

D/DRC Case

1811 Pickens Street

Landmark District

TMS: 11403-01-10



DESIGN/DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMISSION
DESIGN REVIEW DISTRICT
HISTORIC AGENDA
EVALUATION SHEET
Case # 1

ADDRESS: 1811 Pickens Street

APPLICANT: Ralph Barbier, Superior Properties LLC, owner

TAX MAP REFERENCE: TMS#11403-01-10

USE OF PROPERTY: Commercial, Office

REVIEW DISTRICT: Landmark District

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

FINDINGS/COMMENTS:

This is a Folk Victorian house built around 1913. It contributes to the Landmark District. This district has the highest level of review of any historic district and therefore buildings in this area are held to a high standard. The applicant is requesting approval of a porch floor made of deck boards and a new front door.

Staff passed by the property in late August and noted that the entire front porch floor had been replaced. Staff spoke with a contractor on site, and asked if he had replaced the porch floor and if he had a permit. He said he did not do the floor and that he was working on trim inside and did not need a permit for that work. The new porch floor was made of deck boards, not porch floor boards, which are generally about 3 inches wide with a tongue and groove design. Staff promptly sent a letter to the owner of record but it was returned. Staff got the new owner's mailing address from Richland County and sent a letter on September 12, 2014. In that letter staff stated that "exterior changes must be reviewed by the City."

On September 25, 2014, building owner Ralph Barbier, Superior Properties LLC, called staff in response to their letter. Staff spoke with Mr. Barbier about the porch floor replacement and the porch roof. At the time, Mr. Barbier stated that his contractor told him he had the appropriate permit, but had not yet produced the permit for the porch floor. Staff expressed again that exterior changes on the building had to be reviewed.

On October 9, 2014 Staff noted that the front door had been replaced, and spoke with the same contractor on site that had they had spoken to previously. At this encounter the contractor admitted that he had put in the porch floor but he did not get a permit because he told the City's permit staff he was doing inside trim work and flooring, and "it was their fault they did not ask the right questions" about his work. Interior flooring apparently does not require a permit because of the understanding that the subfloor is not being altered, however, as there is no subfloor on porches they do require permits for changes to flooring. Ultimately, it is the contractor's

responsibility to obtain proper permits for the work. A permit will still be required regardless of the D/DRC's decision.

Staff contacted the owner concerning the front door and explained again that exterior changes had to be reviewed and asked that no more exterior work be conducted without the proper review and permits.

PERTINENT SECTIONS FROM CITY ORDINANCE

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

1. Issuance of a certificate of design approval shall be based upon the requirements set forth in the standards or design guidelines adopted by the city council for each historic district. For individual landmarks, the Governor's Mansion Protection Area, Elmwood Park Architectural Conservation District, and the Landmark District, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, as amended and listed below (the "Standards"), shall serve as guidelines until such time as design guidelines may be written and adopted by City Council for each local historic district. The Standards are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects, taking into account the designation level of each district.

a. For landmark districts and individual landmarks, the historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

The door that was just replaced on the house was not the original door; it appears to have been installed since the early 1980s.

As staff was not alerted before work began they could not review the porch flooring to see if it appeared to be original. The applicant has not provided any documentation or photographs to prove that the flooring that was removed was not original.

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 historic district.

Not applicable.

c. For individual landmarks and the landmark district, each property shall 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 architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.

The door installed is not a typical front door design for a 1910s Folk Victorian style home nor does it replicate the original door; therefore it could be considered conjectural. In looking at two images from the early 1980s (one is included at the end of the evaluation, the other is on file at the State Archives), it is apparent that the door on the house at that time had a lattice work panel detail on the bottom half with a rectangular piece of glass on the top half. Staff has located this same door in a catalog from 1910, which is close to the latest possible construction date of 1913 for this building.

In looking at several door catalogues from the 1910s it is apparent that none of the doors featured an arch top nor did they feature muntins in the glass. Rear doors sometimes had muntins, but not the front doors. Patterns within this district and in other houses from the 1910s reveals that local patterns followed the same trends as those found in the catalogues;

glass was rectangular with no muntins. The door that has been installed is a change that is not in keeping with this guideline.

The owner stated that they were putting back what was on the porch floor, but Staff explained that regardless of what was on the porch most recently, when they do a complete removal of that material they must return to something in keeping with the historic materials and features that would have originally been on the building. Staff is unaware of the condition of the porch floor but historic porch floors are always tongue and groove wood, creating a seamless appearance.

There is no historic precedent for using deck boards as a front porch floor. Deck boards are for decks; they are marketed as such and are commonly understood to be for decks. Similarly, porch flooring is marketed as such and features the traditional tongue and groove interlocking edges, much like an interior wood floor. The sidewalk (public right of way) on this street is very close to the building so the porch floor is very evident as an alteration to the front of the house. The deck boards are much wider than traditional porch flooring and they have gaps between them.

d. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

f. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severe deterioration or complete loss requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, finish, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence, and character-defining features that have been lost due to intentional damage, removal or neglect shall be rebuilt.

