

AGENDA # 5

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: LANDMARKS COMMISSION

PRESENTED: 11/16/20

TITLE: 505 S Dickinson St - Exterior Alteration in
the Third Lake Ridge Hist. Dist. -
Replacement of windows; 6th Ald.
Dist.

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: 11/19/20

ID NUMBER: 62823

Members present were: Anna Andrzejewski, Richard Arnesen, Katie Kaliszewski, David McLean, and Maurice Taylor. Excused were Betty Banks and Arvina Martin.

SUMMARY:

Thomas Ulve, registering in support and available to answer questions

Bailey discussed the proposal to replace 17 windows, as well as the applicable standards, including 41.18(d) regarding frustrating the public interest and 41.23(9)(c), which states that alterations of the street façade shall retain the original or existing historic materials. She pointed out that the windows on the front of the house are included in those proposed for replacement and referenced the memo from the City Attorney's Office regarding window replacement. She said that per the process adopted by the Landmarks Commission for evaluating window replacement projects, the applicant did reach out to a contractor who does window repair; however, the assessment submitted does not include a lot of detail. She said that typically, they would receive more detailed evaluations regarding each window's condition and whether it could be repaired, but this report simply said that all windows should be replaced. In looking at the photos provided in the application, Bailey said that there does appear to be some rot, but the question is whether they are rotted to the point of not being repairable. The submission also stated that some windows have air leakage, are painted shut, have broken hardware, or have lead paint. Bailey said that these items can be repaired and lead paint remediated. She said that she sent the application materials to the State Historic Preservation Office for their opinion on whether the project would meet their standards for window replacement, and their response was that there appears to be damage that should be repaired, but the project would not meet the state's criteria for replacement. She said that staff's recommendation is that the standards are not met and the commission should deny the request for the Certificate of Appropriateness and recommend that the property owner repair and maintain the existing historic windows.

Taylor asked if there was lead paint throughout all 17 windows. Bailey said that she didn't have detailed information, but she would assume so because that is true in most historic houses. She pointed out that lead paint is not part of the criteria for replacing a window. Taylor asked whether the person providing the window evaluation was a professional repair person. Bailey said that the third-party assessment was done by someone on the list of window repair contractors that is maintained by the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation. Taylor asked why staff disagreed with the third-party assessment that the windows should be replaced. Bailey said that of the photos provided, there is a spectrum of window deterioration, but some do not appear to be all that deteriorated. She said that the details provided in the application that some windows were painted shut, drafty, or starting to fall apart doesn't provide enough detailed information on each window for her to say what specifically needs to be repaired or replaced. She said that it would be unusual to have a situation where all of

the windows in a building require replacement. She said that the lack of specificity in the third-party assessment was surprising and looking at the photos, it appears that most windows are repairable. She said there is also no information regarding the cost of repair for each window, so they can't make a financial comparison between repair and replacement either.

Ulve said that he has been at the site several times to examine the windows, and they are some of the worst windows he has seen in his 20 years in the business. He said that the entire frame of the sash is falling apart in some windows where you can fit your hand into the opening from the outside, which is not something you can repair. He said that he's sure that is what the third-party window assessor saw, but noted that the property owner set up the appointment for that inspection so he doesn't have any further information on it. He said that there are some windows they could repair so that they function, but asked what standard of function they are looking at. He said that while they could repair some windows so they look better, that's about all they can do, and someone has to live with these windows in their home.

Andrzejewski referenced the staff report, which stated that the windows proposed for replacement closely match the existing and would be acceptable if replacement windows were approved. She asked staff to speak about the state statute that says the commission can recommend replacement if warranted when the proposed replacement materials and forms match. Bailey said that the commission first needs to determine if the proposed feature warrants replacement, then they can look at whether the proposed replacement adequately replicates the existing or historic feature and materials. She said that her point of contention is not whether these are an appropriate replacement product, but whether the existing windows are repairable. She said that one option would be to request more detailed information from the applicant regarding whether the windows are repairable and if it is financially feasible.

Andrzejewski asked staff what other materials they should request from the applicant for a project of this scale. Bailey said that she would like more information from the third-party repair person as to why each of the windows is not feasible to repair. For the windows the applicant said were falling apart, she requested more detail as to whether they can be dismantled and repaired or if they are truly disintegrated and would not withstand a repair. Arnesen said that he believes the applicant complied with the letter if not the spirit of what the commission was trying to do with the new window application policy, but he would like to see more detail on the window conditions. He said that he didn't doubt that there are probably some windows that cannot be repaired, but they need a more detailed discussion of each window to make that determination. He said that it would be helpful to have a chart with specific details on each window keyed to photos of each window. He also requested information on the price of repair for each window so the commission could take into account the financial aspect as well. He said that he was in favor of referring this item and requesting additional information.

McLean agreed with Arnesen and said the photos don't illustrate the need for replacement to him. He reiterated Bailey's comments that issues such as flaky paint, drafts, or not opening easily can all be repaired. He said that the replacement of 17 windows is a lot to ask with very little information. He agreed with the additional information Arnesen requested. Kaliszewski agreed as well, saying that she would like to request the additional information outlined by Arnesen. McLean added that it would be nice to have details on the level of decay and what specific work would be necessary to get each window working again. Arnesen said that in the future, it may be helpful to hear from the window repair person on the window conditions and repair costs. Taylor pointed out that the repair person has been on site and inspected the windows, while the commission is making a decision based on photos. Bailey said that a lack of evidence makes it difficult for the commission to deliberate and make a decision, so this additional information is necessary. Taylor said that the applicant provides some descriptions for each window and asked how much more detail the commission expected. McLean said that after reading the window descriptions, it sounded dire; however, he didn't see evidence of that in the photos. Because the two sources of information seemed contradictory, he said that he would like more information.

ACTION:

A motion was made by Arnesen, seconded by McLean, to refer the item to a future Landmarks Commission meeting to allow the applicant to provide additional information on window conditions and the cost of repair. The motion passed by the following vote:

Ayes: 4 - Anna Andrzejewski; Richard Arnesen; Katie Kaliszewski; David McLean

Noes: 1 - Maurice Taylor

Excused: 2 - Elizabeth Banks and Arvina Martin