

**SALT LAKE CITY  
HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION**

**REQUEST BY JOSEPH MARTY TO ALTER THE EXISTING BUILDING AND  
REPLACE A MISSING PORCH ELEMENT AT APPROXIMATELY 211-215 WEST  
500 NORTH STREET, IN THE CAPITOL HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT  
CASE NO. 470-07-03  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 4, 2007**

**OVERVIEW**

The applicant, Joseph Marty, is requesting approval to alter existing wall openings of the building located at 211-215 West 500 North Street and re-establish a porch element. The subject property is located in the Capitol Hill Historic District, in a SR-1A Special Development Pattern Residential District. The purpose of the SR-1A district is to “maintain the unique character of older predominantly low density neighborhoods that display a variety of yards, lot sizes and bulk characteristics. This request is before the Historic Landmark Commission because the proposed addition is highly visible from the street and the replacement feature is a new design.



**BACKGROUND**

According to the historic site form completed in 1980, this two-story brick apartment building was constructed in 1905 for Petronalla Larson Moray. Born in Skana, Sweden, Moray married James C. Moray and lived in this building until 1922. The building has a flat roof and a symmetrical pairing of doors on the principal façade. The attached 1911 Sanborn Map

indicates that a front porch was included in the original design (See Exhibit 1). The 1936 tax photograph and property appraisal cards show a large single-story porch with a roof-line balustrade that later became two enclosed two-story porch elements. These were then removed and the concrete stoops that exist today constructed.

The building permit file for the property indicates that repair work and a remodel of the building took place in 1946. These records do not specify the extent of the improvements. However, the 1958 property appraisal card indicates that a stucco material had been applied to the building. In addition, original windows were replaced and the fenestration pattern altered. Although major alterations have occurred, according to available survey information, the subject property has been determined to be contributing to the Capitol Hill Historic District.

Salt Lake City Building Services recognizes the subject property as a legal nonconforming nine (9) unit apartment complex. Multi-family dwellings are not permitted in the SR1-A zoning district; therefore, the use is considered legal nonconforming.

## **PROPOSAL**

The applicant proposes to reduce the number of dwelling units from nine (9) to seven (7) and intends to convert the apartment complex to condominium ownership. The property is a corner lot located on the northeast corner of 500 North Street and Baltic Court. The applicant is proposing to construct a two-story porch on the front of the building. The proposed full-width addition would have a shallow pitched shed roof capped by a double gable detail. The dominate features of these balconies are square wood posts, overhanging rafters and a rock veneer foundation wall. The size and the shape of the window and door openings of the front elevation will be altered to accommodate the proposed addition. The applicant also proposes to replace all existing windows with vinyl windows. The submitted plans show that some window openings will be modified.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **REQUIREMENTS OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE**

All proposed work must comply with height, yard and bulk requirements of the SR-1A zoning district.

#### SR-1A Zoning District

- **Maximum height of a flat roof building:** Sixteen feet (16'). The proposed addition measures approximately twenty-five feet (25') to the peak of the gable when measured from the front elevation. The existing building measures approximately twenty-six feet (26') to the highest point of the cornice. The new construction is comparable in height to other buildings in the immediate area and neighborhood. A discussion regarding scale and form is included on page 4 of this staff report.

- **Maximum exterior wall height:** Sixteen feet (16') for exterior walls placed at the building setback established by the minimum required yard. The existing exterior wall height at the front of the building measures approximately twenty-six feet (26') from grade. The proposed two-story porch element would exceed the wall height limitation of the ordinance, but is less than the existing building height and consistent with other buildings of similar height in the immediate vicinity and historic district.
- **Front yard setback:** The minimum depth of the front yard for all principal buildings is equal to the average of the front yards of existing buildings within the block face. The 1911 Sanborn Map is evidence that a single-story porch element existed historically. *The applicant will need to seek a Routine and Uncontested special exception to rebuild an historic porch element in its original location which would be less consistent with the alignment of buildings on the block face as they exist today.*

**FINDING:** The proposed alterations exceed the underlying zoning regulations, as adopted by the Compatible Residential Infill Development Ordinance, relating to building and exterior wall height. The Commission can allow the increased height if it finds that the project meets the provisions of Chapter 21A.34.020, and the applicant is requesting these modifications by the Commission. The proposed plans do not meet the standards for front yard setbacks. Thus, the applicant will need to seek a special exception through the Routine and Uncontested Matter process to modify the setback requirement, if a replacement feature that enhances the appearance of the building and brings its design closer to the original form is approved.

