
Regarding: 1112 Spaight Street – Third Lake Ridge Historic District – Demolition of existing residence and construction of new residence. 6th Ald. District.
(Legistar #23871)

Date: October 17, 2011
Prepared By: Amy Scanlon

General Information:

The Applicants are proposing to demolish the existing c. 1885 residence and construct a new residence on the site.

The residence at 1112 Spaight is located adjacent to the Curtis-Kittleson House (1102 Spaight), a designated landmark and also is across the street from Orton Park, a designated landmark. In addition to being located in the Third Lake Ridge Historic District, the residence is a contributing structure in the Orton Park National Register Historic District.

The Applicants appeared before the Landmarks Commission for an informational presentation on September 19, 2010 to discuss improvement options for the property. Several members of the Landmarks Commission toured the property on October 4 and October 7, 2011.

The Landmarks Commission will need to consider whether to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition and a separate Certificate of Appropriateness for the new construction. Relevant sections of the Landmarks Ordinance pertaining to each of these aspects are included below.

Relevant Landmarks Ordinance Sections for DEMOLITION:

33.19(5)(c)3 Standards In determining whether to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for any demolition, the Landmarks Commission shall consider and may give decisive weight to any or all of the following:

- a. Whether the building or structure is of such architectural or historic significance that its demolition would be detrimental to the public interest and contrary to the general welfare of the people of the City and the State;
- b. Whether the building or structure, although not itself a landmark building, contributes to the distinctive architectural or historic character of the District as a whole and therefore should be preserved for the benefit of the people of the City and the State;
- c. Whether demolition of the subject property would be contrary to the purpose and intent of this chapter as set forth in Sec. 33.19 and to the objectives of the historic preservation plan for the applicable district as duly adopted by the Common Council; (*section is included below*)
- d. Whether the building or structure is of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture and/or material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty and/or expense;
- e. Whether retention of the building or 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;
- f. Whether the building or structure is in such a deteriorated condition that it is not structurally or economically feasible to preserve or restore it, provided that any hardship

or difficulty claimed by the owner which is self-created or which is the result of any failure to maintain the property in good repair cannot qualify as a basis for the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness;

- g. Whether any new structure proposed to be constructed or change in use proposed to be made is compatible with the buildings and environment of the district in which the subject property is located.

33.19 (1) Purpose and Intent It is hereby declared a matter of public policy that the protection, enhancement, perpetuation and use of improvements of special character or special historical interest or value is a public necessity and is required in the interest of health, prosperity, safety and welfare of the people. The purpose of this section is to:

- (a) Effect and accomplish the protection, enhancement and perpetuation of such improvements and of districts which represent or reflect elements of the City's cultural, social, economic, political and architectural history.
- (b) Safeguard the City's historic and cultural heritage, as embodied and reflected in such landmarks and historic districts.
- (c) Stabilize and improve property values.
- (d) Foster civic pride in the beauty and noble accomplishments of the past.
- (e) Protect and enhance the City's attractions to residents, tourists and visitors, and serve as a support and stimulus to business and industry.
- (f) Strengthen the economy of the City.
- (g) Promote the use of historic districts and landmarks for the education, pleasure and welfare of the people of the City.

Staff Comments and Recommendations regarding DEMOLITION:

Staff evaluated the proposal against the demolition standards cited above and includes comments on each standard:

- a. Staff does not believe that this specific structure is of such architectural or historic significance that the demolition would be detrimental; however, its simple architectural form is significant as a common vernacular style whose loss would be damaging to the greater integrity of the historic district.
- b. Staff believes that the building contributes to the distinctive architectural and historic character of the district. The historic district is a collection of buildings that together embody a historic quality. The erosion of the district happens as original buildings are removed and replaced with new buildings or as original materials are removed and replaced with new materials.
- c. Staff believes the demolition would be contrary to the purpose and intent of the Ordinance – The Landmarks Commission shall protect, enhance and perpetuate the historic districts.

Staff further believes that the demolition would be contrary to the objectives of the Third Lake Ridge Historic District Plan. The Plan states,

“The architectural heritage of the Third Lake Ridge reflects the diverse development patterns of this residential, commercial and industrial area. Today it remains as an abstract symbol of the layering of the nineteenth century architectural traditions; literally, it is a physical expression of their agglomeration. Executed in frame and masonry are examples of the full range of nineteenth

century architectural styles: Greek Revival, Italianate, Late Picturesque, early twentieth century Revival styles, and of vernacular design and construction.”

“Characteristically, a single block in the Third Lake Ridge might contain one or two residences constructed in the 1850’s, several Late Picturesque residences circa 1890, a house of Prairie School persuasion, and a variety of traditionally designed residences of the tens and twenties. A substantial part of the housing stock of the area is composed of the gable roofed, two-story residences, covered in wooden or asbestos siding, with little architectural ornament. Constructed roughly between 1880 and 1910, the uniform street façade and roof pitch of this house type has left a significant visual impact on the area. Like such housing across the state and nation, it sheltered a then-growing entrepreneurial and working class.”

The Third Lake Ridge Historic District Plan embraces the architectural development patterns and styles of the district and encourages the preservation of all buildings that were in place when the district was created with importance placed on buildings built between 1850 and 1915.

