

JOHN COOPER  
MAYOR



**METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY**

Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission  
Sunnyside in Sevier Park  
3000 Granny White Pike  
Nashville, Tennessee 37204  
Telephone: (615) 862-7970  
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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**  
**1717 Villa Place**  
**February 19, 2019**

**Application:** Partial Demolition; New Construction—Addition  
**District:** Edgehill Neighborhood Conservation Zoning Overlay  
**Council District:** 17  
**Base Zoning:** RS5  
**Map and Parcel Number:** 10408035900  
**Applicant:** Trent Dabbs, Owner  
**Project Lead:** Sean Alexander, sean.alexander@nashville.gov

<p><b>Description of Project:</b> The applicant requests to retain an uncovered staircase on the left side of the house that was recently constructed without permits, and to retain a door that was installed in what was originally a window opening.</p> <p><b>Recommendation Summary:</b> Staff recommends disapproval of the request for after-the-fact approval to retain the exterior staircase and window alteration on the left side of the house at 1717 Villa Place, and that original conditions be returned within 30 days, finding that the work does not meet the following sections of the Edgehill Neighborhood Conservation Zoning Overlay design guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>III.C. Setbacks and Rhythm of Spacing</li> <li>III.D. Materials</li> <li>V.A. Additions (Location and Removability)</li> <li>VI. Demolition (Partial)</li> </ul> <p>Staff further recommends that the replacement window, once the door is removed, is approved administratively.</p>	<p><b>Attachments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>A:</b> Photographs</li> <li><b>B:</b> Sketch</li> <li><b>C:</b> Public Comment</li> </ul>
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## Applicable Design Guidelines:

### V. NEW CONSTRUCTION-ADDITION

(Also see section III.)

#### A. Addition: Design

1. Contemporary designs for additions to existing properties are not discouraged when such additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural, or cultural material; and when such design is compatible, by not contrasting greatly, with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the property, neighborhood, or environment.

#### B. Addition: Location

1. Generally, an addition should be situated at the rear of a building in such a way that it will not disturb either front or side facades. Additions should be physically distinguished from the historic building and generally fit within the shadow line of the existing building.
  - a. Connections to additions should, as much as possible, use existing window and door openings rather than remove significant amounts of rear wall material.
  - b. Generally rear additions should inset one foot, for each story, from the side wall.
2. When a lot width exceeds 60 feet or the standard lot width on the block, it may be appropriate to add a side addition to a historic structure.
  - a. The addition should sit back from the face of the historic structure (at or beyond the midpoint of the building) and should be subservient in height, width and massing to the historic structure.
  - b. Side additions should be narrower than half of the historic building width and exhibit a height of at least 2' shorter than the historic building.
  - c. To deemphasize a side addition, the roofing form should generally be a hip or side-gable roof form.
3. The creation of an addition through enclosure of a front porch is not appropriate. The creation of an addition through the enclosure of a side porch may be appropriate if the addition is constructed in such a way that original form and openings on the porch remain visible and undisturbed.
4. A new addition should be constructed in such a manner that if the addition were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the original structure would be unimpaired. Connections should, as much as possible, use existing window and door openings rather than remove significant amounts of rear wall material.

#### C. Addition: Massing

1. In order to assure that an addition has achieved proper scale, the rear addition should generally be shorter and thinner than the existing building. Exceptions may be made when unusual constraints make these parameters unreasonable, such as an extreme grade change or an atypical lot parcel shape or size. In these cases, an addition may rise above or extend wider than the existing building; however, generally the addition should not be higher and extend wider.

*a. When an addition needs to be taller:*

*Whenever possible, additions should not be taller than the historic building; however, when a taller addition is the only option, additions to single story structures may rise as high as 4' above ridge of the existing building at a distance of 40' from the front edge of the existing building. In this instance, the side walls and roof of the addition must sit in as is typical for all additions. The portion of the roof that can be seen should have a hipped, side gable or clipped gable roof to help decrease the visual mass of the addition.*

*b. When an addition needs to be wider:*

*Rear additions that are wider than an existing historic building may be appropriate when the*

*building is narrower than 30', the building is shifted to one side of the lot, or the lot is greater than 60' in width. In these instances, a structural alcove or channel must separate the existing building from the new addition. The structural alcove should sit in a minimum of 1' and be at least twice as long as it is deep.*

*A rear addition that is wider should not wrap the rear corner. It should only extend from the addition itself and not the historic building.*

