



Project Name & Address: 1825 Van Hise Avenue

Application Type(s): **Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior alterations in the University Heights historic district**

Legistar File ID # [56059](#)

Prepared By: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner, Planning Division

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Summary

Project Applicant/Contact: Meri Tepper/Rodney Welch

Requested Action: The Applicant is requesting that the Landmarks Commission approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the addition of a sunroom, deck, and reinstall windows.

Background Information

Parcel Location/Information: The subject site is located in the University Heights Historic District.

Relevant State Statute Section:

Wisc SS 62.23(7)(em)2m. In the repair or replacement of a property that is designated as a historic landmark or included within a historic district or neighborhood conservation district under this paragraph, a city shall allow an owner to use materials that are similar in design, color, scale, architectural appearance, and other visual qualities.

Relevant Ordinance Sections:

41.24 UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS HISTORIC DISTRICT.

- (5) Standards for the Review of Exterior Alterations and Repairs in TR-C2, TR-C3, and TR-C4, Zoning Districts.
 - (a) Height. No alterations shall be higher than the existing structure; however, if the existing structure is already a nonconforming one, alteration shall be made thereto except in accordance with Section 28.192. Roof alterations resulting in an increased structure volume are prohibited unless they meet the requirements in Sec. 41.24(4)(a)5. and are permitted under Chapter 28, or approved as a variance pursuant to Sec. 28.184 or approved as a conditional use or as part of a planned residential development.
 - (b) Second Exit Platforms and Fire Escapes. Second exit platforms and fire escapes shall be invisible from the street, wherever possible, and shall be of a plain and unobtrusive design in all cases. In instances where an automatic combustion products detection and alarm system is permitted as an alternative to second exits, use of such a system shall be mandatory.
 - (c) Repairs. Materials used in exterior repairs shall duplicate the original building materials in texture and appearance, unless the Landmarks Commission approves duplication of the existing building materials where the existing building materials differ from the original. Repairs using materials that exactly duplicate the original in composition are encouraged.

- (d) Restoration. Projects that will restore the appearance of a structure to its original appearance are encouraged and will be approved by the Landmarks Commission if such projects are documented by photographs, architectural or archeological research or other suitable evidence.
- (e) Re-Siding. Re-siding with aluminum or vinyl that replaces or covers clapboards or nonoriginal siding on structures originally sided with clapboards will be approved by the Landmarks Commission provided that the new siding imitates the width of the original clapboard siding to within one (1) inch and provided further that all architectural details including, but not limited to, window trim, wood cornices and ornament either remain uncovered or are duplicated exactly in appearance. Where more than one layer of siding exists on the structure, all layers except the first must be removed before new siding is applied. If insulation is applied under the new siding, all trim must be built up so that it projects from the new siding to the same extent it did with the original siding.
- (f) Alterations Visible from the Street and Alterations to Street Facades. Alterations visible from the street, including alterations to the top of structures, and alterations to street facades shall be compatible with the existing structure in architectural design, scale, color, texture, proportion and rhythm of solids to voids and proportion of widths to heights of doors and windows. Materials used in such alterations shall duplicate in texture and appearance, and architectural details used therein shall duplicate in design, the materials and details used in the original construction of the existing structure or of other structures in University Heights of similar materials, age and architectural style, unless the Landmarks Commission approves duplication of the texture and appearance of materials and the design of architectural details used in the existing structure where the existing building materials and architectural details differ from the original. Alterations that exactly duplicate the original materials in composition are encouraged. Alterations that destroy significant architectural features are prohibited. Side alterations shall not detract from the design composition of the original facade.
- (g) Additions and Exterior Alterations Not Visible from the Street. Additions and exterior alterations that are not visible from any streets contiguous to the lot lines upon which the structure is located will be approved by the Landmarks Commission if their design is compatible with the scale of the existing structure and, further, if the materials used are compatible with the existing materials in texture, color and architectural details. Additions and alterations shall harmonize with the architectural design of the structure rather than contrast with it.
- (h) Roof Shape. The roof shape of the front of a structure shall not be altered except to restore it to the original documentable appearance or to add a dormer or dormers in a location and shape compatible with the architectural design of the structure and similar in location and shape to original dormers on structures of the same vintage and style within the district. Alterations of the roof shape of the sides or back of a structure shall be visually compatible with the architectural design of the existing structure.
- (i) Roof Material.
 1. If the existing roof is tile, slate or other material that is original to the structure and/or contributes to its historic character, all repairs thereto shall be made using the same materials. In addition, in all cases any such roof must be repaired rather than replaced, unless the documented cost of repair exceeds the documented cost of re-roofing with a substitute material that approximates the appearance of the original roofing material as closely as possible, in which case re-roofing with a material that approximates the appearance of the original roofing material as closely as possible will be approved by the Landmarks Commission.