## **ZONING ORDINANCE AND DESIGN GUIDELINES**

*21A.34.020 H Historic Preservation Overlay District:*

*G. Standards for Certificate of Appropriateness for Alteration of a Landmark Site or Contributing Structure. In considering an application for a certificate of appropriateness for alteration of a landmark site or contributing structure, the historic landmark commission, or the planning director, for administrative decisions, shall find that the project substantially complies with all of the following general standards that pertain to the application and that the decision is in the best interest of the city:*

*1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be used for a purpose that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment;*

**DISCUSSION:** No changes are proposed in the use of the building for residential purposes. It should be noted that the subject property is currently recognized as a legal nonconforming nine (9) unit apartment complex.

**FINDING:** The proposed project is consistent with this standard.

*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;*

**DISCUSSION:** This horizontal apartment block of brick masonry construction is covered with a stucco finish, and was once highlighted by a decorative brick cornice. The two-story building contains separate entries for each half of the building. The historic character of this residential structure was compromised when the original porch was removed, the brick covered with a new material and the arrangement of historic windows altered. As a result of these changes, the building lost important stylistic elements as shown in the 1936 tax photograph that contributed to the historic significance of the building. However, these early alterations may themselves be of such an age and character to have achieved significance and thus merit preservation. Other significant elements that remain include the buildings overall massing, and its roof form.

It is possible to reverse some of these changes since documentation is available to provide a framework for the work. If it cannot be an exact reproduction of the original, the new windows should, at a minimum, maintain the existing window proportions. The Historic Landmark Commission has approved the use of vinyl replacement windows in cases where the windows are located on secondary and tertiary elevations and no decorative or architectural features are removed. The windows must also be the same size and configuration as the historic windows.

The design guidelines offer the following guidance on the preservation of character-defining elements.

### **Design Standards for Windows**

**3.3 Preserve the historic ratio of window openings to solid wall on a primary façade.** Significantly increasing the amount of glass on a character-defining façade will negatively affect the integrity of the structure.

**3.4 Preserve the size and proportion of a historic window opening.** Reducing an original opening to accommodate a smaller window or increasing it to receive a large window are inappropriate measures.

**3.5 Match a replacement window to the original in its design.** If the original is double-hung, then the replacement window should also be double-hung, or at a minimum appear to be so. Match the replacement also in the number and position of glass panes. Matching the original design is particularly important on key character-defining facades.

**3.6 Match the profile and its components, as closely as possible to that of the original window.** A historic wood window has a complex profile-- within its casing, the sash steps back to the plane of the glazing (glass) in several increments. These increments, which individually only measure eighths or quarters of inches, are important details. They distinguish the actual window from the surrounding plane of the wall. The profiles of wood windows allow a double-hung window, for example, to bring a rich texture to the simplest structure. In general, it is best to replace wood windows with wood on contributing structures, especially on the primary façade. Non-wood material, such as vinyl or aluminum, will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and the following will be considered: will the original casing be preserved? Will the glazing be substantially diminished? What finish is proposed? Most importantly, what is the profile of the proposed replacement windows?

**3.7 In a replacement window, use materials that appear similar to the original.** Using the same material as the original is preferred, especially on key character-defining facades. However, a substitute material may be considered in secondary locations if the appearance of the window components will match those of the original in dimension, profile and finish.

**FINDING:** Changing the proportion of solid-to-void which is important in defining the overall historic character of a site and establishing a new fenestration pattern that does not convey the same visual appearance will result in additional alterations that further diminish the historic integrity of the property and its context. The proposed work is inconsistent with this standard.

*3. All sites, structures and objects shall be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations that have no historical basis and which seek to create a false sense of history or architecture are not allowed;*

**DISCUSSION:** Entrances and porches are quite often the focal point of historic buildings, particularly when they are located on primary elevations. Their functional and decorative elements are important in defining the overall historic character of a property. The front porch element on this building has experienced the typical alterations made to similar structures over time. Some have undergone minor repairs to assure their preservation. Other entrance and porch features have been altered to the degree that they have lost character-defining elements, been enclosed or totally removed like the historic porch associated with this site.

