

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS
APRIL 26, 2021
C14H-2010-0009; HR-2021-041008
VOSS HOUSE
1501 NORTHWOOD ROAD

PROPOSAL

Construct a rear and second-level addition.

PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

- 1) Demolish detached garage.
- 2) Construct a rear addition. The addition extends the back corner of the house by 5'-1" to the south and 8'-5 ½" to the west. Another building, 16'-5" by 25'-2", is connected by an open porch in a dog-trot configuration. The additions have a cross-gabled, standing-seam metal roof and are clad in horizontal wood siding. Windows are 1:1 light and are of similar size and proportions to the windows on the house.
- 3) Construct a second-story addition to the house. The addition extends the ridgeline of the gabled roof to form a higher gable at the same roof pitch. On the east side facing Harris Blvd. is a shed-roofed dormer extending from the upper ridgeline. The overall length of the addition is pulled in from both gable ends, and the dormer is further inset. This addition also has standing-seam metal roofing and horizontal wood siding. Windows on the west are 1:1 light, arranged singly or in groupings of three, and are of similar size to the windows on the house. Windows in the east-facing dormer are also 1:1 light, arranged singly or in pairs, and though smaller are of similar proportions.
- 4) Remove four mulled windows on the south wall of the house and install a large, multi-light fixed window.

ARCHITECTURE

The Voss House faces Northwood Road; however, the following description from the landmark nomination considers the Harris Blvd. side as the primary elevation. The house is a one-story, rectangular-plan, side-gabled frame bungalow with a partial-width front-gabled independent porch on battered posts and stone piers with a brick cap and a vertical baluster railing. Fenestration consists of 1:1 wood-frame, wood-sash units in single and multiple configurations; the entry is flanked with sidelights. A battered stone chimney pierces the north side gable of the house.

The garage is not mentioned in the landmark nomination. It has a low-pitched pyramidal roof and is clad in board-and-batten siding. The garage is located to the southwest of the house at the rear corner of the property, with a modern overhead garage door facing Harris Blvd. While the 1961 Sanborn Fire Insurance map shows a garage at the same location, it has a different footprint. Building permits show the garage was remodeled in 2000, though the description indicates installation of a concrete slab and interior remodel only.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW

The City of Austin's Historic Design Standards (March 2021) are based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and are used to evaluate projects at historic landmarks. The following standards apply to the proposed project:

Repair and alterations

10.1 Whenever possible, retain and repair existing historic accessory buildings.

The project entails demolition of the garage, which is of undetermined age. The dog-trot portion of the rear addition is a compatible replacement in terms of its scale and location on the site.

Residential additions

1.1 Locate additions to the rear and sides of historic buildings to minimize visual impact.

The ground-level addition is at the back (southwest) corner of the property and is recessed when viewed from the front or side street. The second-story addition is also set back from the sides and front of the house.

1.2 Step back side additions from the front wall a distance that preserves the shape of the historic building from the primary street.

The rear addition extends past the west side of the house. Given the location at the back corner of the house, it will be minimally visible from Northwood Road.

1.3 If an addition adds a story to the historic building, set it back from the front wall to minimize visual impact. a. If an addition adds a story to the historic building, set it back from the front wall to minimize visual impact. If the historic building has a side-gabled, cross-gabled, hipped, or pyramidal roof form, set the addition behind the roof ridgeline or peak. b. If the historic building has a front-gabled, flat, or shed roof form, set the addition back from the front wall the greater of 15' or one-half of the width of the front wall.

While the second-story addition is set behind the ridge of the side-gabled porch roof, the more applicable standard for this front-gabled house is 1.3 b. The addition begins 13'-10" from the Northwood Road (north) elevation. This is slightly less than half of the overall house width of 30'.

1.4 For corner properties, set back the addition to align with or behind the front setback of the adjacent building fronting on that street.

The rear addition meets this standard, as it is recessed considerably from the Harris Blvd. (east) side of the house, which has a similar setback as the house across the alley.

1.5 Minimize the loss of historic fabric by connecting additions to the existing building through the least possible invasive location and means.

The rear addition minimally engages with the back corner of the house. It will result in removal of paired windows on the west elevation. On the south elevation, a grouping of four windows will be removed and replaced with a large, multi-light fixed window. The second-story addition will involve modification of the roof and roof framing.

