



**PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

**STAFF REPORT**

**DATE:** MAY 21, 2019

**TO:** HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

**FROM:** DAVID M. REYES, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

**SUBJECT:** CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS – ALTERATIONS TO THE EXISTING FRONT PORCH AND STEPS AT 655 S. MADISON AVE. (MADISON AVENUE LANDMARK DISTRICT)

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. Find that the proposed project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15301, Class 1 of the CEQA guidelines pertaining to existing facilities such as an existing single-family dwelling and there are no features that distinguish this project from others in the exempt class and, therefore, there are no unusual circumstances.
2. Find that no protected native, specimen, or landmark trees under the tree protection ordinance (Ch.8.52, Pasadena Municipal Code (PMC)) will be removed by the new construction.
3. Finds that, as conditioned, the proposed project complies with the applicable design guidelines; and, therefore,
4. Approve the Certificate of Appropriateness as illustrated in Attachment A, subject to the following conditions, which shall be subject to further staff review and approval in advance of obtaining a building permit.

**CONDITIONS:**

1. A small-scale mock-up of the Arroyo stone porch elements shall be prepared for staff review and approval to ensure that the stone size and mortar depth are consistent with the historic stonework found on the house.
2. The wooden elements of the porch shall be painted or stained to prevent rapid deterioration.

## **BACKGROUND:**

This two-story transitional Craftsman style house was designed by architect William Bryant Edwards and constructed in 1902 and is a contributing resource to the South Madison Landmark District. The significant character defining-features of this house include a two-story configuration, a steeply pitched and offset front-facing gable roof, a large stone masonry chimney on the front façade, a large shed-style dormer with windows on the south elevation, wood shingle siding, heavy stone columns flanking the entry way, a recessed and uncovered projecting front porch with a low wall currently clad in horizontal lap siding, and a mixture of single- and double-hung wood windows. Based on photographic documentation and permit records, the house has been substantially altered over time. Photos from 1905 show the house previously had different window configurations within the currently observed openings; one of the windows on the front elevation was enlarged, the original front elevation windows did not have shutters, and one of the large windows on the front elevation did not have a heavy denticulated ledge. Other alterations include: two circular louvered gable vents flanked the chimney; the low walls of the front porch were shingled; a gutter led to a decorative leaderhead on the north elevation; and stone masonry walls with concrete caps flanked the porch stairs.

Photos from 2010 show that large wood posts with beams were added to the front porch, although those posts are no longer present today. It is unclear when the majority of the changes occurred, although Sanborn maps show that a two story structure, most likely the porte-cochere and projecting bay on the north elevation, was constructed sometime prior to 1910. In 1969, a large, publicly visible, two-story rear addition, pool and garage with attached accessory structure were constructed. The original garage as depicted in early photographs is no longer present. The house is currently in fair to poor condition, with extensive deferred maintenance.

An application for a Certificate of Appropriateness was approved on September 4, 2018 to allow: paint removal from the existing Arroyo stone components of the front porch, chimney and porte-cochere supports; replacement of the glass in the existing window on the upper right opening of the primary elevation, the window on the primary elevation above the porte-cochere, and the street-facing windows on the shed style dormer on the south elevation with a more durable single pane glass; replacement of four non-original wood sliding windows on the first story projecting bay under the porte-cochere with custom wood double-hung windows; and the infill of the existing window frame of the third bank of windows set back from the front facade (two windows total) of the large shed style dormer on the south elevation. The project approval also allowed for replacement of the existing wood shingles which had been texture-coated and the infilling with new shingles where needed. These improvements are currently under construction.

