

AGENDA # 2

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: LANDMARKS COMMISSION

PRESENTED: 10/4/21

TITLE: 1141 Jenifer St - Construction of an
addition in the Third Lake Ridge
Hist. Dist.; 6th Ald. Dist.

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: 10/6/21

ID NUMBER: 67389

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

SUMMARY:

Melissa Ruhl, registering in support and available to answer questions

Bailey described the proposed project to construct a two-story addition on the rear of the structure. She pointed out that the surrounding historic structures are two stories, and there is an existing single-story addition off the rear of the house. She discussed the Third Lake Ridge standards, which say that any additions shall be visually compatible with historic resources within 200 feet in terms of height and rhythm of mass and spaces, and the proposed addition technically meets the standards. She said that the proposed addition is significantly stepped back from the existing historic resource, and the applicants propose differentiating the historic siding from the new with trim. She said that as proposed, fully framing around the existing structure creates a rectangular form and asked if the commission would prefer something that continues vertically down from the two-story addition on back instead. She pointed out how the proposed addition is nested behind the existing shed roof dormer. She showed different perspectives looking down the street at the house, noting that the addition would be on the back of the house and of a similar height to adjacent structures. She said that the existing house is taking up a smaller portion of the lot than nearby structures are. Regarding the standards related to roof alterations, she said the historic roof will be maintained, and the addition will be of a similar gable-front style. She said that nothing is changing with the street façade, and staff recommends approval because the standards are met.

Andrzejewski opened the public hearing.

Melissa Ruhl and Chris Lentini, property owners, were present to answer questions.

Andrzejewski closed the public hearing.

Andrzejewski said that this is a unique project, and the building form as proposed will be a “camelback” building with a hump on the back. She said that this building form began in the 1800s as a way to add extra space on a lot.

McLean said that the elevations are a bit misleading and look massive from the front view, but he was actually more concerned about the side views. He asked why the addition is positioned where it is, and he pointed out that there appeared to be a natural break in the north and south side elevations in the roof toward the back of the house. He said he understood it was likely because the applicants wanted as much square footage as

possible on the second floor. He was concerned about how close the dormer is to the addition, and as the second-story wall comes down over the side window, it seems like a poor point of bearing. He said that visually, it is a tenuous design element, and it would be nice if they could push the addition back from the window in order to help carry the line through. He referenced Bailey's earlier comments on the division of old and new being delineated with horizontal and vertical trim as shown or if it should be only a straight vertical from the addition, which would essentially make the two-story mass its own mass as opposed to trying to camelback on to what is already there. He said that he would rather see the two read as the original cottage and the new two-story addition behind it as opposed to the proposed camelback.

Andrzejewski asked staff to respond to McLean's concerns. Bailey said that she understood McLean's perspective in terms of where the addition is located because it is not centered on the side window and is not on the edge of the window but rather intrudes on a portion of the window, which reads oddly. She said that in terms of differentiating the historic and the new, it would be a reasonable request to bump the addition back a foot or so to create a line where it is not intersecting with the window, so the window below is separate. She said then there would be a line that comes down to the side of the window as opposed to intersecting into it, and then there would be a vertical piece of trim continuing down from the second story through the first story.

McLean said that with the distance between the dormer and the new second-story vertical wall, the real determining factor is having proper roof flashing and materials there so it drains well and doesn't drip or hold water. He said that it is within the designer's purview to work out those details.

Bailey asked McLean if he also wanted the dormer widened to come up flush with the two-story structure or to leave the dormer as is and create a narrow space between the dormer and the addition. McLean said he wanted to leave the dormer as is and have a narrow space, which is why he had mentioned concerns about having enough space to have proper roofing and flashing. He said that the dormer is probably not original but is old enough to be historic, and he didn't know how others felt about changing the old dormer.

Arnesen agreed with McLean and said that where the second story falls on the window looks odd. He said that he had also assumed there would be a gap between the dormer and the stepped-back second story, but if it worked better for the floor plan to expand the dormer, he didn't have a strong preference.

Kaliszewski agreed with McLean and said she had similar concerns. She said that his suggestion to push the addition back would help her potential issues with the addition seeming as if it is hovering over the original front portion of the building.

Andrzejewski asked the applicants if they were amenable to the suggestion to push the addition back so that it is not hovering over the window and breaks with the dormer in order to add some distance between the addition and the original section of the house. Ruhl and Lentini said that they were fine with the first suggestion to push the addition back and requested clarification on the second request regarding the dormer.

In looking at plans for the south elevation, McLean explained that commissioners would like the second-story vertical wall to move back further toward the rear of the house in order to clear the window and create some structure passing along the window, enough where it looks comfortable so the window itself isn't trying to hold the second story up. He said that will push the wall back and create a spatial gap between the right side edge of the dormer and the second-story addition. He said that right now, the dormer is hitting the side of the second-story addition, but if they pull the addition back, there would be a foot or two of roofing instead.

Lentini said their architect would better understand and walk them through this, but it didn't sound like something to which they would have an objection. Andrzejewski said that they were asking because the changes could make a difference if there were any particular features in the interior of the room. She suggested that the applicants could work with their architect to revise the drawings and staff could potentially approve the final changes. Ruhl said that the area in question is just a hallway, so it should be feasible to reduce that space.

McLean asked about the addition and where it was placed on the lot. He pointed out that the deck will be shortened and asked if that was as far back on the lot they could go with the addition based on setbacks. Lentini said they thought they could go further back but they wanted to keep more yard space. McLean said that ideally, the addition should start back further where the original cottage's roof drops down. He said that would have kept the cottage reading like a cottage as it always was and would have given more relief between the dormer, the window, and the second-story volume that comes up behind it. He said that would take a few more feet out of the back yard, but proportionately, he would have started the addition there to preserve the essence of the original cottage.

Arnesen agreed with McLean that the addition should start further back where the existing roof drops down.

A motion was made by McLean, seconded by Arnesen, to approve the request for the Certificate of Appropriateness with the condition that the applicants work with staff to explore options for moving the second-story addition back to give the original cottage more breathing space. He said that the two options he would suggest are to minimally push the addition wall back far enough to clear the window or to push the addition wall back far enough to clear the original cottage's roofline drop. McLean added that he didn't want to force the applicants to do that because it could add more cost, and they could work with staff on the details and final approval.

Andrzejewski said that this is a unique case because it does meet the standards, but the commission came up with ways to make it read even more as an addition, which is important.

Taylor asked for an explanation of what these changes would bring to the project if it already meets the standards as proposed. Bailey explained that the standards for Third Lake Ridge reference visual compatibility with surrounding historic resources. She said that none of the historic resources in the vicinity have an addition, roof form, or portion of a building where the wall plane intersects with a window because it will always fall on either side of a window. She said that McLean had pointed out that this aspect of the proposal was out of character, and she agreed. Taylor said that the house itself is different from others in the vicinity because it is much smaller and surrounded by two-story buildings. He said that he understood the applicants' desire to expand the small house and still have a backyard. He opposed the condition of approval and thought the project should be approved as proposed.

ACTION:

A motion was made by McLean, seconded by Arnesen, to approve the request for the Certificate of Appropriateness with the condition that the applicants work with staff to explore options for moving the second-story addition back to give the original cottage more breathing space. The motion passed by voice vote/other.