

March 7, 2021

Via Electronic Submission
Leslie Naji – lnaji@cabq.gov
Historic Preservation Planner
Landmarks Commission

Re: Project #PR-2021-005065
Case #SI-2021-00176

Dear Ms. Naji:

I am writing to oppose the demolition of the property located at 1833 Marble Avenue NW, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87104, referenced as the Project Number/Case Number above.

My opposition is based on the following reasons:

1. The “hazardous” material speculation should be fully investigated before approving this demolition based on that issue. It is mere speculation and may not be true. Your report states “it is believed to have some asbestos.”
2. The “lead paint” issue is also mere speculation. Lead paint is easily remediated and is not adequate reason to demolish a building. Again, the potential presence of lead paint is mere speculation.
3. This neighborhood, known as Roehl’s Gardens, uniquely consists of smaller homes. Most of them are 2-to-3-bedroom homes with 1 to 2 baths. The *2018 Updated Comprehensive Plan* (The Plan) requires the City of Albuquerque to reflect “best practices for land use...and priority needs and desires of the residents” (emphasis added). See *2018 Updated Comprehensive Plan*, Page 5, Line 32.
4. The above-referenced house was occupied in 2019-2020 by an elderly lady. I am uncertain of the exact dates, but it had to have been after February 2019. It was my understanding that she had been living with her sister, they could not get along with each other, and she had previously lived at 1833 Marble, and returned to it upon the falling out with her sister. I do not know the date that she vacated.
5. The Plan requires that the City protect existing neighborhoods. Page 7, Line 22. Permitting a new house to be built at 1833 Marble will not protect this neighborhood. Most of the houses in this neighborhood were built in the late 1920’s and early 1930’s (my house was built in 1931). Many people moved to this neighborhood specifically to enjoy the architecture and small cottage homes the older neighborhood offers. Just because a house is old does not mean there are not buyers for it, and many people do not want to live in a new house. Many of the older homes in this area have had to deal with asbestos and lead paint issues by either the sellers or buyers.
6. The Plan found that a “growing number of families desire to live in small cottage homes.” Chapter 2, Page 9, Paragraph 2.4.3. Every house that has come on the market for sale in this neighborhood usually sells within hours of coming on the market,

including the house that sold at 408 19th Street, which is the property adjacent to 1833 Marble Avenue. The sales all occurred prior to the pandemic migration (except for 408 19th Street) currently taking place. The neighborhood is a very desirable neighborhood not only due to its proximity to Old Town and the Museums, but also because people are looking for smaller homes within the city.

7. The houses that have sold are all 2- or 3-bedroom houses, with only 1-2 baths. It was the style in the 1930's to build smaller homes and this style is what is attractive to many buyers. It is what upholds the values of the Roehl's Gardens neighborhood, including 1833 Marble.
8. The Plan requires that "existing neighborhoods" be protected. Page 7, Line 22.
9. Further, the Plan requires that community identity and heritage conservation be considered in preserving neighborhood character. Page 8, Line 21.
 - a. A new house built at 1833 Marble would not protect the existing neighborhood, nor would it preserve the community character. The lot is exceedingly small. Any new structure built on that property would need to be multiple stories because there is inadequate room to build a ranch style home, in the architectural style of the remainder of the houses on Marble. Multiple storied homes are not found on Marble Avenue, except for 2 houses that have been remodeled. See Exhibits E and F.
10. The Plan requires that any development in established neighborhoods "match the existing character" of the neighborhood. Further, the established neighborhoods are to be protected and preserved (emphasis added). It will be incredibly difficult, and unfair to the remaining property owners, to demolish this home and permit a new home to be built. Especially a new home that is entirely out of character both architecturally and in size. Roehl's Gardens does not need a monster home, such as those that are currently being built in the Country Club area, destroying its existing neighborhood character.
11. The Plan requires that any approvals first show respect for existing neighborhood values, social, and cultural values. See The Plan at Chapter 4, Page 31, Paragraph 4.1.4. The existing neighborhood values for Marble Avenue are small 2-3 bedroom cottages. (There are 2 houses on Marble that do not conform with the Plan, and I've attached photographs of them as Exhibit A and B. They do not show respect for the neighborhood values because of their multi-storied construction, and large square footage. They do not fit into this neighborhood.)
12. Further The Plan requires that the Commission support a thriving residential neighborhood, protect the stability of the neighborhood, and enhance its attractiveness. Allowing the demolition of the house at 1833 Marble does not support the residential neighborhood nor does it protect the stability of the neighborhood. It is an older cottage in an older neighborhood, and it enhances the attractiveness of the neighborhood. It is in keeping with the appearance of every house on Marble except for the 2 exceptions listed above.
13. There are 3 additional houses that are entirely voiding the stability and cultural values of this area (although not in Roehl's Gardens proper), all 3 are on 15th Street north of Marble. I have attached photographs of them as Exhibits C and D. As you can see by the houses to the north and south of these houses, the new houses are not in keeping with the area's architectural stability. It's surprising the City allowed them to be built.

14. The Plan requires the Commission to consider the “identity and heritage” in preserving neighborhood character, preserving traditional community landscapes. Page 8, Line 21. The demolition at 1833 Marble does not preserve the traditional community landscape. Further, allowing a new house to be built further violates this tradition.

I have attached Exhibits E and F to illustrate the nature of Marble Avenue housing from 19th Street east to approximately 18th Street. All are older, small homes.

I oppose the demolition of the house at 1833 Marble Avenue NW and believe that the application for same should be denied. The demolition harms the stability of our established neighborhood of small homes, building a new house will not match the architectural stability of this neighborhood, and this house can be restored by a professional. There should at the very least, be a quote received for restoration, before the drastic step of demolition is undertaken.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

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Attachments as stated