

Charlotte DeVries [devriesca@gmail.com]
734 Spring Street
Ann Arbor, MI

Tonight's zoning meeting re. 722 Spring St.

I planned to be at tonight's meeting but have taken ill, so I send these written remarks re. the request for a variance for new construction at 722 Spring St. We moved to this neighborhood because of the older homes and front yards that set a neighborly tone and allow for interaction like the Waterhill Music Festival. New construction is inevitable, but disregarding architectural aesthetics -- especially crowding a lot like this -- need not be. We understand that there are some Chinese elms on the back of the property that the builders are attempting to save, and that certainly is a good thing. But in the long run, these trees are fragile and will not stand nearly as long as a permanent structure bumping too far forward and out-of-place on a residential lot, looming too closely to pedestrians, the elderly, the children, the bicyclers, all of whom depend on a clear sight line up and down the block that would be obliterated by this structure. This sort of variance might work well enough downtown but in a residential neighborhood, it would be out of place and unsightly. Might the contractor consider designing/building "up" rather than "out" into our discomfort zone? It's always disappointing when neighborhood folks feel disregarded in something that will affect them for a very long time. Please, please consider the Spring Street aesthetic in your decision. Thanks.