



**Agenda Item #:** 4

**Project Title:** 946 Spaight St - Exterior Alteration to a Designated Madison Landmark in the Third Lake Ridge Hist. Dist. - Replacement of patio wall; 6th Ald. Dist.

**Legistar File ID #:** 76445

**Prepared By:** Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner

**Members:** Present: Edna Ely-Ledesma, Molly Harris, Katie Kaliszewski, David McLean, Maurice Taylor, and Ald. Bill Tishler  
Excused: Richard Arnesen

## Summary

*Henry Doane, registering in support and wishing to speak*

Bailey provided background information on the proposed project.

Doane explained that they wanted to replace the raised garden bed that had previously been in front of the porch, which was 4-5" taller than the slab, and they did not think they needed approval for this work. They tried to create something that did not look like it was part of the house, but was still a timeless look. They used rock indigenous to the area to create a mortared rock wall in purple quartzite, which is made from sandstone, and the foundation of the house is also sandstone. Rubble construction has been used for hundreds of years, so they did not know how it could be considered inappropriate. The wall was created to have a stoop, which is why they selected its height of about 15" tall. The first occupant of this home built railroads, and most railroad beds in the area use this type of rock. Other inspiration includes rock walls around Devil's Lake and Picnic Point. They planned plantings with moss, so the wall would have blended with nature. They wanted the wall to be a garden feature, and it does not connect to the house. They said that if it comes down to material and style, if it is a quality material like indigenous rock and done well, it is appropriate. They said that more structures should be made using local materials.

Taylor asked what staff would prefer to be done. Bailey said that with the standards, they need to consider authentic history and whether this is a compatible style of material and construction for the property. They should also consider whether this is a conjectural feature or if it involves bringing in historic features from other properties and putting it onto this property. She said that if the commission thinks it meets standards, they can approve it, but if it does not meet standards, they should provide direction to the applicant for what they are looking to see so the applicant can come up with a new design and resubmit. She said the applicant is going to need a Certificate of Appropriateness one way or another because currently there is unpermitted construction that happened. Taylor asked if staff was opposed to the height or materials. Bailey said she was opposed to both; the wall is too tall and the purple stone draws out and becomes a character-defining feature. There is an Italianate building and materials there, and rubble masonry is not a type of material treatment or design that one sees on this type of building.

McLean said that Italianate style such as this is typically a much more formal and ordered style of architecture, and rubbles does not fit. It may have found its way into gardens, but he was not convinced this was appropriate being so close to part of the structure. If stone were kept, maybe it could find itself elsewhere on property in a distant garden, but one does not see this type of stone with this type of architecture. He said that it wasn't even the color, just the rubble style because it is less formal and ordered. As far as replacement, if it needs to be a wall, he thought the previous lower planters were not bad because they were not very visible and got hidden in the landscaping. Something more formal, tidy, and ordered would be more appropriate in this usage. As is, it looks foreboding, like a defensive wall

relative to the house, and it doesn't fit with the house. He said that the wall itself could become a garden wall or another piece of architecture somewhere else on the property, but not with this structure.

Kaliszewski agreed that the wall does not go with this style; it could make a nice fence, but doesn't belong here being so tall. What was there previously was not perfect, but it was a little better because of its lower profile. She said that she liked the Lannon stone, and she thought there was a way to use it and get a more formal stoop area.

McLean said that even brick similar to the house would make a more appropriate enclosure for a stoop if that is what the applicant wants. If they are trying to create a hard border for a stoop, this isn't it. He suggested that it could be dressed limestone to match the foundation, brick more appropriate in size and scale to the house, but not rubble stone. He referenced Kaliszewski's suggestion that the rubble stone would be more appropriate to a perimeter fence than to the property itself. His material suggestions were to stick with something already on the house or as it was previously, a wood porch as long as it did not have wood railings. He said that he would like to see the removal of the existing rubble wall and for the applicant to submit a redesign for the commission to review at a future meeting.

Ely-Ledesma said she appreciated the applicant's letter, particularly their making a case for the stone being local and of the region. She also understood the challenges and compatibility of the architectural style and the restrictions the commission has with their regulations.

Bailey said that the applicant has accomplished very nice masonry work, but unfortunately it does not fit with the style of this building, especially with being on the front.

Taylor said that while proper permission should have been sought prior to construction of the wall, he thought it looked nice and was not very noticeable or intrusive to the landmark structure.

## **Action**

**A motion was made by McLean, seconded by Harris, to Refer the item to a future Landmarks Commission meeting with a request that the property owner submit updated plans that meet the standards. The motion passed by voice vote/other. Taylor voted in opposition.**