

1321 Forest Court
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
December 9, 2015

Ann Arbor Historic District Commission
City Hall
Ann Arbor, MI
Delivered by email to hdc@a2gov.org
Re: 1310 Hill Street

Dear Historic District Commissioners:

We were appalled to see the recent destruction of the south elevation and back yard of 1310 Hill Street. This house is in the Washtenaw Hill Historic District and is one of the finest old houses in the city.

It is an honor and a privilege for a property owner to take care of such a building in the public trust. That person thus has a moral and legal responsibility to retain and preserve the building's historic features. Any changes that are made to the building must be approved by both the Historic District Commission and the City Building Department. Anyone who buys such a structure must know this responsibility. It seems that many changes made or planned for this building were not brought to the attention of these authorities, most probably because the owner knew that they would not have been approved.

We live on Forest Court, just one block north of the historic Campbell House. We pass it nearly every day and are proud that its beautiful proportions, fine materials and heritage trees are part of our daily urban landscape. Destruction of the "defining spaces," and "the character" of the building, "introducing a new entrance that is incompatible with the size, scale, and material of the original," and removing "cut stone basement walls" are all in clear contradiction to the City Regulations and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

We expect that the Historic District Commission will order the complete restoration of the destroyed elements of the building, including the basement walls, windows, wood siding, grading, fencing and landscaping of the property. We also would like them to recommend whatever penalties they can enforce or pass on to other related authorities. When the First Presbyterian Church destroyed the historic house on Hill Street then used by the Ark, the penalties were said to be set as a deterrent from their ever engaging in such behavior again. We think that the time has come to issue another strong deterrent to people who even think of damaging historic landmarks.

Very sincerely,

Eleanor Linn and Marc Gerstein