



**Project Name & Address:** 2125 Van Hise Avenue

**Application Type(s):** Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition, an addition, and exterior alterations

**Legistar File ID #** [73113](#)

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

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**Summary**

**Project Applicant/Contact:** Robert Grizzard

**Requested Action:** The Applicant is requesting that the Landmarks Commission approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of existing additions, construction of a new addition, and exterior alterations.

**Background Information**

**Parcel Location/Information:** The subject property is in the University Heights Local Historic District.

**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.

**41.25 STANDARDS FOR ALTERATIONS.**

- (1) General
  - (a) Alterations are defined as any change to any portion of the exterior of a building or site that replaces existing materials or changes its appearance. This section provides standards for building alterations.
  - (b) Materials and Features
    - 1. Alterations shall be in keeping with the original design and character of the building.
    - 2. The removal of historic features on elevations visible from the developed public right-of-way is prohibited.
    - 3. The introduction of conjectural architectural features without historic precedent on the building is prohibited.

- (2) Building Site
  - (a) General
    - 1. Fences and retaining walls in the front yard shall be in character with the style of fences or retaining walls historically found in the district or in keeping with the materials and character of historic resources in the district.
- (3) Exterior Walls
  - (a) Masonry
    - 2. Removing a chimney visible from the developed public right-of-way or altering its appearance is prohibited.
    - 3. Replacement brick units shall be of a similar dimension, color, and permeability as the historic bricks
- (4) Roofs
  - (a) General
    - 1. Alterations to a roof shall include a roof style that is compatible with the existing roof.
    - 2. The form of the roof visible from the developed public right-of-way shall not be altered except to restore it to the historic documentable appearance.
  - (c) Skylights
    - 1. Skylights visible from the developed public right-of-way shall be flat, parallel to the slope of the roof, and have the frame painted to match the roof material, and be located least twelve (12) feet back from the front edge of the roof.
    - 2. Other forms of skylights are allowed on elevations not visible from the developed public right-of-way.
  - (d) Chimneys
    - 1. Removing a chimney visible from the developed public right-of-way or altering its appearance, is prohibited.
- (5). Windows and Doors
  - (a) Openings
    - 1. A limited number of openings in walls above the foundation not visible from the developed public right-of-way may be filled in a manner that retains the original opening pattern and size, and is similar in design, scale, architectural appearance, and other visual qualities of the surrounding wall.
    - 2. New window openings may be added to elevations not visible from the developed public right-of-way.
    - 3. The new openings and the windows or doors in them shall be compatible with the overall design of the building.
  - (c) Windows
    - 1. Original decorative windows shall be repaired and retained.
    - 3. Replacement multi-light windows shall use true divided lights or simulated divided lights with window grids on the exterior and interior with spacer bars between the panes of glass.
  - (d) Pedestrian Doors
    - 1. Historic entrance doors or those dating from the period of significance may be replaced with a door that blends with the character of the structure when the original is beyond repair.
    - 2. Doors shall not have a textured fake wood grain.
- (6) Entrances, Porches, Balconies and Decks
  - (c) Enclosing Porches
    - 1. Porches on elevations visible from the developed public right-of-way may have framed screens or storm windows, similar in proportion to windows on the structure and painted or coated to match the trim on the porch, installed on the condition that the balustrade be retained and preserved, repaired, or replaced in a design compatible with the historic character of the structure.
    - 2. Enclosing porches visible from the developed public right-of-way with solid walls is prohibited.

**41.26 STANDARDS FOR ADDITIONS.**

- (1) General
  - (a) General
    - 2. A new addition shall be designed to be subordinate and compatible with the character of the structure.
    - 3. The addition shall be visually separated from the principal building.
    - 4. The alignment, rhythm, and size of the window and door openings of the new addition shall be similar to those of the historic building.
  - (b) Materials and Features
    - 1. A new addition shall be constructed on a secondary or non-character defining elevation so that historic materials and features are not obscured, damaged or destroyed.
    - 2. New additions that destroy significant historic materials or character-defining features are prohibited.
- (2) Building Site
  - (a) General
    - 1. Exterior additions to historic buildings shall be designed to be compatible with the historic character of historic resources within two hundred (200) feet and to maintain the pattern of the district.
    - 2. New site features (such as parking areas, access ramps, trash or mechanical equipment enclosures) shall be designed so that they are as unobtrusive as possible, retain the historic relationship between the building and the landscape, and are visually compatible with historic resources within two hundred (200) feet.
- (3) Exterior Walls
  - (a) General
    - 1. Materials used for exterior walls of the addition shall be similar in design, scale, architectural appearance, and other visual qualities of the historic building, but differentiated enough so that it is not confused as historic or original to the building.
- (4) Roofs
  - (a) General
    - 1. The form and pitch of the addition roof shall be similar to and compatible with the existing roof form and pitch.
  - (b) Materials
    - 1. Visible roof materials shall be similar to the historic roof materials on the structure.
    - 2. Any roofing materials shall be permitted on flat or slightly sloped roofs not visible from the developed public right-of-way.
  - (c) Skylights
    - 1. Skylights not visible from the developed public right-of-way shall be permitted.
    - 2. Skylights visible from the developed public right-of-way shall be located on side roof slopes where the front edge of the skylight is at least twelve (12) feet back from the front edge of the main roof. They shall be flat, parallel to the slope of the roof, and painted to match the roof material.
  - (e) Vents
    - 1. Roof vents shall be minimally visible and as unobtrusive as possible.
- (5) Windows and Doors
  - (a) General
    - 1. Openings and the windows or doors in them shall be compatible with the overall design of the historic building.
    - 2. The new openings shall have similar dimensions, operation, components, and finish as the historic windows or doors of the structure.
  - (b) Windows and Storm Windows
    - 1. Simulated divided lights are permitted with window grids on the exterior and interior with spacer bars between the panes of glass.
  - (c) Entrance Doors and Storm Doors
    - 1. Doors shall be compatible with the overall design of the building.

