

CITY OF BELOIT

REPORT TO THE BELOIT LANDMARKS COMMISSION

Meeting Date: November 18, 2008

Agenda Item: 4

File Number: COA-2008-31

Applicant: Ann Reinert

Owner: Ann Reinert

Location: 861 Bluff Street

Existing Zoning: R-1B, Single-Family Residential District

Existing Land Use: Residential - Duplex

Parcel Size: 7,392 square feet

Request Overview/Background Information:

Ann Reinert has submitted a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) Application to replace two porch columns with a pillar and to add a second set of steps to the porch on the house located at 861 Bluff Street. The attached **Location and Zoning Map** shows the location of the property involved in this application. Note that the porch faces Portland Avenue.

In accordance with Section 32.06(1) of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, staff has issued a COA to replace the porch floor with like materials, to replace the porch railings with like materials (including the addition of spindles), and to replace the skirting with like materials. A copy of the staff-approved COA is attached to this report. Condition one provides specific instructions with respect to the porch columns.

Consistency with the Historic Preservation Ordinance and Strategic Plan:

Consideration of this request is consistent with the intent and purpose of the Historic Preservation Ordinance. Consideration of this request supports City of Beloit Strategic Goal #4.

Key Issues:

- According to the applicant, the porch columns have deteriorated and need to be replaced. Staff has inspected the columns and can confirm that both have countless fractures that appear to be threatening the stability of the porch. Due to material cost considerations, the applicant has proposed the use of 6x6 pillars.
- As shown on the first photo, one of the three original porch columns was replaced with a pillar. This was done before 1991, as the pillar is present in the Intensive Survey photos of this house. Unfortunately, this pre-1991 project resulted in a lack of symmetry and consistency that has lasted until today.
- In order to facilitate easier ingress and egress, the applicant has proposed the addition of a second set of stairs. The stairs would face the driveway (east). In general, staff feels that a second set of stairs is an unnecessary addition to this porch. While the property is currently used as a duplex, the house retains the appearance of a single-family home. A second set of stairs would result in the “duplex” appearance that should be avoided in this single-family district.
- During the Beloit Intensive Survey, the house was classified as a ‘contributing’ structure within the Bluff Street Historic District. A copy of the Intensive Survey Form is available in the Neighborhood Planning Division.
- Section 32.06(5) of the Historic Preservation Ordinance includes general review criteria to be used when evaluating COA applications. The attached COA Checklist evaluates this application against the general review criteria included in the Ordinance.
- Staff feels that the architectural significance of this house is due to the complexity of the roof lines and the projecting gables. In an ideal situation, the applicant would replace the columns with columns. However, given financial considerations, the deteriorated columns, and the fact that the porch is oriented away from Bluff Street, staff feels that pillars (with square capitals) are acceptable. As stated earlier, staff feels that the addition of a second set of stairs would create a “duplex” appearance that would detract from the character of this structure.
- Section 32.06(5) of the Historic Preservation Ordinance establishes *Specific Review Criteria* to be used in evaluating COA applications. For this particular application, applicable review criteria include:

- (1) **Roof shape:** *The design of the roof should first be compatible with the architectural style and character of the landmark itself and then, if necessary, with other surrounding structures in the historic district.*

- The applicant has not proposed any changes to the house's distinctive roof.
- (2) *Architectural Details: Architectural details, including materials, colors and textures, should be treated so as to make a landmark compatible with the original architectural style or character of the landmark in the historic district.*
- Staff feels that retention of the square capitals is important. The square capitals are distinctive and should be retained to ensure that the new porch is compatible with the remainder of the house.
- Section 32.06(6) of the Historic Preservation Ordinance states that the Landmarks Commission may grant a COA if it determines:
- (a) In the case of a landmark or landmark site, the proposed work would not detrimentally change, destroy, or adversely affect any exterior architectural feature of the improvement upon which the work is to be done.
 - (b) In the case of the construction of a new improvement upon a landmark site, the exterior of such improvement would not adversely affect or would harmonize with the external appearance of other improvements on such site.
 - (c) In the case of any property located in an historic district, the proposed construction, reconstruction, or exterior alteration conforms to the objectives and design criteria of the historic preservation plan for the City and district.
- Staff believes that the proposed actions, subject to certain conditions, satisfy the standards of Section 32.06(6)(c).
- On a recent visit to the subject property, staff discovered that the applicant's contractor had replaced the columns with a pillar. As stated in the staff-approved COA, this was done with full knowledge that the Landmarks Commission may not approve the request to replace the columns with a pillar. Please see the attached COA for additional information. As shown on the attached photo, both new pillars include a square capital.

