



Project Name & Address: 1852 Summit Avenue

Application Type(s): Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition and new construction in the University Heights historic district

Legistar File ID # [60774](#)

Prepared By: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner, Planning Division

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Summary

Project Applicant/Contact: Beth Graue and Clark Landis

Requested Action: The Applicant is requesting that the Landmarks Commission approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of an existing garage structure and construction of a new garage structure.

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:

- 41.18 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.
 - (2) Demolition or Removal. In determining whether to approve a certificate of appropriateness for any demolition or removal of any landmark or structure within a historic district, the Landmarks

Commission shall consider all of the following, and may give decisive weight to any or all of the following:

- (a) Whether the structure is of such architectural or historic significance that its demolition or removal would be detrimental to the public interest and contrary to the general welfare of the people of the City and the State.
- (b) Whether a landmark's designation has been rescinded.
- (c) Whether the structure, although not itself a landmark structure, contributes to the distinctive architectural or historic character of the historic district as a whole and therefore should be preserved for the benefit of the people of the City and the State.
- (d) Whether demolition or removal of the subject property would be contrary to the policy and purpose of this ordinance and/or to the objectives of the historic preservation plan for the applicable historic district as duly adopted by the Common Council.
- (e) Whether the structure is of such old and unusual or uncommon design, method of construction, or material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty and/or expense.
- (f) Whether retention of the structure would promote the general welfare of the people of the City and the State by encouraging study of American history, architecture and design or by developing an understanding of American culture and heritage.
- (g) The condition of the property, provided that any deterioration of the property which is self-created or which is the result of a failure to maintain the property as required by this chapter cannot qualify as a basis for the issuance of a certificate of appropriateness for demolition or removal.
- (h) Whether any new structure proposed to be constructed or change in use proposed to be made is compatible with the historic resources of the historic district in which the subject property is located, or if outside a historic district, compatible with the mass and scale of buildings within two hundred (200) feet of the boundary of the landmark site.

Prior to approving a certificate of appropriateness for demolition, the Landmarks Commission may require the applicant to provide documentation of the structure. Documentation shall be in the form required by the Commission.

41.24 UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS HISTORIC DISTRICT.

- (4) Standards for the Review of New Structures in the TR-V1, TR-V2, TR-U1, TR-U2, TR-C2, TR-C3, TR-C4, MNX, TSS, and LMX Zoning Districts.
 - (a) Principal Structures.
 - 2. Materials. Materials for the exterior walls shall be the same as or similar to materials prevalent in the University Heights Historic District. Permitted materials include brick, narrow gauge horizontal clapboards four or less inches in exposed width, stone, stucco, smooth shingles or combinations of the above provided the combinations occur in a manner and location similar to the materials on existing structures in University Heights (e.g., brick on first floor with clapboard on second floor). Other materials, such as aluminum or vinyl must be visually compatible with structures within two hundred (200) feet of the subject property. The following materials are prohibited: concrete block, asbestos, wide clapboards over four inches in exposed width, diagonal boards, vertical boards, rough sawn wood, rough split shingles, shakes.
 - (b) Accessory Structures. Accessory structures, as defined in Section 28.211, MGO, shall be compatible with the design of the existing structures on the zoning lot, shall not exceed fifteen (15) feet in height and shall be as unobtrusive as possible. No accessory structure

shall be erected in any yard except a rear yard. Exterior wall materials shall be the same as those for construction of new principal structures as set forth in Sec. 41.24(4)(a)2.

Analysis and Conclusion

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish the existing garage structure and construct a new garage structure. The principal structure on the property was constructed in 1922 in the French Provincial style for UW Mathematics professor, Warren Weaver. There is no date of construction for the garage, but it appears to be contemporaneous to the house. From the documentation provided by the applicant, the structure is failing. The proposed new garage will replicate many of the stylistic elements of the existing garage, be located in the same place, but modified to accommodate current vehicle dimensions.

While it is possible that the garage was constructed during the period of significance, it does not appear to be significant in and of itself. In order to accommodate the evolution of the property to serve new and ongoing uses, the commission has approved demolition of garages that were designed for much smaller vehicles and their replacement with similar buildings that will accommodate the size of current vehicles.

For the design of the new garage, it will be very similar to the existing garage with stucco cladding, a replication of the inset alcove above the garage door, and garage and pedestrian doors that are period appropriate. The proposed style of roof shingle is a high definition style that would replicate wood shakes rather than wood shingles. Staff recommends the roof be clad with the Natural Shadows line from the same manufacturer, which is a style that the commission has previously approved. The final updated plans were not available prior to the meeting, so staff also recommends that final plans be approved by staff, but believes that the applicant has provided enough information for the commission to determine if the proposal meets the historic district standards.

A discussion of the relevant ordinance sections follows:

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.

- (2) Demolition or Removal. In determining whether to approve a certificate of appropriateness for any demolition or removal of any landmark or structure within a historic district, the Landmarks Commission shall consider all of the following, and may give decisive weight to any or all of the following:
 - (a) While the existing garage has decorative elements that use the same architectural vocabulary as the principal structure, it does not appear to be architecturally or historically significant in and of itself.
 - (b) N/A
 - (c) This garage is largely not visible from the public right-of-way and its preservation or demolition will not impact the significance of the district as a whole.
 - (d) Replacement of small garages to accommodate garages that accommodate current vehicle dimensions has been the precedent of the Landmarks Commission, and is not contrary to the purpose of this ordinance.
 - (e) The structure is not of such old and unusual or uncommon design, method of construction, or material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty and/or expense. The new garage, while it has slight differences, does replicate the character of the existing garage.
 - (f) Retention of the structure would not promote the general welfare of the people of the City and the State by encouraging study of American history, architecture and design or by developing an understanding of American culture and heritage.

- (g) The deterioration of the garage is likely due to migration of the hillside into the existing structure and not due to neglect on the part of this or previous property owners. The new garage will address the need for a more substantial retaining wall to prevent a similar situation in the future.
 - (h) The proposed replacement garage appears to be compatible with the character of the property and of the district.
- Staff does not believe that additional documentation of this garage is necessary.

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- (4) Standards for the Review of New Structures in the TR-V1, TR-V2, TR-U1, TR-U2, TR-C2, TR-C3, TR-C4, MNX, TSS, and LMX Zoning Districts.
 - (a) Principal Structures.
 - 2. Materials. The applicant proposes stucco for the exterior walls, which is both in keeping with the existing garage and of the principal structure. The pedestrian and vehicle doors adequately replicate both the existing and period appropriate doors. The proposed window is also in keeping with the character of the property. The Landmarks Commission's precedent on roofing materials has been to approve architectural shingles that replicate wood shingles rather than wood shakes. The proposed high definition architectural shingle does not replicate wood shingles, but there is a line by the same manufacturer that the commission has previously approved.
 - (b) Accessory Structures. The design of the proposed replacement garage is in similar to the style of the existing garage. It will replicate the general form and some of the design elements, but still read as being a new garage. At 13-feet 3-inches, the new garage will be under the 15-foot maximum height for accessory structures, and it is located in the rear yard in approximately the same location as the existing garage.

Recommendation

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

- 1. GAF Natural Shadows architectural shingle or similar product for the roof cladding
- 2. Final building plans to be approved by staff