



Agenda Item #: 2

Project Title: 857 South Shore Dr - Exterior Alteration to a Designated Madison Landmark, Eggiman House - Alteration to Front Façade (District 13)

Legistar File ID #: 86352

Prepared By: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner

Members: Present: Richard Arnesen, Edna Ely-Ledesma, Molly Harris, Katie Kaliszewski, Jacob Morrison, and Maurice Taylor
Excused: Ald. Amani Latimer Burris

Summary

Sindhu Raju, registering in support and wishing to speak

Bailey provided background information on the proposed project. Staff recommended that the commission deny the proposal because of the introduction of conjectural features, which did not meet the Secretary of the Interior's (SOI) standard 3.

Arnesen asked if ribbon windows were available in Motohomes or only corner windows. Bailey said that each panel was available with or without windows. The standard design had corner windows, but you did not have to keep it that way. Arnesen asked if this particular home could have been equipped with more windows at the time it was built had the property owners chosen to do so, and Bailey confirmed that they could have chosen to add more windows when it was built.

Sindhu Raju, applicant, said the house already has other windows that are not corner windows. They said when they have put the house on the market to sell, people want to tear it down because it is on the lake. They are requesting these additional windows for the primary bedroom, which could have a Capitol and lake view with the added windows. They said the existing panels are deteriorating badly, so it would help to add windows so they didn't need to replace the asbestos panels. They said they have done the best they can to keep the home in its original condition, but it is hard to keep the panels from deteriorating. They said this is the only Motohome in Wisconsin in its natural state because it hasn't had a lot of alterations.

Ely-Ledesma said she appreciated the application materials showing the proposed transformation of the façade, and the owner makes a good case regarding the preservation of the building and what is the front vs. backyard. She said there is the added street-facing context to consider because it is not directly on the lake. She said that it is hard to recognize the current role in place and see that it is in line with the language of the architectural style, so it is a difficult decision.

Morrison said he understood the proposal showing the different window configurations of Motohomes, but looking at the SOI Standards, the house was landmarked in this configuration, which is significant. While he appreciated the owner's desire to make the home more valuable in terms of wanting someone to preserve it, he didn't think that extra windows alone would be enough. He said that the windows could also make the house different enough that it is not the same house that was originally landmarked. The building probably has water infiltration issues with the original windows and roof, which could be causing the deterioration of the panels, and additional windows won't fix that. Instead, it would change the look of the house to a degree that it makes it a different house and would not meet the SOI Standards.

Kaliszewski said that the house is a local landmark, so any proposed demolition would need to come before the Landmarks Commission. While there might be a fear of someone tearing it down, the Landmarks Commission typically does not approve the demolition of buildings that are already landmarked and listed in the National Register. She added that failing to ensure that a property is going to last by not fixing things can be thought of as anticipatory demolition, which is against the historic preservation ordinance's section on demolition by neglect.

Taylor said the proposed windows looked good, and the existing windows are 87 years old. If the structure is standing, its story can still be told.

Kaliszewski asked if the proposal was to replace the existing windows as well. Bailey said the proposal currently before the commission is only to add additional windows. She said that a proposal for window replacement had previously come before the commission because the windows are deteriorated beyond repair. This was approved and still meets the standards for replacing windows, so the current proposal is only to introduce three new windows.

Taylor asked whether the three new windows were proposed for the back of the house facing the lake, or if it was considered the front of the house. Bailey said that it was the front of the house, which has South Shore Drive in front of it and then the lake. Taylor said the proposal looks visually pleasing and asked who else would put the work in to fix up the house. Bailey said they cannot allow people to do things that go against the standards just because they are trying to do right by the building. She said that the proposal is in keeping with the architectural style, so as an alteration, it could be acceptable for the back or side of the house, but not the front. She said there is a wealth of precedent to support that, and when considering the SOI Standards, the primary façade is where you try to keep it as close to the original as possible. There is no precedent to introduce a window on the front of a building, so if the commission decides to go in that direction, they need to make a specific finding of why this property is unique and is an exception to the previous precedent for landmark properties and compliance with the SOI standard 3.

Arnesen said this is a tough one and asked if the property would have been eligible for the National Register if windows had been added. Bailey said she couldn't see it making it through the National Park Service. She said that changes to the front are more challenging; however, the garage door had already been replaced at the time it was designated. The building received the National Register of Historic Places and local landmark designations in the 1990s.

Arnesen said that this is unfortunately black and white, which is disappointing. Their role is to do what they can within the standards to encourage people to invest in historic properties. The ordinance's demolition by neglect provision doesn't always save properties if extensive damage is already done, so he is in favor of encouraging owners to put as much money as possible into their properties. He agreed with Taylor that the proposed windows look great and could have been there originally; while it improves the look, that is not what the commission is voting on.

Harris said that they need to adhere to the standards, and this does not meet the standards. Although the other considerations are compelling, there isn't a particular reason in this case why they could make an exception. Arnesen asked if it was a special case because of the street between the house and the lake. Kaliszewski said no, and Harris said that landmark properties are different from others and whether the lake is there or not, the windows are proposed for the front where the public right-of-way is located. She added that she also appreciated that they don't want to disincentivize people from buying historic homes.

Morrison said the building is not in a historic district, and it was specifically landmarked as it is. The proposed windows don't make it less attractive and would make it more functional, but if the intention of the landmark was to preserve the building in a certain state as a representation, then this is too significant of a change for the front of the house. It gets a lot of people in front of it, and people will notice the change. He also expressed concern about setting a precedent for making an exception, and Arnesen agreed. He referenced staff comments that if this were in the back, it would be different. He said that in addition to SOI standard 3, he didn't think it met standard 9 because they would be putting

replica pieces onto the building. He appreciated that on a purely aesthetic level, it would not be ruining the house at all, but the act of landmarking was intentional, and the commission is here to preserve that intentional act.

Action

A motion was made by Morrison, seconded by Arnesen, to Deny the request for the Certificate of Appropriateness because the proposal does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards 3 and 9. The motion passed by the following vote:

Ayes: 4 - Jacob Morrison, Molly Harris, Edna Ely-Ledesma, and Richard Arnesen

Noes: 1 - Maurice Taylor

Excused: 1 - Amani Latimer Burris

Non-Voting: 1 - Katie Kaliszewski