



Project Name & Address: 203 N Allen Street

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

Legistar File ID # [68534](#)

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Summary

Project Applicant/Contact: Peter Rott, Isthmus Architecture

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

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.

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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. 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.

- (5) Standards for the Review of Exterior Alterations and Repairs in TR-C2, TR-C3, and TR-C4, Zoning Districts.
- (a) Height. No alterations shall be higher than the existing structure; however, if the existing structure is already a nonconforming one, alteration shall be made thereto except in accordance with Section 28.192. Roof alterations resulting in an increased structure volume are prohibited unless they meet the requirements in Sec. 41.24(4)(a)5. and are permitted under Chapter 28, or approved as a variance pursuant to Sec. 28.184 or approved as a conditional use or as part of a planned residential development.
 - (b) Second Exit Platforms and Fire Escapes. Second exit platforms and fire escapes shall be invisible from the street, wherever possible, and shall be of a plain and unobtrusive design in all cases. In instances where an automatic combustion products detection and alarm system is permitted as an alternative to second exits, use of such a system shall be mandatory.
 - (c) Repairs. Materials used in exterior repairs shall duplicate the original building materials in texture and appearance, unless the Landmarks Commission approves duplication of the existing building materials where the existing building materials differ from the original. Repairs using materials that exactly duplicate the original in composition are encouraged.
 - (d) Restoration. Projects that will restore the appearance of a structure to its original appearance are encouraged and will be approved by the Landmarks Commission if such projects are documented by photographs, architectural or archeological research or other suitable evidence.
 - (e) Re-Siding. Re-siding with aluminum or vinyl that replaces or covers clapboards or nonoriginal siding on structures originally sided with clapboards will be approved by the Landmarks Commission provided that the new siding imitates the width of the original clapboard siding to within one (1) inch and provided further that all architectural details including, but not limited to, window trim, wood cornices and ornament either remain uncovered or are duplicated exactly in appearance. Where more than one layer of siding exists on the structure, all layers except the first must be removed before new siding is applied. If insulation is applied under the new siding, all trim must be built up so that it projects from the new siding to the same extent it did with the original siding.
 - (f) Alterations Visible from the Street and Alterations to Street Facades. Alterations visible from the street, including alterations to the top of structures, and alterations to street facades shall be compatible with the existing structure in architectural design, scale, color, texture, proportion and rhythm of solids to voids and proportion of widths to heights of doors and windows. Materials used in such alterations shall duplicate in texture and appearance, and architectural details used therein shall duplicate in design, the materials and details used in the original construction of the existing structure or of other structures in University Heights of similar materials, age and architectural style, unless the Landmarks Commission approves duplication of the texture and appearance of materials and the design of architectural details used in the existing structure where the existing building materials and architectural details differ from the original. Alterations that exactly duplicate the original materials in composition are encouraged. Alterations that destroy significant architectural features are prohibited. Side alterations shall not detract from the design composition of the original facade.
 - (g) Additions and Exterior Alterations Not Visible from the Street. Additions and exterior alterations that are not visible from any streets contiguous to the lot lines upon which the structure is located will be approved by the Landmarks Commission if their design is compatible with the scale of the existing structure and, further, if the materials used are compatible with the existing materials in texture, color and architectural details.

- Additions and alterations shall harmonize with the architectural design of the structure rather than contrast with it.
- (h) **Roof Shape.** The roof shape of the front of a structure shall not be altered except to restore it to the original documentable appearance or to add a dormer or dormers in a location and shape compatible with the architectural design of the structure and similar in location and shape to original dormers on structures of the same vintage and style within the district. Alterations of the roof shape of the sides or back of a structure shall be visually compatible with the architectural design of the existing structure.
 - (i) **Roof Material.**
 1. If the existing roof is tile, slate or other material that is original to the structure and/or contributes to its historic character, all repairs thereto shall be made using the same materials. In addition, in all cases any such roof must be repaired rather than replaced, unless the documented cost of repair exceeds the documented cost of re-roofing with a substitute material that approximates the appearance of the original roofing material as closely as possible, in which case re-roofing with a material that approximates the appearance of the original roofing material as closely as possible will be approved by the Landmarks Commission.
 2. If the existing roofing material is asphalt shingles, sawn wood shingles or a nonhistoric material such as fiberglass, all repairs shall match in appearance the existing roof material; however, if any such roof is covered or replaced, re-roofing must be done using rectangular sawn wood shingles or rectangular shingles that are similar in width, thickness and apparent length to sawn wood shingles, for example, 3-in-1 tab asphalt shingles. Modern style shingles, such as thick wood shakes, Dutch lap, French method and interlock shingles, that are incompatible with the historic character of the district are prohibited.
 3. Rolled roofing, tar and gravel and other similar roofing materials are prohibited except that such materials may be used on flat or slightly sloped roofs which are not visible from the ground.

