

STAFF REPORT: SEPTEMBER 13, 2023 MEETING

PREPARED BY: A. DYE

APPLICATION NUMBER: 22-7665

ADDRESS: 715 VAN DYKE

HISTORIC DISTRICT: WEST VILLAGE

APPLICANT: NICK ASSENMACHER

PROPERTY OWNER: ELLEN BARRETT & NICK ASSENMACHER

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 08/21/2023

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 08/29/2023

SCOPE: ALTERATIONS TO PREVIOUSLY APPROVED PORCH DESIGN (WORK COMPLETED WITHOUT APPROVAL)

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Erected ca. 1905, the building at 715 Van Dyke is a 2 ½-story, single-family dwelling. The building features a hipped-roof central mass with projecting gabled wings at the side elevations. A large bay window and covered porch are at the front façade’s first floor. Two small bay windows at the second floor extend beyond the eave, and gabled dormers with closed pediments extend up from the bay windows’ flat roofs. Historic decorative elements include multiple patterned windows and wood siding, dentils at the bay window cornices, dimensional belly band separating the first and second floors, and eave brackets separating the second and third floors. Windows at the front and side elevations are historic wood-sash units. The historic wood clapboard siding was re-exposed in the past few years and is in the process of being painted.

A one-story, covered wood porch extends south from the front elevation bay window and wraps around the southeast corner of the dwelling, ending just past the recessed front door. The raised porch is enclosed by wood skirting and round columns support the flat roof.



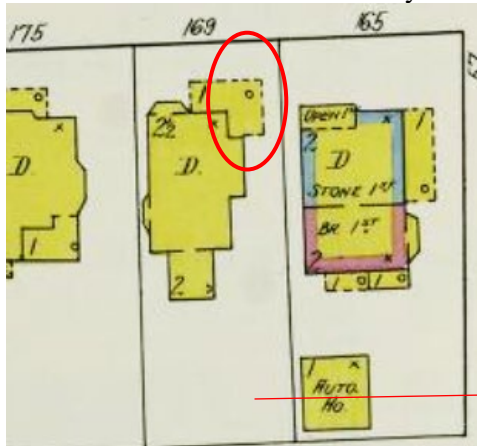
Staff photo, August 30, 2023.

PROPOSAL

Retain front porch as erected.

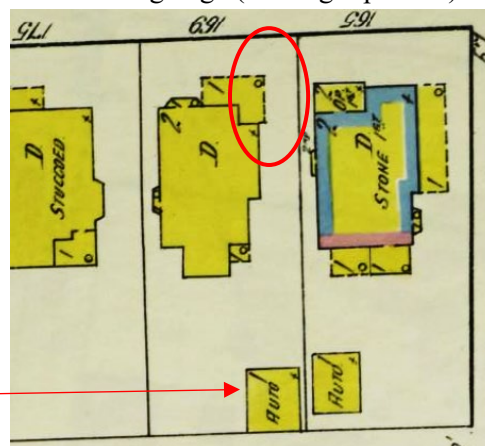
STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The West Village Historic District was established in 1983.
- Per the below Sanborn maps, between 1910 and 1915 the southern end of the front porch was reduced in size for the introduction of a driveway which led to a detached garage (no longer present).



Vol. 8, 1910, Image 7

Sanborn Maps



Vol. 8, 1915, Image 95

- The house displays Colonial Revival features through the pedimented dormers (and previously through the porch's Tuscan pilasters); Queen Anne details include differing wall textures/profiles, multiple glass patterns within the window openings and asymmetrical front porch and house shape/footprint.

