

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

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

703 Shelby Avenue

August 19, 2020

Application: Alteration

District: Edgefield Historic Preservation Zoning Overlay

Council District: 06

Base Zoning: R8

Map and Parcel Number: 09304002400

Applicant: Melanie Farrell

Project Lead: Melissa Sajid, Melissa.sajid@nashville.gov

Description of Project: The request is to paint the historic brick.

Recommendation Summary: Staff recommends disapproval of the request to paint the brick, finding that the project does not meet Section II.B.5.c of the *Edgefield Historic Zoning District Handbook and Design Guidelines* for when it is appropriate to paint brick. Staff recommends that the mortar be repointed and the masonry be repaired as needed using products and methods appropriate for historic masonry to prevent further damage.

Attachments

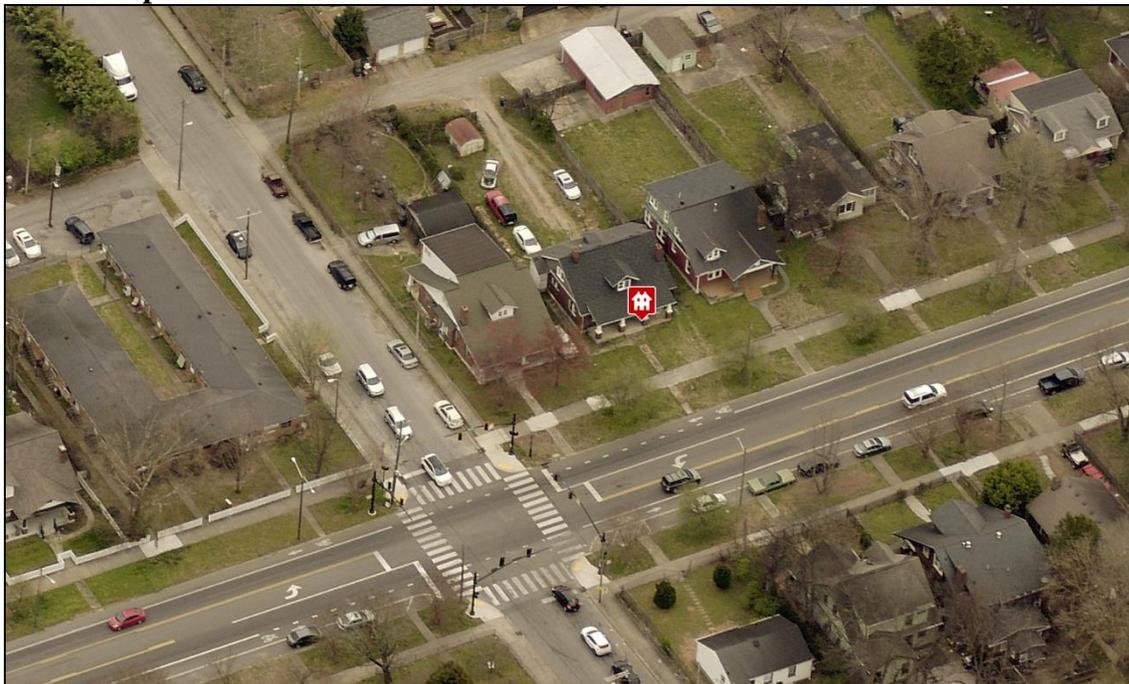
A: Photographs

B: Photos

Vicinity Map:



Aerial Map:



Applicable Design Guidelines:

II.B Alterations & Repairs

II.B.5 Materials

- a. Original building materials should be retained.
- b. Where replacement is necessary, new materials should match the design, dimension, detail, and all other visual characteristics of the originals, based on physical or historical documentation.

Original building materials may include, but are not limited to, wood, brick, stone, terra cotta, stucco, cast stone and concrete.

c. Masonry

- 1) Mortar for re-pointing should match original color, joint width, depth, and tooling profile. *When repointing brick, new mortar with a high concentration of portland cement should be avoided. Temperature and moisture cause brick and mortar to expand and contract. During expansion, the two materials press against each other, and over time, the softer of the two deteriorates. Typical "redi-mix" type mortar, which contains a high concentration of portland cement, is harder than historic brick. In such circumstances, its use can damage brick. Mortar for repointing should have a low concentration of portland cement.*

- 2) Cleaning of masonry should be done with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting causes severe damage to brick, stone, and mortar, and is not appropriate.