This item was considered at the December 8, 2018 Historic Preservation Commission meeting. After considering the staff report, receiving comments from the public, and discussion with the applicant, the Commission continued the public hearing to a date uncertain to allow the applicant to further study the design and address the following comments:

1. Reconstruction of the lower portion of the porch elements (low wall, landing, wing walls, stairs, and pilasters) should match the design of the original porch as closely as possible based on the available documentary evidence.
2. New overhead wooden elements, such as an open pergola, may be acceptable. Any new overhead elements should be located over the northern portion of the porch, not block the original entryway, and be designed to ensure that the proposed elements are compatible with the design of the building but clearly distinguishable as contemporary features.
3. The applicant may prepare several options illustrating porch designs for the Commission to consider. However, all options shall be submitted in the format of architectural drawings that are accurately and fully dimensioned, with details for materials and colors specified. Conceptual renderings are not acceptable in lieu of architectural drawings.

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

The applicant has provided a revised porch design that restores the configuration and appearance of the porch steps, landing, Arroyo stone pilasters, wing walls and shingled low porch walls, based on the available historical photos of the property. The revised design also includes an overhead wooden arbor located over the northern portion of the porch. The design of the arbor includes solid wooden members with decorative beam-ends and is generally lighter in appearance than the prior iteration shown to the Commission on December 8, 2018. In addition, the design of the arbor does not block or cover the original historically significant entryway.

#### **ANALYSIS:**

Pursuant to PMC Section 17.62.090, any undertaking requiring a permit such as a porch alteration that significantly alters or changes the street-facing elevation or side elevations of a historic resource in a historic or landmark district is considered a "major project" and requires a Certificate of Appropriateness, with the Historic Preservation Commission serving as the review authority at a noticed public hearing. PMC Section 17.62.090 E.3.b, specifies that approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness shall be based on the following finding:

*If a project is an alteration or new construction, the project complies with the Secretary's Standards or adopted guidelines based on the Secretary's Standards.*

The project was reviewed using the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Design Guidelines for Historic Districts, which are based on the Secretary's Standards. The applicable standards and guidelines include:

#### **Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:**

- Standard 2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
- Standard 3. Each property will 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 elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.

- Standard 5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
- Standard 6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
- Standard 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.
- Standard 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.

**Design Guidelines for Historic Districts:**

- Guideline 5.1: Avoid removing or altering any significant architectural detail.
- Guideline 5.2: Avoid adding elements or details that were not part of the original building.
- Guideline 5.8: Remove only that which is deteriorated and must be replaced.
- Guideline 5.9: Replace missing original details in kind.
- Guideline 7.1: Maintain an historic porch and its detailing.
- Guideline 7.3: If a complete new porch is necessary, reconstruct it to match the original in form and detail.
- Guideline 5.10: Repair or replacement of missing or deteriorated details should be based on original features.
- Guideline 5.12: Avoid adding ornamentation or other decorative elements, unless thorough research indicates that the building once had them.

As conditioned, the revised design is consistent with the applicable standards and guidelines. The porch steps, landing, shingled low walls, and stone pilasters would be restored based on historical photographs of the property. The proposed restoration of these elements respects the form and detailing of the property and avoids adding overly ornate or conjectural features.

The addition of the overhead arbor is also consistent with the applicable standards and guidelines. Although the porch did not originally have an overhead wooden arbor, physical and photographic evidence shows that an arbor was introduced at a later time, most likely in the mid 1900's. The proposed design of the overhead arbor includes high quality wooden posts and lintel members in roughly the same location as the previous posts and lintel. The design of the proposed wooden arbor uses high quality wood, which is compatible with the historic materials of the house, and the design does not obscure or detract from the historically significant character defining features of the house, which is appropriate.

To ensure the proposed Arroyo stone elements of the proposed porch are consistent with the historical design of the house, a condition of approval is included requiring a small-scale mock-up of the Arroyo stone cladding be prepared for staff review and approval prior to construction of the porch. Staff also recommends that all wooden components of the porch be painted or stained to ensure that material is protected from rapid deterioration from exposure to the elements or pests.

**CONCLUSION:**

Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission approve the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to alter the front porch subject to the proposed conditions of approval. The proposed design restores the appearance of the porch based on historical photographs and the proposed wooden arbor is compatible in size, materials and design with the historic character of the structure.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Attachments:

- A. Revised Plans
- B. Photos