



D/DRC Case

2303 Park Street

Elmwood Park Architectural Conservation District

TMS: 09012-13-16

DESIGN/DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMISSION
DESIGN REVIEW DISTRICT
HISTORIC AGENDA
EVALUATION SHEET
Case #2

ADDRESS: 2303 Park Street

APPLICANT: Lynn Tribble, homeowner

TAX MAP REFERENCE: TMS#09012-13-16

USE OF PROPERTY: Residential

REVIEW DISTRICT: Elmwood Park Architectural Conservation District

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

FINDINGS/COMMENTS:

This is a request to add front porch railings to the ca. 1910 two-story wood-sided house located at 2303 Park Street in the Elmwood Park Architectural Conservation District. This house is a contributing structure in the local historic district as well as in the Elmwood Park National Register of Historic Places district. The house does not currently feature a balustrade or any type of porch railings, and it appears that it has been this way for some time. Staff located a photograph of the house from 1968 that shows very crude rails with no balusters, which were obviously not original. The front porch columns have been replaced, so staff was unable to inspect for evidence of an original balustrade.

Although this particular house may not have featured porch railings originally, the use of porch railings and balustrades in Elmwood Park is prevalent. The originality of these features would have to be assessed on a case-by-case basis; however, it is safe to assume that balustrades were originally installed on many houses in the district to add architectural interest while also addressing safety concerns. The finished porch floor height of 2303 Park Street is approximately 30" at its highest point, which means that installing porch railings would be required if this were a new construction project or if the applicant were to bring the current porch up to current building code standards.

The applicant has proposed installing a balustrade that will consist of treated wood or cedar rails with turned wood balusters. Turned balusters were traditionally used on porches that featured turned or round columns, so this would be a historically appropriate solution for the house. The new porch railing system will be required to meet current building codes since it will be entirely new. This means that the height of the balustrade may be greater and the balusters may be closer together than what is typically seen on historic balustrades. Although the applicant has not requested for the railings to continue down the steps, code enforcement may require guards with at least one graspable handrail to be installed. Staff will be happy to work with the applicant on these details if required to meet code.

PERTINENT SECTIONS FROM THE CITY ORDINANCE

Section 17-674(d) Criteria for review of design of structures and sites.

(1)b In architectural conservation districts and protection areas, the historic character of a district shall be retained and preserved through the preservation of historic materials and features which characterize the district.

If the house originally featured a balustrade, it was removed many years ago. Porches with balustrades are prevalent in the district and add to its historic character. Installing a new historically correct balustrade to 2303 Park Street will not diminish the character of the district. A new balustrade, however, will most likely be higher and the balusters closer together than what is typically seen on historic balustrades. This is because the new balustrade will have to meet current building code requirements.

(5) Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.

The design of the proposed balustrade will be based on historic examples on adjacent properties. The balustrade will be constructed of treated wood or cedar with turned wood balusters. All new materials will feature a painted finish to match the existing trim. Plastic, vinyl, or PVC products are not permitted in architectural conservation districts.

(6) Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

The applicant has not provided any documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence to substantiate that a front porch balustrade ever existed at this property. There are, however, similar houses in the district that currently feature balustrades. In fact, there are more houses with porch railings than without in the block on which 2303 Park Street is located. Staff contends that installing a historically correct balustrade would add architectural character and make the porch safer.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff recommends granting a Certificate of Design Approval for the project as proposed with the following conditions:

- A new wood balustrade with turned balusters shall be installed to visually match historic examples found on similar houses within the district.
- All new wood features shall feature a painted finish
- All details deferred to staff including any additional work required to meet code

2303 Park Street – Elmwood Park Architectural Conservation District



Minimal porch rails – February 1968 – Joseph Winter Collection

Photo courtesy of USC Digital Collections



Existing conditions

2303 Park Street – Elmwood Park Architectural Conservation District



Existing conditions – façade



Left corner

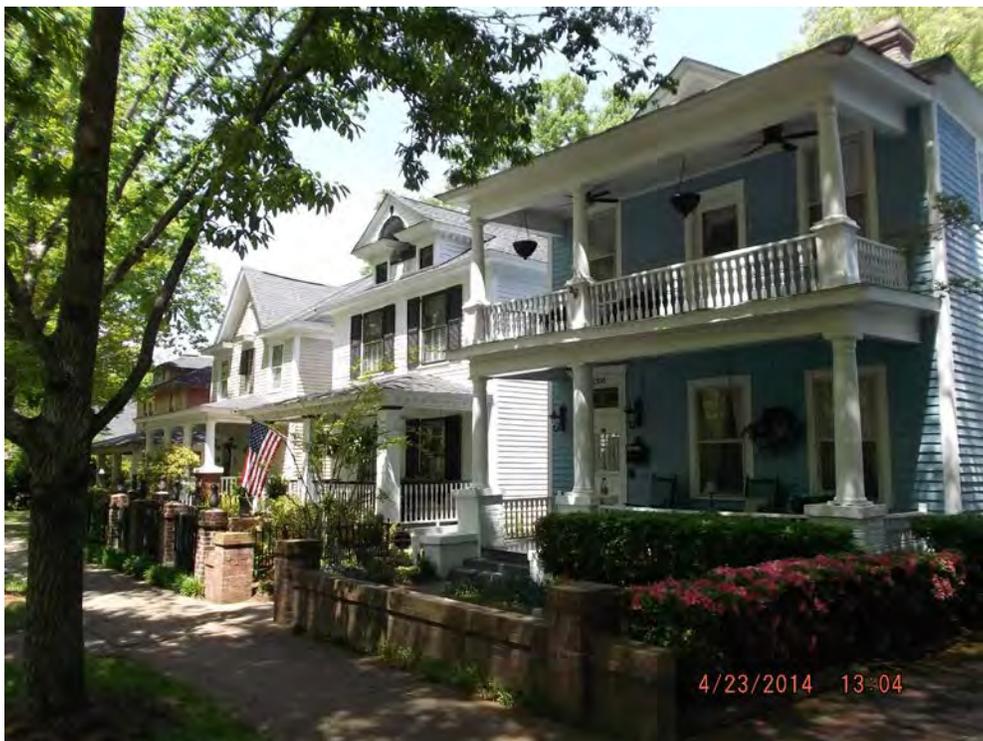


Front steps

2303 Park Street – Elmwood Park Architectural Conservation District



Neighboring property with balustrade



Properties across the street with balustrades



Photos submitted by applicant

