



**CITY OF ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN**

**301 E. Huron Street, P.O. Box 8647, Ann Arbor, Michigan**

**48107-8647**

[www.a2gov.org](http://www.a2gov.org)

**Planning & Development Services - Planning (734) 794-6265**

Community Services Area

January 24, 2014

Dear Mr. Belew,

This letter serves to explain the Historic District Commission decision to deny the request to put a two-story rear addition, as proposed, on 317 Koch Avenue in the Old West Side Historic District. The complete reasons for the Commission's decision were discussed at the January 9, 2014 Commission meeting and are contained in the record.

The proposed work does not meet *The 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.

**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**

**Additions**

*Recommended:* 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 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**

*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:**

### **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.

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.

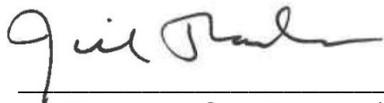
Designing a new addition so that the size and scale in relation to the historic property are out of proportion.

At its January 9, 2014 meeting, the Commission determined that the proposed addition is too tall in comparison to the contributing historic structure and overpowers the original house. The size and scale as proposed in the application are out of proportion and dramatically alter the building. The application may be corrected by designing a smaller addition that does not compete with and distract from the historic structure.

As noted in the Historic District Commission Determination, you have the right to appeal this decision within 60 days of the receipt of the denial to the State Historic Preservation Review Board. If there is new information you may submit a new application to the Historic District Commission.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call the Planning Division at (734) 794-6265 or e-mail [hdc@a2gov.org](mailto:hdc@a2gov.org).

Sincerely,



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Jill Thacher, City Planner/Historic Preservation Coordinator

c: File HDC13-228  
City Attorney's Office