

My wife and I had our first home together in the Old North End after we got married years ago. We've relocated our home several times since due to military service, but we have known for a few years that we would be assigned to Colorado Springs in 2021 for my final military assignment. My wife has remained a loyal and legal Colorado resident. We were super excited to find this lot. We bought this lot at the beginning of the year for \$150,000, with the hope of building a home for our family. We did not have any idea that it could become such a lengthy and stressful ordeal to build on this lot.

Since we started the building approval process we've learned a conspiracy theory has been circulated in the neighborhood and in public comments to the city about our family and our plans. Specifically, it has been suggested the lot purchase was an inside deal by out-of-state residents to maximize return on investment with a non-owner-occupied rental business. This is untrue. We purchased the lot to build a home for our family. There were multiple offers on the lot, and we were lucky enough to get it by placing a full price offer. It was a coincidence, not confirmed until after we placed an offer on the lot, that one of the lot's sellers and I once attended the same school and happened to speak to one another about 20 years ago. All contact during the transaction was through our agent. Neither my wife nor I are developers and we're not going to AirBnB the property as has been rumored. COVID-19 and my out-of-state military assignment has limited our ability to meet many future neighbors, but we are thankful for the support of those neighbors we have met. We are also thankful for this opportunity to dispel false information. It will be a hardship to our family if this process drags on. We are hopeful to get settled and have some peace before one of our children's next major surgery.

At the first historic board hearing, our plans were unanimously and unconditionally approved. However, we heard some neighbors had concerns about the scale and massing of the house, so we voluntarily sacrificed the 9 foot ceilings in our home and lowered them to 8 feet. We lowered the roof by 50 inches and went through a second historic board hearing, where the neighbors had a second opportunity to voice any concerns to the project. We delayed our project and made these changes because we care about our neighbors' concerns and believe in being good neighbors.

We will now address the specifics of the appeal.

The appeal points to the design guidelines stating: “Preserving vacant lots which historically have been linked by ownership and landscaping to the adjacent house and lot is strongly preferred; however, if they are to be developed, new structures on these lots will be subject to these standards in keeping with the size and style of neighboring structures”.

We have researched all the city property records in the historic preservation overlay zone. We did not find a single other vacant lot on a street. 15 W Del Norte St appears to be the very last buildable lot on a street in the historic overlay zone. So it appears, there has been no preservation of vacant lots on streets within the overlay zone. Additionally, our lot was not connected to an adjacent house by landscaping. The previous owners of the lot live on the other side of the alley at 17 W Del Norte. It is just a lot surrounded by a chain link fence with no landscaping. And even if it were connected, the design standards do not prohibit development.

Our research also revealed at least 14 other instances of homes built on lots the same size or smaller than ours within the preservation overlay. Lot coverage for some homes are in excess of 55% and they range from one to two stories. The lot coverage of our proposed plan is 37%.

The nearest example is a home one block away in the same historic overlay zone at 113 W Del Norte St, built on a lot that is 1,250 square feet smaller than ours. The lot is only 2500 sq ft and the lot coverage is 47%.

Building a home of this size on a lot of this size is not unprecedented as the appellant has claimed. All other lots of this size and smaller in the overlay zone have already been built on, most with higher lot coverages than what we are proposing.

Regarding design of the home:

We are planning to build a Tudor style home. We chose the Tudor Revival style because it is a style that was popular from the turn of the century

through the 1930's and is still built today. We just sold a beautiful Tudor Revival style home a few blocks from the state capitol in Wyoming, so it is a style we are very familiar with and felt comfortable replicating. We knew it would be an appropriate style since the home across the street from our lot is a stucco Tudor Revival home. We spent enormous amounts of time researching Tudor Revival architecture and referenced hundreds of photos of historic Tudor Revival homes in the design of this home and the selection of our materials.

The front elevation features classic Tudor Revival details such as a steeply pitched, asymmetrical bell gable roof and custom diamond casement windows. The front door is a custom round-top front door as is commonly seen in Tudor Revival architecture. A classic twisted steel railing will lead up the front steps to the door. The front elevation does not include a large covered front porch, as large covered front porches are very rarely seen on the front of Tudor Revival homes.

The exterior will be done in stucco. In the Old North End Interpretive Guide referenced by the appellate, it states that stucco is only appropriate for the Craftsman style and bungalow form, mission style or modern style. This is surely a typo, as stucco is a predominant material used in Tudor Revival architecture, and stucco is used in most of the Tudor Revival homes in the historic overlay zone, including the Tudor Revival home across the street from our lot.

