

Department of Planning and Zoning

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MEMORANDUM

To: The Design Advisory Board
From: Ryan Morrison, Associate Planner
RE: ZP 19-0087CA; 19 Spruce Street
Date: September 25, 2018

File: ZP19-0087CA
Location: 19 Spruce Street
Zone: RM **Ward:** 6S
Date application accepted: July 30, 2018
Applicant/ Owner: Oliver & Anna Gebhardt
Request: Enclose front porch and relocate existing back door.



Background:

- **Zoning Permit ZP18-1111FC;** new and replacement fencing. Approved June 4, 2018.

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Overview: 19 Spruce Street is a single family home on a small lot (2,655 sf) built ca. 1894, and is listed as a contributing resource on the Vermont State Register of Historic Resources. The applicant is proposing to enclose the open front porch, and to relocate an existing rear door to another location on the back of the home.

A similar request to enclose a historic porch was reviewed by the Design Advisory Board earlier this year. The property was located right up street, at the corner of South Winooski Avenue and Spruce Street. Due to the historic nature of the home and open porch, the DAB voted unanimously to recommend denial of the application, for many of the same reasons mentioned below in this staff report.

Part 1: Land Division Design Standards

Not applicable.

Part 2: Site Plan Design Standards

Sec. 6.2.2 Review Standards

(a) Protection of Important Natural Features:

The subject property contains no important natural features as identified in the Open Space Protection Plan.

(b) Topographical Alterations:

No topographic alterations are included in the plans.

(c) Protection of Important Public Views:

The subject property is not affected by any identified public view corridor.

(d) Protection of Important Cultural Resources:

Burlington's architectural and cultural heritage shall be protected through sensitive and respectful redevelopment, rehabilitation, and infill. Archeological sites likely to yield information important to the city's or the region's pre-history or history shall be evaluated, documented, and avoided whenever feasible. Where the proposed development involves sites listed or eligible for listing on a state or national register of historic places, the applicant shall meet the applicable development and design standards pursuant to Sec. 5.4.8(b).

See Section 5.4.8, below. The property contains no known archaeological resources.

(e) Supporting the Use of Renewable Energy Resources:

No part of this application would preclude the use of wind, water, geothermal or other renewable energy resource.

(f) Brownfield Sites:

The site is not included on Vermont DEC's list of brownfield sites.

(g) Provide for nature's events:

Special attention shall be accorded to stormwater runoff so that neighboring properties and/or the public stormwater drainage system are not adversely affected. All development and site disturbance shall follow applicable city and state erosion and stormwater management guidelines in accordance with the requirements of Art 5, Sec 5.5.3.

The only increase in lot coverage will result from the addition of steps for the relocated rear door.

Design features which address the effects of rain, snow, and ice at building entrances, and to provisions for snow and ice removal or storage from circulation areas shall also be incorporated.

The enclosed porch will provide shelter for those entering the home. However, there is no canopy above the front porch entrance, and there should be one.

(h) Building Location and Orientation:

The building will retain its orientation; fronting on Spruce Street.

(i) Vehicular Access:

Access will remain as existing; from Spruce Street. There is a single car garage, and the driveway is wide enough and deep enough to continue to provide off-street parking.

(j) Pedestrian Access:

The existing walkway will continue to serve this entrance from the Spruce Street sidewalk.

(k) Accessibility for the Handicapped:

Handicap access is not a requirement for single family residences. The building inspector implements ADA requirements.

(l) Parking and Circulation:

Three parking spaces are provided off Spruce Street. No changes to parking are proposed.

(m) Landscaping and Fences:

No changes to landscaping or the fencing are included within the project.

(n) Public Plazas and Open Space:

Not required.

(o) Outdoor Lighting:

Where exterior lighting is proposed the applicant shall meet the lighting performance standards as per Sec 5.5.2.

The plans indicate no new lighting. Should exterior lights be proposed, they will have to meet the lighting performance standards of Sec. 5.5.2.

