

2/21/2022

Hello to the Heritage Preservation Committee!

I live at 539 Holly Ave down the street/alley from 525 Holly with my husband Tomislav Mutak.

I am writing to express our support for the new accessory dwelling unit proposed for 525 Holly. We are proponents of multi-generational housing and increased density in our walkable urban neighborhood. Adding livable space above the garage at 525 will not materially affect the character of the neighborhood and seems to me to be a smart use of space.

Thank you for all you do!

Sarah Taffee
539 Holly Avenue

2/24/2022

To the Heritage Preservation Committee -

My name is Lauren Hupperts and I live at 537 Holly Avenue in Saint Paul, two houses down from 525 Holly Ave.

I'd like to voice my support for this project as I believe it will add value to the neighborhood, as well as complement the primary dwelling on the property. The existing structure is in need of repair/replacement, and the proposed design of this new project respects the need for a functional, safe building while maintaining the historical integrity of the neighborhood.

I hope this email assists in your decision making process,

Sincerely,

Lauren Hupperts
537 Holly

March 3, 2022

To Whom It May Concern on the Historic Preservation Commission, the District 8 Council, the designer/architect for the ADU at 525 Holly:

I am writing with concerns about the proposed Holly garage replacement project at 525 Holly Avenue, St. Paul. I live in a condominium building across the alley from the houses and garages 525 Holly and 529 Holly Avenue. The Phoenix Condominiums, at 528 Ashland, are 6 units in an historic 1890's brick building. Some years after the association was formed, a continuous 3-unit garage of double entrances was installed on the alley at the side yard to the east of the 528 building.

While I do not object to the addition of an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) by the residents at 525 Holly, I have concerns such that greater care must be taken by the architects and the city before approval is given for such an addition. This neighborhood is already a very dense neighborhood, the historic brick alley is narrow, and issues exist with snow and water runoff as well as traffic in the alley. They must be taken into account and addressed before approval of any new structure. See more detail in the comments from Pfeifers at 529 Holly. My concerns are as follows:

Garage apron: The garage apron cannot be any less in depth, because of the narrow alley we have. People leaving their garage often need to back up or turn onto the aprons in order to exit down the alley. The condominium association at 528 Ashland Avenue has 3 units of double garages across from the 525 Holly garage, which affects the four units to the east. I am uncertain from the designs what the plan is for the apron.

New ADU:

A proposed roof on a story and a half structure will be higher, generating more snow retention. The proposed slope running north and south will add to drainage in the already narrow alley. The proposal has no indication of where drainage will go.

(a) The ADU extension proposed to the west will remove a vegetation patch adjacent to the west side of the existing 525 garage. This undeveloped 140 square foot area is the only place that snow removers can deposit snow when clearing the alley garage aprons, so that the other Ashland alley residents can get their vehicles out. In addition, the north side of the proposed roof will not get sun, causing snow & ice buildup, and more concerns for the alley.

(b) The change in ADU roof slope direction also means an increase in stormwater runoff from the north-facing roof down the westward sloping, unlevel historic alley.

Ridge reorientation will likely cause more frequent water pooling in the alley (and likely at the 529 garage entrance) due to a raised hump in the alley that the city in 35 years has never offered to level; nor has the city installed any type of storm drain or drains to capture water. We already

know that climate change will bring greater water flow. Minnesota climatologists project that rain events will be more frequent, earlier and later in the year.

New garage aprons are required to be permeable to capture some water runoff. That should be specified in the plans.

It is logical and considerate for the other residents of this alley, that before the city approves a proposal like this, the city must be willing to address the alley concerns first.

Snow Options:

1. Would the city be willing to move the Tot Lot fence further south about 4 feet, so that alley neighbors can pile snow there from the alley?
2. If not, would the HPC and residents of 525 Holly agree to moving the new ADU to the east near the current east side fence and tot Lot. It is far better that the 5-foot extension be to the east than the west, where it creates more shadow for the 529 neighbors, and would eliminate the vegetative area to capture snow and has no impact on the Tot Lot.


The HPC should have no objections to option 2, since they are already approving the removal of an historic structure, and if they are approving an ADU addition of 5 feet, the extension has to go somewhere.

Roof runoff

I note that there are other garages on the south side of this stretch of alley between MacKubin and Kent (four currently) with a north-south slope to their roofs, but they are just garages. This ADU will be nearly 2 story, and thus have a higher sloping roof. The proposed design has not included features to address runoff and drainage. For the last 10 decades, the annual precipitation has been captured from the east and west-facing 525 garage roof by the vegetated, permeable areas on the east and west sides of the garage and by other permeable areas.

Could a satisfactory design be proposed that would retain the current east-west sloping roof so water/snow would drain into the yard? If not, then the city should install storm drains on the alley to accommodate snow and water drainage; require a permeable garage apron, and require a plan for the structures roof runoff.

