

**CITY OF SAINT PAUL  
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT**

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FILE NAME: 1373 Summit Avenue  
DATE OF APPLICATION: June 5, 2015  
APPLICANT: Joe and Tina Shaffer  
OWNER: same  
DATE OF PUBLIC HEARING: June 25, 2015  
HPC SITE/DISTRICT: Summit Avenue West Heritage Preservation District  
CATEGORY: Contributing  
CLASSIFICATION: Building Permit  
STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: Bill Dermody  
DATE: June 19, 2015

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**A. SITE DESCRIPTION:** The Thomas E. Yerxa House at 1373 Summit Avenue was constructed in 1890. This two-and-one-half-story Georgian Revival style house has weatherboard sheathing with limestone foundation and asphalt bellcast hipped roof with dentilled brackets. The facade is symmetrical with projecting balustraded front portico supported by eight fluted Doric columns with pilasters of the same order echoed on the second story. The second story central window has a Palladian motif. The roof is dominated by a central gabled dormer with paired windows under a rounded arch. Windows are one-over-one, fixed-lite and some have bullet glass. The property, including the rear shiplap-sided three-car garage, is contributing to the local and the National Register Summit West Historic District.

**B. PROPOSED CHANGES:** The applicant proposes the following alterations to the property:

1. Remove a one-story porch at the rear of the residence.
2. Construct a one-story, 27'-6" x 17'-6" addition to the northwest portion of the house with two points of outdoor access: a door/stoop near the mudroom at the northwest corner and French doors at addition's east side adjacent to a new outdoor terrace. The addition's detailing will match that of the existing rear façade.
3. Construct outdoor terrace adjacent to northeast portion of the house.
4. Convert part of the main level screened porch on the house's east side to an indoor sun room, with 4 new windows.
5. Provide new combination screen/storm windows to replace existing windows in remaining portion of the main level screened porch.
6. Convert the 2<sup>nd</sup> story screened porch on the house's east side to a dressing room, including removal of 4 windows in the building's rear and 2 windows on the building's east wall, and replacement of the remaining 10 windows.
7. Expand the 2<sup>nd</sup> story master bathroom over the existing single-story rear porch, including 2 new windows. The bathroom will extend north to the same extent as the 2<sup>nd</sup> story screened porch that is proposed to be converted.

**C. BACKGROUND:**

The property received HPC staff approvals for a new metal fence in May 2015, a rear storm door in 2009, a wood fence in 2009, storm windows in 2008, replacement of French doors in 2008, and installation of condenser units in 2008. The property received HPC approval in 2008 for a new garage accessed via the alley (HPC File #08-025).

**GUIDELINE CITATIONS:**

**SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION**

1. *A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.*
2. *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.*
3. *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.*
4. *Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.*
5. *Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.*
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.*
7. *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.*
8. *Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.*
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.*
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.*

**Summit Avenue West District Guidelines**

**Sec. 74.36. - Restoration and rehabilitation.**

(a) *General Principles:*

- (1) *All work should be of a character and quality that maintains the distinguishing features of the building and the environment. The removal or alteration of distinctive architectural features should be avoided.*
- (2) *Deteriorated architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible. In the event of replacement, new materials should match the original in composition, design, color, texture and appearance. Duplication of original design based on physical or pictorial evidence is preferable to using conjectural of "period" designs or using parts of other buildings.*
- (3) *Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship characteristic of structures of a period should be treated sensitively.*
- (4) *Buildings should be used for their originally intended purpose or compatible uses which require minimum alteration of the building and its site.*

(5) *In general, buildings should be restored to their original appearance. However, alterations to buildings since their construction are sometimes significant because they reflect the history of the building and neighborhood. This significance should be respected and restoration to an "original" appearance may not be desirable in some cases. All buildings should be recognized as products of their own time and not be altered to resemble buildings from an earlier era.*

(6) *Whenever possible, new additions or alterations to structures should be done in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the structure would be unimpaired.*

(b) *Walls and Foundations:*

(1) *Deteriorated surface materials should be replaced with material used in original construction or with materials that resemble the appearance of the old as closely as possible. Imitative materials, such as artificial stone and artificial brick veneer, should not be used.*

(2) *Original masonry and mortar should be retained whenever possible without the application of any surface treatment. Masonry should be cleaned only when necessary to halt deterioration and always with the gentlest method possible, such as low pressure water and soft natural bristle brushes. Brick and stone surfaces should not be sandblasted. This method of cleaning erodes the surface of the material and accelerates deterioration. Chemical cleaning products which could have an adverse chemical reaction with the masonry material should not be used.*

