

Staff Report



Development Services Department

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REPORT TO: Heritage Kitchener

DATE OF MEETING: April 4, 2023

SUBMITTED BY: Garrett Stevenson, Interim Planning Director, 519-741-2200 ext. 7070

PREPARED BY: Jessica Vieira, Heritage Planner, 519-741-2200 ext. 7041

WARD(S) INVOLVED: Ward 10

DATE OF REPORT: March 14, 2023

REPORT NO.: DSD-2023-134

SUBJECT: Heritage Permit Application HPA-2023-V-002
17 Ahrens Street West
Demolition and Reconstruction of Porch, Replacement of
Front Door and Two Windows

RECOMMENDATION:

That pursuant to Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act, Heritage Permit Application HPA-2023-V-002 to permit the demolition and reconstruction of the front porch as well as the replacement of the front door and two main-floor front windows for the property municipally addressed as 17 Ahrens Street West, **BE APPROVED** in accordance with the supplementary information submitted with the application and subject to the following conditions:

1. That a material sample board be submitted to Heritage Planning staff for review prior to the issuance of a building permit; and
2. That final building permit drawings be reviewed, and heritage clearance provided by Heritage Planning staff prior to the issuance of a building permit.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

The purpose of this report is to present a proposal for the demolition and reconstruction of the front porch as well as the replacement of the front door and two main-floor front windows for the property municipally addressed as 17 Ahrens Street West, as detailed in Heritage Permit Application HPA-2023-V-002 and in Attachment A.

- The key finding of this report is that the proposed work will not negatively impact the cultural heritage value or interest of the property or the surrounding area, as it is in keeping with the architectural style and character of the subject property and complies with the policies and guidelines of the Civic Centre Neighbourhood Heritage Conservation District Plan as well as other heritage best practices.
- There are no financial implications associated with this report.

- Community engagement included posting this report and associated agenda in advance of the meeting and consultation with the Heritage Kitchener Committee.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Heritage Permit Application HPA-2023-V-002 is for the property municipally addressed as 17 Ahrens Street West, designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act and located in the Civic Centre Neighbourhood Heritage Conservation District. It proposes the demolition and reconstruction of an existing front porch that is deteriorated beyond repair. The new porch will be constructed using both wood and Azek while maintaining the existing size and appearance. In addition, the application is proposing the replacement of the existing front door and two main-floor windows as they are also in disrepair and no longer seal properly. In reviewing the merits of this application, Heritage Planning Staff note that the proposed work meets the policies and guidelines of the Civic Centre Neighbourhood Heritage Conservation District Plan, maintain the overall appearance of the original elements while improving the efficiency and functionality of the home, and is not anticipated to adversely impact the heritage attributes or character of the subject property or surrounding area.

BACKGROUND:

The Development Services Department is in receipt of Heritage Permit Application HPA-2023-V-002, which seeks permission to demolish and reconstruct the front porch as well as replace the front door and two main-floor front windows at the property municipally addressed as 17 Ahrens Street, located within the Civic Centre Neighbourhood Heritage Conservation District.

