

Memorandum

To: Enid Torregrosa,
Kelly Perkins

cc: Ron Ramsingh

From: Bert Bender

Subject: HARC Application H16-03-0015

Address: 820 Carsten Lane

Date: September 21, 2017

The project at 820 Carsten Lane was reviewed by HARC at the February 2017 and April 2017 meetings. The proposed design was denied based on several factors, including, but not limited to the following:

Description:

The house at 820 Carsten Lane is listed as a contributing resource. First appearing on the 1912 Sanborn map as a one-story structure, the house has undergone a few changes since then, such as siding replacement, new skylights, a new side addition, and a large two-story addition in the rear.

This property came to HARC in March, but was postponed by the Commission due to questions over the accuracy of the plans and whether what was built matched the HARC approval in 2006.

After conducting research, it appears that a rear porch addition with a height of 23 feet was approved by the HARC Commission on November 28, 2006. A building permit was submitted and picked up in early 2007. Two inspections were conducted (auger holes and framing), but the applicant never scheduled any more inspections or closed out the permit. It appears that the structure was built, but without the necessary inspections and approvals. The plans that were issued were kept by the architect, and now the City has a copy. The City Attorney has opined that the existing two story massing is very similar to the massing that was approved in the 2007 plans. Therefore, the massing was approved by HARC in 2006, but not the side staircase or the current enclosure. There is currently a code case for the rear addition.

This project was heard in from of the HARC Commission again in November 2016, but again, there were errors in the plans. The applicant has measured the building again and corrected the plans.

The project last came to HARC in February 2017, but was postponed for redesign.

Guidelines Cited in Review:

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (pages 16-17), specifically Standards 2, 5, 6, 9, and 10.

2013 HARC Guidelines for Additions and Alterations/New Construction (pages 36-38a), specifically guidelines for additions and alterations 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 and guidelines 2, 3, 4 and 5 of new construction (pages 38-38a).

Entrances, Porches, and Doors (pages 32-33), specifically guidelines 13 and 14.

Analysis:

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the HARC guidelines require that additions honor the size, scale, and character of the property, neighborhood, or environment, as follows:

STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION

9. Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties shall not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historic architectural, or cultural material and such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the property, neighborhood, or environment.

10. Whenever possible, new additions or alterations to structures shall 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.

From page 37 of the old HARC guidelines, which apply to this application:

1. A structure shall not be altered and/or expanded in such a manner that its essential character-defining features are disguised or concealed.

The application fails to meet this guideline because the two-story enclosed addition and exterior staircase alters the essential character-defining feature, which is a one-story bungalow. The addition enlarges the mass of the historic cottage and overpowers the historic structure.

2. N/A

3. Addition design should be *compatible with the characteristics* of the original structure, neighboring buildings and streetscapes.

The application fails to meet this guideline because the characteristics of the original structure, neighboring buildings and streetscapes are all one story, small scale buildings. This is evident by reviewing page 66 of 91 in the PDF application, which shows the heights of adjacent historic structures, and the historic structure as follows: 822 Carsten is 18'6", 820 Carsten (the applicant) is 16'0", 818 Carsten is 18'0", and 816 Carsten is shown as lower than 16'0". The proposed addition is 24'8" tall and clearly overshadows the adjacent historic structures.

4. Additions should be constructed with a scale, height and mass that is appropriate to the original building and its neighbors.

The application fails to meet this guideline because the addition is at least a full story, 10 feet, taller than adjacent historic structures (height), encloses an open porch as a solid volume (mass) and adds to the length, width, and height of the historic building (scale).

5. Additions should be attached to *less publicly visible secondary elevations* of an historic structure.

The application fails to meet this guideline because the two-story addition is clearly visible from Carsten Lane while standing in front of 820 Carsten Lane or while approaching the building from any direction on Carsten Lane.

6. Additions should not *alter the balance and symmetry* of an historic structure.

The application fails to meet this guideline because the two-story 21 foot square addition alters the balance and symmetry of the historic structure by increasing its height, width, and length beyond what is appropriate or necessary.

7. No existing structure shall be enlarged so that its proportions are out of scale with its surroundings.

The application fails to meet this guideline because it enlarges the historic structure so that it outsizes the historic structure and creates proportions that are out of scale with its surroundings.

From page 38 of the applicable guidelines:

3. **Height** – must not exceed two and a half stories (see Figures 1 and 2 pages 77 and 78). There must be a sympathetic relationship of height between new buildings and existing adjacent structures of the neighborhood. New buildings must be compatible with historic floor elevations. *The height of all new construction shall be based upon the height of existing structures within the vicinity.*

The application fails to meet this guideline because it proposes a two-story structure that is more than 10 feet taller than the adjacent one-story historic structures.

4. **Proportion, scale and mass** – massing, scale and proportion shall be similar to that of existing historical buildings in the historical zone. No new construction shall be enlarged so that its proportions are out of scale with its surroundings. No new construction shall be more than two and a half stories. No structure shall outsize the majority of structures in the streetscape or historic zone.

The application fails to meet this guideline because it outsizes the majority of structures in the streetscape.

5. **Compatibility** – Design must be compatible with Key West architectural characteristics in the historical zones. *All new construction must be in keeping with the historic character in terms of size, scale, design, materials, color and texture.*

The application fails to meet this guideline because it is not in keeping with the size and scale of the historic zone.

In all cases, the standards and guidelines emphasize compatibility of new additions to the size and scale of adjacent historic structures. All of the adjacent historic structures, including the original structure at 820 Carsten Lane are one story.

The plans that were approved in 2006 were for an open porch. The current addition is an enclosed two-story building. When the addition was enclosed, it changed the massing and proportions of the addition, as previously approved in 2006. In other words, what currently exists is not what was approved and permitted in 2006.

The following terms are defined by the “Dictionary of Building Preservation” published by the Preservation Press, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Massing The overall composition of the exterior of the major volumes of a building, especially when the structure has major and minor elements.

Proportion The relationship of the size, shape, and location of one building element to all the other elements; each architectural style typically has its own rules of proportion.

Scale The proportions of the elements of a building to one another and the whole, and sometimes to adjacent buildings; may be related to a **module**.

Using the referenced guidelines, and as reinforced by the recognized industry standard definitions, the proposal for 820 Carsten Lane does not comply with the requirements for massing, proportion and scale. Furthermore, when the 2006 HARC approval for a porch was enclosed, the work not only exceeded the approved scope, but it altered the massing by creating a solid mass where an open porch was proposed, altering the mass, proportion, scale and rhythm of the previous 2006 approval.

Therefore, the proposal for 820 Carsten Lane application H16-03-0015 fails to meet the guidelines.

END OF MEMORANDUM