

VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD



MEMORANDUM

DATE OF MEETING: June 6, 2024

To: Appearance Commission

From: Noah Schumerth, Assistant Director of Community and Economic Development

Through: Angela Mesaros, Director of Community and Economic Development

Topic: Case 24-16: Gottschalk House Porch, Stairway and Balcony Rehabilitation



DOCUMENTS FOR REVIEW

Title	Pages	Prepared by	Date
Application Form – Appearance	1	Ioannis Davis, Architect	05/28/2024
Application Packet and Drawings	14	Ioannis Davis, Architect	05/22/2024
Required Structure Report – Building Inspector	2	Dennis Johnson, Chief Building Inspector	06/01/2024
Federal Requirements for Rehabilitation Projects	3	Office of the Federal Register	N/A
Additional Architectural Resource	1	Noah Schumerth, Asst. Dir. of ECD	06/01/2024

BACKGROUND

The applicant has proposed work to renovate the porch structure and details along the front of the historic home at 18101 Martin Avenue, known as the Gottschalk House.

The work will include the following projects:

- Replacement of all rotted wood trim and bead board around private open spaces (porches, balconies) on the front and sides of the home
- Replacement of rotting or damaged structural beams above porch structure of home
- Foundation repairs and leveling for porch and outdoor stairs in the front of the home
- Reconstruction of stone porch steps on the front of the home
- New guardrails and bannister structures on porch stairs and balcony of home

According to the Historic Preservation Ordinance of the Village of Homewood (Section 22 of the Village Code of Ordinances), the Village Board has the authority to designate buildings, structures, artworks and open spaces with an official local landmark status. This status designation subjects proposed changes to these elements of the built environment to greater scrutiny, including special review procedures of all

building and demolition permit applications and additional regulations to ensure the preservation, protection, enhancement, and rehabilitation of such landmarks.

All changes requiring a building permit which are performed to a building with landmark status is to be subject to review by the Village Board of Trustees. The Appearance Commission is to review and provide recommendations to the Village Board for all proposed changes, as outlined in Section 22-56(b) of the Village Code of Ordinances. The Appearance Commission shall review any proposed changes to a designated local landmark with the standards of Section 22-57 of the Village Code of Ordinances.

The residential structure located at 18101 Martin Avenue is designated as a local landmark by the Village Board of Trustees, per Ordinance M-687 of the Village of Homewood as approved and adopted on September 14, 1982. The designation subjects any change to the building at 18101 Martin Avenue to the additional review requirements and regulations of Section 22 of the Village Code of Ordinances.

HISTORY

The home at 18101 Martin Avenue was constructed in 1891 and is one of Homewood's oldest remaining structures. The house was constructed by Henry Gottschalk, who served as Village President in the early 20th century and was the founder of the Gottschalk Brick and Tile Works and Chicago City Bank. The home was constructed as a centrally located manor house for the Gottschalk family as the influence of the family grew in the Homewood community.

In the mid-1950s, the house was converted into apartments. In 1986, a portion of the building was converted for commercial use, and a large modern addition was constructed in the rear of the home. The home has been prominently featured in numerous annual community events, including Homewood Fall Fest and "Gottschalk-the-Walk." The house remains classified as apartment housing.

DISCUSSION

The home is a prominent example of the Queen Anne style, a Victorian-era style, which saw its peak popularity in the design of larger homes between 1880 and 1910. The style is defined by varying craftsman-preferred materials, asymmetrical exterior and interior designs, broad front-facing gables and dormers, porch structures, and reliance on private open spaces as defining architectural features. Many Queen Anne homes are decorated with finely crafted spindle work, classic column designs, timbered gable designs, and patterned masonry.

Over 50% of all Queen Anne homes known to have been built in the United States were built with a form including a hipped central roof with lower cross gables. The Gottschalk House is a modified version of this form, with the following elements setting the Gottschalk House apart as a unique piece of Victorian-era architectural history:

- **Roof Layout:** The home's roof structure is comprised of a single hip with no additional gables attached to the structure; broad front-facing gables with material detailing define many Queen Anne homes. Instead, the home employs a large number of dormers and secondary gables of varying shapes and sizes. Architectural detailing common for Queen Anne gables is used on the front faces of many of the dormers.

- **Hip Roof Design:** The home's hip roof includes a longer central ridge than is common on most Queen Homes without a gable roof, creating a unique appearance of length moving away from Martin Avenue.
- **Free Classic Design:** Unlike many Queen Anne homes, which use fine decorative columns and intricate spindle work across the structure, the home instead employs "Free Classic" design principles, using columns in a Classical style (Doric commonly) and less intricate forms, using the location of columns and posts to create detail and visual interest. Differing from many other "Free Classic" Queen Anne designs, the Gottschalk House does not group columns together and uses a standard spindle pattern along its porches and balconies, instead employing a large amount of color on columns and spindles and using oversized posts to achieve its visual interest.