(p) Integrate infrastructure into the design:

Exterior storage areas, machinery and equipment installations, service and loading areas, utility meters and structures, mailboxes, and similar accessory structures shall utilize setbacks, plantings, enclosures and other mitigation or screening methods to minimize their auditory and visual impact on the public street and neighboring properties to the extent practicable.

Utility and service enclosures and screening shall be coordinated with the design of the principal building, and should be grouped in a service court away from public view. On-site utilities shall be placed underground whenever practicable. Trash and recycling bins and dumpsters shall be located, within preferably, or behind buildings, enclosed on all four (4) sides to prevent blowing trash, and screened from public view.

Any development involving the installation of machinery or equipment which emits heat, vapor, fumes, vibration, or noise shall minimize, insofar as practicable, any adverse impact on neighboring properties and the environment pursuant to the requirements of Article 5, Part 4 Performance Standards.

The plans indicate no new utilities or equipment.

Part 3: Architectural Design Standards

Sec. 6.3.2 Review Standards

(a) Relate development to its environment:

1. Massing, Height and Scale:

The proposal will not change the building's existing massing, height and scale, but it will change the structure's historic appearance as seen from Spruce Street.

2. Roofs and Rooflines.

No changes to the roof are proposed.

3. Building Openings

The project will see a new door, and an existing front window reused on the enclosed porch's front wall (north). The applicant proposes to relocate a window from the rear wall to the west wall of the enclosed porch. No other changes to building openings are proposed on the front. The existing door on the rear of the home will be relocated to the eastern portion of the rear wall. A new set of steps providing access to the relocated door is proposed.

(b) Protection of Important Architectural Resources:

Burlington's architectural and cultural heritage shall be protected through sensitive and respectful redevelopment, rehabilitation, and infill. Where the proposed development involves buildings listed or eligible for listing on a state or national register of historic places, the applicant shall meet the applicable development and design standards pursuant to Sec. 5.4.8. The introduction of new buildings to a historic district listed on a state or national register of historic places shall make every effort to be compatible with nearby historic buildings.

See Section 5.4.8.

(c) Protection of Important Public Views:

Not applicable.

(d) Provide an active and inviting street edge:

The front façade of the home, facing Spruce Street, is currently active and inviting. The building façade offers variety, instead of a more uniform appearance. By enclosing the porch, the variation on the façade will change, and contribute to a more uniform street edge.

(e) Quality of materials:

All development shall maximize the use of highly durable building materials that extend the life cycle of the building, and reduce maintenance, waste, and environmental impacts. Such materials are particularly important in certain highly trafficked locations such as along major streets, sidewalks, loading areas, and driveways. Efforts to incorporate the use of recycled content materials and building materials and products that are extracted and/or manufactured within the region are highly encouraged.

Owners of historic structures are encouraged to consult with an architectural historian in order to determine the most appropriate repair, restoration or replacement of historic building materials as outlined by the requirements of Art 5, Sec. 5.4.8.

The house is sided with vinyl clapboard siding, although the the State Register listing identifies the siding as being aluminum. Regardless, neither vinyl nor aluminum siding are original to the historic structure. The applicant proposes to use cedar clapboard siding for the porch enclosure, with reveal to match the siding on the home. The existing window next to the front door will be moved to the front wall of the enclosed porch, next to the new door. This window appears to be a wood framed window, which is typical of historic structures. An existing window on the rear of the building will be relocated to the west side of the enclosed porch. This window, too, appears to be wood framed.

(f) Reduce energy utilization:

All new construction is required to meet the Guidelines for Energy Efficient construction per the requirements of Article VI, Energy Conservation, Section 8 of the City of Burlington Code of Ordinances.

(g) Make advertising features complementary to the site:

Not applicable.

(h) Integrate infrastructure into the building design:

The plans indicate no new utilities or equipment as part of the project.