2. New door openings shall have a similar height to width ratio, components, and finish as the historic doors of the structure.
- (d) Garage Doors
1. Garage doors shall be similar in design, scale, architectural appearance, and other visual qualities prevalent within the historic district.
- (6) Entrances, Porches, Balconies and Decks
- (b) Balconies and Decks
1. Rear yard decks shall be constructed so that they are not visible from the developed public right-of-way to which the building is oriented.
  2. Spaces beneath decks and stairs visible from the developed public right-of-way shall be screened.
  3. All parts of the deck or balcony, except the flooring and steps, shall be painted or opaquely stained.
- (7) Building Systems
- (c) Lighting and Electrical Systems
1. Decorative light fixtures shall be compatible in style and location with the overall design of the building.

## Analysis and Conclusion

The proposed project is to alter the existing accessory structure from serving as a garage to usable space, a new addition on the rear of the principal structure that will include demolition of some spaces, and alteration of the a side porch on the principal structure to become an enclosed and conditioned space. The Colonial Revival house was constructed in 1915 and designed by architect James R. Law. This was originally the home of Eric R. Miller, Chief Meteorologist for the US Weather Bureau and later a professor at the University of Wisconsin.

For the accessory structure, it currently serves as a detached garage. The proposal is to remove the existing vehicle door and replace it with a glass door, which will allow that space to read as a void. On the east side of the structure, the two existing window openings will be modified to become doors that mimic the multi-light style of the existing windows and introduction of a new doorway on the south end of the east façade.

For the house, the western porch is to be enclosed to become a conditioned space with the existing trellis on the front (north) to be rehabbed so that the single-story porch area continues to look the same from the developed-public right-of-way. The screens and porch door are to be removed and replaced with multi-light windows to match the style found on the house. A new skylight is to be installed on the south end of the porch roof and the existing window is proposed to be converted to a multi-light door.

In order to make way for the new rear addition, the proposal is to largely remove the ca. 1945 rear addition, which has had several modifications over time, and an attached deck on the west side of the house, located behind the side porch. The new addition would be of the same height as the existing and include several new skylights, none of which should be visible from the developed public right-of-way. The new addition will be centrally located on the existing historic house, to form a "T" and will have a gable roof. On the west side, the basement level will be excavation to provide for a two-car garage space. The first floor level would include a projecting bay window and a Colonial Revival style light located above one of the garage bays. The second floor will feature a restored existing window. The windows on the east side of the addition largely replicate the configuration and style of the existing windows on the structure. The rear of the addition features banks of multi-light windows on the first and second floors, a simple rear pedestrian door, and a raised brick patio area with a metal railing. The brick for the addition will be of a similar style to the historic brick, but the differences will allow for a subtle differentiation.

For the site, an enlarged patio area is proposed adjacent to the accessory structure and there will be excavation and introduction of a taller retaining wall for the area that leads to the new garage bays on the side of the house.

The configuration of the lot will mean that the new garage spaces are located behind the retaining wall for observers from the developed public right-of-way.

A discussion of relevant standards follows:

