

STAFF REPORT: NOVEMBER 8, 2023 REGULAR MEETING PREPARED BY: T. BOSCARINO
Revised November 8, 2023 to include additional information on the appearance of the porch.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 23-00080

ADDRESS: 19170 WARRINGTON

HISTORIC DISTRICT: SHERWOOD FOREST

APPLICANT/OWNER: MICHAEL CONWAY

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: OCTOBER 11, 2023

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: OCTOBER 21, 2023

SCOPE: REMOVE BALCONY, ALTER EAVES, CHANGE PAINT COLOR

EXISTING CONDITIONS

19170 Warrington is a two-story house in the Sherwood Forest Historic District, built in 1949 and facing west on an angular lot at the corner of two curved streets. Its appearance is a hybrid of International Style and Colonial Revival influences. Defining features include a low pitched, flat-decked hip roof with wood shingles, narrow but well defined eaves, steel casement windows, unique, paired entrance doors and surround, a curved, front (west) bay window, and a broad, pylon-like chimney on the rear (east). Formerly, a balcony was also a prominent and defining feature. The balcony featured a distinctive design with a cantilevered platform, decorative metal railings, and a flat roof.



Front (viewed from Warrington Avenue facing east) view of subject property, October 2023 photo by staff.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes several work items, already completed and visible on the building. Most noticeably, a proposed removal of the balcony has already been completed. Also proposed (and completed) are new gutters and downspouts, new fascia boards, repairs to the poured concrete porch, and a change in paint color from blue and white to black.



The subject property in 2022 2020 or 2021. Image: Google Maps <https://www.realtor.com/realestateandhomes-detail/M4321465246>

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Sherwood Forest Historic District was established by Ordinance 02-02 in 2002. The Final Report states that the Sherwood Forest Historic District is significant for both architecture and community planning from the 1920s through the 1940s.
- The Elements of Design for Sherwood Forest (Sec. 21-2-178 [d]) provide the following relevant observations:
 - “Entrance and porch types relate to the style of the building ... on buildings of Classical inspiration, they are centered on the front façade. Some houses have entrances that recede while others have porches, steps and/or entrances that project.”
 - “Wood is almost universally used for window frames, half-timbering, and other functional trim.”
 - “Original metal balconets, balustrades, and light fixtures exist on some properties.”
 - “Modernistic buildings are not symmetrical but result in highly ordered compositions.”



Interior views from realtor.com 2020 or 2021.

- **The removed porch appears to have had a leaf-and-vine motif sometimes found on mid-twentieth-century houses and is certainly an important and characteristic feature of its era.¹ Staff checked photos from Google Maps (2022) and the Historic Designation Advisory Board (2002) but these are of too low a resolution to view the details of the porch. However, a real estate listing (cited above) shows that a similar motif exists on the interior; this could be used as a model for reconstruction.**
- The proposed gutter and downspout work does not “remove quality materials like copper” and is not “intrusive in the design of the building,” consistent with what is typically approved as “routine work” according to Resolution 97-01. (An exception is mentioned under “Issues,” below.)
- The applicant included a photo of a portion of the eaves prior to replacement. The area shown depicts visible deterioration of the fascia boards and it is possible, though not certain, that the fascia boards on the entire house were deteriorated beyond repair. The new work matches the materials and dimensions of the historic material. The soffits and frieze boards appear to have been repaired rather than replaced. The work appears to satisfy the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, namely Standard #6: “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.”



Image from application materials, cropped and labeled by staff.

- The proposed porch repairs are limited to in-kind resurfacing of cracked areas and constitute “ordinary maintenance” (Sec. 21-2-4)
- The proposed (already painted) color is appropriate for the style of the house.

ISSUES

- The balcony proposed for removal (already removed without approval) is unambiguously a distinctive and character-defining feature of the building, as mentioned in the Elements of Design. Its metal (likely iron) details added a Colonial Revival character to the façade, while its cantilevered composition was a Modern

¹ **The vine motif is often found on wrought-iron porch supports on Ranch houses of the 1940s and 1950s where it is inspired by photos of the era in which vines are seen in photos growing on the porches of California buildings. Virginia McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 2014, 599, 784.**

element. It appears to have been original to the building. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, namely Standard #2, require that "the removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided."

- Furthermore, the cantilevered porch design and iron detail constitute a "distinctive ... construction technique [and] "example of craftsmanship" that should be preserved, according to Standard #5.
- The collector boxes attached to the proposed (already installed) gutters are often found on Colonial Revival buildings; however, there is no indication that they historically existed on this house. This is contrary to Standard #3, which states that "conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings" should not be added.

RECOMMENDATION

Section 21-2-78: Determinations of Historic District Commission

Recommendation One: Denial of porch removal

Staff concludes that the porch removal does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the following reasons:

- The porch is an important character-defining feature; its alteration or removal greatly changes the appearance of the building.
- The cantilevered design and decorative metal elements of the porch are distinctive examples of historic construction and craftsmanship that must be preserved.

Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission issue a Denial as the proposed work fails to meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, in particular:

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 historic property shall be preserved.*

Recommendation Two: Certificate of Appropriateness for eave repairs and alterations, concrete repairs, and paint colors

Staff recommends that the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the remaining work items as they meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Elements of Design for the Sherwood Forest Historic District with the following condition:

- The proposed (already installed) collector boxes shall not be included.