2. No matter its use, an addition should not be larger than the existing house, not including non-historic additions, in order to achieve compatibility in scale. This will allow for the retention of small and medium size homes in the neighborhood. The diversity of housing type and size is a character defining feature of the historic districts.
3. Additions which are essentially a house-behind-a-house with a long narrow connector are not appropriate, as the form does not exist historically. Short or minimal connections that do not require the removal of the entire back wall of a historic building are preferred.
4. When an addition ties into the existing roof, it should be at least 6" below the existing ridge.
5. Ridge raises are most appropriate for one-story, side-gable buildings, (without clipped gables) and that require more finished height in the attic. A ridge raise is generally not appropriate for low sloped roofs, such as those found on ranch forms. The purpose of a ridge raise is to allow for conditioned space in the attic and to discourage large rear or side additions. The raised portion must sit in a minimum of 2' from each side wall and can be raised no more than 2' of total vertical height within the same plane as the front roof slope.
6. Foundation walls should sit in from the existing foundation at the back edge of the existing structure by one foot for each story or half story.
7. The height of the addition's roof and eaves must be less than or equal to the existing structure.
8. Visually evident roof slopes should match the roof slopes of the existing structure, and roof planes should sit in accordingly for rear additions.

## **VI. DEMOLITION**

### **A. PRINCIPLE**

The demolition of a building, or major portion of a building, which contributes historically or architecturally to the character and significance of the district is not appropriate and should be avoided.

### **B. GUIDELINES**

#### **1 . Demolition is not appropriate**

- a. if a building, or major portion of a building, is of such architectural or historical interest and value that its removal would be detrimental to the public interest; or
- b. if a building, or major portion of a building, is of such old or unusual or uncommon design and materials that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced without great difficulty and expense.

#### **2 . Demolition is appropriate**

- a. if a building, or major portion of a building, has irretrievably lost its architectural and historical integrity and significance and its removal will result in a more historically appropriate visual

effect on the district;

- b. if a building, or major portion of a building, does not contribute to the historical and architectural character and significance of the district and its removal will result in a more historically appropriate visual effect on the district; or
- c. if the denial of the demolition will result in an economic hardship on the applicant as determined by the MHZC in accordance with section 17.40.420 (Historic Zoning Regulations), Metropolitan Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance.

**Background:** The building at 1717 Villa Place is a one and one-half story brick house with a side-gabled roof and a projecting gabled front porch. The house was constructed circa 1925 and is typical of the Craftsman architectural style.

Because of the age and design of the house, it is considered contributing to the historic character of the neighborhood.



Figure 1: 1717 Villa Place.

This application was scheduled to be reviewed as a violation by the MHZC on December 18, 2018 but was granted a deferral at the request of the applicant. The application would have been re-scheduled for the January 15, 2020 meeting, but the applicant communicated before the submittal deadline that they were willing to correct the violation. On January 16<sup>th</sup>, however, the applicant communicated to staff that they had subsequently decided that they did not want to correct the violation and were renewing their request to retain the unapproved stair and door.

**Analysis and Findings:** The applicant is seeking after-the-fact approval of a new open exterior staircase that was added on the left side of the house, and a window opening in the left gable wall that was converted to a doorway. The applicant did not acquire a Building Permit or Preservation Permit for this work.

**Demolition:** A upperstory window opening on the left side of the house was enlarged to convert it to a doorway. Replacement of a window or door unit alone does not require MHZC approval in a Neighborhood Conservation Zoning Overlay, but altering a building's fenestration pattern does. Typically, altering an opening's size or location or adding a new opening altogether is considered "partial demolition" because it requires removal of a portion of wall, and can make the proportion and rhythm of windows incompatible with the historic house.

This particular window opening had already been altered, having been converted from a pair of double-hung windows to a single window between 2013 and 2015, before the creation of the Neighborhood Conservation Zoning Overlay. In general, however, overlay design guidelines are in place so that alterations do not make a building less like its original condition and should generally move toward the goal of taking a building closer to its original condition.

Staff finds that the partial demolition of the left side wall to convert the window opening into a doorway does not meet Section VI.B.2 for appropriate demolition, and that it constitutes an inappropriate demolition under section VI.B.1.

Location & Removability: The new uncovered exterior staircase was added on the left side of the house, originating approximately five feet (5') back from the front wall of the building and leading up to the new door in the center of the gable-field wall. Exterior stairs are not typical of historic Craftsman style buildings and so are not appropriate unless located at the rear, where they would not be visible or would be only minimally visible.



Figure 2: Side stair at 1717 Villa Place.