Cordially,


Patricia Callaghan
528 Ashland Avenue, Apt 6
St. Paul, Minnesota 55102

To: City of Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission, PED
Eric Johnson, C. Strom Architects

From: Sharon and George Pfeifer, 529 Holly Ave

Date: 1 March 2022

Regarding: Comments on proposed **525 Holly Ave ADU design**

Context for Concerns on Submitted ADU Design

In 2015 a Saint Paul city-wide residential zoning study was initiated in response to concerns that the height and scale of new city residential construction was out of character with established neighborhoods. The final St. Paul zoning code adopted as a result of this study noted how “accessory buildings are significant due to lot coverage requirements and the impact they have, especially, as they impact neighbors”.

As 35 year residents of 529 Holly, we inform you that the proposed ADU’s 5 foot extension and reoriented roof ridge will negatively impact us and some long-established neighbors living across the historic alley at 528 Ashland Ave for the reasons that follow.

ADU proposed design impact concerns

1. Neighbor Impacts created by proposed ADU extension toward 525’s northwest corner along the historic alley

The proposed 5 foot ADU extension into the extreme northwest corner of the 525 Holly lot will impact the daily lifestyle of retired residents at 529 Holly, even with the mandatory minimum 3 foot setback from the fenced lot line (Accessory Buildings and Uses, Section 63.501). The proposed design would put ADU’s peaked 25.7 foot west wall within 3 feet of 529 Holly’s northeast corner property line where 6 raised vegetable and fruit garden plots (400 SF) have been located for years and are tended frequently throughout the growing season (**Figs. 1 and 2**). The variety of grown garden vegetables and fruits need different mixes of sun, shade, and moisture for good production spring into late fall. The city zoning study mentioned that the height and closeness of newly built structures are principal elements that produce building massing like this proposed design does.

The St. Paul zoning study also noted that residents adjacent to new building massing projects expressed concern about how close to their properties taller new structures were being built. The study noted that **structural height and closeness “has the potential to impact access to light, privacy, and creates a sense of enclosure for adjacent property owners.”**

Another finding of the zoning study was residential concern **about home resale value with adjacent tall and close built structures.** There is already a comparably sized structure to this ADU on 529 Holly’s northwest corner, so if the 525 ADU is extended westward the residents of 529 Holly will feel more boxed in by their neighbors on both sides.

Some Ashland Avenue neighbors in the 6-unit condominium across the historic alley are concerned that the ADU extension proposed to the 525’s northwest corner will **remove the undeveloped extreme northwest corner of 525 Holly (Fig. 3).** This undeveloped area adjacent to and slightly over the historic alley line is approximately 140 square feet. This is the only larger place where snow removers can deposit snow (Fig. 4, March 1) when clearing neighbors’ garage aprons and stretch of alleyway (Fig. 5) adjacent to and directly across from the new ADU so that the 528 Ashland and 529 Holly neighbors can get their vehicles safely out in winter with snow and ice.

Additionally, there is a real **benefit to the ADU occupant if the ADU is extended to the east, not to the west,** as the revised sightline would follow the 525’s east lot line and extend across the open city park (Fig. 6).

- 2. The proposed change in the ADU’s ridge line from running north-south to east-west will increase the flow of rain and melted snow onto the westward, downward sloping historic alley as well as into the 529 Holly driveway and historically designed garage (Fig. 7). The 529 residence is located on the lowest elevation of the entire block.**

For the last 3 decades, some of the annual precipitation has run off the east and west sides of the 525 garage roof and dropped into vegetated, permeable areas on the existing garage’s east and west sides. This has helped mitigate the amount of storm water in the drainless alley.

Minnesota’s climatologists project that precipitation events in the Twin Cities’ future will be more frequent, occur earlier and later in the year, and will be more intense due to our changing climate and Metro’s urban heat island effects. It is, therefore, a reasonable expectation that the **529 Holly**

garage and its interior work space will be storm water-covered more frequently due to the reorientation of the ADU roof and its overhangs as well as the removal of 3 key pervious areas on 525's lot that has helped retain storm water from running into and down the alley to "Lake Holly" on Kent Street.

Unless ADU gutters and down spouts are intended (but not shown), ridge reorientation will likely cause more frequent 529 garage flooding and polluted storm water runoff down the alley. **Capitol Region Watershed District recommends** given this proposed design that a) gutters and down spouts be installed that drain runoff onto 525 Holly vegetated back yard areas and b) a pervious garage apron be installed to allow infiltration of precipitation.

3. Design Increases back yard impervious footprint

The back lot coverage for the proposed ADU (24x29) and south-facing, protruding deck and covered workout space (17x10) total 866 square feet, which is as proposed almost a **50% increase in square footage of impervious surface area** in the rear half lot.