- 3) Generally, the use of paint, stain, water repellent, or any other type of coating on brick is not appropriate.

If brick is mismatched due to insensitive repairs, paint or stain on mismatched areas may be appropriate. If brick is so deteriorated that it cannot withstand the weather, a water repellent or paint may be appropriate. In such circumstances, the paint or stain must approximate the natural material color of the original brick. Previously painted brick may be repainted using a color which approximates the natural material color of the original brick.

- 4) Previously unpainted stone should not be painted. Waterproof coatings shall not be used.

If stone is so deteriorated that it can no longer withstand the weather, a water repellent or consolidant may be appropriate. Previously painted stone may be repainted using a color which approximates the natural color of the stone.

Background: The house located at 703 Shelby Avenue is a c. 1920 brick bungalow that contributes to the historic character of the Edgefield Historic Preservation Zoning Overlay district. A rear dormer addition was permitted administratively in October 2019 (HCP 2019060604).



Figure 1. 703 Shelby Avenue, April 2020.

Analysis and Findings: The applicant has requested to paint the brick. The brick on the rear wall has already been painted without a preservation permit.

Painting of Masonry: The applicant has requested to paint the historic brick in order to cover existing stains as well as brick and mortar in need of repair. The stained areas are located near the front corners of the house and appear to be where the gutters were previously located (Figures 2 and 3).

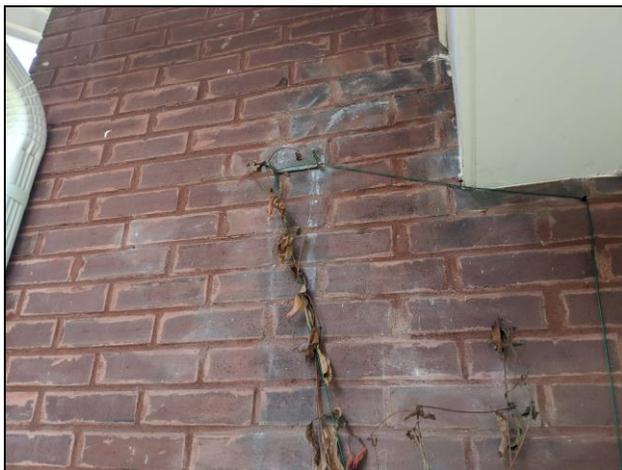


Figure 2. Staining to the left of the front porch.



Figure 3. Staining to the right of the front porch.

The owner has suggested that the brick may have previously been painted or stained, but staff's inspection of the brick was unable to conclude that that is the case with the exception of the rear wall that was painted more recently without a permit. Some of the bricks appear either to have been damaged or worn down by recent or previous cleaning attempts or to have been stained by mortar in previous repointing efforts (Figures 4 and 5). (Also see Attachment B for more photos.) Staff also observed some individual brick that need repair. The owner has attempted to clean the brick using paint thinner, acetone, a wire brush, and multiple power washes, which are not effective or appropriate methods for cleaning historic brick.



Figure 4. Front wall under porch roof.



Figure 5. Front wall to the right of the porch floor.

Section II.B.5.c.3 of the Edgefield design guidelines states that the use of paint or stain on brick is not appropriate and that “if brick is so deteriorated that it cannot withstand the weather, a water repellent or paint may be appropriate.” Staff finds that the evidence does not meet the criteria for when painting brick could be appropriate. Instead, staff recommends that the mortar be repointed and brick be repaired, as needed. If additional cleaning is desired by the applicant, staff recommends a gentle alkaline chemical cleaner or poultice such as those made by Prosoco. The appropriate cleaner should be determined by testing different products as different types of masonry and staining have different requirements that can only be determined by testing. [Contractors trained to use Prosoco products](#) can assist with determining the appropriate product but other products are also available. More information is available through the National Park Service’s [Preservation Brief: Assessing Cleaning and Water-Repellent Treatments for Historic Masonry Buildings](#).

As stated previously, the rear façade has recently been painted without a preservation permit (Figure 6). While painting the brick does not meet the design guidelines, staff finds that leaving the rear wall painted could be appropriate since the rear façade is not visible from the street.



Figure 6. Recently painted rear façade.

