



City of Ann Arbor

301 E. Huron Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
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Meeting Minutes Historic District Commission

Thursday, February 13, 2014

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: 6 - Robert White, Ellen Ramsburgh, Patrick McCauley, Thomas Stulberg, Benjamin L. Bushkuhl, and John Beeson

Absent: 1 - Jennifer Ross

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)

None

E HEARINGS

E-1 [14-0235](#) HDC14-009; 418 South First Street - Solar Panels - OWSHD

Jill Thacher presented the following staff report:

BACKGROUND:

This simple single-story cottage first appears in the 1928 Polk City Directory as the home of Gottlieb Weltz, a mason. It features a partial-width front porch and one-over-one double hung windows. The house has had at least two rear additions since 1965. The garage does not appear on the 1965 Sanborn map, and was either constructed after that date or moved to its current site.

The applicant received a Certificate of Appropriateness from the HDC in August 2011 to demolish the existing garage and construct a new two story tandem garage with a studio above it (HDC11-103).

The applicant also received a Certificate of Appropriateness in July 2013 to modify the design of the garage/studio (HDC13-098).

LOCATION:

The site is located on the west side of South First Street, south of West William and north of West Jefferson.

APPLICATION:

This application seeks to modify the approved garage/studio design by removing the south-facing dormer and three small windows on the south elevation and installing 26 black-on-black solar panels that span the width of the roof.

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:

Energy Efficiency

Recommended:

Placing a new addition that may be necessary to increase energy efficiency on non-character-defining elevations.

Not Recommended:

Designing a new addition which obscures, damages, or destroys character-defining features.

Mechanical Equipment

Recommended:

Providing adequate structural support for new mechanical equipment.

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

Solar

Appropriate:

Mounting solar panels at grade or on ground pole mountings. In the absence of an appropriate ground-based mounting location, panels should be mounted on side or rear facing roof surfaces.

Installing mechanical and service equipment on the roof related to the solar units and their related devices so that they are inconspicuous from the public right-of-way and do not damage or obscure character-defining features.

For sloped roof installations, mounting solar panels parallel to and within 8" of roof surface.

Not Appropriate:

Mounting solar panels and their related devices on primary elevations or roofs that face the primary elevation or in planes that are highly visible from the street view. This location has the highest impact on the historic character of the historic building and all other options should be thoroughly explored.

STAFF FINDINGS

- 1. Each panel is 40" x 66", and just over an inch thick. The panels and their frames are black, and will cover the roof to within approximately a foot of the edges and ridge, per the supplied drawing. The applicant emailed that they haven't picked a roof color yet, but that it would be a medium to dark color. Since the panels are being installed on a new accessory structure, staff feels this is acceptable.*
- 2. Removal of the south dormer and windows has no negative effect on the compatibility of the new garage/studio with surrounding resources.*
- 3. Staff believes that the materials and design of the panels are compatible with the design of the new structure, neighboring contributing and non-contributing buildings, and the surrounding historic district, and meet both the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and the Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines.*

REVIEW COMMITTEE'S REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Commissioners Ramsburgh and Beeson visited the site as part of their review.

Beeson reported that during their site visit the site was quite snow covered, but noted that from the street one would probably not even notice solar panels on the roof.

Ramsburgh agreed, adding that she also appreciates that the massing of the proposed building will be reduced somewhat, making this a little more appropriate for the neighborhood.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Margaret Wong, 418 South First Street, Ann Arbor, owner, explained the application and was available to respond to the Commission's enquiries.

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

A motion was made by Ramsburgh, seconded by White, that the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application at 418 S First Street, a contributing property in the Old West Side Historic District, to remove a dormer and windows from the south elevation of the previously approved garage/studio, and add 26 photovoltaic solar panels, 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 Guidelines for Solar, 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 Energy Efficiency and Mechanical Equipment.

(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.

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: 6 - White, Ramsburgh, McCauley, Chair Stulberg, Vice Chair Bushkuhl, and Secretary Beeson

Nays: 0

Absent: 1 - Ross

E-2 [14-0236](#)

HDC14-010; 317 Koch Avenue - Addition - OWSHD

Jill Thacher presented the following staff report:

BACKGROUND:

This one and a half story colonial revival cottage features six over one double-hung windows, no eave overhang, gable corner returns, and wood shingle siding. It first appears in the 1931 Polk City Directory as the home of Emil D. Bethke, an employee of Michigan Bell Telephone. Emil C. Bethke (presumably Emil's son) lived in the house until at least 1960. The house is still owned by members of the Bethke family.

In January, 2014 the HDC denied an application for a rear addition that was mainly determined to be too tall.