1.6 Additions are not appropriate for all historic landmarks and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

The Voss house is significant for its architecture and association with Herman F. Voss, founder of the H. H. Voss Company, which handled wholesale and retail hardware, glassware, stoves, and hotel supplies. It is a good example of a Craftsman-style bungalow. The proposed additions and alterations maintain the most significant architectural features of the house, and the second-floor addition is pulled back from the distinctive porch and stone chimney on the north façade. Nevertheless, as the house is on a corner lot, the additions would represent visible changes to a historic landmark.

2.1 Design an addition to complement the scale and massing of the historic building, including height. The addition must appear subordinate to the historic building.

The second-floor addition will increase the height of the roofline and introduce dormers visible on the Harris Blvd. side. However, it does not add a full story in height, as much of the usable space is captured from the existing attic.

2.2 (b) Minimize the appearance of the addition from the street faced by the historic building's front wall. The historic building's overall shape as viewed from the street must appear relatively unaltered.

The second-floor addition is set back from the front and side elevations but does introduce a gable and a shed-roofed dormer visible from the front and side streets.

3.1 Design additions to be compatible with and differentiated from the historic building, if they are visible from the street.

The addition's form, massing, roof pitch, materials, and fenestration are compatible with the historic house but do not appear to be historic features.

3.3 If adding dormers to the roof of a historic building, do not locate them on front-facing slopes. Minimize their location, size, and scale on sidefacing slopes.

The shed-roofed dormer on the east elevation does not extend the full length of the house.

4.1 If an addition will be visible from a street on the front or side, design its roof form and slope to complement the roof on the historic building.

The roof pitch is the same or similar to that of the existing house. The north façade has nested gables, and the second-floor addition would introduce a third, recessed gable. The rear addition has a cross-gabled roof.

4.2 Use roof materials that match or have similar color, texture, and other visual qualities as the roof on the historic building.

Metal roofing is noted as an alteration to the house in the landmark nomination. The additions will also have standing-seam metal roofing.

5.1 If an addition will be visible from a street on the front or side, use exterior wall materials that are compatible with those on the historic building, as well as with the character of the district, in scale, type, material, size, finish, and texture.

The addition will be clad in horizontal wood siding matching that on the historic house.

5.2 Differentiate the exterior wall materials of the addition from those of the historic building. This could be accomplished by using different materials, using the same materials with different dimensions, or changing trim type or dimensions.

While the cladding will match the historic house, the additions will be differentiated by use of narrower window trim and plain rather than decorative bargeboards.

6.1 If an addition will be visible from a street on the front or side, use windows that are compatible with those on the existing building in terms of material, fenestration pattern, size, proportion, configuration, and profile.

The fenestration patterns are compatible with the historic house.

The proposed additions are compatible in their design and would largely meet the standards for a contributing resource in the Old West Austin National Register district. However, additions to historic landmarks should be evaluated individually based on the characteristics that make the property significant. The additions are major modifications to a landmark property visible from the front and side streets. While they do not directly impact the most prominent character-defining features, the additions result in some removal of historic fabric, including windows on the side and rear elevations.

