

## ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

### Staff Report

**ADDRESS:** 121 Crest Avenue, Application Number HDC22-1198

**DISTRICT:** Old West Side Historic District (OWSHD)

**REPORT DATE:** October 13, 2022

**REPORT PREPARED BY:** Jill Thacher, Historic Preservation Coordinator

**REVIEW COMMITTEE DATE:** Tuesday, October 11, 2022

	<b>OWNER</b>	<b>APPLICANT</b>
<b>Name:</b>	Robert Straszewski/Sentiny LLC	Same
<b>Address:</b>	240 Crest Ave Ann Arbor, MI 48103	
<b>Phone:</b>	(734) 742-7332	

**BACKGROUND:** This 1 ¾ story gable-fronter features 3/1 and 4/1 windows, exposed rafter tails, a round attic window in the front gable, a full-width shed-roof front porch with tapered square half-columns on a solid wall clad with siding to match the house.

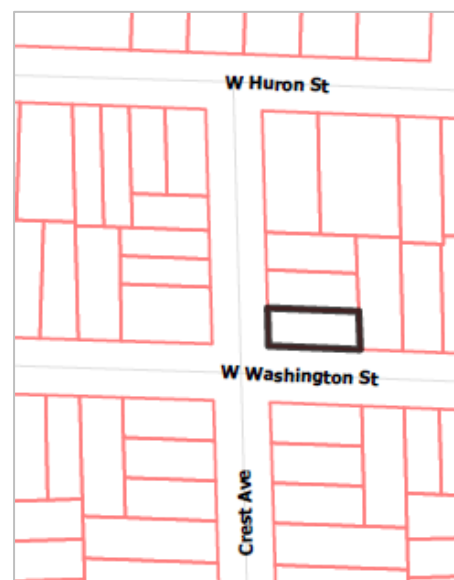
**LOCATION:** The site is located at the northeast corner of Crest Avenue and West Washington Streets.

**APPLICATION:** The applicant seeks HDC approval to add a two-story rear addition, rotate the garage to face south instead of west, add a new asphalt driveway and curb cut, and add an air conditioning unit on the north side of the house.

#### **APPLICABLE REGULATIONS:**

#### **From the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (other SOI Standards may also apply):**

- (2) The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
- (5) Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
- (9) New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the



old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

- (10) New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property will be unimpaired.

**From the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (other SOI Guidelines may also apply):**

### **Additions**

*Recommended:* Constructing a new addition so that there is the least possible loss of historic materials and so that character-defining features are not obscured, damaged, or destroyed.

Locating the attached exterior addition at the rear or on an inconspicuous side of a historic building; and limiting its size and scale in relationship to the historic building.

Designing new additions in a manner that makes clear what is historic and what is new.

Placing new additions such as balconies and greenhouses on non-character-defining elevations and limiting and size and scale in relationship to the historic building.

Designing additional stories, when required for the new use, that are set back from the wall plane and are as inconspicuous as possible when viewed from the street.

*Not Recommended:* Attaching a new addition so that the character-defining features of the historic building are obscured, damaged, or destroyed.

Designing a new addition so that its size and scale in relation to the historic building are out of proportion, thus diminishing the historic character.

Designing and constructing new additions that result in the diminution or loss of the historic character of the resource, including its design, materials, workmanship, location, or setting.

Constructing additional stories so that the historic appearance of the building is radically changed.

### **Building Site**

*Recommended:* Retaining the historic relationship between buildings, landscape features, and open space.

Identifying, retaining, and preserving buildings and their features as well as features of the site that are important in defining its overall historic character.

Removing or relocating buildings or landscape features thus destroying the historic relationship between buildings and the landscape.

Designing new exterior additions to historic buildings or adjacent new construction which is

compatible with the historic character of the site and which preserves the historic relationship between the building or buildings and the landscape.

**From the *City of Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines*** (other guidelines from this document may also apply):

### **Guidelines for All Additions**

*Appropriate*: Locating a required addition on the least character-defining elevation and keeping it subordinate in volume to the historic building.

Placing a new addition on a non-character defining or inconspicuous elevation and limiting the size and scale in relationship to the historic property.

Designing the addition so it is compatible in terms of massing, materials, relationship of solids to voids, and proportion of openings.

*Not Appropriate*: Designing a new addition that requires the removal of significant building elements or site features.

Designing an addition to appear older or the same age as the original building.

### **Residential Accessory Structures**

*Appropriate*: Maintaining and restoring historic barns, garages, sheds, trellises, and other accessory structures to match the historic materials and configuration.

Maintaining and repairing historic doors and windows on historic barns and garages to match the existing materials and configuration.

*Not Appropriate*: Altering historic barns, garages, and sheds by using materials, configurations, and designs that do not match the existing or historic appearance.