Additionally, the location of the stair runs across the opening of an original and remaining window opening on the first story. Additions should not disturb side facades or remove or obscure architectural features.

Staff finds that the location and attachment of the stair addition is not appropriate and does not meet Sections V.A, V.B, and V.C. of the Edgehill design guidelines.

Design: The new stairs are wood with solid risers and a wood and steel cable railing, which is relatively modern in design and contrasts with the character of the Craftsman style house. Modern additions are not discouraged when they are compatible with the historic property, do not remove original materials, or are minimally visible. The recently constructed stairs are in a highly visible location, are not consistent with the Craftsman style of the house, and required the removal of a portion of the gable wall.

Staff finds that the stair and window alteration do not meet Section V.A, V.B., IV.C., and IV. F. of the Edgehill design guidelines.

Setback & Rhythm of Spacing: The outside edge of the new staircase is approximately three feet (3') from the left side property line. The standard side setback requirement for stairs with risers is five feet (5'); however, the bulk zoning regulations allow stairs with open risers to encroach into the setback buffer. The applicant is not requesting a setback determination; they have agreed to remove the risers in order to meet the setback regulation.

While removing the risers on the stairs would meet the setback requirement, Staff finds that the location of the stairs with or without risers is not appropriate with the historic context because they alter the appearance of the house and the space between houses.

Staff finds that the stairs do not meet Section III.C. of the Edgehill design guidelines for setback and rhythm of spacing.

Materials: The stairs were constructed of deck grade pressure-treated wood with a railing made of wood and steel cable. The foot of the staircase lands on a poured concrete pad.

These materials have been approved previously as components of an appropriately located rear addition, or for a side or rear entrance on infill, but not on a side addition so near the front of an historic house.

The door that was installed in the gable-field wall is a solid steel panel door, typical of outbuildings or basements but not a primary façade of an historic building.

Although the materials of the stair and door may be appropriate in other applications, Staff finds that they are not appropriate for a highly visible addition on an historic building and therefore do not meet Section III.D. of the Edgehill design guidelines.

**Recommendation:** Staff recommends disapproval of the request for after-the-fact approval to retain the exterior staircase and window alteration on the left side of the house at 1717 Villa Place and that original conditions be returned within 30 days, finding that the work does not meet the following sections of the Edgehill Neighborhood Conservation Zoning Overlay design guidelines:

III.C. Setbacks and Rhythm of Spacing

III.D. Materials

V.A. Additions (Location and Removability)

VI. Demolition (Partial)

Staff further recommends that the replacement window, once the door is removed, is approved administratively.