(3) *Original mortar joint size and profile should be retained and replacement mortar should match the original mortar in color and texture. Materials and ingredient proportions similar to the original mortar should be used when repointing, with replacement mortar softer than the masonry units and no harder than the historic mortar. This will create a bond similar to the original and is necessary to prevent damage to the masonry units. Repointing with mortar of high Portland cement content often creates a bond stronger than is appropriate for the original building materials, possibly resulting in cracking or other damage. Mortar joints should be carefully washed after set-up to retain the neatness of the joint lines and keep extraneous mortar off of masonry surfaces.*

(4) *The original color and texture of masonry surfaces should be retained. While unpainted masonry surfaces should not be painted, paint should not be indiscriminately removed from masonry surfaces because some brick surfaces were originally meant to be painted. Color is a significant design element, and paint colors should be appropriate to the period and style of the structure. Building permits are not required for painting and, although the heritage preservation commission may review and comment on paint color, paint color is not subject to heritage preservation commission approval.*

(c) *Roofs and Chimneys:*

(2) *The original roof type, slope and overhangs should be preserved. The shape of existing dormers should also be preserved. New dormers may be acceptable in some cases if compatible with the original design. Modern skylights are a simple way to alter a roof to admit light and air without disrupting its plane surface, are less noticeable than dormers, and may also be acceptable. Skylights should be flat and as close to the roof plane as possible. They should not be placed on the front roof plane.*

(3) *Chimneys should be restored to their original condition. In the absence of historical documentation on the original design, chimney design should be in keeping with the period and style of the building.*

(d) *Windows and Doors:*

(1) *Existing window and door openings should be retained. New window and door openings should not be introduced into principal elevations. Enlarging or reducing window or door openings to fit stock window sash or new stock door sizes should not be done. The size of window panes or sash should not be altered. Such changes destroy the scale and proportion of the building.*

(2) *Window sash, glass, lintels, sills, architraves, doors, pediments, hoods, steps and all hardware should be retained. Discarding original doors and door hardware, when they can be repaired and reused in place, should be avoided.*

(3) *The stylistic period(s) a building represents should be respected. If replacement of window sash or doors is necessary, the replacement should duplicate the material, design and hardware of the older window sash or door. Inappropriate new window and door features such as aluminum storm and screen window combinations, plastic or metal strip awnings, or fake shutters that disturb the character and appearance of the building should not be used. Combination storm windows should have wood frames or be painted to match trim colors.*

(e) *Exterior Architectural Features:*

(1) *Porches and steps which are appropriate to the building and its development should be maintained or restored. Porches and steps removed from the building should be reconstructed to be compatible in design and detail with the period and style of the building. In general, front porches should not be enclosed and precast steps should be avoided.*

(2) *Decorative architectural features such as cornices, brackets, railings and those around front doors and windows should be preserved. New material used to repair or replace, where necessary, deteriorated architectural features of wood, iron, cast iron, terra-cotta, tile and brick should match the original as closely as possible.*

(3) *Shutters should not be used on buildings not designed for them. If used, they should be large enough to cover the entire window area, should be functional and operable, and should not look as if they were simply flat-mounted on the wall.*

(4) *Deck and firestair additions may be acceptable in some cases, but should be kept to the rear of buildings where they will be the most inconspicuous and detract the least from the historical context. The detailing of decks and exterior stairs should be compatible with the period and style of the building.*

(Ord. No. 17116, § 2(2), 3-1-90)

**Sec. 74.37. - New construction.**

(a) *General Principles: The basic principle for new construction in the Summit Avenue West District is to maintain the scale and quality of design of the district. The Summit Avenue West District is architecturally diverse within an overall pattern of harmony and continuity. These guidelines for new construction focus on general rather than specific design elements in order to encourage architectural innovation and quality design while maintaining the harmony and continuity of the district. New construction should be compatible with the size, scale, massing, height, rhythm, setback, color, material, building elements, site design, and character of surrounding structures and the area.*

(b) *Massing and Scale: New construction should conform to the massing, volume, height, facade proportions and scale of existing surrounding structures. The scale of the spaces between buildings and the rhythm of buildings to open space should also be carefully considered. New*