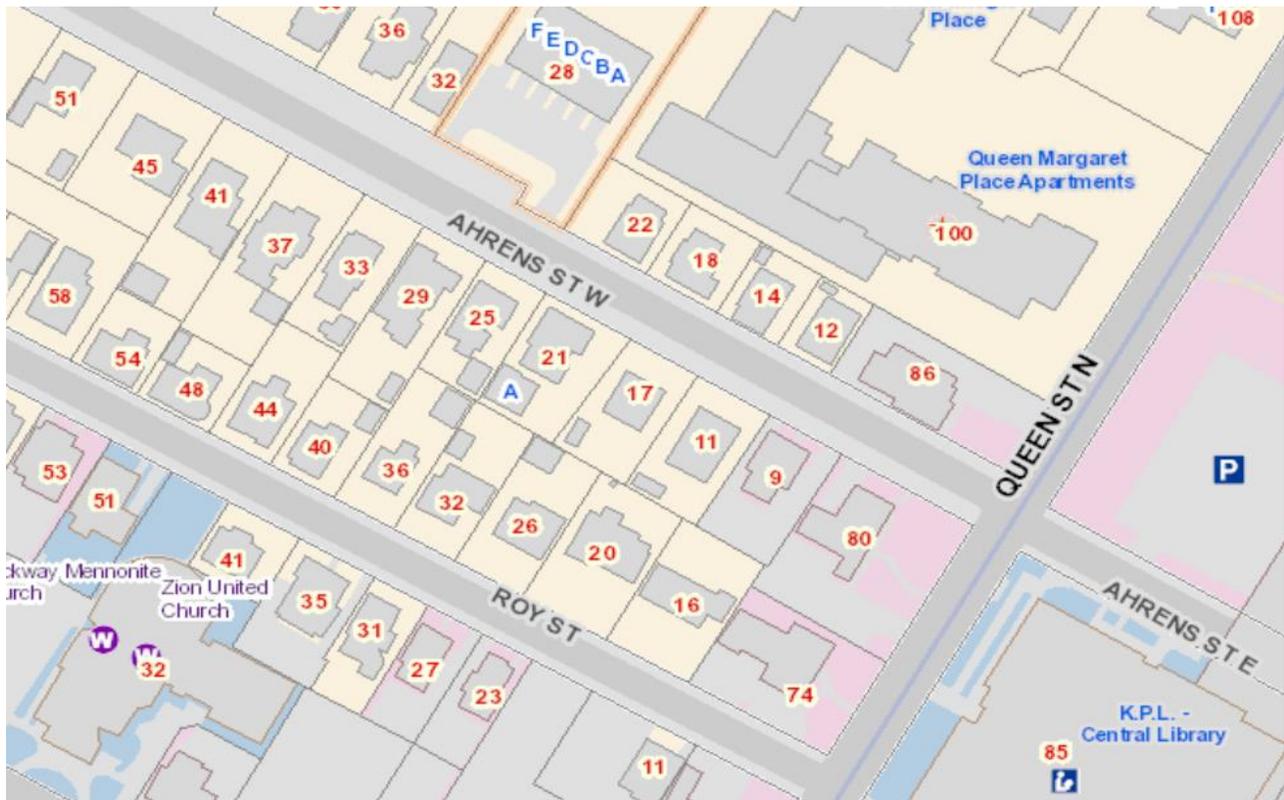


Figure 1: Location Map of Subject Property

REPORT:

The subject property is located on the south side of Ahrens Street West, between Queen Street to the east and Young Street to the west. It is designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act and is within the Civic Centre Neighbourhood Heritage Conservation District (CCNHCD).

The subject property is classified as being District Significance C within the CCNHCD Plan. Group C buildings are not fine or very fine examples of defined architectural styles but do have attributes that contribute value to the heritage environment of the district. The building at 17 Ahrens Street West is 2 and a half storeys in height and was constructed c. 1895 in the Berlin Vernacular architectural style, which is a form of Queen Anne style homes unique to the Kitchener area. Notable features of the home include its front dormer window and the raised porch which spans the front width of the home and consists of decorative railings and posts. Most of the original windows on the home have been replaced with vinyl, though the window openings have retained their original size. The storm door and front door appear to be original.



Figure 2: View of Subject Property from the Streetline

Proposed Work

Demolition of Existing Front Porch

The existing front porch is in poor condition and no longer structurally stable, with noticeable deterioration and sagging in the posts, railings, steps, and wood decking (Figures 3-5). The contractors for the proposed work have assessed its existing condition and determined that the porch is not salvageable. The entirety of the front porch including the roof and floor structure is to be removed and disposed of. Some components such as the support posts, sunrise details, and handrail system, will be saved for the purpose of replication and then disposed of once these elements have been milled to match the original.

