

PROPOSAL:

The Historic Preservation Commission is asked to advise the Planning Commission on a request for a special permit (16060) to approve expansion of a non-conforming use at 2340 Woodsdale Blvd., a contributing property in the Boulevards Historic District (listed on the National Register of Historic Places).

DISCUSSION:

The Lincoln Zoning Code provides an opportunity for owners of property that is legally used, but does not conform with some aspect of current zoning standards (typically lot size, setbacks, heights or continuing use), to apply for a special permit to rebuild, expand, or otherwise change their property.

2340 Woodsdale was built in 1930, designed by Meginnis & Schaumberg in the Tudor Revival style for Edward and Lillian Polley. Edward was executive secretary of the Nebraska Good Roads Association. Lillian was a well-known singer, church soloist, and vocal music teacher in Chicago and at the University School of Music in Lincoln.



Lillian Helms Polley,
1928 *Who's Who in Lincoln*



The curving diagonal of Woodsdale echoed by an rear lot line that produces an acutely angled rear corner on the north. This configuration places the house an ample 45 feet from the front property line at its nearest point, but less than 4 feet from the rear lot line along a chamfered portion of the garage. The front yard is planted with several mature trees, substantially screening the house from the Woodsdale right-of-way.

The request is to reconstruct the garage wing, slightly increasing the separation from the rear lot line above the garage.



Aerial from south of 2340 Woodsdale, 2013



2016 aerial of 2340 Woodsdale and larger neighboring houses.

The proposed addition would continue to provide two garage stalls, but separated into “carriage house” type doors. The first story would be clad in brick and upper story in stucco and false half-timbering, echoing the materials and style elements of the original house.



View from south, 2015



21 SOUTH ELEVATION - EXISTING
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



22 SOUTH ELEVATION - PROPOSED
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

In a strict application of the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines for rehabilitation of historic structures, this careful mimicking of the original house and near-doubling of its main façade might be faulted for masking the original design, and not clearly demarcating between old and new. However, even the enlarged

house is in keeping with the scale of its neighbors. Furthermore, the shed roofs over the garage door and eaves dormers above create a subtle separation from the 1930 house. Finally, the Commission's review is a general, advisory one, not a strict application of adopted standards in a locally designated landmark district. The addition is respectful of the original design and an improvement on the existing garage wing.

Recommended finding: The proposed addition is responsive to the design of the original house, improves upon the appearance of the current garage, and is compatible with its setting in the Boulevards historic district.

Recommended action: Recommend that Planning Commission support the approval of Special Permit 16060.

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