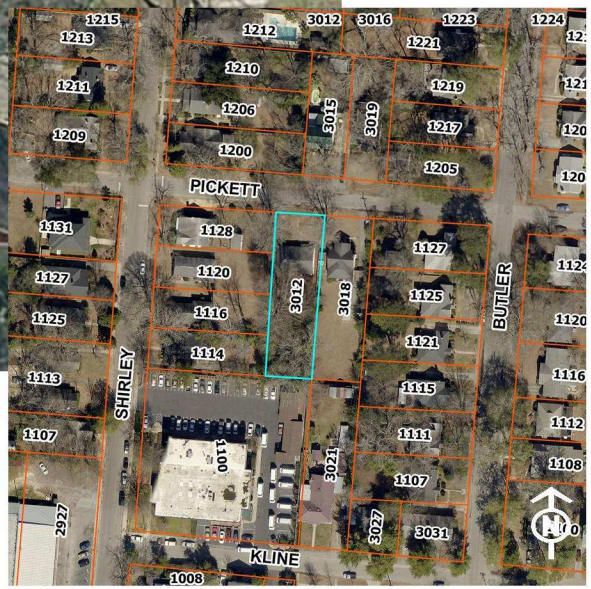

D/DRC Case

3012 Pickett Street

Melrose Heights/Oak Lawn Architectural Conservation District

TMS: 13901-17-02

DESIGN/DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMISSION

DESIGN REVIEW DISTRICT
HISTORIC AGENDA

EVALUATION SHEET

Case # 5

ADDRESS: 3012 Pickett Street

APPLICANT: William Hungiville, owner

TAX MAP REFERENCE: TMS#13901-17-02

USE OF PROPERTY: Residential

REVIEW DISTRICT: Melrose Heights/Oak Lawn Architectural Conservation District

NATURE OF REQUEST: Request Certificate of Design Approval for exterior changes

FINDINGS/COMMENTS:

This is a c. 1950 brick veneer duplex that is contributing to the Melrose Heights/Oak Lawn Architectural Conservation District. As cited in the guidelines, multiple-family homes like this were part of the building boom after World War II and a transition to the small Ranch style of architecture that dots a few parcels in the district, and the period of significance for this district extends into the early 1950s. The building has had some alterations in the past, including the addition of vinyl siding in the side gables and the painting of the brick exterior; however these changes have not eradicated the historic integrity of the building which until recently retained its historic form and its original windows.

A neighbor alerted staff that the owner had replaced the original metal windows on this home with vinyl windows. Staff sent a letter to the owner on record with the county but unfortunately the records had not been updated since a recent sale in January so it did not reach the new owner. The new owner started building a front porch on the building and was stopped by City inspectors for not having a permit. The new owner is a contractor. When he came in to pull a permit he was directed to staff who explained that the property was within a historic district and that exterior changes had to be reviewed by the D/DRC. He stated he was adding a gable to the front so that the house would look more like other houses in the area. He stopped working on the exterior of the property to await a decision by the D/DRC.

PERTINENT SECTIONS FROM GUIDELINES

SECTION 7-2: WINDOWS

Principles

Windows are a significant character-defining feature of any structure. They are like a piece of good furniture. Original windows were constructed so that individual components could be repaired, instead of requiring an entire new unit if one piece breaks or rots. This often means that an existing, historic window can be repaired for far less cost than a replacement. See the resource section for instructions on window repair and upgrade.

Repair of a historic window is the best first step when confronted with a damaged or deteriorated unit. If after careful evaluation, window frames and sash are so deteriorated they need replacement, they should be duplicated. Replacement windows must be selected with care. They should generally match the original sash, pane size, configuration, glazing, materials, muntin and mullion detailing, and profile. Small differences between replacement and historic windows can make big differences in appearance.

If 50% or more are deteriorated or missing, then wholesale replacement of windows is allowable. When choosing replacements, the qualities of the original windows should be used as criteria. Consider the following features of the original:
trim detail;
size, shape of frame, sash;
location of meeting rail;
reveal or set-back of window from wall plane;
materials, reflective qualities of glass.
muntin, mullion profiles, configuration.

