

**STAFF REPORT:** 10/12/2022 REGULAR MEETING

**PREPARED BY:** J. ROSS

**ADDRESS:** 1424 IROQUOIS

**APPLICATION NO:** #2022-8053

**HISTORIC DISTRICT:** INDIAN VILLAGE

**APPLICANT/OWNER:** KYLE LYNCH AND ALEXANDREA MURPHY

**DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT:** 10/5/2022

**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION:** 9/22/2022

**SCOPE:** REPLACE PORCH DECK

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The building located at 1424 Iroquois is a two-story, single-family dwelling that was erected in 1905 for Arthur M. Pelletreau. Albert Kahn provided the home's design. The home features a hipped-roof, centrally-located main mass with a projecting front-gabled wing at the primary elevation. A small partial-width, hipped-roof porch with round wood columns, brick wingwalls, stone steps, and a terrazzo cap/flooring shelters the building's primary/front elevation entrance. Terrazzo has also been applied to the porch's top step. Larger hipped-roof porches with wood steps and decks are also located at the rear and side elevations. Exterior walls are clad with brick and wood shake.



1424 Iroquois, current conditions (staff photo taken 10/5/2022)

## PROPOSAL

With the current application, the property owners are seeking the Commission's approval to replace the existing decorative terrazzo flooring at the front porch with a new 4" thick concrete porch cap. The applicants have noted that they wish to replace the existing terrazzo flooring because its current deteriorated condition has created dangerous conditions/a tripping hazard at the front porch. Please see the photos submitted with the application which depict the terrazzo floor's current condition.

## STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- Research revealed that terrazzo dates back to the ancient mosaics of Egypt. However, the form of terrazzo which is used today in the US was first found in Italy in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and was noted to have first appeared in the US in the late 1890s.
- An article dating from 1917 provides a description of terrazzo flooring installation [Concrete-Cement Age - Google Books](#). Specifically, a reinforced concrete base was first laid then a "concrete bed" which was composed of a mixture of cement and an aggregate of chips/pieces of marble, granite, mother of pearl, or quartz was applied to the concrete base. When the mixture hardened, the surface was ground to a smooth finish, which exposed the aggregate. Rather than installing the flooring as a single, unbroken piece (which could lead to cracking), terrazzo flooring was typically installed in sections with expansion joints to allow for contraction and expansion. Prior to the 1920s, the expansion joints were marked by/filled in with cubes of marble (see photos). However, in 1924, the introduction of an improved method for installing terrazzo flooring which included the use of metal strip dividers/expansion joints (see photo) greatly expanded the use/popularity of terrazzo in the US [Modern Mosaic and Terrazzo Floors - Google Books](#)



1424 Iroquois. Note that expansion joints are marked by small square pieces of marble.



Example of a terrazzo floor with metal strip expansion joint



- The expansion joints at the terrazzo porch floor at 1424 Iroquois are marked by cubes of marble. No metal strips are visible at the porch. It is staff's opinion that the flooring was likely installed prior to 1924 as the cubed marble expansion joints date from the time prior to the introduction of metal strip dividers/expansion joints

## ISSUES

- The applicant has provided photos of the terrazzo porch floor to support their statement that it cannot be repaired. Staff does acknowledge that areas of the border and a small area at the southwestern corner of the central grey terrazzo panel are crumbling. Also, the porch does display a small number of cracks which run east west along the border and central panels. However, staff does find that the flooring can be repaired as the crumbling border sections and southwestern corner of the central grey terrazzo panel can be infilled and the cracks can be patched.



**Existing conditions.** Photos provided by applicant. Note that porch flooring is failing mainly at the red border areas with a small area of deterioration at the southwestern corner of the central grey terrazzo panel. The porch also displays a small number of cracks which run east west along the border and central panels

- As previously noted, the home was erected in 1905. The applicant has provided a floor plan in which the front porch floor is labeled as "concrete." Although it is clear that the plan called for a concrete floor at the porch, it is possible that the original homeowner had the terrazzo porch flooring added upon the home's construction. However, if the terrazzo floor does not date to the home's original date of construction, it is historic age and was likely installed prior to the 1920s per the above analysis. The homeowner who installed this flooring made a deliberate choice to locate this decorative, distinctive flooring at the building's primary entry porch vs adhering to the concrete finish which was prescribed in the original Kahn plan. It is staff's opinion that the porch floor represents a distinctive

feature and finish and is an example of craftsmanship that characterizes the property. As noted above, it is staff's opinion that the porch floor is not deteriorated beyond repair. It is therefore staff's opinion that the porch floor should be repaired per the below-listed Standards. Since the current application proposes to replace the porch floor with concrete, it is staff's opinion that the proposed project does not meet the SOI's Standards.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Section 21-2-78. Determination of the Historic District Commission – Certificate of Appropriateness**

HDC staff recommends that the Commission issue a Denial for the project as presented because it does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. In particular, Standard #s:

- 2.) *The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.*
- 4.) *Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.*
- 5.) *Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.*
- 6.) *Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.*