



Project Name & Address: 2015 Van Hise Avenue

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

Legistar File ID # [70734](#)

Prepared By: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner, Planning Division

Date Prepared: April 15, 2022

Summary

Project Applicant/Contact: Matthew Merrins and Rebecca Coughlin

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

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 an existing shed and construct a new shed. The existing shed was largely destroyed by a fallen tree and the proposal is to replace it with a similarly sized shed. The design of the new shed will not replicate the design of the existing, but does use a similar architectural vocabulary as the house.

The 10' x 14' shed is proposed as side gabled with shed-roofed dormers that incorporate small divided lites that replicate the design of windows on the principal structure. The building will be clad in smooth LP Smartside panel that replicates a stucco appearance, which is essentially the style of the current shed and replicates the stucco appearance of the principal structure. The double doors will also include the divided lite band of windows at the top of the doors to replicate the window pattern.

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) The shed is not architecturally or historically significant.
 - (b) N/A
 - (c) The damaged shed does not contribute to the significance of the historic district such that it needs to be preserved.
 - (d) Technically the tree has already demolished the accessory structure and removal of the ruined structure is not contrary to the policy and purpose of this ordinance.
 - (e) The shed is not particularly old or of unusual design.
 - (f) Retention of the ruined shed will not benefit the general welfare of the people of the City.
 - (g) The condition of the shed is not a self-created circumstance.
 - (h) The new structure is compatible with the historic district.

Staff does not believe that the shed needs additional documentation beyond what the applicant has already supplied.

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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 proposed materials for the exterior walls of the new shed will be a wood alternative that is smooth-surfaced and not have false wood-grain texture, replicating a stucco appearance.
 - (b) Accessory Structures. The proposed accessory structure will be located in approximately the same location as the existing, which is at the rear corner of the property and meets Zoning definitions for accessory structures.

Recommendation

Staff believes that the standards for granting a Certificate of Appropriateness are met and recommends that the Landmarks Commission approve the proposal as proposed.