The new windows need not be exact replicas of the originals. In the Melrose Heights/ Oak Lawn Architectural Conservation District, it is appropriate to substitute a window configuration found during the homes period of significance for the original. For instance, many homes have four slender panes over a single pane. It would be appropriate, if these units were deteriorated, to replace them with a 1/1 configuration.

Guidelines

i. When technically and economically feasible, repair of deteriorated or damaged windows shall be preferred over replacement.

Staff spoke with a contractor for the previous owner in September 2013 who stated that the windows were in need of some repair. That contractor had no experience with repairing windows so he was not able to offer a realistic assessment of what was needed for repairs. Staff's photographs from September 2013 show some peeling paint which may suggest some areas of rust. The true condition of the original sashes is unknown.

ii. If replacement of a small number of units is deemed necessary after evaluating the sill, frame, sash, paint and wood surface, hardware, weather-stripping, stops, trim, operability, and glazing, replace with units that match the original in detailing, size, reflective quality, and materials.

Replacement cannot be deemed necessary as staff has no opportunity to review the original sashes. The replacement units do not match the original in detailing, size, reflective quality and materials due to the fact that they are 6/6 double hung vinyl windows with interior grids instead of the metal casement windows, each with 8 stacked, equally-sized true divided lights.

iii. If wholesale replacement is found to be necessary, either match the original unit or substitute a unit appropriate to the home's period of significance, maintaining the use of historic materials.

It is not known if wholesale replacement was necessary but it did not appear to be, given the site visit staff completed in September 2013 which showed no large areas of missing glass or loose window sashes.

Had the windows needed replacement, the units installed currently are not appropriate to the building's period of significance and do not maintain the use of historic materials.

iv. Improve the thermal performance of existing windows and doors through adding or replacing weather stripping and adding storm windows which are compatible with the character of the building and which do not damage window frames.

Not applicable.

SECTION 6: ADDITIONS

Principles

It is often necessary to increase the space of a building in order for it to continue to adapt to the owner's needs. Over time, a family's space needs change and, in order to accommodate these needs, a building may need to be enlarged. While these additions are permitted, they should serve to reinforce and not detract from the existing architectural form and design of the building.

Additions should not significantly alter original distinguishing qualities of buildings such as the basic form, materials, fenestration, and stylistic elements. They should be clearly distinguished from original portions of building and should result in minimal damage to it. Character defining features of the historic building should not be radically changed, obscured, damaged, or destroyed in the process of adding new construction. The size and scale of the new addition should be in proportion to the historic portion of the building and clearly subordinate to it. Additions should be attached to the rear or least conspicuous side of the building. They should be constructed so that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the building will be unimpaired.

Guidelines

1. Site additions so that they do not detract from or obstruct important architectural features of the existing building or others around it, especially the principle façade.

The addition on the front obstructs the simple, original roof form of the building, which is an important feature on the principle façade. It also diminishes the view of the doubled recessed entry on the principle façade.

2. Design additions to be compatible with the original structure in materials, style and detailing.

The new porch features a gable roof, but it is a front gable intersecting with the house's only gable, which is a lateral gable. As there are no written plans for the detailing of the porch addition it is not known how the completed product would have been compatible with the original structure in materials, style and detailing. As vinyl is not a siding material allowed for new construction in the district, the gable would need to be a different product. The columns would also be a key part of the design and would need to be compatible with the building.

3. Limit the size and scale of additions so that the integrity of the original structure is not compromised.

The size and scale of the addition does not compromise the size and scale of the original structure.

4. Additions are also subject to the guidelines for new construction.

SECTION 5: NEW CONSTRUCTION

Principles

Within the Melrose Heights/Oak Lawn district, there are numerous vacant lots and noncontributing structures. The construction of new or replacement structures on these lots will greatly affect the district by either reinforcing or undermining existing historic patterns. New construction should be consistent with existing buildings along a street in terms of height, scale, proportion and rhythm of openings, setbacks, orientation and spacing. However, new buildings

need not imitate past architectural styles to be successful infill; they may reflect the era of their own construction while using significant themes, such as height, materials, roof form, massing, set-back, and the rhythm of openings to insure that a new building blends with its context. It is hoped that the new construction of today will be contemporary and contextual so that it will be worthy of the affection and designation of future residents.

