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Title: Consider the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) request for a variance for a front porch for the property located at 421 School Street- COA 19-3032

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HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

ACTION REQUESTED:

Consider the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) request for a variance for a front porch for the property located at 421 School Street- COA 19-3032

DEPARTMENT: Transportation, Engineering and Development

SUBMITTED BY: Gabrielle Mattingly

BOARD/COMMISSION REVIEW:

Submitted for Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) review.

BACKGROUND:

The subject property is an approximately 3,685 square foot parcel located on the north side of School Street, with a common street address of 421 School Street. The property is zoned R2 (Single-family and Low-Density Multiple-Family Residence District) and is currently improved with a two story, gabled ell vernacular architectural style residence and detached garage. The City does not have any record of prior COA applications for the subject property.

DISCUSSION:

The homeowner for the subject property is Mark E. Dowd. A COA request has been submitted for approval of a variance in order to construct a one-story wraparound covered front porch onto the existing single-family home. The proposed front porch will consist of the following materials: wood columns, wood railings and handrails, wood skirting, asphalt shingles, wood or trex stairs and flooring, and wood ceiling. The porch will have a gable roof feature that mimics the gable roof style of the home and will have decorative brackets consistent with the existing ornamentation.

Variance Request

The subject property is located in the R2 zoning district which has a front yard setback requirement of 25'. The Naperville Municipal Code allows front porches to extend 5' into the front yard setback, resulting in a setback of 20' from the front property line without triggering the need for a variance. However, the existing home is setback only 19' 6" from the front property line, therefore, any additions made to the front of the home require a variance to encroach further within the setback.

The proposed front porch is 6' wide, resulting in a front yard setback of 13' 6" post construction. The front porch requires approval of a variance in order to encroach into the front yard setback. Staff is in support of the encroachment finding the proposed alteration to be compatible with the existing architectural style of the home. HPC review of the variance is required to determine the effect, if any, that the variance will have on the historic character of the district.

PZC and City Council Review

Once the HPC has provided a recommendation on the request, the variance will be forwarded to the PZC for review. Variance requests are reviewed by the PZC and then forwarded to the City Council for final determination per the requirements in Section 6-3-6 (Variances) of the Naperville Municipal Code.

Factors for Consideration of a Certificate of Appropriateness Application

Review of COA applications are conducted based on the compatibility with the Factors for Consideration of a Certificate of Appropriateness Application (Section 6-11-8:5; Certificate of Appropriateness Required). Analysis of the Factors for Consideration for COA #19-3032, based off of details provided from the petitioner, can be found below. The petitioner has reviewed these responses and is in general agreement with the findings.

5.1. Compatibility With District Character: The Commission and Zoning Administrator shall consider the compatibility of the proposed improvement with the character of the historic district in terms of scale, style, exterior features, building placement and site access, as related to the primary facade (s), in rendering a decision to grant or deny a certificate of appropriateness.

Analysis: Staff notes that many homes within the historic district do not comply with the front yard setback and finds the proposed alteration will not negatively impact the character of the district.

5.2. Compatibility With Architectural Style: The Commission and Zoning Administrator shall consider the compatibility of the proposed improvement with the historic architectural style of the building or structure to be modified by the certificate of appropriateness request.

Analysis: In the Historic Building Design and Resource Manual (HBDRM), the vernacular architectural style is identified as having porches located on the front of the residence or wrapping around the corner. The proposed front porch is consistent with the architectural style of the home as indicated in the HBDRM (page 26).

In addition to the information found within the HBDRM, the 2008 architectural and historical survey of the subject property notes that a front entry porch may have existed previously and has since been removed.

5.3. Economic Reasonableness: The Commission and the Zoning Administrator shall consider the economic reasonableness of any recommended changes determined to be necessary to bring the application into conformity with the character of the historic district.

Analysis: This Factor is not applicable unless modifications to the current request are recommended by the Commission. If the Commission requests modifications be made to the current proposal, then

the Commission shall consider the economic reasonableness of those modifications.

5.4. Energy Conservation Effect: In making its determinations, the Commission and Zoning Administrator shall consider the effect that any recommended changes may have on energy conservation.

Analysis: This Factor is not applicable unless modifications to the current request are recommended by the Commission. If the Commission requests modifications be made to the current proposal, then the Commission shall take the energy conservation of those modifications into consideration. Guidance for energy efficient improvements can be found in the Historic Building Design and Resource Manual, section D.8, "Energy Efficient Improvements", starting on page 57 and within the appendices, section H.3, "Sources of Additional Information", found on page 87.

5.5. Impact of Proposed Demolition: In evaluating any application for demolition of a principal structure in whole, or for certain partial demolitions as determined by the Zoning Administrator, the Commission shall balance the findings presented in the structural analysis, which includes an analysis of the improvements required to restore or repair the structure to a condition that complies with the standards for issuance of an occupancy permit under the provision of [Title 5 <https://library.municode.com/il/naperville/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT5BURE>](#), and the estimated cost of said restoration or repairs, against the architectural and historical significance of the structure.

Analysis: This factor is not applicable to the current request.

5.6. The City's Historic Building Design and Resource Manual (HBDRM) may be used as a resource in consideration of the above.

Analysis: The HBDRM states construction of new porches that are appropriate to the style and period of the home in overall design and scale to be an acceptable form of modification.

Key Takeaways

- The petitioner is requesting approval of a variance in order to construct a new wrap around front porch for the property located at 421 School Street (COA 19-3032). The HPC review is required for the alterations made to the street facing façade and to determine the effect, if any, that the variance will have on the historic character of the district.
- Staff is in support of the proposal finding the alterations to be more consistent with the architectural style of the home.