

Minutes of the Jun 13, 2019 ARB meeting. – 745 Francis

Bokor reviewed staff comments with the Board for this application. For the benefit of all in attendance, Bokor explained that there is a demolition ordinance that has strict criteria to work through before a demolition would be approved. The applicant would like to demolish the existing home and build a new single family dwelling. The original application lacked sufficient scale and detail and the architecture did not fit with the fabric of the street. The homeowner and designer revised the proposal and came back with a new proposal. The scale is smaller, more detailed and more modern in design. The garage was removed from the front of the home in this rendering. In terms of the merit of demolishing an existing home, the replacement must be equal to or better than what is currently there. The structural engineer included a letter stating there were foundation problems, which the applicants will discuss with the Board. Staff believes more work could be done to break down the symmetry in the proposal's design. Bokor also noted that demolitions and new builds rarely get approved on the first time. Other features, such as landscape plans and adequate time for neighbors feedback, are included in the process. Bardwell restated Bokor's explanation of demolition, and added that Bexley has a rigorous demolition ordinance which sets rigorous standards for what must be done for an existing residence to be demolished, one of which is a demonstration of a fully explored proposed replacement. Criteria exists for the new structure, which should be over and above what is existing. Included in a proposed new build is a view of the streetscape of building frontage and height. One other item helpful to the Board in this, and any application, is including a 3-dimensional view to see how the building fits into the streetscape.

William Gruber and Shawn McAllister were sworn in. The applicants provided background information to the Board for this application. They provided an independent structural engineer report, which shows structural damage to the integrity of the house in the basement as well as water damage. The walls are cracked and the engineer was not confident the home is structurally sound. An independent architect reviewed the detailing of the demolition code and his opinion of the home, as well as researched whether the home had any architectural or historical significance. The applicants worked with Bokor on the plan revisions and knew some things would change after coming before the Board for review.

Comments from the Board included that the conditions listed by the structural engineer are not uncommon in South Bexley homes, are normal for this location, are not found to be compelling, all of the reasons are applicable to everyone living in South Bexley, that the design is of mediocre quality and out of scale, there are concerns with elevations, materials, massing and that the home is drawn facing forward in elevation only but will not always be seen from that vantage point, and that the design does not need to be symmetrical. The members are not convinced of the assessment, think the home has character as is, and see it as an opportunity to embellish and enhance the home.

Amy Lauerhass was sworn in. Mrs. Lauerhass is a neighbor to this residence and wanted to voice her concerns. She thanked the applicants for being open to changes based on Bokor's feedback and feels strongly that this home should not be demolished. There is nothing about the home that can not be repaired or remedied, and that the home has not been maintained properly, but is not uncommon. She did not see the structural engineer's report, but noted a lot of homes have similar problems. She disagrees that this home is unremarkable and thinks that it is desirable. She referenced that even though this home backs up to Capital University, homes to the sides will be impacted by this proposal. A solution she offered is to keep the main house open, and that it sits on a large lot that could support a detached garage in the back as well as include an addition for more interior space. The home in this proposal is not appropriate in scale height or massing to the other homes in the neighborhood. The homes in the area are asymmetrical, while this home is one large mass. She is concerned this would set a precedent in South Bexley, and look misplaced in the neighborhood. She asked the applicants to explore options of the stock of homes that are already there.

Susan Plaisted was sworn in. She is also a neighbor to this home, read the application, and wanted to remind the Board of a few things about demolition. Prior demolition requests came before the Board for historically significant homes and were approved. She stated that this house does not have the same type of significance as the other homes, one of which had a letter written on its behalf to not demolish the building, but was approved by the Board to demolish. This home is typical of the time it was built, but in her opinion is not that significant. The street is changing and evolving. Multi-family

homes have been converted into single family homes because people living in South Bexley want bigger homes.

Members of the Board stated that they do not necessarily object to demolishing a home that will be replaced with something better, but feel that the design in this proposal is not better than what is already there. The applicants said they will work with the Design Consultant to revise the proposal and asked the members of other changes to consider. Bardwell stated that the Board is not in the position to imply recommendations in order to meet Board approval. Bokor offered that the applicants have 3-dimensional representation of the proposal. Members commented that the proposed building lacks charm, and suggested the applicants take a look at cues in the surrounding homes, and that this was an opportunity to create something with character. Bardwell commented that the applicants should show the renderings in context, especially in regards to the broader perspective to the context of the street. The current grouping of residences are unique and frontages on this street are greater than on other streets in South Bexley. The lots are wider, have a spacious streetscape, and that the applicants should take advantage of that. Diverse styles of homes align the street, and Bardwell suggested the applicants walk along the street, and take a cue from what exists on the street now.

The members continued to discuss the details and design for this application. They commented that they can not dictate a specific style, but are asking for greater compatibility with the immediate and overall streetscape, as well as seeing the applicant use quality materials in the project. The Board and the applicants discuss Tabling the application. The applicants agree to Table. Bill Heyer made a motion to Table the application. Suzanne Toney seconded the motion.