

Dear Members of the Zoning Board of Appeals:

I ask you to deny the request by Mark Schroeder to add a massive new two story addition to 532 S. 5th Ave. I oppose his request on the following grounds:

1. The lot he owns at 532 S. 5th Ave is too small for the 1,734 square foot addition he is proposing. Lots of that size are not permitted under zoning to be built up as massively as he proposes for very good reasons that protect the rights of nearby property owners and the public health and safety.
2. Such an overbuild would not be permitted in a wealthier neighborhood like Ann Arbor Hills or Burns Park and should not be permitted in our neighborhood either. There is currently no other lot on the block that does not meet zoning requirements, so this would be the first exception and might create a flood of additional proposals for over-density. At the time Mr. Schroeder purchased his lot he was well aware that it was too small for R4C and had lot size and width requirements. He purchased his property on a gamble that he could over-develop it at the expense of the character, safety, and home values in the neighborhood. His gamble is not protected under Ann Arbor's zoning policy. In fact, the Zoning Board of Appeals and the City of Ann Arbor would incur legal jeopardy in approving this proposal, as it does not meet the conditions under which an exemption from zoning can be granted.
3. The plan to add ~10 bedrooms with only 4 parking spaces (doubtful that there is even space for 4 parking spaces as the driveway is shared with the adjacent property) means that the persons living in 6 bedrooms will be prone to illegal street parking, which is already a major safety problem on our street. Moreover, further ingress and egress to the property at such elevated density is a problem given that S. 5th Ave is a hill with high speed traffic, buses, ambulances, and fire engines. Over-building on this street is a major safety concern and would clearly be a violation of the conditions under which an exemption can be granted. Adding extra backing out traffic to the hill when buses are cruising down it at high speed and we are trying to back out across the street is lose-lose situation for the neighborhood. Safety concerns are one of the very strong reasons for respecting zoning.

We have no problem with Mr. Schroeder using his property for income so long as he does so in a way that is consistent with his lot size and existing zoning. The notion that he be allowed to maximize his income at the expense of the safety, home values, and quality of life of his new neighbors is not a "by right" proposal and our neighborhood association is prepared to defend other property owners vigorously, in whatever way is required, to stop this poorly conceived plan.

As I have a conflicting appointment. I am unable to attend the meeting but will closely follow the results. Please distribute these comments to all persons having jurisdiction over this proposal, including the members of the Zoning Board of Appeals. I appreciate your consideration.

Kind regards,

Beverly I. Strassmann

Resident Co-owner of 545 S. 5th Ave  
Germantown Neighborhood Association, President