Our proposed plan features decorative timbering on the gables. There are examples of Tudor Revival stucco homes with no timbering, timbering just within the gables, and timbering covering most of the house within the overlay zone. The appellant confuses medieval Tudor architecture with Tudor Revival architecture when they state that "stucco, brick or tile is only used to fill the spaces in the half-timbering". This method of construction has not been used since the Middle Ages when they were using real timbers as the structure of the house and filling in the spaces between with other materials. Turn of the century and later Tudor Revival houses only have decorative timbers if they have timbers at all.

The roof is composed of multiple steeply pitched gables with a bell gable on the front elevation. This roofline is typical of Tudor Revival architecture,

and bell gable roofs can be found on Tudor Revival homes in the ONEN historic overlay. The appeal states that a gable end or hipped roof would be more historical in character, but a bell gable is actually a type of gable end roof. (Design standard B-6)

The roofing material is slate composite. We chose the same brand and type of slate composite roof that is used on the historic Union Printers Home in Colorado Springs. We want our roof to have the same coloration, pattern and texture of slate, but we do not want to use real slate because it cracks easily. Slate roofs are common to Tudor Revival homes.

Our casement windows will feature details like exterior moulding and sills and a combination of custom diamond grilles and colonial grilles. We referenced the Anderson Windows Tudor pattern book to select window details that would be appropriate for a Tudor Revival style home.

We plan to use traditional landscaping around the perimeter of the home utilizing low water grasses and plants. We chose gravel with concrete edging for our driveway and parking area to minimize stormwater runoff.

The home design incorporates off street parking with a one-car attached garage at the back of the house and an additional parking space next to the garage. There is an unfinished basement. We wanted to build our house on a slab, but our builder told us that we could not do so because of the frost line. The exterior entrance to an unfinished basement is historically accurate and common in the Old North End. We wanted it this way due to security concerns.

At the first historic preservation hearing we had included an “or similar” line on our materials sheet, in case our specific chosen item was not available during construction. However, contrary to what the appeal states, we removed that line from our material sheets for the second preservation hearing since it was confusing.

All materials for the home were carefully selected to create a look of character and craftsmanship. The historic preservation board made comments recognizing that this home should be able to stand beside any home in the Old North End. Another comment was that they were excited to see the craftsmanship as it was built.

We included an example of a stucco Tudor home within our historic overlay zone at 2120 N Cascade that is very similar to our proposed house plan. The home at 2120 N Cascade is also built on a 50 foot wide lot, but our proposed house is not as tall or wide.

Regarding scale and massing:

In the design standards for our specific subarea in C-1-G, it says "Maintain the visual pattern created by the irregular plans and massing of houses in the subarea" When the design standards were created, it was clearly recognized that there was great diversity in our particular sub area. It could not be more true than on the blocks surrounding our lot. The house across the street from our lot is a 7,000 sq ft stucco Tudor Revival and it sits next to a 2,000 square foot clapboard cottage. Our lot has a 4,200 square foot brick bungalow on one side and a 4,600 square foot two-and-a-half story dutch colonial on the other side

We placed a lot of thought and consideration into the design and size of this home in an effort to build a home that would appear neither too large for the lot nor too small next to the large houses on either side. When driving down Cascade there is a large brick bungalow that sits on the corner of Cascade and Del Norte. Our proposed house will sit back approximately 13 feet behind the bungalow. There is a large city right away in addition to our front setback, so our proposed house will be set back well over 40 feet from Del Norte. The green space in front of the house will be very generous. Our front setback of 18 feet is close to the maximum specified in the design standards C-1 for east/west streets in our subarea which specifies 10-20 ft front setbacks. It also maintains the rhythm of the street, as the large two-and-a-half story dutch colonial on the other side of our lot at 17 W Del Norte has close to the same setback. Additionally, the side and rear setbacks that we have requested are larger setbacks than what currently exists on any of the neighboring adjacent properties or the property behind us. It doesn't seem to be understood by the appellant or other commenters that our front setback is close to the maximum stated in the design guidelines and matches the rhythm of the street.

The appellant statement that it is a relatively massively sized 3,032 square foot home is misleading. This number includes the entire unfinished basement which is below grade and the garage. If you were to include those items for other homes in the Old North End, most homes would have very large square footage amounts. The above grade finished square footage is approximately 1721 square feet.

Lastly, we submitted a complete application. The appeal claims general locations of structures on adjacent properties were not provided. However, they indeed were provided at the first hearing. A landscape plan and parking formula are not required for this type of project per the city. Additionally multiple photos of the street and adjacent homes were submitted at the second historic board hearing, although they were never requested or required.

We hope that this clears up confusion in regards to our proposed plans to build a family home. It has always been our goal to build the best possible design to blend seamlessly within the neighborhood, and we have worked hard in our efforts to achieve that. Thank you to the council members for reviewing our proposal.

Adam and Ashley Ackerman