

ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Staff Report

ADDRESS: 543 Detroit Street, Application Number HDC22-1201

DISTRICT: Old Fourth Ward Historic District

REPORT DATE: December 8, 2022

REPORT PREPARED BY: Jill Thacher, Historic Preservation Coordinator

REVIEW COMMITTEE DATE: December 5, 2022

	OWNER	APPLICANT
Name:	Kloe Ferriman	Jimmy Bevilacqua
Address:	543 Detroit St Ann Arbor, MI 48104	Saltbox Street Residential Design 1311 W Huron St Ann Arbor, MI 48103
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BACKGROUND: The circa 1850s Thorpe-Frank House is one of Ann Arbor's oldest. This Greek Revival was part of John Allen's and Elisha Rumsey's original plat of Ann Arbor in 1824. The 1853 plat map of the city shows the house on this lot, though its exact date of construction is unknown. It is an upright-and-wing style of Greek Revival, with a 1 ¾ story main block that could have been built as early as the 1830s. The one-story wing was added sometime between 1870 and 1888, per Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps.

LOCATION: The house is on the west side of Detroit Street, north of East Kingsley and south of the N. Division/Broadway/E. Summit interstecction.

APPLICATION: The applicant seeks HDC approval to 1) add a shed dormer on the rear of the second floor roof; 2) remove a pair of pre-1945 kitchen windows and replace them with a 2'11" by 7'4" picture window on the rear elevation; 3) add a slider with sidelights in a 6" bump out on an exposed rear basement wall; 4) add two coach lights on the rear elevation; and 5) infill a front door with a 2' 8" x 4'5" casement window with a decorative panel below.

APPLICABLE REGULATIONS:

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

- (1) A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.



- (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) 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.
- (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):

Roofs: Alterations/Additions

Recommended: Designing additions to roofs such as residential, office, or storage spaces; elevator housing; decks and terraces; or dormers or skylights when required by the new use so that they are inconspicuous from the public right-of-way and do not damage or obscure character-defining structures.

Not Recommended: Changing the configuration of a roof by adding new features such as dormer windows, vents, or skylights so that historic character is diminished.
District/Neighborhood

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: Changing the number, location, size, or glazing pattern of windows, through cutting new openings, blocking-in windows, and installing replacement sash which does not fit the historic window opening.

Removing or radically changing windows which are important in defining the historic character of the building so that, as a result, the character is diminished.

Installing new windows, including frames, sash, and muntin configuration that are incompatible with the building's historic appearance or obscure, damage, or destroy character-defining features.

Introducing a new design that is not compatible with the historic character of the building.

Entrances and Porches

Recommended: Identifying, retaining, and preserving entrances – and their functional and decorative features – that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building such as doors, fanlights, sidelights, pilaster, entablatures, columns, balustrades, and stairs.

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

Roofs

Not Appropriate: Adding chimneys, cupolas, or dormers where not appropriate.

Windows

Not Appropriate: Replacing an entire window that is not deteriorated beyond repair.

Lighting

Appropriate: Attaching light fixtures so historic fabric is not damaged or destroyed.

Residential Doors

Appropriate: Retaining, repairing, and maintaining original doors, hardware, and trim, including transoms, sidelights, and surrounds.

Not Appropriate: Enlarging, reducing, or otherwise changing the door opening size.

STAFF FINDINGS:

1. *Shed Dormer.* The shed dormer is at the back of the roof and would allow required head height for a second bathroom (the first is on the main floor). Changing the roof shape on a house this old should not be approached lightly. The dormer will be visible from the street, but staff believes it is inconspicuous from the public right-of-way.
2. *Picture Window.* The kitchen has a pair of 24" x 25" wood casement windows that are from the period of significance. They are proposed to be replaced by a 35" x 88" fixed picture window. Residential picture windows are usually associated with the second half of the 20th century. They are not appropriate on even the rear elevation of an 1850s Greek Revival home. This house has had many window changes on the rear elevation that date to a 2003 remodeling, when the Old Fourth Ward Historic District did not regulate work beyond the front 15 feet of the house. The pair of kitchen windows may be the only original windows left on the rear elevation and should be preserved. Staff believes the picture window is incompatible with the building's historic appearance and destroys character-defining windows.
3. *Slider.* A slider with sidelights is proposed to be installed in an exposed CMU basement wall. This yard was excavated post-1944 to make a modern walk out basement. The rear wall was replaced then; some other walls in the basement are the historic rubble. Adding

a window wall, therefore, is appropriate since no historic materials will be removed. The window wall pops out 6" to align with the windows above on the first floor.

4. *Coach Lights*. Wall-mounted lights over the deck are appropriate only on the rear elevation. The applicant will need to ensure that the fixtures meet the city's outdoor lighting ordinance requirements. Fixtures should be as small and inconspicuous as possible, and attached in such a way that the work is reversible and does as little damage as possible to the exterior of the house.
5. *Infill Front Door*. The house has two front doors on the porch. This one was likely a "funeral door" used to bring caskets into the front parlour without having to maneuver them through rooms inside the house. It could also have been the original front door before the wing was constructed, but that is speculation. Removing a historic door is not appropriate and replacing a door with a window is not compatible with the historic structure. This front door is important in defining the overall historic character of the building.
6. Staff has suggested two motions below: The first for work staff considers appropriate (the dormer, slider and outdoor lights), and the second for work staff considers inappropriate (removing a front door and replacing it with a window and replacing a pair of windows with a large picture window).

MOTION

(Note that the motions are only a suggestion. The Review Committee, consisting of staff and at least two Commissioners, will view the site and make a recommendation at the meeting.)

Dormer, Slider, Outdoor Lights

I move that the Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for the portion of the application at 543 Detroit Street, a contributing property in the Old Fourth Ward Historic District, to add a shed dormer on the rear of the second floor roof; add a slider with sidelights in a 6" bump out on an exposed rear basement wall; add two coach lights on the rear elevation. The work is compatible in exterior design, arrangement, texture, material and relationship to the surrounding resources and meets the *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines* for roofs, windows and lighting and *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, in particular standards 1, 2, 9 and 10 and the Guidelines for roofs and windows.

Convert Front Door to Window and Rear Windows to Picture Window

I move that the Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for the portion of the application at 543 Detroit Street, a contributing property in the Old Fourth Ward Historic District, to infill a front door with a 2' 8" x 4'5" casement window with a decorative panel below, and to remove a pair of non-historic kitchen windows and replace them with a 2'11" by 7'4" picture window on the rear elevation, as proposed. The work is compatible in exterior design, arrangement, texture, material and relationship to the surrounding resources and meets the *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines* for windows and residential doors, and *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, in particular standards 1, 2, 9 and 10 and the Guidelines for windows and entrances and porches.

ATTACHMENTS: photos, drawings

543 Detroit Street (2004 File Photo, taken after aluminum siding was removed)