Sustainability: (Briefly comment on the sustainable long term impact of this policy or program related to how it will impact both the built and natural environment utilizing the four following eco-municipality guidelines)

- Reduce dependence upon fossil fuels – N/A
- Reduce dependence on chemicals and other manufacturing substances that accumulate in nature – N/A
- Reduce dependence on activities that harm life sustaining eco-systems – N/A
- Meet the hierarchy of present and future human needs fairly and efficiently – N/A

Staff Recommendation:

The Neighborhood Planning Division recommends **denial** of a Certificate of Appropriateness to add a second set of steps to the porch on the house located at 861 Bluff Street, based on the above standards and criteria. If the Landmarks Commission decides to approve this request, staff recommends the inclusion of the conditions outlined below.

The Neighborhood Planning Division recommends **approval** of a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace two porch columns with a pillar on the house located at 861 Bluff Street, subject to the following conditions:

1. The porch shall be painted to match the house. The color shall be one of the colors presented in the City's Historic Preservation Guide.
2. The porch skirting shall be replaced with like materials and painted accordingly.
3. All work must be completed by December 31, 2008.
4. Any changes or additions to this Certificate of Appropriateness must be reviewed and approved by staff prior to the start of any work. Work done without prior approval will be subject to the issuance of correction orders or citations.
5. The applicant must obtain all necessary building permits. The completion date above does not extend any other time limits, such as those imposed by an order from Housing Services.

Fiscal Note/Budget Impact: N/A

Attachments: Location & Zoning Map, Photos, and COA Checklist.

Location & Zoning Map

861 Bluff Street

COA-2008-31



1 inch = 46 feet



Legend

-  Parcels
-  Zoning District

Map prepared by: Drew Pennington
Date: November 2008
For: City of Beloit, Neighborhood Planning
Date of Aerial Photography: April 2008

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING DIVISION



CITY of BELOIT

Neighborhood Planning Division

100 State Street, Beloit, WI 53511 Phone: (608) 364-6700 Fax: (608) 364-6609

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS CHECKLIST

For property located at: 861 Bluff Street

GENERAL REVIEW CRITERIA	YES	NO	N/A
Has every reasonable effort been made to provide a compatible use for a property that requires alteration for use other than for its originally intended purpose?			X
Will the applicant retain distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure or site? The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features should be avoided when possible.	X		
Is the applicant proposing alterations that have a historical basis, rather than trying to create an earlier or later appearance?	X	X	
Has the applicant recognized and respected changes in the development of a building over time that may have acquired significance in their own right?			X
Has the applicant treated with sensitivity distinctive stylistic features, or examples of skilled craftsmanship that characterize a building, structure or site?	X		
Has the applicant repaired, rather than replaced, deteriorated architectural features, wherever possible? If replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design color, texture and other visual qualities.	X		
Has the applicant avoided sandblasting and other cleaning methods that will damage the surface of the historic building?			X
Has the applicant made every possible effort to protect and preserve archeological resources affected by or adjacent to any project?			X
If a contemporary design for alterations and additions is proposed, does this design retain significant historical, architectural or cultural material and is the design compatible with the size, scale, color, material and character of the property and neighborhood?	X		
Are new additions or alterations to buildings done in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the building would be unimpaired?			X