

Historic Old Northeast Forever  
[Support@HistoricOldNortheastForever.org](mailto:Support@HistoricOldNortheastForever.org)

May 3, 2018

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

Re: 736 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE

Dear CPPC Members:

We, as homeowners in the Old Northeast who are committed to preserving the historic character and charm of our great neighborhood, write to you once again to voice our strong opposition to the pending application for the construction of a new, non-contributing house in the 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE Historic District.

On March 13, 2018, the CPPC unanimously rejected the prior application. Rather than appeal to the City Council, the owner of the existing historic house at 736 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, submitted a new application which is not significantly different than the one unanimously rejected. The CPPC should reject this application as well.

This new application reinforces our concern about the inherent difficulty of attempting to replace an existing, contributing home in a designated Historic District, like the existing 1925 Colonial, with new construction, while attempting to maintain the character of that block of historic properties. The new application is almost identical to the initial one and identifies the style of the new construction as “Monterey” style. But, the facade of the proposed structure, does not remotely resembles an historical “Monterey” style. As shown by the attached examples, an authentic “Monterey” style house has two stories, with continuous surrounding porches on both levels, a hip roof and adobe walls.

**While as an individual decision, the demolition of this contributing home and its replacement by an obviously non-contributing structure would be regrettable, the much larger issue is the precedent established for future cases.** The 700 block of 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE is the first historic district in the Historic Old Northeast and, as neighbors and property owners, we want the CPPC to be acutely aware of the damage that will be inflicted on our neighborhood if this design becomes the basis of all future attempts at redevelopment in historic districts.

As we said in opposition to the initial application, to minimize the damage to this Historic District, any new construction must be as near to the style, mass and scale of the existing home as possible, as that is the very rationale for establishing such a District. The current pseudo “Monterey” style design, even as revised, is completely inconsistent with these factors.

As to mass and scale, the proposed structure takes up almost the entire lot. The applicant proposes a structure that is 150% larger than the existing house – which is not a small house. And, the new application, at a FAR of 0.596, is 150% larger than permitted under the current ordinance. In order to qualify for FAR larger than 0.4, the applicant must be awarded 0.196 in additional FAR. This additional  
May 3, 2018

Community Planning and Preservation Commission

May 3, 2018

Page two

size must necessarily come from “add ons” awarded because, at least in part, the applicant intends to build the new house in a recognized historic style.

Here, the City *required*, as a condition of demolition of the existing contributing house, that the applicant demonstrate that the replacement will be historically accurate and compatible. Therefore, the applicant is not exercising an “option” to obtain approval for a larger house. The applicant *must* satisfy the “historically accuracy” condition *before* it can demolish the existing house. The applicant is not entitled to any reward for doing what it is already required to do.

That this design includes a couple of features of an authentic historic style does not mean that it has any historic authenticity. The applicant has attached a partial second story porch to an otherwise unremarkable, massive cement block house (without a hip roof) and is trying to pass it off as an example of historic architecture. **Simply asserting an entitlement to additional floor space based on a claim that the submitted “design” qualifies for it, does not mean the CPPC must agree – especially given the precedent that this case will establish.**

As a final comment, the interior passage is not counted in the FAR, even though it too adds to the building’s mass, exactly as if it were enclosed. If this floor area is counted, as it should be, the new design violates the FAR limit, even if *all* possible add ons are awarded. **Such a massive structure on the smallest lot in the Historic District cannot be justified either under the current FAR regulations or when considering the size of the “remaining contributing resources” there.**

As taxpayers and residents of the Old Northeast, recent experience has shown that new construction is built, not by owners who intend to live in houses that they design, but by developers who see profits solely in terms of how much they can gain on a dollar per square foot basis. Additional FAR bonus points should only be awarded because the final product is compatible with existing homes in the Historic District -- not because a builder makes minimal design concessions to maximize profits by building as massive a structure as possible.

The decision to permit the demolition of the existing, contributing 90-year old house in the Historic District is extremely disappointing. Its replacement by the proposed structure would be even more tragic. We join HONNA, the residents of the 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE Historic District and the other property owners and residents who oppose this proposal. We love our neighborhood and are devastated by what has been happening to its charm and character over the past few years. **The CPPC has the opportunity to create a precedent that will enhance, rather than further denigrate, the unique and wonderful Old Northeast.**

We ask that the CPPC again reject this application. Thank you for your consideration of our concerns.

Sincerely,

Rachel Agustines  
Paula Albinson  
Mary Allen

Ivana and Amra Kux  
Catherine Landstra  
Kim Levell

Arnie Arluke  
Nancy Bahl  
Sue Blanshan  
Paul and Barri Boudreaux  
Julia Brazier  
Kevin Brennan  
Carol Sitarsky Brennan  
Elizabeth Burbage  
Ryan Burri  
Angela and Mike Carley  
Richard Carlson  
Michael Carnevale  
Jewell Christie  
Catherine and Britt Cobb  
Ralph Contursi  
Fumiko Coppard  
Neverne Covington  
Thomas and Dixie Crawford  
Geoff Creaghan  
Jon Day  
Mary Dowd  
Tom Dwyer  
William Evans  
Carol Fontaine  
Lisa Freeman  
Kenneth Gloger  
Pete and Gina Gorrell  
Melissa Greene  
Jim and Joanne Gribben  
Donna and Edward Guillaume  
Catherine Hamel  
Laura Harrington  
Elise and Jeff Hazrad  
Sara Heerens  
Janice and Gilbert Henry  
Ron Hosler  
Robyn Johnson Lyle  
Barry and Mary Neal Jones  
Jon and Monica Kile  
Burt Kline  
Carol Kline  
Kate Kroupa

Dawn Lynch  
Kristin Maselli  
Roger and Suzanne Mcclow  
Charleen McGrath  
Gerald Meaders  
Charlotte Meaders  
Jeff and Jackie Meister  
Rick Miller  
Elinor Miranda  
Gary and Lynne Mormino  
Erin Morris  
Marcy and Steve Mortimer  
Andrew Muss  
Mike Myers  
Amy Neeb  
Nancy Ogden  
Andrew Orr  
Robert and Kristin Osterland  
Karen Pasolli  
Margaret Phares  
Gordon Powers  
Amy and Doug Robison  
Lauren Rolfe  
Alyson Rome  
Brooke and Todd Rosenberg  
Phyllis Scheidt  
Dee Sheppard  
William Sinclair  
Ben and Stephanie Siwinshi  
Elizabeth and David Skidmore  
Barbara and Tim Spofford  
Maureen Stafford  
Molly Stagg  
Janet Strong  
Kathleen Sunseeker  
Kent Ulrich  
Bridgette Vanderlaan  
David Watson  
Stuart and Claire Wray  
Sara Young  
Bob Young  
Don and Marylee Zink