In this case, the applicant is proposing architectural elements that are inconsistent with the character of this building and create a degree of ornamentation and style that documentation indicates never existed historically. These changes would effectively

re-define the character of the building. Although the historic character of the building was compromised when original materials of the porch were removed, a porch similar to the original could be reconstructed based on available historical and pictorial documentation. Another acceptable approach for a replacement feature is a new design this is compatible with the remaining character-defining features of the historic building. The design guidelines recommend the following with respect to the treatment of porches:

### **Design Standards for Additions**

**8.1 Design an addition to a historic structure such that it will not destroy or obscure historically important architectural features.** For example, loss or alteration of architectural details, cornices and eavelines should be avoided.

### **Design Standards for Porches**

**5.3 If the porch replacement is necessary, reconstruct it to match the original in form and detail when feasible.** Use materials similar to the original whenever feasible. On contributing buildings, where no evidence of the historic porch exists, a new porch may be considered that is similar in character to those found on comparable buildings. Speculative construction of a porch on a contributing building is discouraged. Avoid applying decorative elements that are not known to have been used on your house or others like it. While matching original materials is preferred, when detailed correctly and painted appropriately, fiberglass columns may be acceptable. The height of the railing and the spacing of balusters should appear similar to those used historically.

**5.4 Do not permanently enclose a historic porch.** Enclosing a porch with opaque materials that destroys the openness and transparency of the porch is not allowed.

**FINDING:** The proposed new porch element fails to convey the same visual appearance including functional and decorative features such as orientation, columns, balustrades and type of building materials that are important in defining the overall style and historic character of this building, and thus is inconsistent with this standard.

*4. Alterations or additions that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved;*

**DISCUSSION:** Based on building permit records, the existing concrete stoops do not appear to be of sufficient age or character to have acquired historic significance.

**FINDING:** The primary façade and character-defining elements of the historic building as seen from the street would not be negatively affected by the removal of the

existing concrete stoops and an accurate reproduction of missing historic features. The double entry elements are not of an age to have achieved historic significance in their own right.

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

#### **DISCUSSION:**

Where an important architectural feature has already been altered or is missing, its recovery is typically the preferred course of action. Thus, staff views the earlier design of the front porch a character-defining feature of this building, as shown in the tax photograph from 1936, and as such the new porch should be designed to be closer to its original form. The Commission may wish to consider other design solutions for the proposed alterations. The design guidelines offer the following guidance for the treatment of architectural features.

#### **Standards for Architectural Details**

**6.2 If replacement is necessary, design the new element using accurate information about original features.** The design should be substantiated by physical or pictorial evidence. One of the best sources for historic photographs is Salt Lake County Records Management, which maintains early tax photographs for thousands of buildings. In historic districts, intact structures of similar age may offer clues about the appearance of specific architectural details or features.

**6.3 Develop a new design for the replacement feature that is a simplified interpretation when the original element is missing and cannot be documented.** The new element should relate to comparable features in general size, shape, scale and finish. Such a replacement should be identifiable as being new. Use materials similar to those that were used historically, if feasible.

**FINDING:** The architectural detail of the proposed alterations is inconsistent with this standard because accurate information about the original features is available and the new elements do not match the original in form or detail. Furthermore, the proposed design for the replacement feature is generally incompatible with the size, scale, material and style of the existing building itself.

*6. Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced wherever feasible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, texture and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplications of*

*features, substantiated by historic, physical or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other structures or objects;*

**DISCUSSION:** No repair or replacement of deteriorated architectural features is proposed as part of this request. However, historic fabric of the primary elevation was removed during more recent work compromising the proportions and architectural integrity of the house. It would be possible to reconstruct the original front porch because documentation is available to provide a framework for the work. Since following a course of historic accuracy and matching original materials is preferred, staff finds the proposed treatment for the front porch inconsistent with the design guidelines.

**FINDING:** The proposed design of the front porch is inconsistent with this standard because the new elements are historically incorrect for the specific architectural style of the building and do not match or resemble the original in form and detail.

*7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible;*

**DISCUSSION:** No chemical or physical treatments are proposed as part of this request.

**FINDING:** This standard is not an issue for the proposed project.

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

**DISCUSSION:** This guideline regarding contemporary designs for alterations has typically been applied to new work on non-character defining elevations. In this case, the construction of a new front porch element would allow the removal of features that detract from the historic character of the streetscape. If it cannot be an exact reproduction of the original, the new work should follow along the same general lines. The design should be consistent with porches of residences from the historic period, and not remove historically significant features. This treatment would enhance the character rather than confuse it by adding historically inaccurate details of another style as proposed. The design guidelines offer the following guidance for the treatment of architectural features.

