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**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD  
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

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Property Address: **87 V Street NW**  
Landmark/District: **Bloomington Historic District**

Meeting Date: **May 27, 2021**  
H.P.A. Number: **#21-327**

☒ Agenda  
☐ Consent Calendar  
☐ Denial Calendar  
☐ Concept Review  
☒ Permit Review  
☒ Alteration  
☐ New Construction  
☐ Demolition  
☐ Subdivision

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Owner Edward MacAllister seeks permit review to replace a two-story rear porch at 87 V Street NW, a contributing property in the Bloomington Historic District. Plans were prepared by Derek Marks.

### **Property Description and Context**

The property is a prominent corner rowhouse at the northeast corner of V and 1<sup>st</sup> Streets. It was built in 1901 by Thomas A. Haislip along with the rest of the houses on this side of 1<sup>st</sup> Street up to W Street. Haislip was a prolific Bloomington developer with over 200 houses to his credit. 87 V Street was Haislip's residence and where he died in 1903. The house exhibits the prominent projections and rooflines of this era of Bloomington rowhouses. The wide entrance portico on V Street with Corinthian columns is a very uncommon feature and likely relates to Haislip using this house as his personal residence, though certain components—like the railing above the cornice—are not original.

Its rear elevation is prominently visible from V Street and is currently occupied by a late 20<sup>th</sup> century two-story pressure treated deck with steps down to the rear yard. The rear yard is separated from the parked public space by a brick garden wall about five feet tall. The garden wall extends to a one-story brick garage with a vehicle door facing V Street. The public space includes a paved area and double gate off the driveway which in the past has been used as a parking pad.

### **Proposal**

The applicant proposes to replace the rear porch with a new frame porch of the same dimensions, trimmed with pilasters, cornice molding, railings with square pickets and box newels, and lattice skirts. Whether the trim is wood or a composite material is not indicated. The first floor of the porch would be screened. Where the garden wall meets the house a brick balustrade would be demolished. Porch steps would be relocated to this location and include a six-foot wide deck projected four feet into public space and steps running down towards the garage. The public space will be reorganized to reduce the size of the paving adjacent to the driveway and to place small paved areas including a flagstone patio, a walk of floating flagstone pavers, and a gravel bordered planing area.

### **Evaluation**

The new rear porch is well composed in scale and form and is an unquestionable improvement over the existing pressure-treated deck. The trim proposed uses the proportions and components found in early 20<sup>th</sup> century porches found in Bloomington.

However, relocating the steps to the public space is a fault that requires correction. The primary concern is that it would require the demolition of the brick balustrade at this location which is an iconic form of Bloomington porches. This balustrade matches the detailing in the wide porch at the main entrance and should be retained as a character defining feature of the house. The secondary concern would be the introduction of frame-constructed steps into the public space. The public space is a formal area of masonry

materials (main entry porch and projecting bays) and an informal frame component would contrast with these primary elevation elements. The better location of the steps is on the private side of the garden wall where they could land in the rear yard and where its informal frame construction is better suited.

The existing public space is already over-programmed with many non-historic elements that predate the establishment of the historic district in 2018. The proposed landscape plan reorganizes the public space with the benefit of reducing the paved area next to the driveway so it cannot be used as a parking pad in the future. The storage of sanitation cans in this area should not be encouraged since a rear yard and garage are available as alternative. Any future application to screen the cans with a new structure would be difficult to reconcile with the long-held premise that the public space is supposed to be maintained in a landscaped, park-like manner.

### **Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Review Board approve the permit for the new two-story rear porch at 87 V Street NW as compatible with the character of the historic district on the condition that the existing brick balustrade is not demolished and the new porch steps are not placed in public space.*

*Staff contact: Brendan Meyer*