

AGENDA # 9

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: LANDMARKS COMMISSION

PRESENTED: 1/11/21

TITLE: 41 N Roby Rd - Exterior Alteration in the University Heights Hist. Dist. - Extension of front porch roof and installation of columns; 5th Ald. Dist.

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: 1/25/21

ID NUMBER: 63581

Members present were: Anna Andrzejewski, Richard Arnesen, Katie Kaliszewski, Arvina Martin, David McLean, and Maurice Taylor. Excused was Betty Banks.

SUMMARY:

Bill Montelbano, registering in support and available to answer questions
James Stangel, registering in support and available to answer questions

Bailey showed images of the property and pointed out that there are three street façades, with the project located on the entrance pointing toward the corner. She said that the retaining wall and steps were likely not original, and after they were installed, an extension was added to the shed roof to better shed water. She explained that the extra weight of the roof was not accounted for in the original design, so it has started to pull away from the house. She said that the applicant is proposing to further extend the roof and top of the brackets and introduce tapered square columns in order to provide additional support. She discussed the applicable standards regarding alterations visible from the street and roof shape, noting that this entrance is visible from two streets. She said that in discussions with the applicant, she suggested they investigate the interior to see how the existing roof is supported and if they could add additional structural support from the interior where the original support likely is so the roof remains cantilevered rather than introducing columns. She said that the applicant wanted to proceed with the submitted roof extension and columns. She showed a historic photo, pointing out that the porch wall was stucco, and recommended it be clad in stucco again. She said that the existing brick wall does reference the foundation, but the large wall draws attention and if they are further altering the character of the entry, returning the wall to stucco would tie it back to the building again. She said that staff believes the standards could be met, and the commission should evaluate if the proposed alteration meets the standards or if the cantilever should be maintained by introducing additional support to the interior. She said that there have been incremental changes to this entrance and asked the commission to consider if there is an accumulation of effects that are changing the character of the most prominent part of the building, or if they believe the introduction of these elements would be in keeping with the general character of the building. She said that a sleeping porch addition off the back of the house has wood clapboard siding, so the proposed brown wood columns would be in keeping with the changes on the back. However, she pointed out that in the past, the commission has been cautious about changes to a primary entry.

James Stangel, property owner, said that they have been trying to resolve the issues with the roof for two years, but it was difficult to find someone to look at it and provide an estimate. McLean asked if the knee wall had been rebuilt, and if so, why it wasn't stuccoed at that time. Bailey said that she was unaware of the wall being rebuilt. Stangel said the wall was crumbling and they couldn't find someone to fix it, but they did find a

bricklayer willing to do the work. He said they matched the brick exactly with the base of the house and retained the same caps at the top of the wall as were there previously. He said that they did not clad it in stucco and apologized for not getting the proper approval for rebuilding the wall. Andrzejewski asked Stangel if he had a problem with staff's suggestion to stucco the wall. Stangel said that he would prefer to leave it as it is. He said that the brick matched the house nicely and it had been difficult to find someone to do the stucco work originally.

Andrzejewski asked commissioners for their thoughts on the columns, which mark a change to the entrance of the property. McLean said that the house itself has very minimal and tight detail, so the columns seem out of place from what is there now and would be a big change to the front of the building. He said that on the front of the house, it is important to consider what it means to the details and changing the character of the building, so he wasn't sold on changing the porch yet. He referenced staff's earlier question about going inside the house to balance the cantilever and give more structural support, and asked whether that would work. Stangel said that there is nowhere to see where the cantilever comes into the house. He explained that the only place the wall is open is in the attic where one can see clay tile, but there is no existing damage anywhere on the floor or wall. He said they would need to tear apart the inside of the house to figure out the problem, and he would have a hard time going forward with that. McLean asked if they know for certain that is a cantilever and if the brackets are original. Stangel said that he did not know. Bailey said that the brackets look very arts and crafts, so they could be original. McLean said that he wouldn't be surprised if they were original because they are similar to the brackets holding up the stairwell bumpout on the side. He asked if the architect had considered redoing the brackets to have them support a deeper overhang by making them larger or changing the angle. Stangel said that he wasn't sure but expressed concern about extending the brackets because there could be issues with it being too low in height. McLean said that the architect should be able to take measurements and look at the support and clearance, which he thought would be a worthwhile study. He said that the alternative is a significantly different entrance to the house, so he'd like to look into whether there is a different way to structure it.

Kaliszewski asked for confirmation that the columns were square, not round. Stangel confirmed they were tapered and square. Andrzejewski asked if a tapered square column was consistent with the historic district and this era of construction, and Bailey confirmed it was. Kaliszewski said that she was more comfortable with square as opposed to round. Arnesen said that he sympathizes with the difficulty of getting a contractor to look at a small job like this. He asked McLean for clarification on what he was suggesting for the brackets. McLean said that he was suggesting they replace the brackets with something more proportional. Arnesen pointed out that in the existing plans, the applicant is proposing to extend the top bracket to support the end of the roof. He asked if McLean was suggesting making the existing brackets stronger or making the proposed brackets stronger so there were no columns. McLean said both; he explained that extending the brackets won't give more rigidity, they need to change the angle from the house as well. Arnesen suggested they refer the item so the applicant can explore this with his architect. McLean said that it would be worth a study if they haven't already done so. Andrzejewski said that the architect should be able to speak to the feasibility of that option and whether it meets the applicant's needs, which will provide more information for the commission to consider in relation to the standards.

ACTION:

A motion was made by Arnesen, seconded by McLean, to refer the item to the February 15, 2021 Landmarks Commission meeting. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

After item #10, a motion was made by Arnesen, seconded by McLean, to reopen item #9. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

SUMMARY:

Bill Montelbano, the architect for the project, joined the meeting and requested clarification on what the commission would like him to explore related to the brackets. He explained that it is a hollow clay masonry unit, and traditionally those cores run horizontally. He said they would have to see what the composition of the units is, but he didn't see any other way to examine the connection than breaking into the wall from the interior. McLean said that instead of using columns to supplement, he was wondering if they had looked into creating a larger bracket that goes further out from the face of the house to get a better support angle. Montelbano said they were trying to keep the brackets in their original form. He said the current height at the center of the bracket is 6'7", so headroom might be an issue, but it would depend on the size. He said they would have to get into the wall and part of the roof to see how it is connected. He pointed out that the roof doesn't line up with the second floor structure; ideally, one would want to tie it back into the floor structure to anchor the cantilever at the base. He said that it looks like it is just attached to the clay tile somehow, but there is no way of knowing if the cores in the clay tile were strengthened with grout or concrete.

Andrzejewski asked the group if they thought it would be helpful to study the option of replacing the brackets to adjust the angle and how they felt about introducing a new element. Montelbano said that it comes down to how the bracket is attached and what the integrity of the wall is to begin with. He said that the homeowner also indicated that going into the wall was an issue. Stangel said he would prefer not to. He said that they would be adding something different to the home by putting columns in, but it seems the least obstructive option rather than trying to expand the bracket without knowing if that would work. He said they are confident two columns will solve the issue. McLean said that either way, it sounds like there will be a change to the front of the house with a different bracket that holds the expression of the floating roof or the addition of two columns that take away the floating roof and add more detail in the taut face of the house. He said that it would be helpful for Montelbano to do a study on what it would take for brackets to support the roof and what the headroom would look like.

ACTION:

A motion was made by McLean, seconded by Arnesen, to refer the item to the February 15, 2021 Landmarks Commission meeting. The motion passed by voice vote/other.