

Vang, Mai (CI-StPaul)

From: Ken Skrien <kskrien@msn.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 13, 2012 9:01 PM
To: Vang, Mai (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Fw: 451 Selby Avenue and 466 Iglehart Avenue

Dear Ms. Vang:

As residents of the Ramsey Hill area and as concerned homeowners in St. Paul (at 361 Laurel Ave.), my wife Diane and I would like to echo the comments and concerns of Kit Richardson contained in the email below.

We also ask that the homes at 451 Selby Ave. and 466 Iglehart Ave. not be demolished and that the City cooperate in whatever way possible to have the homes renovated.

Thank you. Ken and Diane Skrien

From: Kit Richardson
Sent: Tuesday, June 12, 2012 10:58 AM
To: 'mai.vang@ci.stpaul.mn.us'
Cc: Michelle Hotzler; Spong Amy (Amy.spong@ci.stpaul.mn.us); Moermond Marcia (marcia.moermond@ci.stpaul.mn.us); info@ramseyhill.org
Subject: 451 Selby Avenue and 466 Iglehart Avenue

Dear Ms Vang:

As a Registered Architect, and a Ramsey Hill resident since 1974, I would like to express my real concern for the houses at 451 Selby Avenue and 466 Iglehart Avenue, and to speak strongly against their possible demolition.

I am also a licensed Building Contractor and a licensed Real Estate Salesperson in Minnesota; my profession is commercial and residential real estate development. My company, Schafer Richardson, Inc., has focused for over 15 years on urban, infill rehabilitation projects, primarily in downtown Minneapolis, with a focus on older and historic structures. We have used the Federal Historic Building tax credit program twice for renovation of larger commercial buildings, and we are in the midst of a third historic tax credit project, so I am familiar with approvals process and the Secretary of Interior Standards. Recently I spent two years at the State Capitol as part of the "Jobs Coalition" group lobbying for passage of the State Historic Building tax credit legislation, a program which I and many others believe will help preserve many buildings like the ones at 451 Selby and 466 Iglehart. Over the past 35 years my wife and I have completely renovated our home at 117 Farrington Street, saving and/or replicating all of the original and historic architectural details which we found in the house after its life in the 1950's and 1960's as a rooming house with 11 efficiency units.

All of the electrical and mechanical systems in our house have been replaced, the exterior walls have been super-insulated, the original quarter-sawn oak floors have been preserved, a new roof installed, and new real plaster walls were hand trowelled on the first floor. Most of this work we have done ourselves; needless to say we have a lot of time, energy, money, and passion invested in our neighborhood along with many others. We do not wish to see the City destroy any more of the historic resources which make up our neighborhood.

I spoke last week with the owner of the property at 451 Selby and while I believe that he does intend to rehabilitate the home, I cannot attest to his timing or motivation. Regardless of his plans and abilities to move the project forward, however, the structure should not be demolished. Should the owner decided not to renovate the structure at 451 Selby, others, experienced in the industry and in working with the HPC and City staff, would be willing to step in and restore the home, I am quite certain.

As the former Land Use Chair for the Ramsey Hill Association many years ago, I was a member of the City's task force which determined the viability and disposition of the large stone house at the corner of Farrington and Dayton. Many in the City told members of the task force that the structure was beyond repair and should to be torn down. The task force and the City sold the house for \$10 and attached a number of covenants which, among others, required the new owners to have a minimum of \$300,000 available for the restoration of the structure. That house was sold (we had multiple prospective buyers) and successfully restored and now is a beautiful part of the Historic Hill District; it is also on the tax rolls as a totally restored home. Given my experience and background in architecture, construction and real estate, I have no doubt the home at 451 Selby can be just as successfully preserved and restored and would help keep the frame-building character of that portion of Selby Avenue. The same holds true for the home at 466 Iglehart which would preserve that street frontage and prevent a vacant lot from creating a hole in the fabric of the neighborhood.

I personally know the owners, and one of the residents, of the property at 453 Selby Avenue, immediately west of 451 Selby Avenue, and they all are very concerned that the structure at 451 Selby not be demolished. If that demolition were to happen, I think it is certain that all the neighborhood and the City would end up with would be a vacant lot for many years due to the real estate recession and lack of financing for new construction in the market today. Both the Federal and State tax credit programs for the rehabilitation of income-producing historic properties offer the most compelling incentives for saving and restoring the existing structure; a new building could receive none of those tax credit benefits and thus would be less likely to happen, in my opinion. In addition, we are experiencing as strong a residential rental market as I have seen in 37 years of living in Ramsey Hill which also suggests the structures should be saved and restored to provide much needed apartments in the City.

While I will not be able to attend the public hearings this week due to schedule conflicts, please accept this letter as my testimony in very strong support for the preservation of the structures at 451 Selby Avenue and 466 Iglehart. Please do not permit either structure to be demolished.

Thank you,

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