2. If the existing roofing material is asphalt shingles, sawn wood shingles or a nonhistoric material such as fiberglass, all repairs shall match in appearance the existing roof material; however, if any such roof is covered or replaced, re-roofing must be done using rectangular sawn wood shingles or rectangular shingles that are similar in width, thickness and apparent length to sawn wood shingles, for example, 3-in-1 tab asphalt shingles. Modern style shingles, such as thick wood shakes, Dutch lap, French method and interlock shingles, that are incompatible with the historic character of the district are prohibited.

3. Rolled roofing, tar and gravel and other similar roofing materials are prohibited except that such materials may be used on flat or slightly sloped roofs which are not visible from the ground.

Analysis and Conclusion

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace an existing sunroof on the rear of the building with a larger sunroom and attached deck. Additionally, the applicant is proposing to reinstall windows on the side of the house where the window opening was previously enclosed. The building was constructed in 1925 and is an Arts & Crafts interpretation of an English cottage. The sunroom addition appears to pre-date the creation of the historic district.

The new sunroom will largely replicate the style of the three-season porch, while adding 57 SF of new interior space. The new deck is proposed to be constructed of tongue-and-groove synthetic decking, with the final material to be determined. The commission has previously approved wood alternatives for areas that are not visible from the street. The current railing consists of simple decorative wood panels and the replacement railing for the deck and the stairs is aluminum with simple posts, rail, and balusters.

At a previous date, a window opening on the side of the house was enclosed to create built-in shelving on the interior. The current proposal is to introduce windows back into that space, with the windows being aluminum clad, with muntins and sash profiles to match the existing windows.

A discussion of the relevant ordinance of Chapter 41.24 follows:

41.24 UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS HISTORIC DISTRICT.

- (5) Standards for the Review of Exterior Alterations and Repairs in TR-C2, TR-C3, and TR-C4, Zoning Districts.
 - (a) Height. The proposed sunroom addition will not be taller than the existing house.
 - (b) Second Exit Platforms and Fire Escapes. N/A.
 - (c) Repairs. N/A.
 - (d) Restoration. The proposal is not to restore the entire house but will include restoring windows into a previously enclosed opening. Given the dimensions of the space and the clear evidence of an enclosed window opening, the proposal is to reintroduce three windows into the opening. The windows will be six-over-six double-hung windows of the same dimensions as the windows found elsewhere on the building.
 - (e) Re-Siding. N/A.
 - (f) Alterations Visible from the Street and Alterations to Street Facades. The alteration of the rear porch will not be visible from the street. The reintroduction of windows on the side of the house will be minimally visible from the street, but will be restoring the historic appearance.
 - (g) Additions and Exterior Alterations Not Visible from the Street. The sunroom addition is not visible from the street and it largely replicates the existing three-season porch.

Those decorative elements are in keeping with the Arts and Crafts elements of the house. The current one-over-one windows are in keeping with the character of an enclosed porch and the new sunroom will continue with that style. The use of composite material for the deck flooring has precedent in previous approvals, but the commission has generally specified untextured composites. The current railing for the rear landing and stairs continues the paneling style of the three-season porch. The current proposal is to introduce a simple aluminum railing. The simple vertical balusters mimic the wood slats that currently serve as the screening for under the porch. However, there is no precedent elsewhere on the building for metal railings of any style (the front porch has no railings). The simple, small, square balusters would be an appropriate style for a railing, but in order to be compatible with the existing materials in texture, color and architectural details, the railing would need to have the appearance of wood (so either wood or a compatible composite). Otherwise, the altered addition harmonizes with the architectural design of the structure rather than contrasting with it.

- (h) Roof Shape. The current three-season porch has a flat roof. The new sunroom will have a hipped roof with an extremely shallow pitch so as to give the appearance of it being a flat roof.
- (i) Roof Material.
 - 1. N/A
 - 2. N/A
 - 3. The membrane roof is appropriate for a roof with such a shallow pitch.

Recommendation

Staff believes that the standards for granting a Certificate of Appropriateness may be met and recommends the Landmarks Commission approve the proposal with the following conditions:

1. Deck flooring specifications be approved by staff.
2. Deck railing be of the same style as proposed, but be constructed of either wood or a compatible wood substitute as determined by the commission.