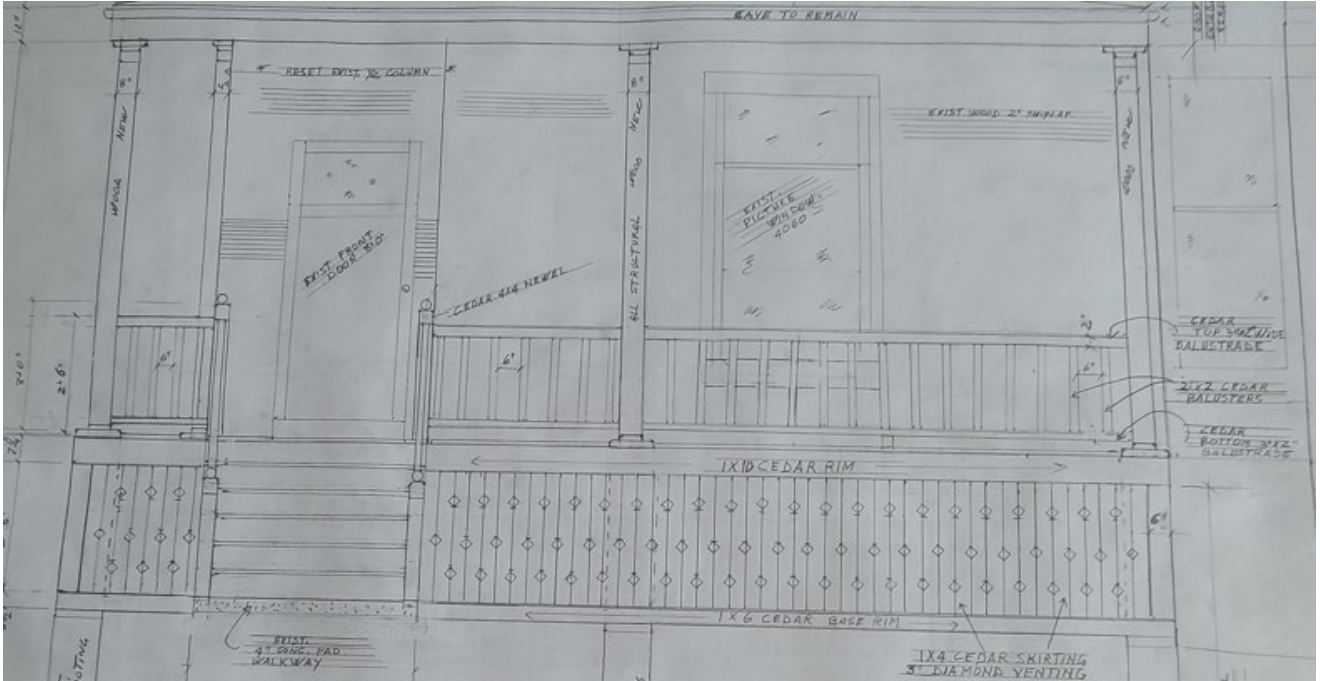


HDC staff photo, August 30, 2023.

- The Commission reviewed and approved an application to rebuild the front porch at the February 2022 meeting. A copy of the approved front elevation, shown on the following page, includes a lower height railing, straight spindles, diagonal-shaped cut-outs in the porch skirting, and round columns (that would replace the non-historic square columns); two historic half-round pilasters remained on site and were to be re-installed at the walls of the house at the north and south termination points of the porch.
- It is staff's opinion that the most common profile used for early 20th century porch railings was square

spindles, especially when classical support columns were used. Railings with turned spindles were regularly paired with highly detailed porches that would have included any or all of the following components: turned porch supports, porch frieze and corner brackets. At 715 Van Dyke, the only remaining original porch elements were two classical wood pilasters; staff doesn't have confirmation of the original railing design. Therefore, staff uses the "reasonable and feasible" requirement and the consideration if the design is consistent with the historic character of the structure and district in which it is located.