LOCATION:

The site is located on the south side of Koch Avenue, west of South First Street and east of Third Street.

APPLICATION:

The applicant seeks HDC approval to replace the west basement wall, install two egress windows with wells; and construct a two-story rear addition, with a two-car garage on the first story and a bedroom on the second; and extend the existing gravel driveway.

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.

Guidelines for Paved Areas

Not Appropriate:

Installing driveways or parking areas that are too wide or large for the building site and are out of character for the district.

STAFF FINDINGS:

- 1. The applicant seeks permission to construct a one-and-a-half story rear addition consisting of a bedroom over a side-entry two-car garage. Between the house and the garage is a lower one-story connector which contains a mudroom and a stairway to the new bedroom. The location on the back of the house is appropriate, as is the use of hardie board cladding and trim. The proposed windows are wood with either vinyl or aluminum cladding, and are awning-style or doublehung.*
- 2. The taller rear portion of the proposed addition is eleven inches higher than the ridge of the existing house. Because of the separation from the existing house by the one-story section, staff believes the rear section's taller ridge will not detract from the original house or call attention to itself. The applicant has constructed the lower-level garage to be as low as possible and still meet building code.*
- 3. The two-car garage would be accessed via a shared gravel driveway along the east property line (between 315 and 317 Koch). This driveway was originally installed as a two-track on 317's property, and currently ends near the back of the houses.*
- 4. An area well with a new egress window is proposed on the new west basement*

wall. The window would be 30" by 34" with a poured concrete well.

5. Staff believes that the proposed work meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitation, and the Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines.

REVIEW COMMITTEE'S REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Commissioners Ramsburgh and Beeson visited the site as part of their review.

Beeson reported that during the site visit they discussed the location of the new area wells with the architect and were informed that both wells are needed so the functionality of the basement can be used as intended. He said they also discussed the trees that will be affected by the proposed work, and calculated if the retaining wall on site would hit the house if it were to fall.

Ramsburgh noted that with the addition they lose a back door and a window, adding that the back door didn't look to be an original door but a replacement. She felt the current application was better than the previously reviewed application and that the site leant itself to the style of the proposed addition.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Brad Moore, 4844 Jackson Avenue, Ann Arbor, Architect, explained the application and was available to respond to the Commission's enquiries.

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

A motion was made by McCauley, seconded by White that the Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for the application at 317 Koch Street, a contributing property in the Old West Side Historic District, to replace the west basement wall, install two egress windows with wells; construct a two-story rear addition; and extend the existing gravel driveway, 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, 9 and 10 and the guidelines for additions and building site; and the Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines for additions and paved areas.

(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.

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.

Yeas: 6 - White, Ramsburgh, McCauley, Chair Stulberg, Vice Chair Bushkuhl, and Secretary Beeson

Nays: 0

Absent: 1 - Ross

F UNFINISHED BUSINESS

G NEW BUSINESS

H APPROVAL OF MINUTES

H-1 [14-0237](#) Minutes of the January 9, 2014 HDC Meeting

Ramsburgh requested correction on the original motion vote on page 20 since the way it was written made it contradictory of the amended motion.

Beeson requested correction on the vote for 318 West Liberty Street, noting that he voted Yes and McCauley voted No.

A motion was made by Chair Stulberg, seconded by White, that the Minutes be Approved by the Board with changes and forwarded to the City Council. On a voice vote, the Chair declaring the motion carried.

Yeas: 6 - White, Ramsburgh, McCauley, Chair Stulberg, Vice Chair Bushkuhl, and Secretary Beeson

Nays: 0

Absent: 1 - Ross

I REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

J ASSIGNMENTS

J-1 Review Committee: Monday, March 10, at Noon for the March 13, 2014 Regular Meeting

Bushkuhl and White will not be available for the March HDC meeting.

Commissioners Stulberg and Beeson volunteered for the March Review Committee.

K REPORTS FROM STAFF

K-1 [14-0238](#) January 2014 HDC Staff Activities

Thacher reported that the HDC Annual Retreat had been scheduled for March 22, 2014 at 8:30 to noon, in the First Floor Conference Room – South, City Hall.

Received and Filed

L CONCERNS OF COMMISSIONERS

Beeson asked about the façade of the building next to LENA’s on Main Street and if the work had been approved by the Commission.

Thacher said the Commission had approved the removal of the steel panels but no new canopy has been approved, adding that the owners have not decided yet how they would like to proceed with a canopy.

M COMMUNICATIONS

[14-0239](#) Various Communications to the HDC

Received and Filed

N ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Working Session Immediately Following Regular Meeting

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