Guidelines

1. Height: The characteristic height in Melrose Heights/Oak Lawn is 1 to 2 stories. Construct new buildings to a height that is compatible with the height of surrounding historic buildings. New construction shall not vary greatly in height from older buildings in the vicinity

The height is consistent with the building.

2. Size & Scale: The size and scale of a new building shall be visually compatible with surrounding buildings Although much larger than its neighbors in terms of square footage, the building shown maintains the same scale and rhythm as the existing buildings. Do not construct buildings that disrupt the existing scale of the area.

The size and scale do not overwhelm the building.

3. Massing: Arrange the mass of a new building (the relationship of solid components (ex. walls, columns, etc.) to open spaces (ex. windows, doors, arches)) so that it is compatible with existing historic buildings on the block or street. Breaking up uninteresting boxlike forms into smaller, varied masses is essential to maintaining the character of the streetscape. Do not construct single, monolithic forms that are not relieved by variations in massing.

Not applicable.

4. Setback: Locate the new building on the site so that the distance of the structure from the right of way is similar to adjacent structures. In Melrose Heights/Oak Lawn, the characteristic setback is between 10 – 20'. Do not violate the existing setback pattern by placing buildings in front of or behind existing façade lines.

Not applicable.

5. Sense of Entry: Place the main entrance and the associated architectural elements (porches, steps, etc.) so that they are compatible to surrounding structures. The main entrance shall be constructed with covered porches, porticos or other architectural forms that are found on historic structures on the block or street. Do not construct facades without a strong sense of entry.

This guideline refers to new construction of a building and its language about "covered porches" is not meant to indicate that a house which never featured a porch should be given one in order to meet the guideline. This building accomplished its sense of entry with the use of a recessed bay, which allowed an unbroken roof plane to continue across the length of the building. The sense of entry was also heightened by the larger windows in the recessed bay.

6. Rhythm of Openings: Construct new buildings so that the relationship of width to height of windows and doors, and the rhythm of solids (walls) to voids (door & window openings) is visually compatible with historic buildings on the block or street. Maintain a similar ratio of height to width in the bays of the façade. Do not introduce incompatible façade patterns that upset the rhythm of openings established in surrounding structures.

Not applicable.

7. Roof Shape: Use roof shapes, pitches, and materials that are visually compatible with those of surrounding buildings. Nearly all of the buildings in Melrose Heights/Oak Lawn have pitched roofs, with gable, hip or a combination thereof as the predominant style. Do not introduce roof shapes or pitches that are not found in the area.

While front gable roofs and intersecting gables are found in the area, the use on this building introduces a non-original element and creates a more complex roof form of intersecting gables than what was in the original design intent for the building.

8. Outbuildings: Construct garage and storage buildings so that they reflect the character of the existing house and are compatible in terms of height, scale, and roof shape. Place such buildings away from the primary façade of the building. Do not allow outbuildings to obscure character-defining features of a building.

Not applicable.

9. Materials, Texture, Details: Use materials, textures, and architectural features that are visually compatible with those of historic buildings on the block or street. When selecting architectural details, consider the scale, placement, profile, and relief of details on surrounding structures for the basis of design decisions. If horizontal siding is to be used, consider the board size, width of exposure, length, and trim detail such as corner boards on adjacent historic structure for specifications of the new material.

As the porch addition is incomplete and there are no drawings to indicate the materials and details of the addition it is difficult to determine the compatibility of the addition.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff finds that the proposal does not meet Sections 5, 6 and 7-2 of the guidelines and recommends that the request for Certificate of Design Approval be denied. Staff also recommends removal of the vinyl windows and replacement with a casement style window of aluminum-clad wood or wood, and recommends removal of the porch addition within 60 days.

Images by staff from September 2013

Images by staff from February 2014

Images by staff from March 2014

Homes across the street and next door