



14 March 2014

Ann Arbor City Planning Commission
Ann Arbor City Council
301 E. Huron Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Dear City Council and Planning Commission Members:

I would like to voice my concern over the proposed rezoning of 515/517 Oxford Road, known as the George Brigham home. Rezoning to R2B status would allow the owner to significantly alter this historical structure, thereby destroying its design integrity. The Brigham home and studio is an important community landmark in Ann Arbor and should be protected in its existing state.

George B. Brigham, Jr. was an architect and educator who taught and inspired University of Michigan architecture students for decades. He was the first true modernist architect to live in Ann Arbor and teach at the university, arriving in 1930. His design work and teaching introduced the principles of modern architecture to the area, and the students he trained spread out through the Detroit region, creating a legacy of fine modernist design that continues to this day. One of his most characteristic and important early creations was his home and studio on Oxford Road, completed in 1940. In this building Brigham trained scores of students and designed forty homes that were constructed in the area. The structure demonstrated the influence of Frank Lloyd Wright but is not a copy of any Wright building; instead, it melds Wrightian ideas with Brigham's individual version of modernism. There was nothing else like it in the Ann Arbor area at the time.

It has come to my attention that Dan Pampreen has requested a special exception to rezone the house for a sorority annex of up to twenty occupants. Approving this request would alter the house in such a manner as to destroy its design integrity. Surely there are alternatives available that would allow the home to retain its historic character via an adaptive use that is more sympathetic to Brigham's original intent. I believe that A2 Modern – and perhaps others – have previously made suggestions along these lines.

I urge the City Council, in the strongest possible terms, to deny this rezoning application and instead help preserve this local landmark in as near original state as possible.

Sincerely,

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