### **Paved Areas**

*Appropriate*: On residential properties, retaining and maintaining existing historic driveways and curb cuts, including “two track” driveways and green space between the driveway and the house.

### **STAFF FINDINGS:**

#### *Addition*

1. The house is currently 1,421 square feet and has no additions. The proposed two-story addition is 702 square feet, or 49% of the original. The footprint is currently 704 square feet; proposed is 351, for an increase of 50%.
2. The addition has a rectangular footprint inset 9 ¼” from the existing rear corners of the

house. The roof ridge is dropped 1'9" below the existing for about two feet, then bumps up to 4 ½" below the current roof ridge. The HDC should consider whether bumping back up in this way appropriately meets the standards and guidelines that suggest keeping an addition subordinate in volume to the historic building and limiting the size and scale in relation to a historic property. Keep in mind also that this is a very visible corner lot. The roof pitch of the larger portion of the addition matches that of the existing dormers. The smaller portion is similar (12/13) to the current roof pitch (12/11.5).

3. Cladding is currently narrow (3" approx.) wood lap siding. The addition is proposed to have 7" cementitious siding. Staff would appreciate the HDC's opinion on the appropriateness of this width (it appears to be on the large side to staff). Proposed trim is Boral. New windows and the double rear doors are aluminum clad. The windows have divided lites on the top sash for compatibility with the historic house.
4. A rear deck of composite materials with a metal guardrail and composite cap has a modern feel which is in keeping with the addition. On the north side of the addition is a well with steps leading down to a basement door. This location is out of sight and does not impact the historic part of the structure.
5. Staff believes the addition, deck, and below grade stairwell are compatible in size, materials, and composition to the historic house and neighborhood and meeting applicable standards and guidelines.

#### *Garage Rotation and Driveway with Curb Cut*

6. The garage is wood shiplap sided with double-leaf doors with six lites over six panels. A garage is present on the 1931 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map whose style and materials are consistent with garages of that age; it is therefore considered a contributing structure in the OWSHD.
7. The existing driveway is from Crest Avenue and there is a parking space just behind the front wall of the house's north elevation. The driveway stubs there and does not continue back to the garage. From the photo provided, the space between the house and fence is narrow but does look like the driveway could be extended to the garage (as it would have done originally).
8. The garage, once rotated, shows a 3'1" setback from the east property line. If approved, it is highly likely that the Building Department will require the garage to be 5' from the property line, unless the garage wall is fire proofed.
9. Rotating the garage and adding a new driveway is not compatible with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* standard number 2, which says "The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided." Rotating the garage and relocating the driveway would significantly alter features, spaces, and spatial relationships of the site. Per the *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines*, though the garage would be partially on the same footprint when rotated, the change in appearance and additional driveway location does not match the historic configuration of the garage and driveway.

### *Additional Comments*

10. The air conditioning unit is located in an appropriate location on the north side of the house. The applicant's architect has stated that if the garage rotation is not approved, the driveway stub would remain as it is currently, and their intent is to not extend the driveway to the garage. The new AC unit would therefore not be in the way of an extended driveway.
11. The house has half-round gutters on all or part of the roof, which the property owner will need to maintain or apply for a staff approval to replace with matching gutters. Similarly, the front steps and handrail appear to be in poor condition. That's another staff approval if the proposed stairs have closed risers and meet the design guidelines.
12. Staff has suggested two motions below. The first is for the addition and air conditioning unit. The second is for the garage rotation and new driveway and curbcut. The work included in each motion stands alone and may be approved or denied by the HDC without peril to the work in the other motion.

**POSSIBLE MOTIONS:** (Note that the motion supports staff findings and is only a suggestion. The Review Committee, consisting of staff and at least two Commissioners, will meet with the applicant on site and then make a recommendation at the meeting.)

#### *Addition, etc.*

I move that the Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for the portion of the application at 121 Crest Avenue, a contributing property in the Old West Side Historic District, to add a two-story rear addition and deck, and an air conditioning unit on the north side of the house, as proposed. The work is compatible in exterior design, arrangement, texture, material and relationship to the rest of the building and the surrounding area and meets *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, in particular standards 2, 5, 9, and 10 and the guidelines for additions, as well as the *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines*, in particular the guidelines for additions.

#### *Garage and Driveway:*

I move that the Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for the portion of the application at 121 Crest Avenue, a contributing property in the Old West Side Historic District, to rotate the garage to face south instead of west and add a new asphalt driveway and curb cut from West Washington Street, as proposed. The work is compatible in exterior design, arrangement, texture, material and relationship to the rest of the building and the surrounding area and meets *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, in particular standards 2, 5, 9, and 10 and the guidelines for building site, as well as the *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines*, in particular the guidelines for residential accessory structures and paved areas.

**ATTACHMENTS:** drawings, photos, materials information

121 Crest Avenue (May 2008 survey photo)