*houses should be at least twenty-five (25) feet high and relate to the height of existing adjacent houses. New college buildings should relate to nearby contributing college buildings; new college buildings with a smaller setback from Summit should have a correspondingly lower height.*

*(c) Materials and Details:*

*(1) Variety in the use of architectural materials and details adds to the intimacy and visual delight of the district. But there is also an overall thread of continuity provided by the range of materials commonly used along Summit and by the way these materials are used. This thread of continuity is threatened by the introduction of new industrial materials and the aggressive exposure of earlier materials such as concrete block, metal framing and glass. The materials and details of new construction should relate to the materials and details of existing nearby buildings.*

*(2) Most buildings on Summit are built of high-quality materials, often with brick or stucco walls and asphalt or tile roofs. Most brick is red and tile roofs are either red or green. Vinyl, metal or hardboard siding is acceptable only for accessory structures which are not visible from Summit. Imitative materials such as artificial stone and artificial brick veneer should not be used. Materials will be reviewed to determine their appropriate use in relation to the overall design of the structure.*

*(3) The materials and details of new college buildings should relate to the materials and details of nearby contributing college buildings. The Macalester College campus has buildings predominantly of red brick with concrete or sandstone trim. The College of St. Thomas presents cream-colored Kasota stone buildings to the Summit Avenue streetscape.*

*(4) The color of materials should relate to surrounding structures and the area as well as to the style of the structure. Building permits are not required for painting and, although the heritage preservation commission may review and comment on paint color, paint color is not subject to heritage preservation commission approval.*

*(d) Building Elements: Individual elements of a building should be integrated into its composition for a balanced and complete design. These elements of new construction should complement existing adjacent structures as well.*

*(1) Roofs. There is a great variety of roof treatments along Summit, but gable and hipped roofs are most common. The skyline or profile of new construction should relate to the predominant roof shape of existing nearby buildings.*

*The recommended pitch for gable roofs is 9:12 (rise-to-run ratio) and in general the minimum appropriate pitch is 8:12. Highly visible secondary structure roofs should match the roof pitch of the main structure. A 6:12 pitch may be acceptable in some cases for secondary structures which are not visible from the street.*

*Roof hardware such as skylights, vents and metal pipe chimneys should not be placed on the front roof plane.*

*(2) Windows and doors. The proportion, size, rhythm and detailing of windows and doors should be compatible with that of existing nearby buildings. Facade openings of the same general size as those in nearby buildings are encouraged. Sliding windows, awning windows and horizontally oriented muntins are not common in the district and are generally unacceptable. Vertical muntins and muntin grids may be acceptable when compatible with the period and style of the building. Sliding glass doors should not be used where they would be visible from the street.*

*Although not usually improving the appearance of a building, the use of metal windows*

*or doors need not necessarily ruin it. The important thing is that they should look like part of the building and not like the raw metal appliances. Appropriately colored bronze-toned aluminum is acceptable. Mill finish (silver) aluminum should be avoided.*

*(3) Porches and decks. Front entrance ways should be articulated with a suitable design element to provide a transitional zone between the public outdoors and the private interior, and should be appropriate in detail to the size and style of the building. If front porches are constructed, they should generally not be enclosed.*

*Decks should be kept to the rear of the buildings, should be visually refined, and should be integrated into the overall building design. A raised deck protruding from a single wall usually appears disjointed from the total design and is generally unacceptable.*

(e) Site:

*(1) Setback siting. New buildings should generally face Summit Avenue and be sited at a distance not more than five (5) percent out-of-line from the front yard setback of existing adjacent buildings. Setbacks greater than those of adjacent buildings may be allowed in some cases.*

*(2) Landscaping. The streetscape can be divided into three (3) visual areas: public, semipublic and private. Public space is provided by the publicly owned sidewalks, boulevards, streets and medians. Semipublic space includes front yards and side yards on corners. While privately owned, this space is open to view by passersby. Private space is generally that which lies behind the front face of the building. Buildings, landscaping elements in front yards and boulevard trees provide a "wall of enclosure" for the street "room." Generally, landscaping which respects the street as a public room is encouraged. Boulevard trees mark a separation between the automobile corridor and the rest of the streetscape and should be maintained. Front yard enclosures such as hedges or walls are not common along west Summit. When they are used, they should permit visual penetration of the semipublic space. Low hedges or limestone retaining walls and visually open fences, such as wrought iron, are preferred. Chain link fences, while visually transparent, should not be used in front yards or in the front half of side yards. Privacy fences, timber retaining walls and high hedges are also inappropriate in front yards.*