The door is a distinctive feature that had previously been missing from the home. The c. 1980s door that was in the house was clearly not original. When that door was removed, replacement by a new door appears to require a door that matches in “design, color, finish, texture” etc. to meet this ordinance. If the Colonial door had not been removed then there would have been no review needed as there would have been no exterior change. The new door fails to match the original door, which appears to be intact in early 1980s images. The new door has an arched glass inset with muntins; both the arch shape and the muntins are not typical of doors of the era and the door in general does not meet this ordinance as it does not match the old design.

While Staff does not know what was on the porch floor immediately preceding its recent wholesale replacement, it is another example where the complete loss of the original material should generate replacement with a new material that matches the old in “design, color, finish, texture and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials.” Wood porch flooring to match historic patterns is still widely available today, so it is possible to meet this ordinance with modern materials.

g. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

Not applicable.

b. 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.

Not applicable.

i. 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.

Not applicable.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff finds that the proposal does not meet Section 17-674(d) of the City Ordinance and recommends that the request for Certificate of Design Approval be denied.

Staff recommends replacement of the porch floor with appropriate porch flooring within 60 days in order to comply with Section 17-674(d) of the City Ordinance. Appropriate porch flooring would be approximately 3 to 4 inches wide and 3/4 inch thick.

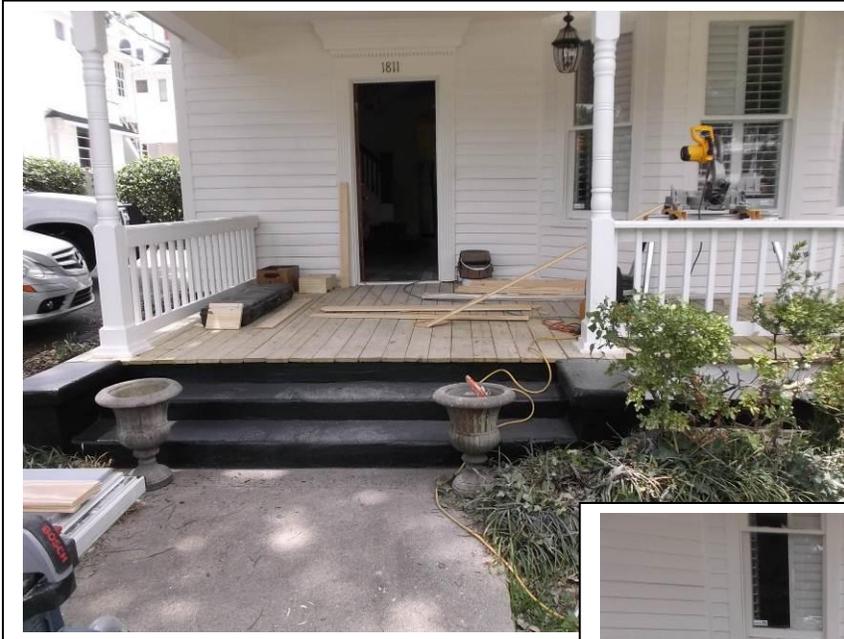
Staff recommends removal of the new door within 60 days, with a replacement door to match the original in order to meet Section 17-674(d) of the City Ordinance, or they may reinstall the recently removed Colonial door. If they reinstall the Colonial door then there is no exterior change to review.



Before Image (from www.Inimg.com)



Current Image, staff photo



Staff photos of porch floor immediately after replacement

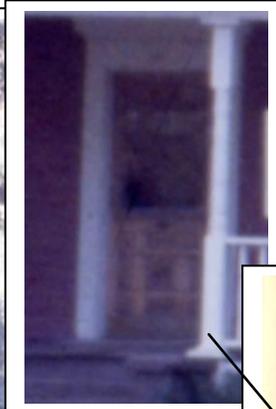


Ca. 1980s door, removed, applicant photo



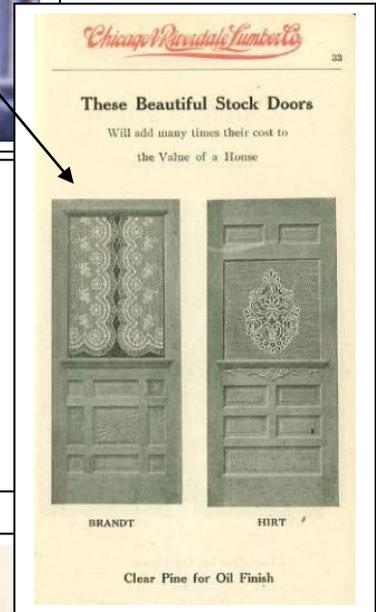
New door, installed without approval

Applicant photo



Slide from early 1980s, City of Columbia collection, with inset showing close up of what was likely an original door, removed in the 1980s

A 1910 catalog features a very similar door to the one shown on this c. 1913 house (Lumber Millwork, cat. 31, www.archive.org)



1992 Survey Photo, City of Columbia collection