Analysis and Conclusion

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish an existing garage, construct a new garage, and construct an addition to the principal structure. The existing principal building was constructed in 1925 and is in the Dutch Colonial style, which features a side gambrel roof, dormers, and symmetrical front façade. Everett O. Stubbs was the first resident, and he worked as a grounds keeper.

The existing garage appears on the 1942 Sanborn Map, but is suffering the typical deterioration of accessory structures of this vintage in addition to no longer easily accommodating current automobile sizes to allow for additional garage space. The proposed new garage largely replicates the appearance of the historic with the addition of dormers, and a pedestrian entry on the front of the structure. Otherwise the simple design is typical of what is found in the district and the alterations are complimentary to the architectural character of the principal structure.

The side addition would remove an existing single-story side addition and construct a gambrel-roofed two story addition that would be nested under the eaves of the historic structure, slightly off center, but largely conveying a symmetrical placement on the side façade. There is precedent for both single-story additions and two-story side additions in the district and the immediate vicinity.

The addition would feature dormers on either side. On the rear of the structure is a proposed enclosed, flat roof porch that is topped with a balcony. The existing rear deck would be expanded to align with the new enclosed porch. The materials for the addition and the garage are proposed to replicate the existing materials in dimension and composition. The applicant has not finalized specifications, but the current representation is in keeping with the character of the historic structure. Staff would ask for confirmation of final specifications as part of the approval.

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 garage is not historic and is not architecturally or historically significant.
 - (b) N/A
 - (c) The garage does not contribute to the character of the historic district.
 - (d) Removal of this nonsignificant accessory structure is not contrary to the purposes of this ordinance.
 - (e) The structure is not particularly old and unusual or uncommon design, method of construction, or material.
 - (f) Retention of the structure would not promote the general welfare of the public.
 - (g) This structure does not serve the present function of the property and is not deteriorated due to neglect of the current owner.
 - (h) The replacement structure is in keeping with the character of the existing structures on the property and is in keeping with the character of accessory structures in the district.
- Staff does not recommend additional documentation of the current garage prior to its demolition.

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- (a) Principal Structures.
 - 2. Materials. The proposed materials for the garage are represented as replicating the existing with the drawings showing compatible doors and windows. Staff would request final specifications as part of the approval.
 - (b) Accessory Structures. The replacement garage will be constructed in the same location as the existing, which is in the rear yard. The design is compatible both with the existing garage and the principal structure.
- (5) Standards for the Review of Exterior Alterations and Repairs in TR-C2, TR-C3, and TR-C4, Zoning Districts.
- (a) Height. The proposed alteration is shorter than the existing structure and nested beneath the eaves of the historic structure.
 - (b) Second Exit Platforms and Fire Escapes: N/A
 - (c) Repairs. N/A
 - (d) Restoration. N/A
 - (e) Re-Siding. N/A
 - (f) Alterations Visible from the Street and Alterations to Street Facades. The proposed alteration uses the same architectural vocabulary as the historic structure and is compatible with the architectural design of the structure. While the window

arrangement on the front façade of the historic structure is very symmetrical the window placements on the sides are not, so the pattern of windows proposed facing the side are not problematic. The new materials are proposed to replicate the existing exactly. The addition is stepped back from the front façade so as to not overwhelm the historic structure and differentiate it.

- (g) Additions and Exterior Alterations Not Visible from the Street. The screened porch with balcony and the expanded deck at ground level will largely not be visible from the street and feature painted wood or materials that match the existing structure.
- (h) Roof Shape. The gambrel roof with dormers replicates the roof form of the existing historic structure.
- (i) Roof Material.
 - 1. N/A
 - 2. Roof shingles are proposed to match the existing.
 - 3. N/A

Recommendation

Staff believes that the standards for granting a Certificate of Appropriateness could be met and recommend that the Landmarks Commission approve the proposal with the following condition:

1. Final door, window, and roof shingle specifications to be approved by staff.