



**Project Name & Address:** 417 Cantwell Court

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

**Legistar File ID #** [56074](#)

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

**Date Prepared:** May 29, 2019

## Summary

**Project Applicant/Contact:** Howard Paul

**Requested Action:** The Applicant is requesting that the Landmarks Commission approve a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace a porch floor.

## Background Information

**Parcel Location/Information:** The 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 Landmarks Ordinance Sections:

#### 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 200 feet of other historic resources shall be visually compatible with those historic resources in the following ways:
    - (i) Height
    - (ii) Landscape treatment
    - (iii) 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 a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace the existing wood flooring on the front porch with a PVC board. The home was constructed in 1917 and is a simple Craftsman bungalow. In December of 2018, the Landmarks Commission approved a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of a nonhistoric garage and construction of a new garage on the property.

From the pictures provided, it appears that the wood flooring of the porch may have been painted previously, but has not had paint in some time. Preservation practice would advocate for limited replacement of boards that were deteriorated beyond repair and painting of the wood to help preserve the material. The applicant is proposing to replace all of the wood porch flooring to make the maintenance of the porch easier and improve the surface traction. While the commission has approved composite materials for decks and porches in the past, it has generally been in areas that were not visible from the street. In areas not visible from the street, the fact that the wood alternatives did not have the same appearance as wood was seen as acceptable. The Azek-manufactured PVC boards do not have a textured surface, but do have a printed pattern on the boards. The proposed boards are tongue-and-groove, so could potentially replicate the composition of the current porch flooring.

Staff checked with the State to see what they are approving for projects given the diversity of wood alternatives currently available. They will approve smooth Trex, and some of the composite Timbertek products. They will not approve of the 100% PVC Azek because it has too much of a plastic appearance and shows scratches. The Landmarks Commission needs to make a finding to decide if the alternative material is able to adequately replicate the appearance of wood for a building component that is on the street façade of the building.

A discussion of the relevant ordinance section of Chapter 41.23 follows:

### 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) N/A/
  - b) The proposal will not change the historical proportion and rhythm of solids to voids on the street façade.
  - c) The proposal would replace all of the wood flooring on the front porch and therefore would not be retaining the existing historic materials. If some of the flooring needs replacement because it is beyond repair, it would be allowed under this standard. This standard does not allow for replacement of an entire feature for convenience.
  - d) The proposal is not to alter the roof.
  - e) The proposal would not change the door or window sizes on the street façade.

## Recommendation

Staff believes that the standards for granting a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace all of the porch flooring may be met if the entire porch is deteriorated beyond repair. The Landmarks Commission will need to make that determination first. If the decision is either limited replacement of the deteriorated boards or the entire porch flooring, then the commission will need to make a finding for if the proposed alternative material adequately replicates the original wood. Any replacement must be of similar dimensions as the original flooring and be of a tongue-and-groove style.