

AGENDA # 5

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: LANDMARKS COMMISSION

PRESENTED: 6/17/19

TITLE: 1825 Van Hise Ave - Addition in the University Heights Hist. Dist. - Addition of conditioned sunroom and construction of deck; 5th Ald. Dist.

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: 6/25/19

ID NUMBER: 56059

Members present were: Stuart Levitan, Richard Arnesen, Katie Kaliszewski, Arvina Martin, and David McLean. Excused was Anna Andrzejewski.

SUMMARY:

Meri Tepper, registering in support and available to answer questions

Bailey described the proposed work, which includes replacing the existing three-season porch with a larger sunroom, constructing a new deck with synthetic flooring, and reinstalling windows in a previously enclosed opening on the house. She summarized the applicable standards, and pointed out that the majority of this project will not be visible from the street. She said that on the rear deck, there is no precedent for an aluminum railing as proposed, and she suggests installing a wood railing in a similar style as proposed. She pointed out that the style of windows on the house is consistent, and the windows the applicant proposes to reinstall in a space that was previously enclosed are of the same dimensions as other windows on the house. She said that she recommends approval of the project with the conditions that deck flooring specifications be approved by staff because while not visible from the street, it is attached to the house, and that the deck railing be constructed of wood or a wood substitute in a similar style as proposed.

Tepper said that the homeowner is hoping to remove the previous non-original addition and create a new fully conditioned sunroom with a new deck. She said that there is no precedent for any railings on the house, but the owner would like to age in place and selected synthetic decking and a powder-coated aluminum railing that do not require maintenance. She said that aesthetically, the deck will look comparable to wood at a distance, though up close one will see the difference in materials. She pointed out that the new deck will be attached to the house via the new sunroom addition, so there is some separation from the historic portion of the house. Levitan asked for confirmation that Tepper does not want a wood railing. Tepper said that aesthetically, wood would look better, but it is in her client's best interest to have a low-maintenance deck. She pointed out that wood is also more expensive.

Levitan asked Bailey about the decking materials, and Bailey said that the applicant is proposing synthetic decking with exact specifications to be determined. Tepper said that they are looking at Azek and Trex, which are in the same price category; however, she also found a material with a smoother wood grain that she thought staff would prefer, but it is twice the cost of the others. Levitan asked for confirmation that this will be in the back of the house, and Bailey confirmed that it is. Bailey said that the tongue-and-groove products more accurately replicate the look of a wood deck. Tepper said that they intend to use tongue-and-groove that will be pitched to drain water.

Levitan said that a nice compromise would be to allow the applicant to select the deck flooring texture if they install a wood deck railing. Tepper asked if the Commission had an opinion between the deck flooring samples. Levitan said that the texture does not matter to him, and the wood railing is more important. Arnesen said that there is no precedent for a wood railing either. Bailey said that the existing rear porch does have wood panels, and the striped screening in the proposed railing design is a simple style that makes sense for the house. Kaliszewski pointed out that the staff recommendation mentioned wood or a compatible wood substitute for the railing, which could be another compromise. Arnesen said that there are also metal railings in the neighborhood, and the proposed deck is on the back of the house. Kaliszewski said that the neighboring houses are of different styles, so they need to look at what material would fit best with this particular style of house. Bailey said that it would be odd to see a metal railing on an Arts & Crafts English cottage house. McLean said that he doesn't disagree and asked if there is a wood substitute for railing construction. Tepper said that there is, but it is cheap-looking. Arnesen agreed and said that the wood substitute for railings does not look nice. McLean said that means they are back to wood or metal as options. Tepper said that as a designer, she agrees that wood looks great, but it involves maintenance they are trying to avoid. Kaliszewski asked what color the railing will be. Tepper said that it will be the same beige color as the window trim. Levitan said they need to consider whether the element harmonizes with the architectural design or contrasts with it, and it is the professional advice of staff that it does not harmonize.

Arnesen asked what the difference in cost would be. Tepper said it would be \$50 per linear foot, so a couple thousand dollars total. Arnesen said that it sounds like it isn't the cost, but the maintenance they are concerned about, and Tepper said that they are concerned about the maintenance, but she would also need to factor the added cost of wood into the budget. McLean asked if everything on the sunroom aside from the windows is wood, and Tepper said yes. Arnesen said that it might be odd to introduce powder-coated metal if everything else is painted wood. Levitan said that he thinks allowing textured or non-textured wood substitute for the deck flooring as the applicant chooses and requiring a wood railing is a reasonable compromise that still enforces the ordinance. Arnesen said that he doesn't feel that strongly. Kaliszewski said that it is too bad there isn't a better wood substitute for the railing.

ACTION:

A motion was made by McLean, seconded by Kaliszewski, to approve the request for the Certificate of Appropriateness with the condition that the deck railing be of the same style as proposed, but be constructed of wood. The motion passed by voice vote/other.