

To: Marygrace Goddu and the Olympia Heritage Commission

Date: October 9, 2019

Please accept this request for special valuation of our residence at 208 18<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW, Olympia, WA 98501 located within the South Capital Neighborhood Historic District.

### The House

Our house is a "Ready Cut Home" from the Tumwater Lumber Mills Company. The Tumwater Lumber Mills Company (TLM) was a local business founded and run by 7 siblings of the Anderson family who I believe were Swedish immigrants. TLM was founded in 1918 and began producing ready-cut homes in 1921. The idea behind the concept was that the ready cut house would reduce waste at the mill as well as where the house was to be built. All of the lumber for a house would be numbered and delivered to the site as one package for assembly. Many companies both local and national were involved in this industry including Sears and Roebuck. According to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, more than 100,000 pre-cut or kit homes were built in the United States between 1908-1940. An April 2, 1931 article in the Daily Olympian estimated that 500 homes in the local area were TLM houses.<sup>1</sup>

The house at 208 18<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW was model #361 of TLM ready cut homes and it was constructed in 1924. (Ex. #1). Publicity stills are provided to show what the house looked like in 1924 both inside and out. (Ex. #2, #7 & #10).

### The Residents

The house was purchased by Ernest L. (Bud) and Barbara K. Meyer on August 1, 1947. Both were graduates of Olympia High School, Bud in 1932 and Barbara in 1936. They were married in September of 1943 and world events forced a separated, extended honeymoon in which Ernest spent the next few years in various parts of England, France and Germany while Barbara spent those same years in the Johnson Point area with her parents.

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<sup>1</sup> All of the information in this paragraph came from the article "Tumwater family sold kits for ready-cut homes" by John Dodge published in the Daily Olympian on February 27, 2014

Bud Meyer was a lawyer who began practicing law in Olympia in 1940 and retired in 2000. He passed away in 2001 at home at 208 18<sup>th</sup> Ave SW at the age of 86. He was very active in local affairs including serving as City Attorney for the City of Olympia from 1960-78. Barbara K Meyer stayed at home and raised their 9 boys. She died at home at 208 18<sup>th</sup> Ave SW in January of 2014, one month short of her 96<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Sam and Jennifer Meyer, the applicants in this case, are Bud and Barbara's son and daughter in law. We inherited the house from Barbara's estate.

### The Project

As previously indicated, Bud and Barbara Meyer purchased the home on August 1, 1947. Please see Ex. #4 for a picture of the house probably taken about 1950. Other than replace the round front porch pillars with square ones and remove the roof dormers (which were not original and apparently leaked quite significantly) only very minor improvements on the house were made for the next 67 years.

Please compare Ex. #2, #3 and #4. Ex. #3 was obtained from Washington State archives and was taken in 1939. Please note that by 1939, the original siding had been covered by different siding which was made from 100% asbestos. There was some interior asbestos as well with regard to old heating ducts and old linoleum. The original wiring (nob and tube) had never been improved in any way. All of the outlets were two prong plug ins. All of the walls and ceilings were lathe and plaster and at the time we acquired the house, the lathe and plaster was in bad shape. (Please see ceiling in Ex. #8). Also, prior to the renovation, the house was heated by oil and there was a derelict oil tank in the back yard that needed to be abated. The one aspect of the house that was in good shape were the hardwood floors in the living and dining rooms as well as the softwood floors in all the bedrooms.

The scope of the project was essentially a whole house renovation/rebuild. All of the asbestos was abated according to all environmental regulations. Removal of the asbestos siding revealed that the original siding was incredibly well

preserved and remains in place (although some replacement was necessary where there was rot around some windows). The oil tank was removed from the back yard and testing revealed that there was zero soil contamination.

All of the old wiring was removed and replaced. All of the interior plumbing was also removed and replaced. The walls throughout the entire house are new. In addition to some of the windows having rot, all of the windows had out lived their useful life. In that regard the front (south) facing windows as well as the first two windows on the east and west side of the were replaced with Andersen wood clad windows. Those windows were specifically chosen to maintain the original look and style of the house. Please compare the look of the windows in Ex. #5 and Ex. 6 for exterior comparison and please compare the look of the windows in Ex. #8 and #9 for interior comparison. The square pillars (put on some time in either the late 1950s or early 1960s) on the front porch were replaced by round pillars which also restored the original look of the house.

Ex. #5 and Ex. #6 present before and after views of the front of the house. Ex. #7, Ex. #8 and Ex. #9 present interior views into the living (south west front) room of the house. Ex. #7 was taken in 1924, Ex. #8 was taken at the beginning of construction and Ex. #8 was taken shortly after the completion of the project. Ex. #10, Ex. #11 and Ex. #12 present interior views into the dining (south east front) room of the house. Ex. #10 was taken in 1924, Ex. #11 was taken at the beginning of construction and Ex. #12 was taken shortly after the completion of the project.

I look forward to the meeting scheduled for October 14 at noon and I will be prepared to answer any questions at that time.