

PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

August 4, 2025

PREPARED FOR THE LANDMARKS COMMISSION



Project Name & Address: 739 Jenifer Street

Application Type(s): Certificate of Approval for an addition

Legistar File ID # [88974](#)

Prepared By: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner, Planning Division

Date Prepared: July 30, 2025

Summary

Project Applicant/Contact: Abigail Rohlinger, Michael Abraham Architecture

Requested Action: The Applicant is requesting that the Landmarks Commission approve a Certificate of Approval to demolish part of a landmark structure and construct an addition

Background Information

Parcel Location/Information: The subject property is a designated landmark located within the Third Lake Ridge local historic district

Relevant Ordinance Sections:

41.18 STANDARDS FOR GRANTING A CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

A Certificate of Approval 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 Approval 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 Approval 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 will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will 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 elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.

5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will 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 proposed project is to demolish the ca. 1950s addition from the rear of the structure and construct a rear and side addition to the existing historic structure. The existing house is a two-story Italianate house that was constructed in 1857 and designated a Madison landmark in 1977. Frederick (a tailor) and Johanna Sauthoff moved to Madison from Hanover, Germany, and they were the first residents in this house. Three generations of the family lived in this house and it was designated a landmark for its association with 19th century merchant families in the early history of the City, and for its vernacular architecture.

This building is characterized by its blocky nature. It originally had a flat roof on the entire structure. The current hip roof on the front portion of the structure was installed in 1985. While there are pedimented lintels above the first floor windows and door on the front façade, otherwise the window and door openings are simple in their rectangular form and topped with solid flat stone lintels.

The ca. 1950s rear addition is typical of the additions seen to houses in the historic district, but it is not an alteration that has achieved significance in its own right. The proposed addition on the back of the structure is a contemporary interpretation of the blocky nature of the historic structure. It will read as a product of its time and is largely open with many of the areas featuring large glass windows. The wall cladding otherwise is simple masonry with subtle corbeling at the cornice level. The masonry units are cream brick, which is compatible with the historic structure without trying to mimic the historic masonry. The window and door openings within the new masonry structure will have solid lintels and the windows will have projecting sills. The rear patio area features exposed I-beams, which blend with the contemporary interpretation of the boxy architectural elements on the addition.

A discussion of relevant standards follows:

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

1. The proposed changes are for the ongoing residential use of this property and the largely glass areas of the addition will allow more of the historic masonry on the existing structure to still be visible.
2. No distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property are proposed to change. The new addition will be within the footprint of the existing nonhistoric addition.

3. The new addition will read as a product of its time and not create a false sense of historical development.
4. The ca. 1950s rear addition has not acquired historic significance in its own right.
5. No distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be impact by this project.
6. N/A
7. N/A
8. N/A
9. The new addition and site features will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old while still being compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing of the historic resource.
10. The addition could be removed in the future and the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Recommendation

Staff believes that the standards for granting a Certificate of Approval could be met and recommends the Landmarks Commission approve the project with the following conditions:

1. 6" smooth or brushed-smooth appearance clapboard approved for the addition wall cladding
2. Final door/window trim, soffit, fascia, roof cladding, roof venting, and hardscaping details to be approved by staff
3. New exterior light fixtures and new mechanicals to be approved by staff