Docomomo-US/Michigan

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April 30, 2014

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

Re: 515 Oxford, Files Z13-15, AP13-001
Rezoning and Area Plan

Dear Council Members:

I am writing to you as the coordinator for the newly-formed Michigan Chapter of Docomomo-US. Docomomo stands for the documentation and conservation of buildings, sites and neighborhoods of the modern movement. We educate and advocate for the appropriate protection and preservation of cultural resources from the mid-twentieth century.

A2Modern has made the case for the historic significance of the property at 515 Oxbord, the George B. Brigham, Jr. Home and Studio. Homes and studios of architects and artists are particularly significant; the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio in Oak Park, IL, and Georgia O'Keefe's home and studio in New Mexico are both tourist draws. A local example is the Aden B. Dow House and Studio in Midland, Michigan. While the Brigham House and Studio may not not yet be recognized to that degree, it is nonetheless a critical element in the development and flourishing of mid-century modern architecture in Ann Arbor by an architect that was nationally recognized as a leader in the modern movement. Its presence in its original state contributes to university and community history.

Others have pointed out that a site plan and design which is sensitive to the historic character of the building could be achieved without sacrificing the historical significance of the building. This is clearly the direction this project should take so that the Brigham home and studio will continue to contribute to the legacy of the modern movement in Ann Arbor and the University of Michigan. To this point, the Planning Commission and City Council should strongly encourage and support local designation for this property should the zoning change and site plan be approved.

On behalf of Docomomo-US/Michigan, I thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Coordinator, Docomomo-US/Michigan