

AGENDA # 2

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: LANDMARKS COMMISSION

PRESENTED: 5/3/21

TITLE: 311 Forest St - Exterior Alteration in the
University Heights Hist. Dist. -
Installation of siding; 5th Ald. Dist.

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: 5/6/21

ID NUMBER: 65073

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

SUMMARY:

Joseph Thompson, registering in support and wishing to speak

Andrew Yoblonski, registering in support and available to answer questions

Also present: Alder Regina Vidaver, District 5

Bailey described the proposed work to replace the faux stucco and half-timbering cladding with 6" clapboard. She said that the period of significance for University Heights ends in 1928, and this structure was constructed in 1981. She discussed the applicable standards for exterior alterations and repairs in 41.24(6)(b) and (c) and pointed out that the exterior siding is failing in a number of locations and needs to be repaired. She said that the commission could look at this project as an alteration, though the standards do not envision changing the architectural character of a structure. She said that the intent of the standards is primarily for preserving the historic character of historic resources and ensuring that any resources outside the period of significance are appropriate infill and not detrimental to the overall character of the historic district. She referenced 41.24(5)(e), standards for re-siding, pointing out that they focus on siding being replaced in-kind, as well as retaining the character of historic resources and ensuring buildings outside the period of significance don't become more non-conforming. She referenced her assessment in the staff report of comparable properties suggested by the applicant, some of which were within the period of significance and were a mix of styles and cladding. She said there were also some properties outside of the period of significance that had a similar character to what the applicants are proposing. She said that if this were new construction, the project would likely meet those standards. She said that the building was constructed of a particular style, Tudor Revival, which is very popular in University Heights. She said that if the commission decides that the building was intended to retain that character, they could look at the re-siding standards, which she did not think the project met. However, if the commission looks at the building as resource from 1981 and evaluates using the alterations standards, those standards provide room for interpretation and could be met.

Thompson mentioned two nearby buildings, 2027 University and 301 Forest, which both have clapboard exteriors. He asked that the commission also consider the affordability of the project because re-siding in the Tudor style costs approximately 50% more than the proposed work.

Ald. Vidaver said she finds it compelling that the project would meet the new construction standards, and she does not have concerns about the proposal.

Martin asked if there were any projects similar to this in the past, and if so, how they were handled. Bailey said that this request is unusual because the easiest option in terms of meeting the standards is to replicate what is existing. She said that the applicant provided a case for why they are not proceeding in the same style of siding. She said that the style of alterations proposed would allow this building to read as complementary to the historic district, follow a similar pattern to other resources outside the period of significance in the district, and would still retain some half-timbering elements in the gable-ends.

Kaliszewski said that she was conflicted. The building is outside of the period of significance, and she said that typically she thinks they can go a little lighter in their review in those cases. However, she agreed that the building was very specifically designed to be within the University Heights historic district, and it reflects a very specific historic example of the Tudor Revival style. She said that the proposed design only has half-timbering in the gables, so it will lose quite a bit of the existing half-timbering, which is a big change to the exterior and will have a visual impact on the area around it.

McLean agreed with Kaliszewski and added that in the new design, he would no longer perceive the half-timbering as half-timbering, but as a trim board, which is where he was conflicted. He said that once one changes that material, the dynamics of the trim or half-timbering, and changes the style as well, at that point one is making an alteration because it has gone beyond re-siding to look like an entirely different building. He said that the most difficult part, especially in University Heights, is to see the chimney elements wrapped in clapboard siding. He said they could probably find places in the ordinance that discuss chimney elements where this would not be allowed and pointed out that this proposal takes that element far away from any chimney in this historic district. He said that clapboard is not out entirely, but he didn't think it could be used as proposed because it would be very rare, if ever, that one would see a chimney in clapboard siding. He said that he could see a stucco finish or a smooth brick or block and asked if there was another alternative to consider for the chimney elements. Thompson said they hadn't explored the cost difference of covering the chimneys with a different type of material, but he assumed it would cost more. McLean said that he would have a hard time approving this as proposed mostly due to the chimney elements.

Arnesen asked if replacement in-kind would be with EIFS. Bailey said there are some alternatives that are not technically EIFS, but essentially it would be something similar. She said that it is currently a fake stucco EIFS-type product, which is why it is failing. Arnesen said that he has a hard time with forcing someone to replace fake stucco with fake stucco. He agreed with McLean on the chimneys being problematic, but he didn't know if keeping them stucco in the midst of all of the clapboard would be a solution either. He said that he was in favor of considering the project an alteration and allowing the clapboard. Andrzejewski asked if he was okay with the clapboard as proposed. Arnesen said that he was okay with the gables as drawn, and he didn't like the chimneys as they are now, so they wouldn't necessarily look worse than they already are.

Kaliszewski agreed with McLean and Arnesen. She said that she didn't like the idea of wrapping the chimneys in siding but also disliked the idea of using a low-quality product like EIFS.

Taylor said that in his opinion, this should be considered an alteration, and with the building being constructed outside of the period of significance, he didn't want to put undue requirements on the applicant.

Martin said that she appreciated McLean's point that the proposed work changes the style of the building.

Bailey asked if the commission would be open to a brick veneer on the chimney. Arnesen said that would be more appropriate than siding or stucco. Kaliszewski agreed and said that wrapping the chimney in siding is a step too far, and brick veneer will hold onto the subtle Tudor Revival style. Arnesen asked what type of brick veneer Bailey was suggesting. Bailey said there are a range of possibilities. Andrzejewski asked if the applicant would consider working with staff on materials for the chimney. Thompson said they could get a price on it, but he fears they may have to rethink their approach to the project if it is too expensive.

A motion was made by McLean, seconded by Martin, to refer the item to a future Landmarks Commission meeting in order for the applicant to look into alternate materials for the chimneys. The motion failed.

Thompson said that material prices are going up rapidly, so they will likely have to consider other options. McLean said that if time is of the essence and referral is not ideal, they could have the applicant work with staff on final approval of the materials.

Andrzejewski said that she appreciated the point made about this being an alteration, not a re-siding, that changes the fundamental character of the building. She said that she agreed with looking into brick veneer on the chimneys, which would be more in keeping with the alteration and preserving the character of the building and historic district as a whole.

ACTION:

A motion was made by Arnesen, seconded by Taylor, to approve the request for the Certificate of Appropriateness for the exterior alteration per 41.24(6)(b) with the condition that the applicant work with staff on alternative materials for the chimneys. The motion passed by voice vote/other.