

ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Staff Report

ADDRESS: 707 Lawrence Street, Application Number HDC24-0008

DISTRICT: Old Fourth Ward Historic District

REPORT DATE: March 14, 2024

REPORT PREPARED BY: Jill Thacher, Historic Preservation Coordinator

REVIEW COMMITTEE DATE: March 11, 2024

OWNER

Name: 707 Lawrence, LLC

Address:

Phone: (734) 971-6000

APPLICANT

Scott Klaassen
2100 S Main St Unit A10
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
(734) 677-2222

BACKGROUND: The house first appears in City Directories in 1909 as the home of J. Fred Maulbetsch, a bookkeeper for Washtenaw Light & Power, and his wife A. Maud. The house is a 1 ¾ story gable-fronter with a gabled wall dormer on the west elevation, corner returns, wide board eave trim, a full-width front porch with square columns, and a bay window on the second floor that is centered above the front porch. In the 1987 file photo (see end of staff report) the porch had tapered round columns.

In September, 2023 a fire started in the kitchen of the house and traveled through the west wall. The boarded up wall section is shown in the applicant's photos. Staff was able to approve repairs to the wall and siding, and replacement of the window, which was destroyed.

APPLICATION: The applicant seeks HDC approval to construct a basement egress window and well on the west elevation by maintaining the width and increasing the depth of an existing basement window.

LOCATION: The house is on the north side of Lawrence Street between North State and North Thayer Streets.

APPLICABLE REGULATIONS:

From the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:



- (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.
- (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):

Building Site

Recommended: Designing new exterior additions to historic buildings or adjacent new construction which is compatible with the historic character of the site and which preserve the historic relationship between a building or buildings, landscape features, and open space.

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.

Not Recommended: Introducing new construction onto the building site which is visually incompatible in terms of size, scale, design, materials, color and texture or which destroys historic relationships on the site.

Removing or radically changing buildings and their features or site features which are important in defining the overall historic character of the building site so that, as a result, the character is diminished.

District or Neighborhood Setting

Not Recommended: Introducing new construction into historic districts that is visually incompatible or that destroys historic relationships within the setting.

Windows

Recommended: Designing and installing additional windows on rear or other non-character-defining elevations if required by the new use. New window openings may also be cut into exposed party walls. Such design should be compatible with the overall design of the building, but not duplicate the fenestration pattern and detailing of a character-defining elevation.

Not Recommended: Introducing a new design that is incompatible with the historic character of the building.

Health and Safety

Recommended: Identifying the historic building's character-defining spaces, features, and finishes so that code-required work will not result in their damage or loss.

Complying with health and safety codes, including seismic code requirements, in such a manner that character-defining spaces, features, and finishes are preserved.

Not Recommended: Altering, damaging, or destroying character-defining spaces, features, and finishes while making modifications to a building or site to comply with safety codes.

STAFF FINDINGS:

- 1) The proposed egress window is on the west side of the house approximately 35' from the public right of way. It is the third basement window on this elevation, and the one that is the farthest from the street. It is along the driveway and a bollard is proposed to be installed to keep vehicles from unwittingly driving into the well. An existing 32" wide basement window opening would be made deeper below grade, to 48" tall, with a new wood casement window. A wood timber well is shown slightly larger than the required clear area of 36" x 36". A bollard is proposed off the front corner of the well, to prevent a car from driving into it. The plans note that vehicle access to the driveway will end at the bollard. This is not a shared driveway.
- 2) There are four total basement windows on the house, two on the east and two on the west elevations. The windows on the east side are near the washer and furnace. The basement is proposed to be remodeled into a bedroom. The proposed window allows them to keep using the driveway while staying clear of the appliances/mechanicals.
- 3) The location is appropriate. This is a fairly inconspicuous location pushed back from the public right of way. The materials are appropriate, as are the window and well sizes. Staff recommends approval of the application.

MOTION

(Note that the motion is only a suggestion. The Review Committee, consisting of staff and at least two Commissioners, will meet with the applicant on site and share their observations at the meeting.)

I move that the Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for the application at 707 Lawrence Street, a contributing property in the Old Fourth Ward Historic District, to enlarge an existing basement window opening and install a wood casement egress window and well and bollard on the west elevation, as proposed. The work is compatible in exterior design, arrangement, materials, and relationship to the house 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, 9, and 10 and the guidelines for building site, windows, and health and safety, as well as the *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines*.

MOTION WORKSHEET

I move that the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work at 707 Lawrence Street in the Old Fourth Ward Historic District

___ Provided the following condition(S) is (ARE) met: 1) STATE CONDITION(s)

The work is generally compatible with the size, scale, massing, and materials and meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, standard(S) number(S) (*circle all that apply*): 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

ATTACHMENTS: photos, drawings

707 Lawrence Street, Sept 2022 (Courtesy Google Street View)



707 Lawrence, 1987 OFW Survey Photo



OFW
707
LAWRENCE

Roll 16
11/12/87

←
Frame 23



Frame 24
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