

December 18, 2017

Dear HARC Commission Members,

I am the owner of 1007 Watson Street and abutter to 1009 Watson Street. I request that the following be read on the record for application 17-03-0052 at the HARC meeting on Dec 19th as I am unable to attend the meeting.

The damaged shed's removal and proposed replacement to accessory structure has proportions and scale that are incompatible with surrounding elements. Most surrounding properties are single or 1.5 stories. The relationship between the existing structures and the proposed 2-story accessory structure will be a detriment to the character of this area even though it is not visible from the street. There is little sympathetic relationship of height between the proposed structure and adjacent structures. Addition of another 2-story structure in this area creates, in my opinion, an excessive outbuilding. The structure will detract from the quality of the historic neighborhood and lessen its attended appearance. Once providing some open space, the proposed new construction and its proposed location eliminates the opportunity for shade and canopy which once was visible from the street. This proposal in essence creates a "gatehouse" - a separate dwelling enclosed with 6-foot walls on all sides providing no access to the main structure. Regulations seem to only allow for 6' fences on side and rear property lines. Approval of this fence deems the new construction separate not accessory. No access to the main structure and no kitchen makes one wonder what the intended accessory nature of this proposal is and, as designed, what the separate dwelling potential of this outbuilding could become.

I understand the desire to improve one's property but I also understand the consequences to the neighborhood. In the 1990's, my father did the exact thing the applicant is proposing. My family once owned the structure that the applicant is using as an example of compatibility with surrounding structures - 1007 Watson Rear. This property was once a shed too! It morphed into many things, the most important, for him, being a duplex rental. This added density to an already tightly spaced block. It created a scale of buildings disproportionate to the area. Allowing this was an extreme detriment to the area. It eliminated open space, eliminated privacy, increased noise, increased parking issues, and increased foot traffic. A decade later, this example of a compatible structure was parceled off and sold. It has absolutely no vegetation and only hardscape. I believe this example of "compatibility" is exactly what HARC is trying to protect Key West from becoming.

A bad precedent does not mean that there should be more of the same. I hope you consider this in your discussions on the application for 1009 Watson Street.

Regards,

Amy Morris and Eric Brazer,
1007 Watson Street, owners