



Project Name/Address: 6 South Prospect Avenue – Wolff House

Application Type: Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior alterations on a landmarks site in a historic district

Legistar File ID # [55761](#)

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Summary

Project Applicant/Contact: Meri Tepper – Associated Housewrights

Requested Action: The Applicant is requesting that the Landmarks Commission approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for an exterior alteration at the Wolff House in the Mansion Hill historic district involving the conversion of 3-season sun porches to conditioned rooms.

Background Information

Parcel Location: The subject site is located on a landmark site in the University Heights historic district. Where there are conflicting regulations, the more restrictive applies, which are the standards for a landmark property rather than the historic district.

Relevant State Statute Section:

Wisc SS 62.23(7)(em)2m. In the repair or replacement of a property that is designated as a historic landmark or included within a historic district or neighborhood conservation district under this paragraph, a city shall allow an owner to use materials that are similar in design, color, scale, architectural appearance, and other visual qualities.

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

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness to convert two existing three-season porches into conditioned spaces. The Landmarks Commission approved construction of a below grade garage, a pergola-style carport, and canvas covered porch roof in 1989. The canvas roofed porch appears to be in the location of the ground-level three-season porch in the proposal. In 1992, the City designated the property an individual landmark and the nomination specified the construction of a terrace in 1979 and the carport in 1989 as the only exterior modifications to the building. In review of building permit records, there is no record for the extension of the roof for the upper sun porch or the enclosing of either porch. Aerial views show the roof for the upper sun porch in place in September of 2010, which is prior to the current owners acquiring the property.

As it seems that a previous owner constructed the porches without a review, those alterations do not have the architectural details that the landmarks Commission would have required for a property in the University Heights Historic District and of a City landmark. The windows for both porches are out of character with the rest of the house. The clapboard siding is also a detail that is not found elsewhere on what is otherwise a stucco building with wood-trim accents, with the exception of clapboards located above the garage.

The present owners are following appropriate processes to make exterior alterations to the current conditions. However, the elements that they are proposing to alter are areas where the Landmarks Commission can

recommend treatments that would mitigate previous alterations that are out of character with the landmark structure.

A discussion of the relevant standards follows:

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

1. The applicant is proposing that what are currently seasonal use areas become spaces of year-round use. From the exterior, these three-season porches will continue to read as enclosed spaces and the larger changes would be on the interior. The shed area of the house will shift to being connected to the interior of the house and become a space for interior use.
2. The historic character of this corner of the house was previously altered, in part with Landmarks Commission approval with the construction of a pergola-style porch and the pergola carport. This is a rear corner of the property that is largely not visible from either Prospect or Regent. As relatively new additions, no historic features would be removed as part of this work. It is unclear if the door to the shed area is original, but as a feature on the rear of the house, it is not a critical character defining feature. The shed area is on a portion of the house that has already undergone significant alterations, so removing the door and installing a transom window is not a change that would significantly alter the design of the rest of the building.
3. The addition of the upper sun porch was done in a way that differentiates it, but also in a way that is very differentiated from the rest of the house. The clapboard on the upper sun porch is a detail found on the below-grade garage, but perhaps the Landmarks Commission would consider stucco with wood trim to be more appropriate. The style of windows on either of the sun porches are not found elsewhere on the house. New windows in a Mission style of either vertical 4-over-1 or 3-over-1 would be more appropriate, but also be clearly new, so as to not create a false sense of historical development. The new transom in the converted shed space is in keeping with the style of the other windows on the historic portions of the house.
4. This project does not propose to make changes to previous alterations that have achieved historic significance in their own right.
5. The proposed alterations are not altering distinctive materials, features, finishes, or construction techniques.
6. This proposal does not address deteriorated historic features.
7. Staff is unaware of any proposed chemical treatments for the project.
8. No archaeological resources are likely to be disturbed as part of this project.
9. The new work will not destroy any historic materials or features. Rather, this is an opportunity to correct previous changes that were out of character with the historic structure.
10. The changes to the additions will not impact the historic portions of the building.

Recommendation

Staff believes the standards for granting a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations at 6 S Prospect have been met and recommends that the Landmarks Commission approve the proposal with the following conditions:

1. New double-hung windows be of a Mission-style with vertical lights in the upper sash.
2. Door to the ground-level converted porch should be in an Arts & Crafts style.