



Project Name & Address: 1021 University Avenue, Luther Memorial Church

Application Type(s): Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior alterations to a Designated Madison Landmark

Legistar File ID # [63580](#)

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Date Prepared: January 5, 2021

Summary

Project Applicant/Contact: Vince Micha, The Kubala Washatko Architects

Requested Action: The Applicant is requesting that the Landmarks Commission approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the reconstruction of signage and retaining walls.

Background Information

Parcel Location/Information: The subject site is a Designated Madison Landmark

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.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Analysis and Conclusion

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the reconstruction of a damaged sign and retaining walls. The previous sign was not historic, but was destroyed by an automobile on August 3, 2020. The sign is on the site of Luther Memorial Church, which was designated a Madison landmark in 2011. The church was constructed in 1923, designed by Claude & Starck, and is a high-style expression of Neo-Gothic Revival ecclesiastical architecture. The courtyard sign was located in front of the 1959 addition designed by Reginald Stehr. The character defining features are extensive use of stone and incorporation of the iconic Gothic arch decorative element.

The proposal is to salvage any of the materials of the sign and the site walls where possible. The lighting on the site will be altered to have recessed lighting installed under the stone caps on the retaining walls. The cut stone piers of the former sign will be incorporated into the new sign which will continue to be a stone sign. The content of the sign will be etched into the stone and the sign will be illuminated with recessed lighting located under the stone cap at the top of the sign. This will obviously be a new sign, but retain the Gothic stylistic elements and feature stone that is used extensively on the landmark property.

A discussion of the relevant standards follows:

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

1. The property will continue to be used as it has been historically.
2. No historic materials are proposed to be removed. The existing materials are proposed for salvage and reincorporation where possible.
3. While the retaining walls and sign will feature materials and decorative elements found elsewhere on the property, it will still read as a new sign and not create a false sense of history.
4. N/A
5. N/A
6. N/A
7. N/A
8. N/A
9. No historic materials will be destroyed as part of this project and the new sign and retaining walls will be complimentary to the historic site while still being differentiated from the old.
10. This new sign and the retaining walls could be removed in the future with no effect on the historic integrity of the property.

Recommendation

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