The 10x17 square foot (SF) elevated deck (170 SF) that covers a 170 SF lower work out space on the ADU's south side seem excessive for a one person occupant, which is for whom this ADU is being built. By comparison, the front and back porches restored to historic 529 Holly, which received a 2010 HPC award for the Pfeifer Queen Ann restoration, are each barely 6 feet wide and each total less than 90 SF yet can accommodate 4 adults nicely, and more if needed. Also, the proposed deck, shown with cable fencing, does not fit C. Johnston's historical style nor this historic house and neighborhood.

In addition to the proposed added impervious surface area (above), there also exists a cement sidewalk from the house to the alley and a cement dining area pad in the backyard that add to the total backyard impervious area, which is close to the 1000 SF development limit (Code 63.501).

Alternatives to Proposed Design

1. Given that there is no private property on the east side of 525 Holly Ave, the building mass impact of the proposed design would be mitigated if the **ADU, with its increased footprint, is extended eastward, not westward that results in boxing in the northeast corner and garden area of 529 Holly Ave.** An additional benefit for the ADU occupant of extending eastward would be better back yard and street views (Fig. 6) than if the ADU extended westward with its short, fenced back yard views (Fig. 8 shows an approximated closed backyard view).
2. Moving the ADU **extension to the east would retain the existing and highly functional permeable areas that exist on 525's back yard lot to:**
 - a) **help absorb storm water runoff and diminish alley water ponding and icing**
 - b) **provide much needed space for plowed alley snow** cleared for 10 residents on the 2 neighboring properties whose garage exits are within close to 100 feet of each other
 - c) **diminish adjacent neighbor garage flooding and alley ponding**
3. If the decision is to not change the **ADU's direction extension and roof orientation** based on these above three major concerns by neighbors of the proposed 525 Holly Ave ADU, two alternative options are possible.
 - a) Option 1: concerned neighbors would request a **hardship explanation** from 525 residents to justify the ADU placement in 525's northwest lot corner and reorientation of the ADU ridge line that create impacts and hardships for 529 Holly and alley neighbors.
 - b) Option 2: Residents of 529 Holly would request an additional distance setback on the ADU's west side and have a **maintenance easement recorded on 525 Holly when a building permit is applied for** such that the following setback requirements are met:
 - a) A more adequate supply of sunlight, precipitation, and air flow are provided to adjacent 529 Holly's back yard corner with its food garden plots and sun and shade MN perennials

- b) Potential damage to 529 Holly's wooden yard fence and historically designed wooden garage is minimized by possible fire or severe runoff from the reoriented ADU roof overhangs that extend closer to 529 and its food plots
- c) Following city code, the proposed taller and closer west ADU wall with windows facing the interior lot line (as shown on the design) must provide not less than 6 feet of yard next to the wall, which limits the westward extension dimension.

A final safety comment on interior design mentioned in a phone call to the architect:

By moving the bedroom to the ADU's southwest corner air pollution safety concerns from CO2 and other vehicular emission pollutants would be mitigated; this suggestion is based on our 35 years of living at 529 Holly and the history of alley usage by residents' vehicles and service trucks. The living room could be moved to the southeast ADU corner for deck access and a better long, open space view.

Thank you all for thoughtful consideration of your neighbors in this wonderful historic block.

Sharon Pfeifer_____

George Pfeifer_____



Fig 1. 529 Garden NE
corner



Fig 2. NE Food Garden
and lot fence line



Fig. 3. Former treed area on alley and 525



Fig 4. Snow plot
deposit area
NW 525 corner



Fig. 5 Ashland garage (6 spaces) behind ADU



Fig. 6. view line of ADU if moved to east.



Figure 8 – separate page

March 6, 2022

To the Heritage Preservation Committee,

As you review the application for the replacement of the garage at 525 Holly Avenue, I ask that you please consider my full support for the project. The rear of my home at 528 Ashland Avenue (where I've lived since 2006) faces the alley on which the current structure stands.

I support this project because the plans demonstrate a dedication to replacing a sad and worn structure with one of quality that fits in seamlessly with the architecture and ambiance of our neighborhood. I've discussed this project with Mr. Drinan and Ms. McCormick and found them to be enthused and positive about preserving and improving Cathedral Hill.

Thank you for your consideration.

Penelope Scialla

528 Ashland Avenue Unit 5

Saint Paul MN 55102-2059

March 5, 2022

Dear Heritage Preservation Committee,

I'd like to echo the sentiments of my husband, Mark Andersen, who also emailed you today. I, too, live at 530 Holly, across the street from 525 Holly, and agree wholeheartedly with everything he said. I am fully supportive of the proposed garage project. Greg and Zindzi are both fabulous additions to the neighborhood, and I have no doubt that they will oversee the project with integrity and responsibility.

Best-

Erika Lund
530 Holly