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To: Planning
Subject: 515- Oxford

I am writing about the Brigham House at 515 Oxford and the planned expansion for a sorority. I'm very impressed with the developer's changes to his plans once he was apprised of its historical value as a modernist landmark. George Brigham was no ordinary architect: He was the founder of the modern school of architecture at the University of Michigan and is responsible for training such greats as Bob Metcalf and David Osler. These three men are now having individual retrospectives at the U-M Museum of Art(UMMA). The Osler exhibit has just come down and the Metcalf exhibit will be next. Last will be an exhibit of Brigham's work. His home and studio will feature prominently in this exhibit. It is too bad that it's importance wasn't recognized by later owners. I'm happy that the developers are now aware of the significance of the house and plan to respect it accordingly.

Of course I'm not happy with a doubling of size of what was once a single family home but I guess this is going to be allowed by the re- zoning. Perhaps this should be thought of more carefully. Once these houses are expanded they can never go back to a less dense use. We know that the Greek system has its ups and downs and sometimes they lose membership and don't need so much space. Putting so many on one site might be challenging with noise and traffic I don't know how the Oxbridge neighbors feel about it. But it is worrisome the potential single family use will never return here. This just pushes single family occupancy further and further away from town. However, this is an unusual situation and I think that what is proposed will probably be all right.

More effort should be made by the city to recognize that mid-century modern is now a historic style (I know! Only 50 years old! Younger than me!) and make efforts to educate the public and perhaps create a historic district some day--or at least designate individual properties so that they can be preserved for future generations to enjoy

Susan Wineberg

<https://umma.umich.edu/view/exhibitions/2014-Metcalf.php>