From: Nelson, Chris
To: Hanzel Sarah
Cc: Nelson, Kate
Subject: 1103 WB
Date: Tuesday, February 11, 2014 8:40:54 AM

Hi Sarah,
The state determines no adverse effect for project at 1103 WB.

Feel free to pass this on to the commission as way of an explanation too.

We looked at the additional information and the cumulative changes have diminished integrity to the point where the house no longer contributes to the architectural significance of the district.

Sanborn/Ferris Maps show that the house historically had a central main entry and porch. In 1956, this was reconfigured with an addition to the corner of the house. This addition is outside the period of significance of the district (goes up 1945 in nomination) and significantly alters the architectural integrity of the design, which is important to note since WB is nominated only under Criterion C for architecture. The more recent addition of vinyl siding, covering of soffits, and the covering (or removal) of window surrounds also diminishes material and design integrity. The accretion of changes prohibits the house from being able to convey its architectural significance.

This house was classified C when the commission reviewed it, so I understand their recommendation of adverse effect. If the SHPO had determined that this house was still a C building in the district, then that determination would be correct and the SHPO would have concurred.

Just a quick note for further explanation:
Vinyl siding does not meet the Standards and is never recommended. But the National Register does not categorically exclude it for eligibility. In most cases it makes a house ineligible individually. In districts, it will make some houses non-contributing, depending on the number of character-defining features on the house and how it is applied. If it is applied in a similar width and similar appearance, and enough other features remain unchanged, a property can remain contributing to a district. It's a big material integrity detractor, though.

Using this house as an example, the narrow width vinyl does mimic a clapboard reveal. The multi-light windows, dormer, roof line, some window features (like the cap mold, and maybe the drip mold – hard to tell from the historic photos) remain. If this house still had its original front configuration, it may have still contributed to the district even with the replacement siding.

It'd be a judgment call based on knowledge of the Standards and National Register program. I've talked to several commission members about this before. We look at every house case-by-case. Some can still convey their significance with siding changes while others many times can't depending on the appearance of the siding, what it covers, and what other character-defining features remain. Generally, the smaller, simpler houses without a lot of different character-defining features can handle less change. Larger styled houses have more of features and can get away with more change.

One last note, even though the finding is no adverse effect, a friendly recommendation to the owners would be to mimic the historic 5/1 window configuration to keep some visual compatibility with the district. I believe this was the original request, so that would be good.

Thanks,
Chris

PS The contractor emailed me about the status of the project, so I'll email him back that we've completed the review and he can contact the city.

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