**ATTACHMENT A: PHOTOGRAPHS**



1717 Villa Place, front.



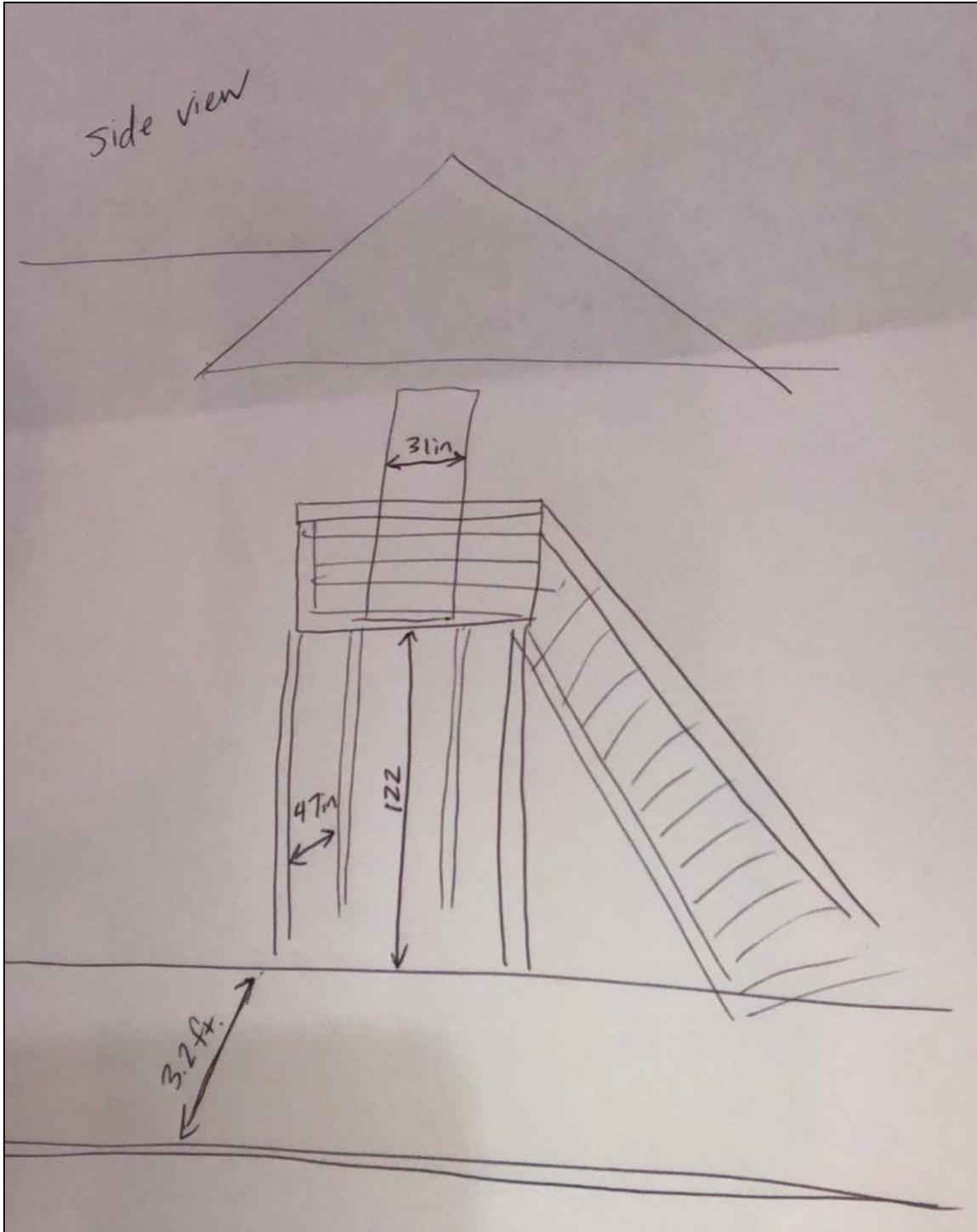
1717 Villa Place, left side wall and stairs, viewed from front.



1717 Villa Place, left side wall and stairs viewed from rear where stairs can be seen crossing the original window opening



New door in left-side gable wall.



Sketch of stair addition submitted by applicant. Not to scale.

**ATTACHMENT B: PUBLIC COMMENT**

**From:** Sledge, Colby (Council Member) <Colby.Sledge@nashville.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2020 3:17 PM  
**To:** Zeigler, Robin (Historical Commission) <Robin.Zeigler@nashville.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Opposed to 1717 Villa Place

Hey Robin,

Thanks for your updates. I oppose the request to keep the unpermitted stairs.

Colby

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Colby Sledge  
Metro Council, District 17  
(615) 442-3727  
ColbySledge.com  
Sign up for my weekly newsletter here!

**From:** Rodney King  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 18, 2019 10:29 AM  
**To:** Historical Commission <historicalcommission@nashville.gov>; Zeigler, Robin (Historical Commission) <Robin.Zeigler@nashville.gov>  
**Subject:** Opposed to 1717 Villa Place

I am opposed to the non-permitted construction of exterior stairs at 1717 Villa Place.

This does not comply with the overlay guidelines, and the fact that they built this without a permit indicates they knew it didn't comply.

Also, although outside of your area of consideration, this property is zoned for single family occupancy only, so an exterior stair to a second story entrance is totally inappropriate.

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Rodney King  
907 Villa Place  
Nashville  
615-513-1460  
www.beyondtheboxproductions.com

**From:** Karin Kalodimos  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 18, 2019 8:13 AM

**To:** Historical Commission <historicalcommission@nashville.gov>  
**Cc:** Zeigler, Robin (Historical Commission) <Robin.Zeigler@nashville.gov>  
**Subject:** Please disapprove request at 1717 Villa Place

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to request that you not allow the applicant at 1717 Villa Place to retain the side/exterior staircase and door that was constructed without a permit and that this be removed within the 60 days that staff recommended.

This does not follow the guidelines for the overlay and does not fit within the Edgehill Overlay guidelines. Furthermore, the zoning is RS 5 and therefore only allows a single family home, thus making a separate entrance unnecessary.

As a owner within the Edgehill Overlay I strongly feel that this would detract greatly from the historic preservation goals of the overlay district. In addition as a contributing house this greatly muddles the historic significance of the house at 1717 Villa Place.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Karin Kalodimos  
907 Villa Place  
Nashville, TN 37212