

**801 Williamson Street Proposal Reviews**  
**Marquette Neighborhood Association**  
**Preservation & Development (P&D) Committee Reviews**

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6/5/2017

I am accounting for the P&D Committee reviews of the demolition and new construction for 801 Williamson over the past ten months.

On behalf of the Marquette Neighborhood Association's Preservation & Development Committee (P&D), last summer and fall I helped arrange access for neighbors to view the existing building at 801 Williamson on two occasions. Then at two P&D meetings we talked about demolition alone where no one agreed that the existing building should be retained due to its physical condition. Also, its history and architecture didn't appear to meet the levels of significance that are standard for preservation. At a P&D meeting last fall we talked about the schematic proposal for a replacement building on the site. At the recent neighborhood meeting called by Alder Rummel no one countered the demolition of the building. At that meeting, the owner and architect responded to the usual questions about the proposed new building's lot coverage, setbacks, height, access, appropriateness of uses, materials, roof form and historical precedence of uses and building characteristics. Precisely the same topics were also covered at the following P&D meeting held May 9.

Many people who are regulars to P&D along with many who weren't frequent attendees meetings have been through Cook's 1018 Williamson Street renovation during and after. They have participated in the discussion at three P&D meetings about the demolition and the schematic and proposed building to be built on the lot at 801 Williamson.

Of note in the May 9 conversations were those of John Martens who owns the building next door at 805 Williamson. He wanted a greater side yard setback and shorter building because there is only a 5'-6" distance between the buildings now. Martens' building is two feet from the lot line. He said he only halfway supported the replacement building. The proposal for the new building met with a luke-warm response, though passed on a four-to-three vote majority.

At its May 18 meeting, the Marquette Neighborhood Association board of twelve people listened to a brief presentation by the applicant. Of those on the board perhaps four had been in 801 Williamson. During the discussion, no one stated an interest in preserving or retaining the existing building. Following the motion to permit demolition and a replacement building the discussion focused only on the new building and it was decided not to split the two items to cause a return of the design to the board for review. During the discussion, three people questioned the concept of building a TSS mixed use building instead of a residential-only building. Several questioned the historical precedence of uses, size and the three-story massing. It was clear to me that there was an inadequate understanding of the building, its history or the buildings in the vicinity. The motion to permit both demolition and the proposed building resulted in four votes to approve, four not approve and three not voting. Urged to break the tie, the MNA president voted against it.