

Update on the AGR Project

Four or five years ago the Kappa Foundation attended an ECCO board meeting to let the neighborhood know that they were thinking about remodeling or replacing their current structure at Idylwild and Holdrege. They came back to the ECCO board in August, 2011 with a proposal of their plans. Over the course of the next four weeks a committee of neighbors and the ECCO board worked with the Kappa Foundation to work through some concerns and issues with the Project. The Kappa Foundation incorporated several ideas that came out of these meetings and amended their original plans to alleviate neighbors' concerns. On September 14th, they met with the neighborhood committee, several members of the ECCO board and other interested neighbors. They provided updated drawings and a document for us to review.

The first part of the document described their Project. The Project is to demolish the old fraternity structure (1430 Idylwild) and replace it with a structure that is safer (a sprinkler system and updated wiring) and architecturally better fits into the neighborhood. The proposal also included demolishing or moving three homes within the East Campus Historic Landmark district. The two properties to the south of the fraternity (1400 and 1358 Idylwild) would be used to expand their parking lot. A small portion of the property to the east (3611 Holdrege) is needed for the new building. The latter property needs to be rezoned (from R-2 to R-6). In order to proceed they need the following Government Approvals:

- Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of the fraternity building and three additional homes in the East Campus Historic Landmark District and the construction of a new Fraternity House and parking.
- Change of Zone from R-2 to R-6 for 3611 Holdrege St (Lot 48).
- Special permit and waivers to implement the expanded on-site parking area on the two lots south of the current parking area (1358 and 1400 Idylwild Drive).
- Demolition permit to remove the existing AGR structure and three homes.
- Building permit to construct the new building based on the designs presented to the neighborhood by Sinclair Hille Architects.

The second part of the document included the following Conditions and Limitations that the Kappa Foundation is willing to have written into a zoning agreement with the City.

- a. The new Fraternity Building will be lower to a grade elevation that is a minimum of one foot lower than shown on the original Sinclair Hille Architect images.
- b. The Project's new parking lot will be lower to a grade elevation that is a minimum of two foot lower than shown on the original Sinclair Hille Architect images.
- c. The Project's new parking lot will be lighted to meet the City's parking lot lighting/shielding design standards using light fixtures similar to the historic lighting fixtures in the neighborhood and whose design is acceptable to the City of Lincoln Historic Preservation Commission.

- d. Lot 48 (the property to the east of their current structure) will have a minimum of 15 feet Setback on the east side of the property. (This will provide a buffer for the home on the southwest corner of 37th and Holdrege. Setbacks are typically 5 feet.)
- e. This large Setback will be appropriately landscaped with trees and bushes.
- f. The remaining Lot 48 open space between the proposed Fraternity House and the large Setback will not be improved with an expansion of the Fraternity House or motor vehicle parking lot for a term of twenty years.
- g. The Kappa Foundation, at its expense, will properly install and maintain a brick formed concrete wall (first preference) or a stucco wall (second preference) that will be a barrier between the parking lot and the homes that abut it. (They prefer the brick-formed concrete wall as it fits in better with the architecture of the proposed building.) This wall will be approximately 5 feet high measured from the North 37th St. neighbors' side of the wall, on or near the boundary line. Due to the lower grade of the parking lot it will be 7 feet high on the parking lot side.
- h. The Kappa Foundation, at its expense, will install street trees to comply with the City's design standards in the public right of way abutting its properties on Holdrege Street and Idylwild Drive.

The third part of the document stated that these Conditions and Limitations, will be met by the Kappa Foundation, if ECCO and the participating interested neighbors will:

- Support the Project and the Governmental Approvals provided they are based on the above Conditions and Limitations.
- Use our best efforts to cause the other residential owners in the East Campus Community Organization and the East Campus Neighborhood Landmark District to not oppose the Kappa Project and Governmental Approvals, provided they are based upon the above Conditions and Limitations.

The above Conditions and Limitations will be part of the zoning agreement (contract zoning document) with the city. This is very much to the benefit of the neighborhood, as it involves due process and places limits on the current Project. At the Historic Preservation Commission meeting on September 15, Ed Zimmer, the Historic Preservation Planner for the city said it best - when looking at individual pieces of this Project it is not good for a historic district, but when you put the whole thing together, in his view, it will increase the stability in the neighborhood. It has also set a precedent and a high standard for future Projects affecting our neighborhood.

Since the Kappa Foundation is willing to have the Conditions and Limitations described above being written into an agreement with the city, ECCO can support the new Project. We will go before the Planning Commission on September 21 to voice our support of the Project.