

From Lorenzo Sadun at 1706 W. 30th Street:

As an across-the-street neighbor of the Davis's, I have no serious objections to their plans for remodeling their house, and hope that the BWNA will not voice any objections, either.

I can't say that I'm in love with the design. It's not what I would have built. But it's not SUPPOSED to be what I would have built, since I'm not going to live there! It's supposed to meet the Davis's needs, while respecting the eyes of the neighborhood. The Davis's have gone to great lengths to discuss their plans with their neighbors, and to work in good faith to make the remodel (adding to a base that's already in a very different style from the rest of the neighborhood, on a very odd lot) as harmonious as reasonably possible.

When it's done, will I look in awe at the masterpiece across the street? Probably not. But I won't spend the next decade complaining about the eyesore, either (unlike certain other local houses that I could name). It will be a perfectly acceptable house to live across the street from.

And that's good enough for me. In my opinion, the neighborly thing to do is to thank the Davis's for working with the neighborhood to optimize their design, and to let them get on with their project.

Follow up:

Dear Micaelan,

Just to be clear, my letter really should be taken at face value. It should NOT be read as an attempt to say "I hate this design but it's none of my business", or "I hate it but the Davis' are nice people, so please let them get away with it" a little more diplomatically.

It's true that I've got mixed feelings about the design. It's not to MY taste, but that doesn't mean it isn't tasteful. I think you've done a great job of optimizing it, and that nobody can reasonably ask you to do more. I doubt if viewing the exterior each day will affect me much, one way or the other. .

The main purpose of your house is to be a comfortable place for YOU to live. The secondary purpose is to be an expression of your own artistic taste, adding that taste to the neighborhood's character. Diversity (with respect: no in-your-face monstrosities, please!) is a good thing, and is a sign of a community that's alive. As much as I love the design of our own home, I'd hate to live in a neighborhood where all the remodels had to look like ours.

Katie Coleman

3000 Bryker Drive | Austin, Texas 78703 | [REDACTED]

January 30, 2015

Dear Brykerwoods Neighborhood Association,

I live next door to Graham and Micaelan Davis to the north. As the homeowner that will arguably be most affected by their remodel, I am writing to express my full support for their plans. I was invited to review the plans and provide feedback several weeks ago, which I very much appreciated.

The Davises have had a lot of issues with the existing structure, and from what I understand their options are to either do a substantial remodel or to ultimately tear the house down and start over. I would strongly prefer that they preserve the existing structure, but update it to address longstanding issues and accommodate their growing family. For example, since the house is so old, it was not designed for central air and heating. The house has large HVAC ducts that are exposed on top of the house. You can see these from my back porch and back yard. While I don't particularly mind, it would be nice to have a second story that would conceal these ducts from an aesthetic standpoint, and I'm sure it would also be much more energy efficient in the summer if these ducts were not outside. The architectural style of Graham and Micaelan's existing house is somewhat unique for our neighborhood, which adds character in my opinion. Their remodeling plans preserve the existing style of the house, but update it to make it more modern and functional. I think the redesigned house will be a great addition to the neighborhood.

I understand that many of the homes in Brykerwoods are one-story so there may be concerns about adding a second story. However, Graham and Micaelan's house is at a relatively low elevation due to the downward slope of Bryker Drive between 31st and 30th street. If I look out the windows on the south side of my house (which is one story) I am level with their roof. So, adding a second story will not cause the house to "tower" over mine significantly, which might otherwise be a concern. Instead it will probably balance out the height of the house with mine.

The Davises are great neighbors and wonderful people, and I support making it as easy as possible for them to modify their home so that we can keep them in the neighborhood. Please feel free to call or email me if you have questions or if I can help further.

Katie Coleman