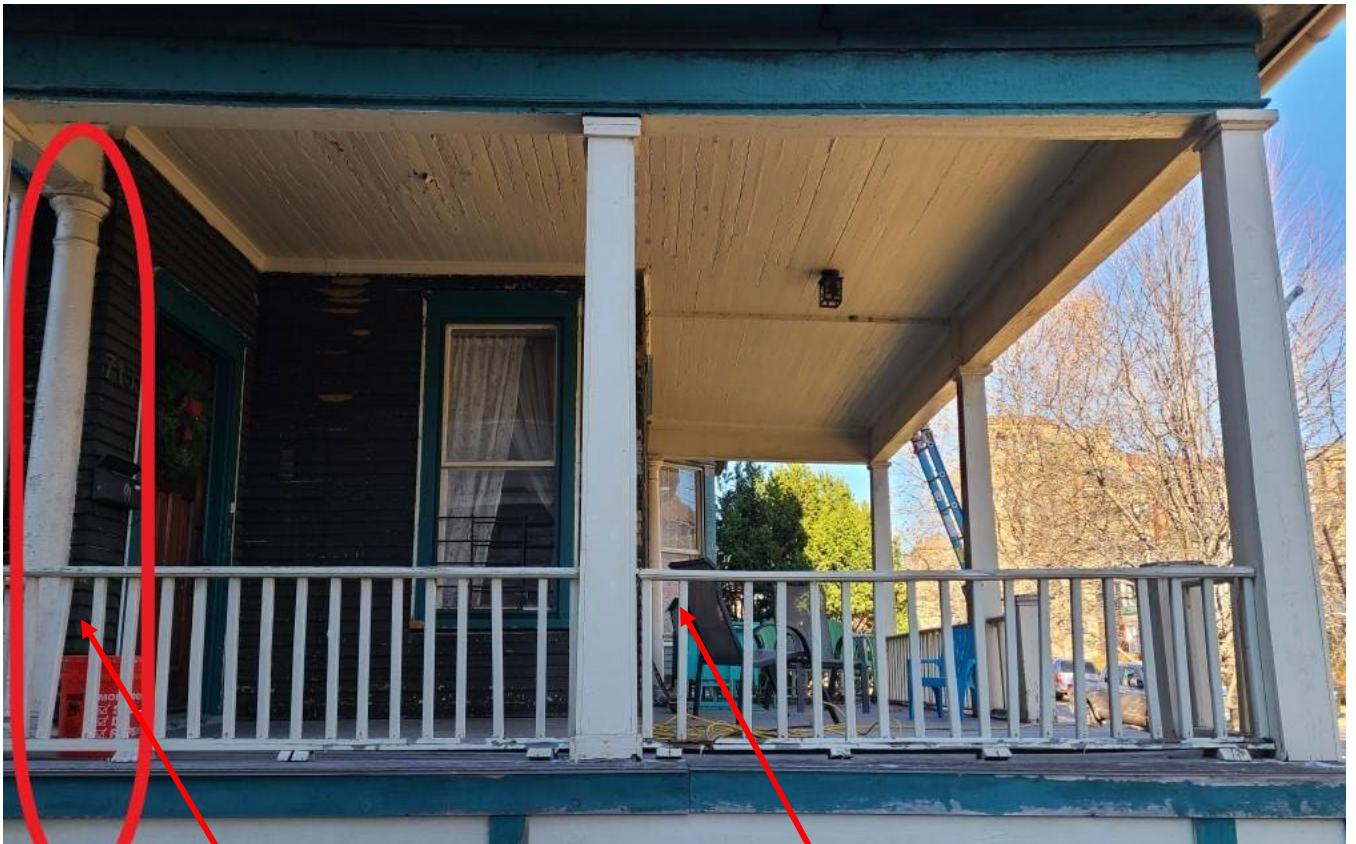
- The historic pilasters were replaced with round columns. Additionally, taller turned spindles were used for the porch railing, thick square newel posts were used at the stairs and a "solid" (i.e., no cut-outs) skirting with diamond medallions was installed.



Applicant drawing, February 2022.



HDC staff photo, August 30, 2023. Full columns were installed in place of reinstalling historic pilasters. Photos of pilasters in their original locations are on the following page.



Applicant provided photos of the porch, pre-demolition, that show the location of the historic pilasters.

- Based on the photographs provided by the applicant within the February 2022 application, the wood pilasters remained on site and appeared to be solid and not deteriorated beyond repair.
- When the applicant determined the pilasters couldn't be reinstalled, due to a reported conflict with placement against the wood siding, the HDC should have been contacted to allow staff to inspect the existing conditions before replacement of the historic pilasters was considered.
- Cut-outs within porch skirting are decorative ventilation openings for the area below the porch. The spacing between the vertical strips of wood used in this application may offer some level of air circulation.
- Applied medallions are not a traditional architectural component of historic porches. It is likely they could be removed without significant damage to the porch skirting.
- As mentioned earlier, turned spindles were used on Queen Anne houses, but often with more elaborate, finely detailed porch designs. It is staff's opinion however, due to the narrow spacing implemented between these spindles the more defined profile as installed is not demonstrably inappropriate.

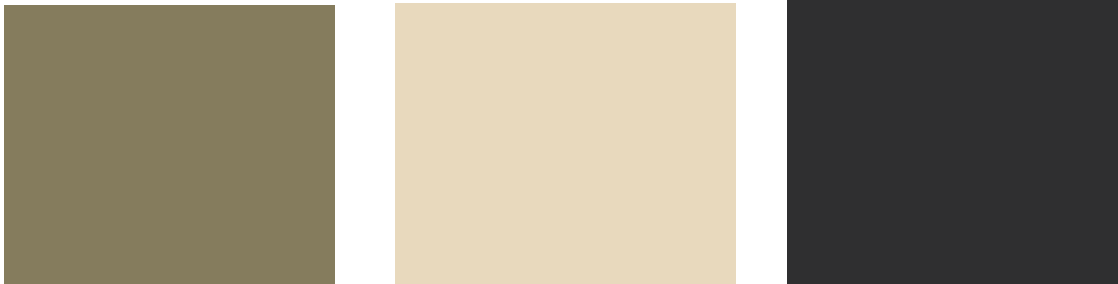


Applicant photo, February 2022.



HDC staff photo, August 30, 2023.

- In March 2023, HDC staff issued a Certificate of Appropriateness (23-6270) for the exterior painting of the dwelling.
 - Body/Siding: Sherwin Williams, SW2861 Avocado
 - Trim: Sherwin Williams, SW2833 Roycroft Vellum
 - Windows: Sherwin Williams, SW6258 Tricorn Black



Color samples from Sherwin Williams website



HDC staff photo, August 30, 2023.

