



Project Name & Address: 2438 Atwood Avenue
Application Type(s): Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior alterations
Legistar File ID # [79567](#)
Prepared By: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner, Planning Division
Date Prepared: September 13, 2023

Summary

Project Applicant/Contact: Father Michael Radowicz
Requested Action: The Applicant is requesting that the Landmarks Commission approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of the rear wing of the nonhistoric education building.

Background Information

Parcel Location/Information: The subject property is a designated landmark.

Relevant Ordinance Sections:

41.18 STANDARDS FOR GRANTING A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

A certificate of appropriateness shall be granted only if the proposed project complies with this chapter, including all of the following standards that apply.

- (1) New Construction or Exterior Alteration. The Landmarks Commission shall approve a certificate of appropriateness for exterior alteration or construction only if:
 - (a) In the case of exterior alteration to a designated landmark, the proposed work would meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
 - (b) In the case of exterior alteration or construction of a structure on a landmark site, the proposed work would meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
 - (c) In the case of exterior alteration or construction on any property located in a historic district, the proposed exterior alteration or construction meets the adopted standards and guidelines for that district.
 - (d) In the case of any exterior alteration or construction for which a certificate of appropriateness is required, the proposed work will not frustrate the public interest expressed in this ordinance for protecting, promoting, conserving, and using the City's historic resources.

Secretary of the Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Analysis and Conclusion

The proposed project is the removal of much of the rear wing of the education building on the site of the landmarked St. Bernard's Catholic Church. The church was designed by noted Madison architect, J. J. Flad, and constructed in 1926 in the Late Gothic Revival style. This property was designated as a Madison Landmark in 1981 and the landmark nomination specifies that only the church building is considered a historic resource on this landmark site.

The proposal to remove the rear portion of the education wing is part of a larger evolution of this site as it transitions to being the new official cathedral in Madison after the loss of St. Raphael's to fire in 2005, which was also a designated landmark. The removal of the rear wing of the education building does not fit the official definition of a demolition as the proposal will remove less than 50% of the walls on the education building. As this structure is significantly stepped away from the historic resource on the site and the alteration of the nonhistoric structure will be to the rear, not the front of the property, this change will not have an effect on the historic character of the landmark site. The redesign of the parking lot after the removal of the existing structure will need a future approval, but must go through Zoning process as part of the plans for that design. The alteration to the nonhistoric structure appears to be in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

A discussion of relevant standards follows:

Secretary of the Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation

1. The proposed change in use from diocese church to city cathedral will increase the capacity for people using this site, hence the need for additional parking and an increased focus on the usage of the historic building. The proposed changes will not alter the historic character of the property
2. The removal of the rear wing of the education building will not alter the historic features or spaces of this property.

3. The proposal would not introduce conjectural features.
4. The more recent educational building has not achieved historic significance in its own right and the landmark nomination states specifically that the historic resource to be preserved is the church building.
5. No distinctive features, finishes, construction techniques, or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property are proposed for removal.
6. N/A
7. N/A
8. There are no previously identified archaeological sites on this property and the area of the removal of the education wing is already highly disturbed and unlikely to yield additional information as part of ground disturbing work.
9. The exterior alteration to the site will not compromise the historic integrity of the landmark site.
10. The essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired by the proposed work.

Recommendation

Staff believes that the standards for granting a Certificate of Appropriateness could be met and recommends the Landmarks Commission approve the project as proposed.