

AGENDA # 3

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: LANDMARKS COMMISSION

PRESENTED: 8/6/18

TITLE: 104 E Gilman St - Exterior Alteration to a
Designated Madison Landmark
(Kendall House); 2nd Ald. Dist.

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Amy Scanlon and Bill Fruhling

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: 8/10/18

ID NUMBER: 52418

Members present were: Stuart Levitan, Anna Andrzejewski, Richard Arnesen, and Katie Kaliszewski.
Excused were: Marsha Rummel, Lon Hill, and David McLean.

SUMMARY:

Curt Brink, registering in support and wishing to speak.

Staff provided a brief background on the project. She stated that in 2016 the installation of wood box piers at the front stoop was approved administratively, but the work was constructed differently than approved. Instead of box newels, masonry brick piers were constructed in a color that was not appropriate for the building, which have since been stained to better match the stone color of the home. The two brick piers in the middle were also made wider and taller than the others. She also said that there may be an addition of metal railings that had been removed and never reinstalled.

Brink said that they removed the railings when they poured the new porch and haven't located the old railings yet, but he thinks they are likely being stored in a warehouse. He stated that he is concerned that the old railings may be too low and won't meet code, and he plans to come back before the Commission for approval of the railings at a later date.

Brink stated that he doesn't know why the far right pier was built so large, and they plan to make it smaller. He said that they also agree to construct an engaged pier against the building to match the opposite side. He noted that they would still like to install light fixtures on top of the middle piers because they are already wired for posts, and would like to maintain their taller height so they feel like an entrance to the building. He said that the reasoning for the larger cap overhang is so water doesn't come back in, and they would like to retain the larger size caps.

Staff pointed out that once the piers are reduced in size, the overhang will be too large. Brink agreed that once the east corner pier is reduced, the overhang would be too large. Staff said that she did not call out the middle piers to have their width reduced, just their height. She noted that in the photo from the 1970s, the tops of the caps are pyramidal and the current caps are not; adding sloped sides would help to shed water.

Levitan stated that the piers all appear to be the same height in the photo from the 1970s. Andrzejewski said that it was likely because they were originally holding up something.

Levitan summarized the remaining disputed points, including the height of the center piers, location of the lights, and the caps on top of the piers. Staff asked about the construction of an engaged pier to match the opposite side, and Brink stated that they will build it.

Arnesen said that if the caps are replaced, they should have a pyramidal surface. Staff agreed and stated that the current larger overhang on the cap is too heavy, so if the Commission were compelled to ask that caps be replaced, the new caps should have lesser overhang and a pyramidal top.

Levitan turned discussion to the two center pyramids that are taller than the others. Staff stated that an early photo of the home in 1868 does not show a mansard roof or a front porch, but a porch is shown in a painting of the building from 1938. The photo from the 1970s shows masonry piers all of the same width and height. She said that when we try to recreate the previous condition of a landmark, we want to ensure it is a historic previous condition, which may require more research and evidence. In this case, we are trying to work with something that was constructed incorrectly and find a good compromise for what is on site.

Levitan asked if it would look odd to reduce the two center piers in height and not width and whether the proportions would be off. Staff said that she did not think so, and the goal is to get it back as close to the documentable appearance as we can. Andrzejewski agreed, and said that it is an aesthetic issue that the applicant wants to emphasize the front door, but the height is distracting and she agrees with the staff report recommendation that they need to be lowered.

Arnesen asked if the applicant intended to reinstall railings. Brink said that they do, and will come back for that approval once they figure out what railings were there previously. Andrzejewski said that she is willing to put off discussion of the light fixtures until they see the railings.

Arnesen said that he is not as concerned about the height of the center piers as he is the caps, which he thinks should be replaced. Kaliszewski asked if the caps would look less weird with a railing. Arnesen asked the applicant how tall the railings were. Brink stated that the shorter railings are 37" and the taller railings are 47" from the bottom to the cap. Arnesen asked if the shorter railings meet code, and Brink said that he would need to check. Arnesen said that it will be a problem if they need to do a taller railing in place of the 37" railing, and noted that he wanted to confirm what type of railing can be put on before they change the piers. Levitan said that it looks like the railing comes up to the bottom of the cap in the photo from the 1970s, so if the code requirement for the railing is higher than the caps, part of this discussion will be irrelevant. Arnesen asked if there would be any exceptions for the railing regarding building code. Staff said that the applicant could apply for a variance. Brink said that they will work through the code and based on the railing height requirements, they will come back for railing and light fixture approvals.

ACTION:

A motion was made by Andrzejewski, seconded by Arnesen, to refer the item to a future meeting. The motion passed by voice vote.