- It appears that a mock-up of the intended exterior painting scheme was applied to a portion of the front façade. The exterior painting application didn't specify if the porch would be painted a uniform color to match the trim, or if a multiple-colored palette is planned for this area.

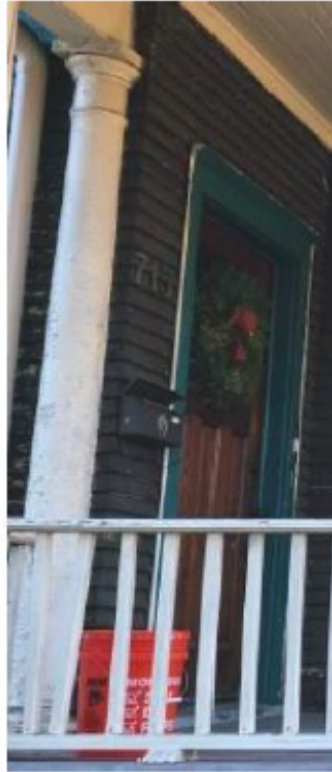
ISSUES

- Copied below is a portion of the February 2022 staff report where staff discusses the review and consideration of the submitted replacement composite column. When the Commission issued the COA, it was for the composite column included within the staff report. The applicant states within the current application: “The columns are the same width that were in the prints we gave to the commission. The image was just an example”. The applicant should have submitted the selected column for staff review and appropriateness determination prior to purchase and installation.

ISSUES

- The best and most appropriate replacement would be a turned-wood column to match the existing prototype. However, it is staff’s opinion the replacement column, while not a perfect match, is similar to the design and proportionality of the historic column and therefore, is reasonable and feasible.

Photo and catalog images supplied by applicant.
The original pilaster appears to have a slightly tapered smooth shaft.
The proposed fiberglass column has a similar Tuscan capital (with slightly different dimensions) and a smooth tapered shaft. The diameter at its widest point will be 8”, similar to the wood pilaster’s width.



- The applicant submitted photographs of the pilasters noting most of the measurements, however the angle of the camera to the measuring tape that was near the pilaster shaft, made the measurements confusing to read. The applicant submitted the additional photos listed below showing the tapered column ranges from 7” – 8” in diameter.



Diameter at the top of the pilaster – seven inches



Bottom diameter of pilaster – eight inches

- The application informed staff it hasn’t decided upon the paint scheme.

- It is staff’s opinion the installed porch columns don’t meet the threshold of reasonable and feasible. The historic pilasters were the remaining distinctive, character-defining feature of the front porch and were to be reinstalled in their historic/original location. Composite Tuscan columns, similar in design and dimension to the historic pilasters as shown on the submitted cut sheet from the February 2022 application, are likely readily available. New Tuscan columns could have closely matched the historic pilasters and not offered a “piecing together of the porch appearance” as stated by the applicant. The current columns are much simpler in design and proportion and removed a level of architectural and historic detailing from the dwelling.
- This applicant has a repeated history of completing work without HDC approval which was subsequently reviewed by the Commission:
 - 20-6441 March 11, 2020 meeting Exterior alterations
 - 22-7665 February 9, 2022 meeting Porch demolition / rebuilding
 Based on the 2020 and 2022 reviews, the applicant is knowledgeable about the review process and took a risk by installing different porch columns and railings without HDC approval.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation One – Denial – Porch columns and medallions

Staff finds that the application of diamond-shaped medallions to the porch skirting, the removal of the historic pilasters, and the full-scale installation of minimally detailed porch columns do not meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the following reasons:

- The historic wood pilasters were distinctive character-defining features in design, materiality and placement (i.e. attached to the house’s exterior walls).
 - Documentation was not submitted to staff showing significant deterioration and/or the inability for reinstallation.
 - The minimally detailed columns do not closely emulate the Tuscan-styling of the historic half-round pilasters, and no confirmation was submitted to staff to show that the previously approved column was not commercially available.
- The medallions applied to the porch skirting do not mimic historic decorative openings that allowed for ventilation to the underside of a porch.

Staff therefore recommends that the Commission issue a Denial for the work as proposed, as it does not meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, specifically Standards 2, 5, and 6:

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.*
5. *Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a 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.*

Recommendation Two – COA – Erection of porch railing, skirting and stairs

Staff finds that the proposal for the remaining work items will not alter the features and spaces that characterize the property and district and therefore recommends the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work as proposed as it meets the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and the Elements of Design for the district.

Staff recommends the Certificate of Appropriateness be issued with the following condition:

- All porch components will be painted Sherwin Williams SW2833, Roycroft Vellum, to match the trim on the remainder of the house.