(i) Make spaces secure and safe:

Development shall conform to all applicable building and life safety codes as determined by the building inspector and fire marshal.

Sec. 5.4.8 Historic Buildings and Sites

The City seeks to preserve, maintain, and enhance those aspects of the city having historical, architectural, archaeological, and cultural merit. Specifically, these regulations seek to achieve the following goals:

To preserve, maintain and enhance Burlington's historic character, scale, architectural integrity, and cultural resources;

To foster the preservation of Burlington's historic and cultural resources as part of an attractive, vibrant, and livable community in which to live, work and visit;

To promote a sense of community based on understanding the city's historic growth and development, and maintaining the city's sense of place by protecting its historic and cultural resources; and,

To promote the adaptive re-use of historic buildings and sites.

(a) Applicability:

These regulations shall apply to all buildings and sites in the city that are listed, or eligible for listing, on the State or National Register of Historic Places.

19 Spruce Street was listed on the Vermont State Register of Historic Resources in 1977. These standards, therefore, apply.

(b) Standards and Guidelines:

The following development standards, following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, shall be used in the review of all applications involving historic buildings and sites subject to the provisions of this section and the requirements for Design Review in Art 3, Part 4. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards are basic principles created to help preserve the distinctive character of a historic building and its site. They are a series of concepts about maintaining, repairing and replacing historic features, as well as designing new additions or making alterations. These Standards are intended to be applied in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

- 1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.*

The house was constructed in 1894 as a residence; a use which continues today.

- 2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.*

The gable and ell styled structure appears to be intact with its original form, as of the 1977 state historic listing. The porch is specifically noted in the historic listing as it spans the front of the ell, and in accordance with this criterion, needs to be retained. Enclosing the porch would be contrary to the historic nature of the structure, as well as contrary to many of, but not all, the nearby historic homes. The neighboring two homes along Spruce Street to the east both have enclosed front porches, similar in nature to the current proposal.

3. *Each property will 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 elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.*

By enclosing the porch, a historic element of the structure will be lost. The only way to preserve the porch would be to retain it as such.

4. *Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.*

There are no permits on file that suggest changes have been made to the structure, that in their own right would be considered to have acquired historic significance. At some point, prior to the 1977 historic listing, the home was resided with vinyl/aluminum siding. It is important to note that the historic listing specifically identifies the porch proposed for enclosure as '*spanning the front of the ell*'. By enclosing and ultimately changing this porch, the historical significance of it will be lost.

5. *Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.*

With the exception of the vinyl/aluminum siding and the metal posts and railings on the front porch, the house retains its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. If the project is approved, it will result in the disappearance of the porch's historic appearance.

6. *Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials recognizing that new technologies may provide an appropriate alternative in order to adapt to ever changing conditions and provide for an efficient contemporary use. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.*

There appear to be no deteriorated features on the porch. The proposal doesn't intend to replace anything on the porch, but rather close the porch completely, thus resulting in the loss of a historic feature of the structure.

7. *Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.*

No chemical treatments are proposed; physical treatments include the wholesale replacement of the historic porch with additional enclosed space. This is contradictory to the preservation of historic features.

8. *Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.*

No archaeological resources have been identified at this address.

If any work associated with the project uncovers any archaeological remains or resources, proper authorities shall be contacted for appropriate recovery, assessment and disposition.

9. *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale, and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.*

By enclosing the existing porch, the historic porch will be completely gone.

10. *New additions and adjacent or related new construction will 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.*

Enclosing the porch will result in a loss of a historic feature unlikely to be recovered.

Recommended Motion:

The existing porch is a documented feature of the historic structure at 19 Spruce Street. Allowing it to be enclosed would contradict Sec. 5.4.8 – Historic Buildings and Sites. The proposal is inconsistent with criteria 2-7 and 9-10. Staff recommends denial of the request to enclose the porch, and approval of the request to relocate the existing rear door further down the rear wall of the home.