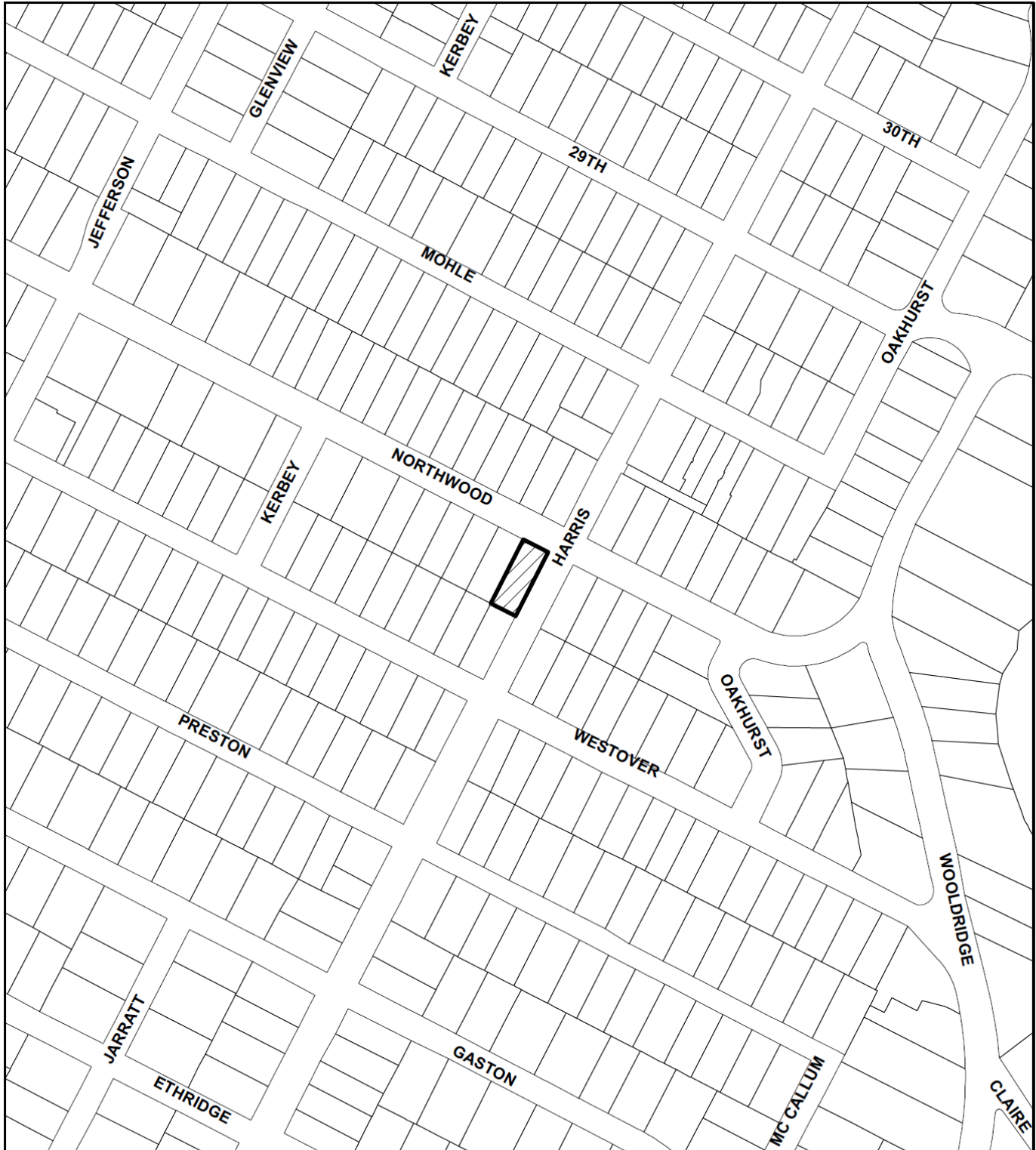
COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

Not reviewed.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Consider approval of the project, including demolition of the garage and construction of rear and second-story additions to the house; specify retention of some of the mulled windows on the north elevation, to the extent possible without compromising the connection with the addition. Alternately, postpone the case to the May 24, 2021 Historic Landmark Commission meeting with a referral to the May Architectural Review Committee meeting.

LOCATION MAP



SUBJECT TRACT



PENDING CASE



ZONING BOUNDARY

NOTIFICATIONS

CASE#: HR 21-041008

LOCATION: 1501 NORTHWOOD ROAD



1" = 250'

This product is for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for or be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. It does not represent an on-the-ground survey and represents only the approximate relative location of property boundaries.

This product has been produced by CTM for the sole purpose of geographic reference. No warranty is made by the City of Austin regarding specific accuracy or completeness.

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Photos



*North and east elevations, view from corner of Northwood Rd. and Harris Blvd.
Photograph provided by applicant.*



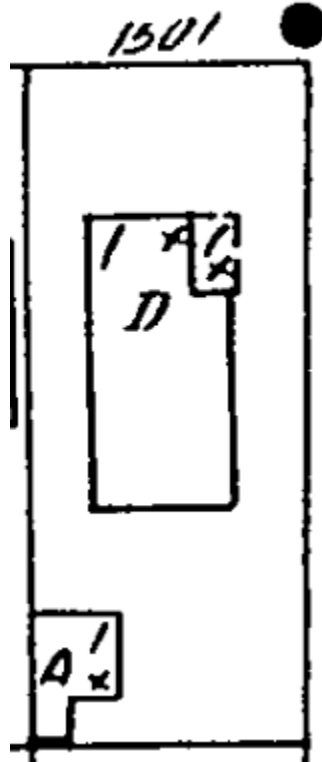
North elevation, view from Northwood Rd. Photograph provided by applicant.



South elevation of house and east elevation of garage. Photograph provided by applicant.



West elevation of house and north elevation of garage. Photograph provided by applicant.



Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of 1501 Northwood Rd., vol. 1, 1935-1961, sheet 56.