



Agenda Item #: 7

Project Title: 110 Ely Pl - Exterior Alteration in the University Heights Hist. Dist. - Conversion of screened porch to enclosed four-season room; 5th Ald. Dist.

Legistar File ID #: 73460

Prepared By: Meri Rose Ekberg, Community & Cultural Resources Planner

Members: Present: Edna Ely-Ledesma, Molly Harris, Katie Kaliszewski, David McLean, Maurice Taylor, and Ald. Bill Tishler.
Excused: Richard Arnesen.

Summary

Aaron Monroe, registering in support and available to answer questions

Ekberg provided background information on the project.

Kaliszewski asked if they were retaining the historic columns. Monroe confirmed they were; they explained that they have to change the structure to add glass, so they will slice the columns and reapply them with structural columns behind them.

McLean asked why they weren't following the same footprint as the existing porch. Monroe said that the porch currently jogs in, so they will need to remove the columns to have them cut, then reattach them with the structural columns. McLean pointed out that this house is very visible and will be seen by the public with its location next to a Frank Lloyd Wright house. He wondered if they could use the mullions to bury the column as opposed to cutting up the original historic columns. Monroe said the technique they use to reinforce the structure won't change how it looks because the columns will essentially be returned to the same spot. They mentioned one change to the area behind the columns, which are currently screen panels that will be changed to a painted wall. McLean said that would diminish the visual strength of the columns; the shadow sits with the columns, so they stand out as individual components of the composition. The proposed work would change the visual effect by diminishing the shadows on the porch, and cutting the columns would be an irreversible change. Monroe said that the challenge is to support the roof above and following wind shear bracing requirements when you put glass in; they were not sure if this could be engineered. McLean said he would like to know if it could. He said that it will look completely different if the space between the columns is filled in with a plane. He would prefer to maintain the current layout of the porch so it would read the same as it does now.

Tishler agreed with McLean's comments and would like to retain the columns with the space behind them in the same floor plan as existing. Monroe said that the window openings would likely need to become narrower in those sections. Tishler said that if someone wanted to convert the space back to a three-season porch in the future, it would be impossible with the proposed plans. Monroe said they thought it made sense to put two structural columns on the outside corners and a beam across, but if the commission's feedback is to create a different solution, they could look into it. McLean said that it would be great if they could replicate the rhythm and layout of the screen porch into the glass structure, while maintaining proportions and distances. Monroe said the columns will need to come out and be put back in either way. McLean said that was fine, as long as they are put back in the same place. Monroe said they would have to gain space for the columns, which will affect the glass size. McLean suggested they have the applicant work with staff on a new design that replicates the current porch as best they can.

McLean asked why they were removing the doors upstairs. Monroe said that the property owners do not use the doors because they are located in inconvenient spots in a closet and bathroom. The railing is beyond repair and will need to be

rebuilt, and it is currently not code compliant, so they decided to convert the doors to windows. McLean said this will change the access from the house to the porch physically and visually. He said he appreciated them keeping a similar low railing design. He suggested they do something to the sills of the windows to acknowledge there used to be doors in that location, even a solid panel. He said they could keep the windows and sills as proposed so they match the others on the house, but they should acknowledge the larger opening that was historically there.

Tishler said he was more concerned about maintaining light between the columns. He asked why they needed to be removed if they are structurally sound. Monroe said that whatever they put behind the columns will need to be accessible to construct, so they will need to work in that area, paint, and make sure everything is weather tight. They said that maintenance in those corners will be a problem, and it will be hard to keep clean.

Harris said that she had similar thoughts as McLean on the columns and windows.

Ely-Ledesma said that she was concerned about losing the structural integrity of the columns as historic features of the house. She said that if there were a way for the structure to be updated with windows in its existing format, with the jogging feature of the screened porch, that would be most respectful of the architectural integrity of those historic features.

Fruhling requested clarification from the commission on whether they would like the panels behind the columns to be glass or solid walls. Tishler said they should be glass in order to see through them and give the columns dimension. McLean agreed that he had been thinking of glass. Monroe said that they did not know if glass panels were feasible because they would probably be smaller than the columns. They said that the effect the commission is describing probably will not happen because they need a wall assembly in place to install the windows, so the glass would probably be 6-8" wide. He said that he had concerns about how that would look, so he was hesitant to commit to glass.

Ely-Ledesma said her impression was that in order for the detail to work, it would not be feasible to be glass in that scale. She said that in the original proposal, she was concerned about cutting the columns. She said that if they could offset the wall behind the columns, the columns would not be disrupted; if it has to be solid, there would still be enough shading and direct light from outside so the columns would be featured and preserved.

Ekberg summarized the commission's discussion that they do not want the columns removed, split, and integrated into the architectural columns supporting the windows. Instead, they would like to see a wall structure or windows replicate the jogging feature that skirts around the columns, leaving the columns intact and helping to retain their current appearance and depth.

Taylor asked if the client wanted glass behind the columns. Monroe said no, and it may not be a practical option because the glass panels would be very small and get dirty easily. Monroe said they could look at an engineering solution that does not disrupt the columns if that is what the commission would like to see. Tishler said it was important that the columns remain untouched and that the option remain for the porch to be reverted to a screened porch in the future.

McLean said that the railing should be approved as proposed, and he would like an acknowledgement that the windows above the porch were once a larger opening by adding a filler board or similar in the area below the sill.

Taylor said that he was opposed to the motion because he liked the applicant's proposal, of which staff had recommended approval.

Action

A motion was made by McLean, seconded by Tishler, to approve the request for the Certificate of Appropriateness with the condition that staff approve a final design that replicates the screened porch layout, retains the columns

without them being cut in half, and acknowledges the historic door openings on the 2nd-story porch that are being converted to windows. The motion passed by the following vote:

Ayes: 4 - William Tishler; David W.J. McLean; Molly S. Harris and Edna Ely-Ledesma

Noes: 1 - Maurice D. Taylor

Excused: 1 - Richard B. Arnesen

Non Voting: 1 - Katherine N. Kaliszewski