Recommendation: Staff recommends disapproval of the request to paint the brick, finding that the project does not meet Section II.B.5.c of the *Edgefield Historic Zoning District: Handbook and Design Guidelines* for when it is appropriate to paint brick. Staff recommends that the mortar be repointed and the masonry be repaired as needed using products and methods appropriate for historic masonry to prevent further damage.

Attachment B: Photos



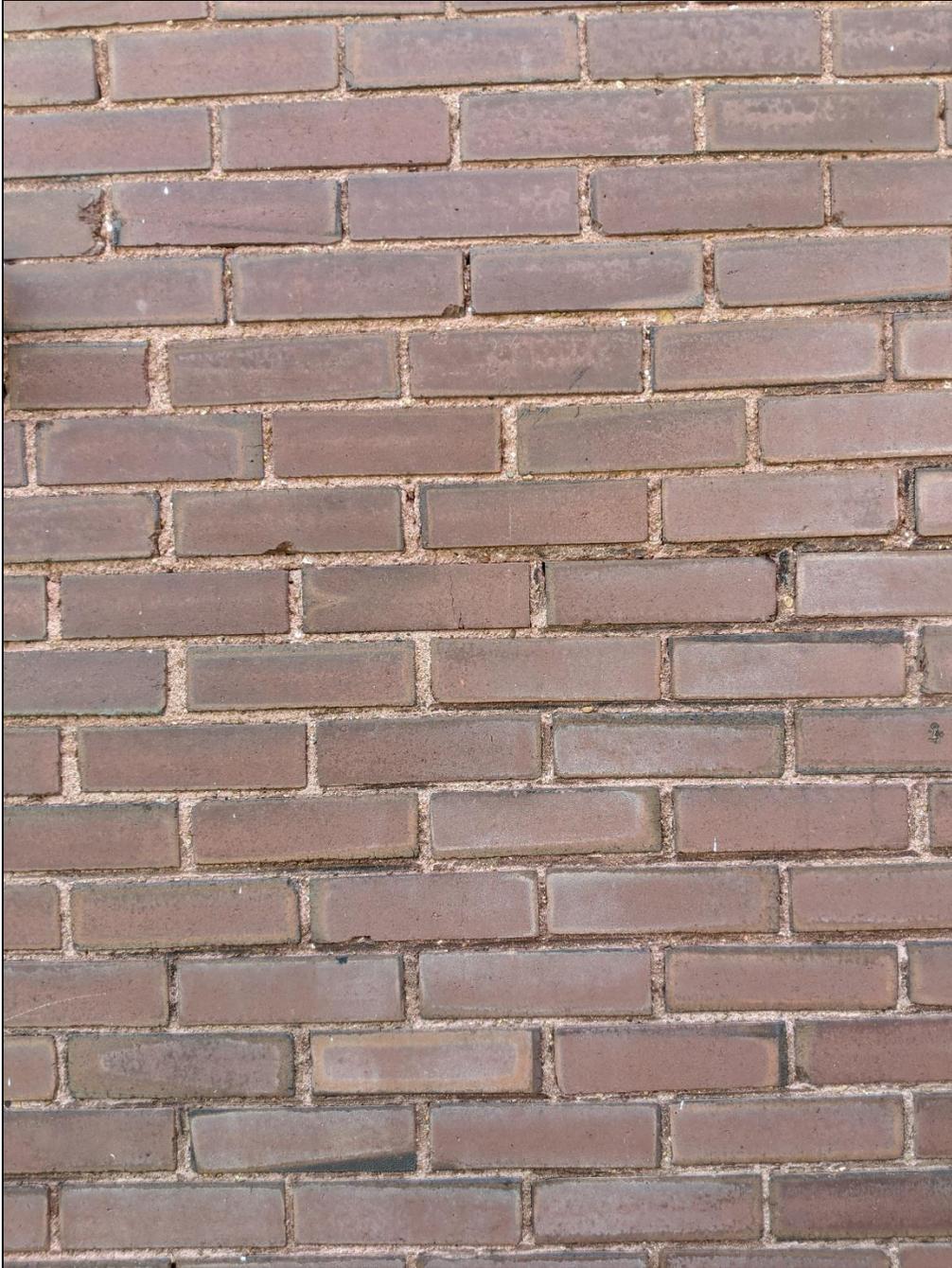
Front wall under the porch



Front façade to the right of the porch floor



Brick pier on the right side of the front porch



Right side façade



Right side façade



Left side façade



Left side façade



Left side façade



Left side façade



Rear façade