The demolition policies of the CCNHCD Plan mostly references the demolition of entire structures, though it does make note that the demolition or replacement of heritage attributes or distinctive architectural features is not encouraged. Where demolition is proposed, supporting documentation demonstrating appropriate reasoning is required. This has been provided in the application package and attached to this report as Appendix A.



Figures 3-5: Deterioration of Existing Porch

Reconstruction of Front Porch

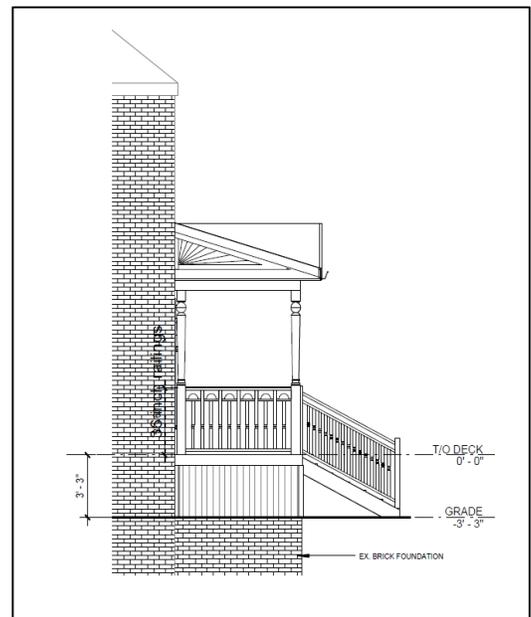
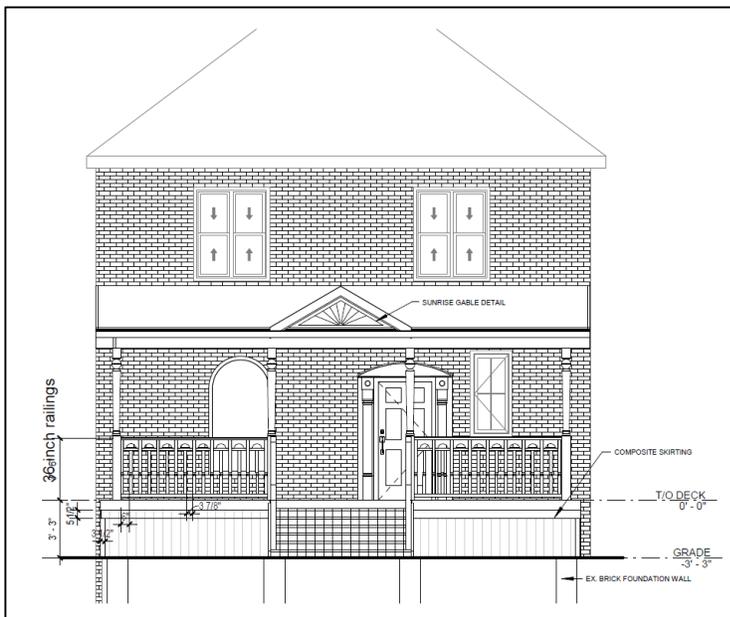
The CCNHCD Plan contains policy direction which pertains to alterations to homes, and specifically work done to porches and verandahs. The CCNHCD Plan recognizes porches as being significant features to the appearance of the heritage district that possess both functional and decorative value.

The footprint of the new porch is proposed to match the existing. It will also be of a matching size and scale, with only minor modifications to the height of the support posts and railing system to comply with the height requirements of the Ontario Building Code. Structural elements including the decking and the stairs are to be comprised of Azek PVC porch boards. This is a composite material which retains the appearance and texture of wood but is more durable and requires less upkeep than wood (Figure 6 and 7). The floor boards would measure 3 1/8" in width and are to be a slate grey colour.



Figure 6-7: Recent Project Completed by Contractor Using the Same Azek Material

The distinctive elements of the porch, including the decorative railing, posts, and sunrise detailing, is to be replicated using wood. The roof of the porch will also use wood with asphalt shingles that match the existing. Overall, the appearance of the porch will be maintained (Figure 8 and 9).