**41.25 STANDARDS FOR ALTERATIONS.**

- (1) General
  - (a) Alterations are defined as any change to any portion of the exterior of a building or site that replaces existing materials or changes its appearance. This section provides standards for building alterations.
  - (b) Materials and Features
    1. The proposed alterations to the existing historic structure and the landscape are largely in keeping with the original design and character of the building.
    2. While the chimney from the 1945 rear addition will be removed, it is minimally visible and part of an addition that was constructed outside of the period of significance for the historic district.
    3. Most of the alterations are to the rear and what they will be minimally visible, they are not introducing conjectural details.
- (2) Building Site
  - (a) General
    1. The altered retaining wall will be in keeping with the character of the existing retaining wall and of the overall character of the site, and is also situated so as to be minimally visible from the developed public right-of-way.
- (3) Exterior Walls
  - (a) Masonry
    2. The chimney proposed for removal is located on the 1945 rear addition. It is minimally visible from the developed public right-of-way. The historic chimney on the front of the house will remain.
    3. The areas of the building that are to be altered as opposed to being part of the addition will have brick units of similar design, color, and style.
- (4) Roofs
  - (a) General
    1. The areas of the roof visible from the developed public right-of-way will largely appear to be the same as existing.
    2. The form of the roof visible from the developed public right-of-way will look the same as current.
  - (c) Skylights
    1. The new skylight on the area of the principal structure that is to be altered is on the enclosed porch. The new skylight will be flat and parallel to the roof slope, and back from the front of the roof edge..
  - (d) Chimneys
    1. The chimney proposed for removal is located on the 1945 rear addition. It is minimally visible from the developed public right-of-way. The historic chimney on the front of the house will remain.
- (5). Windows and Doors
  - (a) Openings
    1. On the house, the proposal is to alter a window on the already enclosed side porch so that it becomes a door. There are a number of openings to be altered on the accessory structure. Most of these are not visible from the developed public right-of-way, with the exception of the garage door, which will read as a void with its new glass panel door. All new windows and doors are in keeping with the character of the existing windows and doors on the structures.
    2. There is one new window proposed on the side of the accessory structure, which is not visible from the developed public right-of-way.
    3. The new openings and the windows or doors in them are compatible with the overall design of the building.

- (c) Windows
  - 1. Several of the original windows are proposed to be repaired as part of this undertaking.
  - 3. The screens in the side porch are proposed to be replaced with multi-light windows, which will replicate the look of the windows on the rest of the structure.
- (d) Pedestrian Doors
  - 1. The proposed door that will be replaced on the side porch is not historic and will be replaced with a window opening. The new doorway on the side of the fully enclosed porch area will read like an elongated window and be minimally visible from the developed public right-of-way.
  - 2. Doors shall not have a textured fake wood grain.
- (6) Entrances, Porches, Balconies and Decks
  - (c) Enclosing Porches
    - 1. The side porch is already enclosed. The proposal is to replace the current screens with windows that will replicated the look of those on the house. The porch posts will remain so that this space can continue to read as a porch with most of the space still being open and reading as a void with the windows.
    - 2. The modification of the porch to being a fully conditioned space will not introduce solid walls where they would be visible from the developed public right-of-way.

**41.26 STANDARDS FOR ADDITIONS.**

- (1) General
  - (a) General
    - 2. The new addition is large, but is located on the rear of the historic structure in a compatible design.
    - 3. The addition is visually separated from the historic structure by wall offsets and the roof form.
    - 4. Most of the window and door openings are of a similar alignment, rhythm, and size of the window and door openings on the historic structure. The bay window over the garage is the exception.
  - (b) Materials and Features
    - 1. The new addition will not destroy historic materials or features and is located on a non-character defining elevation.
    - 2. The addition will not destroy historic materials or character-defining features.
- (2) Building Site
  - (a) General
    - 1. The large rear addition is in keeping with the character of the historic resource and where we see other additions on structures in the vicinity.
    - 2. The enlarged parking area and new attached garage space is configured so as to be minimally visible and compatible with the historic character of the property.
- (3) Exterior Walls
  - (a) General
    - 1. The new masonry units will be of a similar character to the historic.
- (4) Roofs
  - (a) General
    - 1. The new gable roof will simply the different roof forms from previous additions and is of a similar pitch to the historic.
  - (b) Materials
    - 1. The roofing should match the rest of the structure.
  - (c) Skylights
    - 1. The new skylights will not be visible from the developed public right-of-way.
    - 2. There are some tube skylights and a ridge skylight, but none will be visible from the developed public right-of-way.
  - (e) Vents
    - 1. The roof venting shall be minimally visible.

- (5) Windows and Doors
  - (a) General
    - 1. The new windows and door are largely in keeping with the character of the historic building, with the exception of the bay window above the garage doors, which doesn't have precedent on the structure. However, this will be minimally visible, and possible not visible at all.
    - 2. The new windows and doors are of a similar style to the historic. Again, the bay window is the exception.
  - (b) Windows and Storm Windows
    - 1. The multi-light windows and doors are proposed to have simulated divided lights.
  - (c) Entrance Doors and Storm Doors
    - 1. New doors are compatible with the design of the building.
    - 2. New doors are of a similar height to the historic.
  - (d) Garage Doors
    - 1. The new garage doors on the side of the house are minimally visible but are of a similar style to the house.
- (6) Entrances, Porches, Balconies and Decks
  - (b) Balconies and Decks
    - 1. The new rear deck will not be visible from the front of the property.
    - 2. The space beneath the deck will be enclosed with brick.
    - 3. Deck boards must have a painted or opaque appearance.
- (7) Building Systems
  - (c) Lighting and Electrical Systems
    - 1. The new decorative light fixtures are in keeping with the character of the property.

## Recommendation

Staff believes that the standards for granting a Certificate of Appropriateness could be met and recommends the Landmarks Commission approve the project with the following condition:

- 1. Modification of the bay window to be in keeping with the historic character of the building.