- d. Staff believes that the building is not of unusual or uncommon design, texture and/or material. The Applicant is proposing to construct a new residence of similar style in a typical method that is representative of current standards using current materials – just as this house was originally constructed – using then current standards, methods and materials. Staff also believes it is the common design intermixed with architectural specimens that create the character of the Third Lake Ridge Historic District.
- e. Staff believes that retention of this specific building or structure would probably 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; but that a cohesive historic district and community respect for cultural resources may.
- f. While the building has suffered from deferred maintenance, Staff believes that it is not in such a deteriorated condition that it is not structurally or economically feasible to preserve or restore it. The Ordinance clearly states that the result of failure to maintain the property in good repair cannot qualify as the basis for the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness. It should be noted that the Applicant is not the current Owner and that the Applicant has provided an estimate for restoration/renovation work that should be carefully reviewed.
- g. Staff believes the style of the proposed new structure is compatible with the buildings and environment of the district.

The loss of a building in a historic district is poignant and each decision to approve or not approve a demolition must consider the unique situation of each case when applying the demolition standards found in the Landmarks Ordinance. Such requests are seldom black and white, as is the case with this proposal. The Commission is being asked to approve the demolition of a small house that has suffered from deferred maintenance to provide a site that will support the construction of a new larger residence in a similar architectural style. Weighing all aspects of this request, staff believes that the standards for granting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition are not met and recommends that the Landmarks Commission not approve the Certificate of Appropriateness.

However, if the Landmarks Commission finds that the standards can be met, please consider the following conditions:

1. The following elements shall be salvaged for re-use and possibly donated if not desired for use in the new residence: Wood floors, pre-1930 window sash including glass and related hardware, wood doors of panel construction including related hardware, wide sheathing boards, and miscellaneous parts that another home restoration project may find useful. The Preservation Planner shall review the demolition recycling plan to verify compliance with conditions.
2. The building shall be photo documented. At a minimum, this documentation shall include views of each primary building elevation and a view of the residence in context with neighboring buildings. Additional views (for example original siding detail at building corner, front porch decorative details, front door design, etc.) are encouraged. The Applicant or Applicant's representative shall send high quality digital images to staff before the Certificate of Appropriateness is sent to the Applicant.

Relevant Landmarks Ordinance Sections for NEW DEVELOPMENT:

In the left hand columns, staff has indicated whether they believe the proposal meets each criteria or references staff comments found at the end of the report.

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	33.19(11)(h) <u>Guideline Criteria for New Development in the Third Lake Ridge Historic District - Parcels Zoned for Residential Use.</u>
---	---	1. Any new structure shall be evaluated according to all criteria listed in Sec. 33.19(11)(f). <i>(included below)</i>
Y		2. The directional expression of any new structure shall be compatible with those of the buildings and environment within its visually related area.
Staff comments		3. The materials, patterns and textures of any new structure shall be compatible with those of the buildings and environment within its visually related area.
Y		4. The landscape plan of any new structure shall be compatible with that of the buildings and environment within its visually related area.
<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	33.19(11)(f) <u>Guideline Criteria for new Development in the Third Lake Ridge Historic District - Parcels Zoned for Commercial Use.</u>
---	---	1. Any new structures shall be evaluated according to both of the criteria listed in Sec. 33.01(11)(d) <i>(included below)</i> ; that is, compatibility of gross volume and height.
Y		2. The rhythm of solids and voids in the street facade(s) of any new structure shall be compatible with the buildings within its visually related area.
Staff comments		3. The materials used in the street facade(s) of any new structure shall be compatible with those used in the buildings and environment within its visually related area.
Y		4. The design of the roof of any new structure shall be compatible with those of the buildings and environment within its visually related area.
Y		5. The rhythm of building masses and spaces created by the construction of a new structure shall be compatible with the existing rhythm of masses and spaces for those sites within its visually related area.
<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	33.19 (11)(d) <u>Guideline Criteria for new Development in the Third Lake Ridge Historic District - Parcels Zoned for Manufacturing Use.</u>

- Y 1. The gross volume of any new structure shall be visually compatible with the buildings and environment within its visually related area.
- Y 2. The height of any new structure shall be visually compatible with the buildings and environment within its visually related area.
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Staff Comments and Recommendations regarding NEW DEVELOPMENT:

Staff believes that the standards for granting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of the new residence can be met and recommends approval by the Landmarks Commission with the following conditions:

1. The window proportions shall be unified. The paired window proportions seem most appropriate. The wider single double-hungs on front and rear elevations and the casements in the Living Room and Kitchen shall be revised to more closely match the paired window proportion.
 2. The siding is shown as fiber cement with related composite trim. Based on recent discussions about Ordinance interpretation, the Commission shall determine if fiber cement and composite materials are compatible with historic finishes.
 3. The Applicant shall explain the materials proposed to be used for the brackets, fascia and soffits, apron boards, porch deck, foundation, and decorative window adjacent to the front door and the Commission shall determine if the materials are compatible with historic finishes. Staff suggests that the soffit material be selected so that the final product is installed in a historically appropriate way (so that beads run perpendicular to the rafter).
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Relevant Ordinance Sections for NEW DEVELOPMENT ADJACENT TO LANDMARK:

The Landmarks Ordinance does not address development adjacent to Landmarks. The Zoning Code section states:

28.04(3) Scope of Regulations

- (n) Any development on a zoning lot adjoining a landmark or landmark site for which Plan Commission or Urban Design Commission review is required shall be reviewed by the Landmark Commission to determine whether the proposed development is so large or visually intrusive as to adversely affect the historic character and integrity of the adjoining landmark or landmark site. Landmark Commission review shall be advisory to the Plan Commission and the Urban Design Commission.

Staff believes that the proposed development does not adversely affect the adjacent landmark. The Landmarks Commission shall provide a recommendation to the Plan Commission related to the actions above.