

PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

April 19, 2021

PREPARED FOR THE LANDMARKS COMMISSION



Project Name & Address: 731 State Street, University Presbyterian Church and Student Center

Application Type(s): Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior alterations to a Designated Madison Landmark

Legistar File ID # [64875](#)

Prepared By: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner, Planning Division

Date Prepared: April 13, 2021

Summary

Project Applicant/Contact: Mark Elsdon, Presbyterian Student Center Foundation

Requested Action: The Applicant is requesting that the Landmarks Commission approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the repair of masonry.

Background Information

Parcel Location/Information: The subject site is a Designated Madison Landmark

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 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 shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.

2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall 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 architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall 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 for extensive masonry repair on the landmarked building at 731 State St. The University Presbyterian Church and Student Center was designated a Madison landmark in 2002. Designed by Madison architect Edward Tough, it is significant for its Neo-Gothic ecclesiastical architecture with a period of significance from 1931-1935.

The stone decorative elements on the structure need intervention to prevent further decay. Some elements were previously removed as an emergency measure. Proposed work will be completed by a professional mason and follow the masonry repair guidance from the National Park Service. The scope include Dutchman repairs of broken or failing elements, replacement of rusting steel rods with stainless steel rods, fabrication of missing elements to match the historic in design and type of stone, gentle cleaning of soiled masonry, tuckpointing failed masonry joints with a Type N mortar, caulking sills and windows, and re-sealing the roof decks on the tower. The scope of work is detailed and conveys a knowledge of working with historic masonry buildings.

A discussion of the relevant standards follows:

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

1. No proposed changes to the use of the building.
2. The work will retain and preserve the historic character of the building with only failed historic materials proposed for removal.
3. N/A
4. N/A
5. The proposal is to retain distinctive features.

6. Deteriorated features are proposed to be repaired by completing Dutchman repairs where feasible as a way to retain as much of the original as possible, and replication of historic features only where they are entirely missing or too decayed to salvage. The new stone will match the historic as closely as possible.
7. Gentle surface cleaning of soiled masonry is proposed.
8. N/A
9. N/A
10. N/A

Recommendation

Staff believes the standards for granting a Certificate of Appropriateness are met and recommends that the Landmarks Commission approve the project as proposed.