



City of Ann Arbor
Formal Minutes
Historic District Commission

301 E. Huron Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
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Thursday, March 12, 2015

7:00 PM

City Hall, 301 E. Huron Street, 2nd Flr.

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Stulberg called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL

Jill Thacher called the roll.

Present: 5 - Ellen Ramsburgh, Patrick McCauley, Thomas Stulberg, John Beeson, and Jennifer Ross

Absent: 2 - Robert White, and Benjamin L. Bushkuhl

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was unanimously Approved as presented. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

D. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION - PUBLIC COMMENTARY - (3 Minutes per Speaker)

E. HEARINGS

E-1. [15-0288](#) HDC15-024; 229 Crest Avenue - Two-Story Rear Addition - OWSHD

Jill Thacher presented the following staff report:

BACKGROUND:

This two-story four-square features flared eaves with a deep overhang and decorative brackets, a full-width front porch with square columns over lap-sided half-walls, wood shingles on the second floor and lap siding on the first floor, and a street-facing attic dormer. The windows have divided lights on the top sash and a single light on the larger bottom sash.

LOCATION:

The site is located on the east side of Crest Avenue, south of West Washington and north of Buena Vista.

APPLICATION:

The applicant seeks HDC approval to add a 532 square foot two-story addition to the rear of the house. An existing large deck behind the house would be relocated behind the addition. One pair of original windows from the first floor of the rear elevation would be reused on the second floor rear elevation of the addition.

APPLICABLE REGULATIONS:

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

(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.

(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 shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would 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.

Considering the attached exterior addition both in terms of the new use and the appearance of other buildings in the historic district or neighborhood. Design for the new work may be contemporary or may reference design motifs from the historic building.

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.

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.

Building Site

Recommended:

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

Retaining the historic relationship between buildings and the landscape.

Not Recommended:

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

From the Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines (other guidelines may apply):

Guidelines for All Additions

Appropriate:

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

Placing new walls in a different plane from the historic structure in a subordinate position to the historic fabric.

Designing a new addition in a manner that makes clear what is historic

and what is new.

Limiting the size and scale of the addition in relationship to the historic building so that it does not diminish or visually overpower the building or the district. The addition's footprint should exceed neither half of the original building's footprint nor half of the original building's total floor area.

Not Appropriate:

Designing an addition that overpowers or dramatically alters the original building through size or height.

Designing a new addition so that the size and scale in relation to the historic property are out of proportion.

STAFF FINDINGS:

1. *The house is currently 1162 square feet. The proposed addition is 554 square feet, a 48% increase. The footprint of the two-story portion is 15' x 17'9" and the one story powder room is 9'7" x 3'4". Together they are 49% of the existing footprint (and roughly the size of the existing deck). The addition is inset the width of the corner board on both sides, though on the south side the addition is a single story and the original corner is prominent above.*

2. *Cladding on the addition is cement board lap siding on the first story and cement board shingles on the second story. Exposures would match that of the existing wood siding. Trim bands are aligned, and the addition features flared eaves but no brackets (per the applicant). A small wood canopy shields the rear door (which is the current steel rear door). Windows and French doors are wood clad with aluminum or vinyl, with the exception of the second-floor rear elevation windows, which are original to the house and being relocated from the first floor rear. One second-floor rear window and the brackets under most of the rear eave would be replaced by the addition.*

3. *The deck off the back reuses the existing wood decking materials to the extent possible. Guardrails feature a top and bottom rail, simple square newel posts, and vertical wood skirting.*

4. *The addition is compatible with the house and carries over many of the original design elements but is still distinct through the use of modern materials and dissimilar window sizes. The addition will not be particularly visible from the street since the houses on both sides are fairly close to this one. The addition is half the size of the original house, but does not feel inappropriately large or imposing.*

5. *Staff feels the work is compatible with the rest of the building and the surrounding neighborhood, and finds that it meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation as well as the Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines.*

REVIEW COMMITTEES REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Commissioners McCauley and Ramsburgh visited the site.

McCauley said he agreed with the staff report, noting that originally he had some concerns with the proposed work looking too similar to the original, but noted that during the site visit he noted that the flared roof could not be seen at all from the angles that matter the most, due to the buildings being so close together. He said he was in favor of the application and felt it should be approved because it met our standards.

Ramsburgh agreed with McCauley as well as the staff report. She said having the flares was a nice touch.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Luke Forrest, 229 Crest, Ann Arbor, owner was present to respond to enquiries from the Commission.

Mark Rueter, 515 Fifth Street, Ann Arbor, Architect for the project was also present to respond to enquiries.

Noting no further public speakers, the Chair declared the public hearing closed.

Moved by McCauley, seconded by Stulberg, that the Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for the application at 229 Crest Avenue, a contributing property in the Old West Side Historic District, to add a 532 square foot addition to the rear of the house, and relocate the rear deck, as proposed. The work is compatible in exterior design, arrangement, materials, and relationship to the house and the surrounding area and meets the City of Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines for additions, and 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 additions and building site.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION:

The members of the Commission took into consideration the presented application and discussed the matter.

On a voice vote, the vote was as follows with the Chair declaring the motion carried.

Certificate of Appropriateness was Granted.

Yeas: 5 - Ramsburgh, McCauley, Chair Stulberg, Secretary Beeson, and Ross

Nays: 0

Absent: 2 - White, and Vice Chair Bushkuhl

E-2. [15-0289](#) HDC15-025; 124 East Washington Street - Awning/Signage - MSHD

Jill Thacher presented the following staff report:

BACKGROUND:

This two-story, painted brick, commercial vernacular building was first occupied in 1906 by Taylor & Co., merchant tailors. In 1910 the Polk City Directory lists it as the Star Annex Theater. (The original Star Theater, which was located three doors down at 118 East Washington, was destroyed by student rioters in 1908.) It features double hung one-over-one windows, a brick cornice, and stone trim. The HDC gave a preservation award to the former owner, Herb Black, in 2009. New signage on the front façade and display window were approved by the HDC in 2013 when Literati moved into the ground floor.