The Gottschalk House has numerous other well-preserved features which are common for Queen Anne homes from the 1890s, including:

- **Turrets:** The Gottschalk House includes a large turret near the corner of Kroner and Martin Avenues, the most common location on Queen Anne homes.
- **Primary and Secondary Dormers:** The home includes many dormers along its top story, including large and small dormers. The Gottschalk House has far more dormers than typical in this type of home; many are later additions from the conversion of the home to a multi-family building.
- **Few Flat Wall Surfaces:** The home features few large wall surfaces, given that the house is broken up by numerous turrets and bays, large windows, large windowsill elements, and overhanging gables and eaves with large amounts of ornamentation.
- **Patterned Masonry:** Perhaps the home's most unique feature, the brickwork is patterned in a rhythmic pattern similar to many Queen Anne homes, but adds additional detail through the "Homewood" moniker stamped pattern on each of the bricks on the house, adding a local spin to a common design feature of the Queen Anne home.

Analysis of Proposed Changes

The proposed changes to the home in this application are primarily focused on the porch and balcony structures. These are prominent architectural features of the Queen Anne style. The proposed changes also affect the column and spindle work, which are features central to the integrity of the home's Queen Anne style. Therefore, the review of this proposed renovation must be handled with care. The following is a detailed analysis of proposed changes to the Gottschalk House per Section 22 of the Village Code of Ordinances:

(1) Whether the proposed work will highlight or positively enhance any exterior feature of the property and improvements.

The current porch, stairs and balcony structures on the exterior of the home are in poor physical condition. The porch's columns and front newels are misaligned due to structural issues below the porch, which this repair seeks to rectify. The structural improvements, including the replacement of rotting beams and trim sections of the porch roof and foundation repairs below the base of the porch structure, will be essential for extending the life of the historic structure. These maintenance repairs will positively enhance the appearance of the property.

The visible changes to the structure are concentrated around stair structure at the front of the home, which include the full replacement of stone and wood stairs and wooden bannisters and newels. None of these elements, except the stone foundation of the stairs, are original to the home. The newels will be rebuilt with greater detailing, including “cove and dentil” trim around the top edge of the newel and a large decorative cap painted in a matching teal color used on details around the exterior of the house. Similar newel posts will be used on the upper balcony on the second floor. The new caps on the tops of the newel posts complement existing trim and detailing, using a ball design surrounded by ornate trim consistent with the ornamentation typical of Queen Anne homes (see attachment created by staff for similar examples of detailing from Queen Anne homes). The new foundations poured underneath the newels will extend the lifespan of the improvements and are consistent with structural code requirements.

The spindle work replacement proposed on the balcony structure is consistent with the “Free Classic” Queen Anne variant that the Gottschalk House reflects. The proposed balusters on the upper balcony match the existing previously approved balusters on the porch structure on the first floor. The teal and crème paint pattern used on the new balusters will match others used around the structure. The restoration of these balusters will improve the appearance of the upper balcony and allow the balcony to be closely married to the porch structure below in style and condition.

While the design of the proposed banisters on each side of the new stair structure is architecturally consistent with the style of the home, staff has concerns about the height of the final improvements on each side of the new stair structure. The height of the banisters on each side of the set of stairs leading to the patio is proposed to be shortened significantly from the current design, with the balusters in the banisters lowered to the plane of the stairs rather than placed on a raised bar above the stairs. The removal of the bar and the connection of the balusters directly to the plane of each stair creates a lower height for the railing on each side of the stairs, remedied by the proposed 42” steel handrail on each side of the stairs.

This steel handrail is prominently located on the front stairs of the home and is not consistent with the architectural character of the house. While some historic properties converted to multi-family residences have modern stair treatments following ADA and state accessibility requirements, staff finds that the proposed safety and accessibility treatment has not been thoughtfully integrated into the architectural style of the home.

Staff recommends the removal or adjustment of the 42” steel handrails on the stairs to ensure compliance with the requirement to highlight or positively enhance exterior features of the home. Alternative actions include raising the top rail height to approximately 36” to ensure the top return of the railing on each side of the stairs aligns with the height of the railings of the main porch structure, as is reflected in the current conditions of the patio.

(2) Whether any new improvements will have a positive effect and harmonize with the external appearance of neighboring improvements.

The central location of the Gottschalk House requires careful harmonization with the appearance of neighboring improvements. There have been numerous improvements in the immediate vicinity of the home in the past 12 months, including the completion of the Hartford Building at 2031 Ridge Road and the renovation of the former Homewood Florist space across the street at 18064 Martin

Avenue. As investment continues in this area of the downtown district, it is imperative to ensure that the maintenance of the home is on par with surrounding structures.