*(3) Garages and parking. Parking spaces should not be located in front yards. Residential parking spaces should be located in rear yards. If an alley is adjacent to a dwelling, any new garage should be located off the alley.*

#### **D. FINDINGS:**

1. The site is located within the Summit Avenue West Heritage Preservation District and is classified as contributing to the architectural and historical character of the District.
2. On March 1, 1990, the Summit Avenue West Heritage Preservation District was established under Ordinance No.17716, § 1. The Heritage Preservation Commission shall protect the architectural character of heritage preservation sites through review and approval or denial of applications for city permits for exterior work within designated heritage preservation sites §73.04.(4).
3. The rear one-story porch is not original, but is likely an early addition constructed during the period of significance and therefore a historic feature. However, its removal will not result in the loss of a character-defining feature or diminish the structure's integrity.
4. **General Principles.** The rear one-story addition, the expanded master bathroom, and the outdoor terrace will *not destroy historic materials that characterize the property* and are

*compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features of the property. They are of a character and quality that maintains the distinguishing features of the building.* Additionally, these changes are all at the rear of the residence and will not be visible from Summit Avenue.

On the other hand, the screened porch enclosures on the house's east side entail the removal of historic windows and screens; however, these windows do not face Summit Avenue and most of the windows are maintained in the current locations. The second story screened porch enclosure should include different siding materials or colors where the windows are being removed in order that *the new work... be differentiated from the old* (**Sec. 74.36(a)**).

5. **Walls and Foundations.** The proposal intends to match the existing Mankato Dolomite limestone foundation block of the existing house in its new foundation block. Also, foundation block in need of repair on the east wall will use salvaged block from the north side. The existing 4 1/4" cedar siding of a gray color is proposed to be matched in all of the new siding (**Sec. 74.36(b)**).
6. **Roofs and Chimneys.** The existing and proposed roof shingle material complies with the guideline. However, the existing roof is a light gray color that is not appropriate for the district. New roof shingles should be a darker color, with the intent that as the existing roof shingles become worn over time, they are replaced with a darker color that matches, and complies with the guideline. (**Sec. 74.36(c)**).
7. **Windows and Doors.** The proposed new/replacement windows consist mostly of wood, one-over-one, double-hung, and fixed-lite designs of proportions and profiles that match the existing historic windows. The new kitchen casement window, the French doors to the terrace, and the mud room door (all wood) feature true divided-lite design that approximates the divided-lite design of an original window in the same vicinity. The proposal also includes two sets of storm/screen sliding doors on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor north façade, leading to the terrace, that are of appropriate size, proportions, and materials. Replacement, rather than retention and repair of some existing windows is necessary due to extensive rotting (**Sec. 74.36(d)**).
8. **Exterior Architectural Features.** The proposed terrace and new stairs are appropriately placed in the building's rear. The new stairs include appropriately detailed steps and wood handrail/posts that are drawn from the front porch, though with modified height and spacing to meet the current building codes. The terrace is appropriately made of wood with a stone foundation and contains no handrail (**Sec. 74.36(e)**).
9. **Materials and Details.** In general, the proposed materials are compatible with the property and will not have a negative impact, except that a darker roof shingle color should be used in order to comply with the guidelines. Window, roof, and stone details were submitted with the application (**Sec. 74.37(c)**).
10. The proposal will not adversely impact the Program for the Preservation and architectural control of the Summit Avenue West Heritage Preservation District (Leg. Code §73.06 (e)) so long as the conditions are met.

#### **E. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Based on the findings, staff recommends approval of the building permit application provided the following conditions are met:

1. All final materials and details shall be submitted to HPC staff for final review and approval. This includes a specification for repointing the chimney and new light fixtures. All exterior screens shall have a flush mount frame with meeting rails to match the sash configuration if applicable

and be full-frame screens.

2. Any revisions to the approved plans must be reviewed and approved by staff and/or the HPC.
3. The HPC stamped approved construction drawings shall remain on site for the duration of the construction project.
4. In the portion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> story screened porch addition where windows are proposed to be removed and replaced with siding, the new solid surface should be further differentiated from the existing building by using siding of a different color from the existing gray color or by use of a different material.
5. New addition roof shingles shall be a medium to dark gray color.

**F. ATTACHMENTS**

1. HPC Design Review Application
2. Materials submitted by the applicant: narrative, material details, photos
3. Drawings, 11" x 17"