

PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

October 1, 2018

PREPARED FOR THE LANDMARKS COMMISSION



Project Name/Address: 2222 Van Hise Avenue

Application Type: Certificate of Appropriateness for new construction (shed) on a designated Madison landmark site (Aldo Leopold House)

Legistar File ID # [53072](#)

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Date Prepared: September 25, 2018

Summary

Project Applicant/Contact: Chris McMahon

Requested Action: The Applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of an accessory building on a landmark site

Background Information

The property was designated as a Madison landmark in 2001. The primary reason it was designated as a landmark site is because it was the residence of internationally known conservationist Aldo Leopold. Leopold famously recorded many of his observations of nature from and around the shack (a rebuilt chicken coop) on his farm near Baraboo, WI. That is also where he wrote the "Sand County Almanac." Leopold and his wife Estella bought the house at 2222 Van Hise in 1924 and lived there until their deaths (his in 1948 and hers in 1985). The shack near Baraboo is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The owners are proposing to build a 144 square foot shed to be used for storage and a playhouse. The shed will be designed as a 2/3 scale version of Leopold's shack.

Relevant Historic Preservation Ordinance Sections:

- 41.18 STANDARDS FOR GRANTING A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS.** A certificate of appropriateness 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 appropriateness 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 appropriateness 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

A discussion of the relevant standards of 41.18 follows:

41.18 STANDARDS FOR GRANTING A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS. A certificate of appropriateness 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 appropriateness for exterior alteration or construction only if:
 - (a) N/A
 - (b) As discussed below, in constructing the shed on a landmark site, the proposed work will meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
 - (c) N/A
 - (d) The proposed shed 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. The property will maintain its historic use as a single-family residence.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and the location and size of the accessory structure will maintain the spaces, and spatial relationships between the house and accessory structures that are typical of this era and neighborhood.
3. This is a new structure, the design of which will be based on Leopold's shack in the woods near Baraboo, and is not a design typical of a shed in the rear yard of a house in a 1920s traditional neighborhood. That said, the proposed design is inspired by a structure notably associated with the home's prior owner and is an attempt to strengthen that association. The shed is not attempting to create a false sense of historical development, rather it is a representation of a more thoughtful and creative alternative to the typical "off the shelf" shed. It is not adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties.
4. N/A
5. N/A
6. N/A
7. N/A
8. N/A
9. The new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The shed will be differentiated from the existing house and its size, scale and proportion, and massing is consistent with the relationship between primary and accessory structures in this context and will protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. If the shed is removed in the future, 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 Appropriateness for new construction (shed) on a designated Madison landmark site (Aldo Leopold House) are met and recommends that the Landmarks Commission approve the request.