



Project Name & Address: 1245 Spaight Street

Application Type(s): Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior alterations in the Third Lake Ridge historic district

Legistar File ID # [70870](#)

Prepared By: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner, Planning Division

Date Prepared: April 12, 2022

Summary

Project Applicant/Contact: Paul Creswell and Emily Reynolds

Requested Action: The Applicant is requesting that the Landmarks Commission amend a previously issued Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of a new front porch.

Background Information

Parcel Location/Information: The subject site is located in the Third Lake Ridge Local 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:

- 41.18 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.
- 41.23 THIRD LAKE RIDGE HISTORIC DISTRICT.**
- (9) Standards for Exterior Alterations in the Third Lake Ridge Historic District - Parcels Zoned for Residential Use.

- (a) Any exterior alterations on parcels zoned residential use that are located within two hundred (200) feet of other historic resources shall be visually compatible with those historic resources in the following ways:
 - 1. Height.
 - 2. Landscape treatment.
 - 3. Rhythm of mass and spaces.
- (b) Alterations of the street façade(s) of any existing structure shall retain the original or existing historical proportion and rhythm of solids to voids.
- (c) Alterations of the street façade(s) of any existing structure shall retain the original or existing historical materials.
- (d) Alterations of the roof of any existing structure shall retain its existing historical appearance.
- (e) Alterations of the street facade(s) shall retain the original or existing historical proportional relationships of door sizes to window sizes.

Analysis and Conclusion

The applicant is requesting an amendment to the previously issued Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a new front porch. In the original submittal reviewed at the November 15, 2021, Landmarks Commission meeting, the applicant proposed using wood for the materials of the new porch.

The applicant would like to use a wood alternative for the front porch, but is not able to source a product that does not have faux wood-grain texture or allows for exposed ends that replicate wood as the design of porches in the district frequently have exposed end boards that project towards the front of the property. The product they are proposing has false wood-grain texture and the exposed ends reveal the plastic interior of the board. As with all wood replacements, the Landmarks Commission follows the requirements of State Statute 62.23 that the proposed replacement must adequately replicate the appearance of the historic materials. Staff regularly reviews alternative products as technology is ever changing.

The Landmarks Commission last looked at a wide array of product samples for porch flooring at its June 17, 2019, meeting, due to the agenda having three separate requests for alternative decking materials. After a review of the products (which included the product proposed for this project), the commission decided that for porch flooring/decking on the front of the building, products such as Aeratis that do not have false wood grain and are able to have exposed end boards, would meet the conditions of the State statute as adequately replicating wood, but that products such as Timbertech do not. Staff has subsequently approved Aeratis on other front porches and one approval for Celuka porch flooring as it met the Landmarks Commission's conditions. The Landmarks Commission also established at that meeting that plastic or composite products with false wood grain or needing to have the ends covered are acceptable for the rear of the property or in areas where they are not visible from the public right-of-way.

While the applicant is advocating for plastic as a more sustainable material, that is not a standard for approval and does not meet the standards of the State statute.

In directing the applicant for similar designs of porches that have boards with exposed ends, staff pulled a picture from Google Streetview for a porch across the street, which doesn't provide crisp detail, but the exposed end boards were visible. The applicants found upon in-person inspection that this porch is using a Timbertech product. This work was completed without a Certificate of Appropriateness or a Building Permit sometime in 2018 or 2019, per Google Streetview. It is not evidence of previous approvals, but of illegal construction.

A discussion of the relevant ordinance sections follows:

Wisc SS 62.23(7)(em)2m. The product the applicant is proposing does not have the architectural or visual appearance of wood. The Wisconsin Historical Society does not approve this product for State tax credit projects and the Madison Landmarks Commission has previously reviewed it and found that it did not adequately replicate the appearance of wood.

41.23 THIRD LAKE RIDGE HISTORIC DISTRICT.

(9) Standards for Exterior Alterations in the Third Lake Ridge Historic District - Parcels Zoned for Residential Use.

- (a) Any exterior alterations on parcels zoned residential use that are located within two hundred (200) feet of other historic resources shall be visually compatible with those historic resources in the following ways:
 - 1. N/A
 - 2. N/A
 - 3. N/A
- (b) N/A
- (c) The alteration to the street façade was originally approved to construct a period-appropriate front porch and balcony on the structure. The approved proposal was for a wood porch, which is in keeping with the architectural character of the structure and of similar porches within the district. The proposed alteration to the proposal for plastic boards with a false wood-grain texture and do not retain a wood appearance in a cross section to allow for exposed ends for the porch boards does not retain the appearance of historical or original materials.
- (d) N/A
- (e) N/A

Recommendation

Staff believes that the standards for granting a Certificate of Appropriateness are not met and recommends that the Landmarks Commission deny the project as proposed. The original approval for wood on the front porch continues to meet the standards of the historic district.