

Historic Old Northeast Forever
Support@HistoricOldNortheastForever.org

March 12, 2018

Community Planning and Preservation Commission
175 5th Street N
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

Re: Proposed 736 18th Avenue NE Home

Dear CPPC Members:

We, as homeowners in the Old Northeast who are committed to preserving the historic character and charm of our great neighborhood, strongly oppose the pending application for the construction of a new, non-contributing house in the 18th Avenue NE Historic District.

This case demonstrates the inherent difficulty of attempting to replace an existing, contributing historical home, like the original 1925 Colonial, with new construction, in a Historic District, while attempting to maintain the character of that Historic District. While the Staff has undertaken what appears to be a comprehensive analysis, the result is a proposed house that has nothing to do with the character of the District, either in design or scale. While as an individual decision, the demolition of a contributing structure and its replacement by an obviously non-contributing structure would be regrettable, the much larger issue is the precedent established for future cases.

It seems to us that any replacement, to minimize the damage to the 18th Ave NE Historic District, must be as near to the style and scale of the pre-existing structure as possible. At least, the style should be consistent with the Historic District as a whole. The current plans, even as revised, are completely inconsistent with these factors. While there may be a few houses in the Old Northeast that resemble the proposed plan in style, these are scattered, stylistic “modern” outliers that detract from, rather than contribute to, the historic character of the Old Northeast.

As to scale, the proposed construction has more than *twice* the mass of the house it will replace. The FAR for the existing, contributing house is .39 (with garage). While the new construction is shown as .61.5 (with garage), that figure is deceiving for at least three reasons. First, it does not include the 343 sq. ft. “carport,” which is not detached but is an integral part of the structure of the house, the *foundation* for the second story master bedroom. Second, the open living room and dining room extending to the second floor have a combined 633 feet of floor space that is not counted, even though the effect – in mass – is the same as if these areas were floor space, that is, extra second story bedrooms. If these areas were counted, as they should be, the FAR would be .78. Third, the interior passage is not counted, even though it too adds to the building’s mass, exactly as if it were enclosed. Such a massive structure on the smallest lot on the block cannot be justified either under the current FAR regulations or in comparison with the size of the “remaining contributing resources” in the 18th Avenue NE Historic District.

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The decision to permit the demolition of the existing, contributing house is extremely disappointing. Its replacement by the proposed house would be even more tragic. We join HONNA and the other property owners who oppose the current construction proposal. Thank you for your consideration of our concerns.

Sincerely,

Roger and Suzanne Mcclow
Sara Young and David Watson
Burt and Carol Kline
Cheryl and John Welch
Brooke and Todd Rosenberg
Kathleen and Ralph DeMarco
Dawn and Sean Lynch
Kevin and Carol Brennan
Kathleen Kroupa
Robert and Angela Schuck
Dina M. May
Bob Young and Charleen McGrath
Sue Blanshan
Doug Gillespie
Nancy J. Brown
Robert Shapiro and Alicia Reyes
Any Neeb
Lisa Curzio-Blake
Kathy and Jim Klinger
Tom and Dixie Crawford
Catherine Landstra and Gerald Meaders

Rachel Agustines
Suzanne Andrew
Tonya Strubbe
Erin Morris
Melissa Greene
Katherine Gibson
Molly Stagg
Richard Carson
Joan and Kent Ulrich
Jerry Penacoli
Lauren Rolfe and Arnold Arluke
Mary Dowd and Michael Myers
Carolyn Wise
John Broshears and Anna Broshears
Guy Keirn and Dr. Susie Wehr
Diana Daerr
Catherine Rome
Paula Albinson
Stephanie and Ben Siwinski
Maureen Stafford and Elinor Miranda, M.D.
Fumiko Coppard and Ryan Burri