### **Design Standards for Architectural Details**

**6.2 If replacement is necessary, design the new element using accurate information about original features.** The design should be substantiated by



physical or pictorial evidence. One of the best sources for historic photographs is Salt Lake County Records Management, which maintains early tax photographs for thousands of buildings. In historic districts, intact structures of similar age may offer clues about the appearance of specific architectural details or features.

**6.3 Develop a new design for the replacement feature that is a simplified interpretation when the original element is missing and cannot be documented.** The new element should relate to comparable features in general size, shape, scale and finish. Such a replacement should be identifiable as being new. Use materials similar to those that were used historically, if feasible.

**FINDING:** The proposed alterations would change the arrangement of historic openings in a key-character defining façade and are not genuinely traditional in style. The proposed project is inconsistent with this standard.

*9. Additions or alterations to structures and objects 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. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible in massing, size, scale and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment;*

**DISCUSSION:** Although unlikely, the proposed work would be reversible, and the building could be returned to its current appearance. Since it would be possible to remove the porch, the Commission may wish to consider to what extent the applicant should follow a path of historic accuracy. The design of the proposed porch is generally incompatible in form with the historic building as the applicant is proposing to construct a porch that borrows features from other styles that are not known to be a part of the history of this structure.

**FINDING:** The proposed alterations fail to convey the same visual appearance of the original or protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment. As such, it is inconsistent with this standard.

*10. Certain building materials are prohibited including the following:*

*a. Vinyl or aluminum cladding when applied directly to an original or historic material, and*

*b. Any other imitation siding material designed to look like wood siding but fabricated from an imitation material or materials;*

**DISCUSSION:** No prohibited building materials are proposed.

**FINDING:** The standard does not apply to this project.

*11. Any new sign and any change in the appearance of any existing sign located on a landmark site or within the H historic preservation overlay district, which is visible from any public way or open space shall be consistent with the historic character of the landmark site or H historic preservation overlay district and shall comply with the standards outlined in Part IV, Chapter 21A.46, Signs;*

**DISCUSSION:** Signage is not a component of this project.

**FINDING:** The standard does not apply to this project.

*12. Additional design standards adopted by the historic landmark commission and city council.*

**DISCUSSION:** The Historic Landmark Commission's Design Guidelines for Residential Historic Districts in Salt Lake City is applicable in this case. Specific guidelines that are applicable in this case are noted in the discussion of each standard.

**FINDING:** The proposed project is inconsistent with standards 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 12 as noted above and generally not supported by the design guidelines as mentioned in this staff report.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff finds that the proposed alterations to the existing building and design of the replacement porch at 211-215 West 500 North Street do not comply with the City's historic preservation standards as stated above and are inconsistent with the architectural character of the building. Therefore, Staff recommends the following:

1. That the Historic Landmark Commission deny the proposed design of the replacement porch, as details of the new element are incompatible with the character of the building nor do they match the original.
2. Should the applicant present a design that is more in keeping with the appearance of porches of residences from the time period or resembles the original in form and detail, staff requests that the Commission direct staff to administratively approve the addition. Furthermore, the Commission allows modifications to the following development standards to accommodate a replacement porch:
  - Maximum height of a flat roof building.
  - Maximum exterior wall height.

3. That the Commission deny the proposed alterations to wall openings on the primary facade to accommodate a two-story porch element. Changing the fenestration pattern on a primary façade that contributes to the character of a building is an inappropriate measure. Should the applicant present wall openings that are more in keeping with the appearance of the original windows, staff requests that the Commission direct staff to approve the windows administratively.
4. That the Commission approve the use of vinyl windows on the remainder of the house, as they are on secondary and tertiary elevations where the Commission has approved the use of substitute materials such as vinyl in the past.

Janice Lew  
Planning Division  
March 28, 2007

**Attachments:** Exhibit 1: Site Plan and Elevation Drawings  
Exhibit 2: Photographs  
Exhibit 3: Historical Documentation

**Exhibit 1**  
**Site Plan and Elevation Drawings**

## **Exhibit 2 Photographs**

**Exhibit 3**  
**Historical Documentation**