The proposed improvements will address visually apparent structural issues with the building, including the forward bowing of the porch, the wear of paint, and the rotting of wooden structure and trim elements around the front of the building. The improvements will ensure that the home is maintained consistent with the new construction and renovation work in the immediate vicinity.

(3) The extent and process of any proposed demolition and subsequent changes in landscaping.

Demolition is limited to elements which will be fully replaced, including:

- Two structural beams in the roof of the porch structure
- Stair foundations, banisters/balusters, and newels at the front of the structure
- Guardrail and balusters on the upper balcony
- Trim along the roofline of the porch structure

All elements will be replaced with similar structural elements or receive treatments consistent with the character of the existing house. Construction methods, including the relocation of the stone step at the base of the stairs to allow new concrete piers below the stairs to accommodate new newel construction, will not disrupt the home in a manner detrimental to its architectural character. There are no changes to landscaping proposed with demolition associated with this project. The landscaping elements at the front of the porch structure will be preserved. To maintain compliance with local building and zoning codes, the landscaping must be kept in acceptable condition throughout the project.

The staff has no concerns about the extent and process of the proposed demolition.

(4) Whether the proposed work will result in the maintenance or addition of site landscaping and other vegetation.

There are no changes to landscaping proposed with this project. All existing landscaping at the front of the porch structure will be preserved, and building code and zoning requirements will be enforced to ensure that the landscaping is maintained to an acceptable condition at the end of the project. All damage to landscaping during the building process must be replaced to its original condition.

(5) A report from the building inspector on the state of repair and structural stability of the improvement under construction.

A previous citation and additional report completed by Chief Building Inspector, Dennis Johnson, are attached with this memorandum.

(6) Any changes in the essential character of the area which would occur as a result of approval of the application.

The structural repairs and improvements to the property will positively affect the essential character of the area, ensuring the visual quality and architectural integrity of the landmark home in a centrally located district of the Village.

(7) Whether the proposed work is in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's standards for rehabilitation, as found in 36 CFR 67, as amended.

The proposed work complies with the Secretary of the Interior's standards for rehabilitation found in federal regulations (36 CFR 67.7). These regulations dictate the quality and reasonableness of repairs and rehabilitation projects for projects receiving federal, state, and local landmark status. A copy of these federal regulations is included for reference as an attachment to this memo.

The materials used for this project, save for the steel handrail recommended for removal, are consistent with those utilized for buildings of similar architectural quality and are of commiserate quality for this project (67.7(c)). The materials and building techniques proposed will not cause accelerated deterioration and will expand the longevity and physical durability of the structure (67.7(c)).

Additionally, while plans to dismantle structural elements and replace decorative elements of the house are included in this proposal, these demolition operations are for allowable purposes as dictated in the federal code, and the demolition and rebuilding operations proposed to comply with requirements for certified rehabilitation projects (67.7(d)).

(8) Whether the proposed work conforms to any design criteria or other specific guidelines which the village board may later adopt.

The proposed changes align with the Appearance Plan approved in 1999, to which this building must comply under its multi-family residential use and historic designation. The work that the applicant has proposed to the Gottschalk House meets all standards for ensuring positive relationships between buildings with adjoining areas, landscape and site treatments, and building architecture and design.

Staff does not believe that any design criteria in the future, including the forthcoming Appearance Plan revision later in 2024, will cause the proposed work to become nonconforming with Village guidelines and standards.

PROCESS

The Appearance Commission must review this proposed work against the standards for historic landmarks in the Village found in Section 22-57 of the Village Code of Ordinances and the Appearance Plan of the Village of Homewood. The Appearance Commission must recommend action for the Village Board to take regarding the proposed exterior improvements to the home.

The Village Board must make a decision regarding the suitability of the proposed exterior improvements in the setting of a public hearing. The Village Board must also consider the economic hardship facing the

applicant and whether design adjustments are warranted based on a limited set of hardship cases outlined in Section 22-58 of the Village Code of Ordinances.

Should the Village Board approve the proposed exterior improvements in this case, the applicant may apply for and receive building permits to complete the work in a manner consistent with local requirements in Section 22 of the Village Code of Ordinances and Section 36 CFR 67 of federal code.

RECOMMENDED APPEARANCE COMMISSION ACTION

The Appearance Commission may wish to consider the following motion:

Recommend **approval** of Case 24-16 by the Village Board of Trustees to permit rehabilitation and reconstruction of porch, stairway, and balcony structures on the residential property designated with historical landmark status at 18101 Martin Avenue, subject to the following conditions:

1. The 42-inch steel handrail recommended for the railings on each side of the reconstructed stairway structure on the front of the home should be mitigated by raising the height of the proposed banisters and balusters on each side of the stair structure to the height of the existing banister structures on each side of the stairway, or approximately 36 inches.