LOCATION:

The site is at the corner of East Washington Street and South Fifth Avenue.

APPLICATION:

The applicant seeks HDC approval to install two new awnings and additional signage on the east elevation to support the existing business as well as a new coffee shop on the second floor.

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 shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

From the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings:

Storefronts

Not Recommended:

Introducing a new design that is incompatible in size, scale, material, and color.

Using inappropriately scaled signs and logos or other types of signs that obscure, damage, or destroy remaining character-defining features of the historic building.

From the Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines (other Guidelines may apply):

Awnings

Appropriate:

Mounting a standard storefront awning so that the bottom of the fixed frame is at least 7 feet above the sidewalk, although 8 feet is preferred. Consideration should be given to the height of neighboring awnings.

Projecting the awning from the face of the building no more than 4 feet.

Attaching the awning just below the storefront cornice and fitting it within the storefront opening.

Using canvas, vinyl-coated canvas, or acrylic fabrics for awnings and banners.

Signs

Appropriate:

Attaching signage through masonry joints, not masonry units, or through materials that can be easily repaired, such as wood, when the signage is

removed.

Installing signage that is subordinate to the overall building composition.

Mounting signs to fit within existing architectural features using the shape of the sign to help reinforce the horizontal lines of moldings and transoms seen along the street.

Installing signage in the historic sign band area of the building, typically the area above the transoms or just above the storefront.

Not Appropriate:

Installing several signs to advertise a single business.

STAFF FINDINGS:

1. *The two black awnings would be located at the southeast corner of the building, one above the door to the upper level and the other over the large display window and ground-level door next to it. The awnings are 4'3" tall, and mounted 13' from grade. The bottom of each awning is therefore 8'9" from grade. Downtown awnings are more typically mounted 8' off the ground, but the proposed height covers the large header above the display window, and matches the awning immediately to the south on South Fourth Avenue.*

2. *The new signs consist of 15 linear quotes painted on the already-painted wall, each one brick high, and one word painted in each of the three panels of the second-floor bay window. The quotes proposal is creative and adds pedestrian interest to an otherwise blank wall. The single words painted in the bay window panels are an acceptable alternative to adding a sign on the second floor because the size is limited and, like the wall quotes, the work is completely reversible.*

3. *The size, materials, and colors are compatible with the historic structure and neighborhood, and do not impact any character-defining feature of the building. All of the proposed work is easily removable and reversible and meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines and the Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines.*

REVIEW COMMITTEES REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Commissioners Ramsburgh and McCauley visited the site.

McCauley said he agrees with the staff report. He said he noticed that the large picture window seems like it doesn't belong there and the awning will help to soften it and make the streetscape more lively. He

supported the application.

Ramsburgh said she agreed with McCauley's comments and the staff report, adding that one of the nice attributes of the awning is that it is high enough that it allows for the nice arch brickwork over the far door to be shown, which keeps a visual detail. She felt the work is very tasteful and doesn't detract from the building and is reversible, so it meets all of our standards, and she supported the application.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Hilary Gustafson, Literati Bookstore, 124 E. Washington Street, owner and applicant was present to respond to enquiries from the Commission.

Oliver Uberti, 515 Gott Street, Ann Arbor, Designer for signage was also present to explain the application.

Noting no further public speakers, the Chair declared the public hearing closed.

Move by Ramsburgh, seconded by McCauley, that the Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for 124 East Washington Street, a contributing structure in the Main Street Historic District, for the application to install two awnings and to paint signage on the east elevation and bay window, as proposed. The work is generally 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, 9, and 10 and the guidelines for storefronts, and the Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines for awnings and signs.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION:

The members of the Commission took into consideration the presented application and discussed the matter.

On a voice vote, the vote was as follows with the Chair declaring the motion carried.

Certificate of Appropriateness was Granted.

Yeas: 5 - Ramsburgh, McCauley, Chair Stulberg, Secretary Beeson, and Ross

Nays: 0

Absent: 2 - White, and Vice Chair Bushkuhl

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

G. NEW BUSINESS

H. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

15-0290 Minutes of the February 12, 2015 HDC Meeting

The Minutes were unanimously Approved by the Commission and forwarded to the City Council. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

I. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Ramsburgh reported that the Historic District Commission awards would be presented at the Monday June 1, 2015, City Council meeting.

J. ASSIGNMENTS

Review Committee: Monday, April 6, 2015, at 5:00 pm for the April 9, 2015 Regular Meeting

Commissioners Ross and Ramsburgh volunteered for the April Review Committee.

K. REPORTS FROM STAFF

K-1. 15-0291 February 2015 HDC Staff Activities

Received and Filed

K-2. March 21 Retreat Planning

Thacher reported that the Annual Retreat would be held at Gallup Park Canoe Livery in the meeting room, beginning at 8:30 a.m.

L. CONCERNS OF COMMISSIONERS

M. COMMUNICATIONS

15-0292 Various Communications to the HDC

Received and Filed

N. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

**COMMISSION WILL CONVENE TO A WORKING SESSION IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING
THE REGULAR MEETING**

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- *Video on Demand: Replay public meetings at your convenience online at www.a2gov.org/government/city_administration/communicationsoffice/ctn/Pages/VideoOnDemand.aspx*
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