Figures 8-9: Elevation Drawings of the Proposed Work

Window and Door Replacement

Though the storm door and front door have been repaired multiple times, they have now deteriorated beyond repair. The storm door is cracked, and the interior front door no longer fits its frame. The windows to either side of the door also do not seal properly and are not energy efficient.



Figure 10: The existing storm door and front door

The new door is to be made from insulated steel and will mimic the appearance of the existing storm door, including panel layout and glass mullions. A similar project was undertaken at 22 Ahrens Street West through Heritage Permit Application HPA-2017-V-036 which was approved in December of 2017 (Figure 11). The proposed windows are to be vinyl, which is the same material used in the other windows of the house and which would establish consistency throughout the building. The new windows are to be of the same size, colour, style, and proportions of the existing windows to ensure continuity and compatibility with the existing character of the house and neighbourhood. Further, the existing wood sills and interior casings are to remain. While staff typically discourage the use of vinyl windows as being an inappropriate material for the character of the area, since the other windows of the home have already been replaced with this material there is little benefit in exploring other options for the two remaining windows.



Figure 11: New Door Installed at 22 Ahrens Street West

Heritage Planning Comments

In reviewing the merits of the application, heritage planning staff note the following:

- The proposed demolition and reconstruction of the front porch is necessary due to the deterioration and instability of the existing porch.
- The subject property is classified as District Significance C, meaning it is not a fine or very fine example of a distinctive architectural style but does have attributes which contribute to the continuity and character of the streetscape and area.
- While staff typically discourage the use of vinyl windows as being an inappropriate material for the character of the area, since the other windows of the home have already been replaced with this material there is little benefit in exploring other options for the two remaining windows.
- There is precedence for the proposal, as similar projects using the same materials have been approved and undertaken within the CCNHCD, specifically at 22 Ahrens Street through Heritage Permit Application HPA-2017-V-036, approved by the Heritage Kitchener Committee in December 2017.
- The proposed work is in compliance with the following CCNHCD Plan policies and guidelines:
 - When replacement of features (e.g. doors, windows, trim) is unavoidable, the replacement components should be of the same general style, size, proportions, and material whenever possible.
 - *The new porch, door, and window are the same style, size, and proportion of the existing elements. The original appearance of the home will be maintained.*
 - Incorporate similar building forms, materials, scale and design elements in the alteration that exist on the original building.
 - *The porch will retain its original appearance, as the new construction maintains the original size and scale in addition to reinstating replications of distinctive elements including the posts, railing system, and sunrise details.*
 - For decorative elements such as gingerbread fretwork and other trim, wood is still the best choice to recreate the original appearance but using improved technology such as waterproof glues and biscuit joiners and liquid preservatives and best quality paints to protect the finished product.
 - *The decorative elements of the porch will be wood. The roof of the porch will also be comprised of wood and asphalt shingles to match the existing shingles on the dwelling. The structural elements such as the decking and steps are to be comprised of Azek, which is a composite material that has the appearance of wood but has greater resistance to heat and moisture damage.*

- The proposed work is not anticipated to negatively impact the integrity and heritage character of the property, the Ahrens Street West streetscape, or the Civic Centre Neighbourhood Heritage Conservation District.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This report supports the delivery of core services.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Capital Budget – The recommendation has no impact on the Capital Budget.

Operating Budget – The recommendation has no impact on the Operating Budget.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

INFORM – This report has been posted to the City’s website with the agenda in advance of the Council / Committee meeting.

CONSULT – The Heritage Kitchener Committee will be consulted regarding the subject Heritage Permit Application.

PREVIOUS REPORTS/AUTHORITIES:

- *Ontario Heritage Act*
- *Civic Centre Neighbourhood Heritage Conservation Plan*

APPROVED BY: Justin Readman, General Manager, Development Services Department

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Heritage Permit Application HPA-2023-V-002 and supporting documents