

ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Staff Report

ADDRESS: 423 West Liberty Street, Application Number HDC14-199

DISTRICT: Old West Side Historic District

REPORT DATE: October 9, 2014

REPORT PREPARED BY: Jill Thacher, Historic Preservation Coordinator

REVIEW COMMITTEE DATE: Monday, October 6, 2014

	OWNER	APPLICANT
Name:	Peter Hamp	Same
Address:	423 West Liberty Street Ann Arbor, MI 48103	
Phone:	(734) 604-4462	

BACKGROUND: This two story wood frame house features a curving front porch supported by paired Doric columns along portions of the north and west elevations. This house first appears as a duplex in 1907 city directories. Edward W and Magdalena Staebler are listed as the occupants of 423 W Liberty, and Michael and Rosina Staebler are listed as the occupants of 425 W Liberty. In the 1910 City Directory, Edward is listed as the son of Michael, who together owned the M. Staebler and Son store on Washington Street.

In August of 2012, the HDC issued a certificate of appropriateness for a rear addition, new garage, and new decks. That work has been completed, and the duplex is now two condominium units.

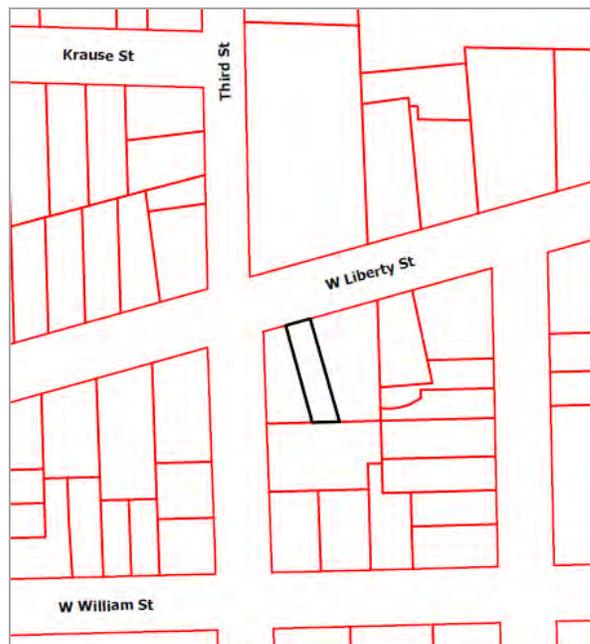
LOCATION: The site is located on the southeast corner of the intersection of West Liberty Street and Third Street.

APPLICATION: The applicant seeks after-the-fact HDC approval to replace the wood decking on the open front porch with azec decking in the same width.

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.

From the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (other SOI Guidelines may also apply):

Entrances and Porches

Recommended: Repairing entrances and porches by reinforcing the historic materials.

Repair will also generally include the limited replacement in kind--or with compatible substitute material--of those extensively deteriorated or missing parts of repeated features where there are surviving prototypes such as balustrades, cornices, entablatures, columns, sidelights, and stairs.

Not Recommended: Using a substitute material for the replacement parts that does not convey the visual appearance of the surviving parts of the entrance and porch or that is physically or chemically incompatible.

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

Porches

Appropriate: Repairing and maintain all porches and not allowing them to deteriorate. Repairs which match the original in scale, material, and design are not considered changes.

Using replacement features that match the documented historic design.

Not Appropriate: Using decking as a flooring material that does not have a closed butt joint.

STAFF FINDINGS:

1. The owner of this condominium replaced only the front porch decking (the guardrails, posts, and stairs were reused) on this un-roofed porch because of safety concerns about the condition of the deck boards. No building permit or HDC applications were submitted before construction was undertaken. The deck boards were previously wood, in traditional dimensions, with a closed butt joint, as found on most historic wood porches. Instead of using wood, the homeowner substituted azek in a width that matches the wood decking. A citizen who was walking by and saw the work being done called and reported the work to staff.
2. The *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines*, and the *City of Ann Arbor Design Guidelines* are clear that matching the original material is the best course of action when undertaking repairs. The SOI Guidelines for entrances and porches also include in the recommendations "limited replacement in kind--or with compatible substitute material--of those extensively deteriorated...parts". The HDC must decide whether Azek is a compatible substitute material for this porch.

3. A covered front porch originally spanned the entire front of the house, across both units, though it did not wrap around the west corner as it does now. At some point after 1931 the roof over 423 was removed. Since the porch is not covered, staff understands the desirability of an artificial deck material that can withstand water. From the sidewalk, the Azek looks compatible. Up close, it unfortunately has a stamped woodgrain design, but that's not apparent until you're standing on it. Because of the unique circumstances of this unroofed front porch, staff believes that the Azek installed is a compatible material. In the event that the porch roof is ever reconstructed, the decking should be returned to wood.

MOTION

I move that the Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for the application at 423 West Liberty Street, a contributing property in the Old West Side Historic District, to replace the wood decking on the open front porch with Azek decking in the same width, 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 porches, and *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, in particular standards 2 and 9 and the guidelines for Entrances and Porches.

MOTION WORKSHEET

I move that the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work at 423 West Liberty Street in the Old West Side 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: application, letter, photos, drawings

423 W Liberty Street (April, 2008 photo)





City of Ann Arbor
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES — PLANNING SERVICES

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ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION APPLICATION

Section 1: Property Being Reviewed and Ownership Information

Address of Property: 423 West Liberty St., Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Historic District: Old West Side

Name of Property Owner (If different than the applicant):

Peter Hamp

Address of Property Owner: 423 West Liberty St., Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Daytime Phone and E-mail of Property Owner: (734) 604-4962 / peterkhamp@gmail.com

Signature of Property Owner: *Peter K. Hamp* Date: 9/18/14

Section 2: Applicant Information

Name of Applicant: Peter Hamp

Address of Applicant: 423 West Liberty St., Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Daytime Phone: (734) 604-4962 Fax: ()

E-mail: peterkhamp@gmail.com

Applicant's Relationship to Property: owner architect contractor other

Signature of applicant: *Peter K. Hamp* Date: 9/18/14

Section 3: Building Use (check all that apply)

Residential Single Family Multiple Family Rental

Commercial Institutional

Section 4: Stille-DeRossett-Hale Single State Construction Code Act

(This item **MUST BE INITIALED** for your application to be **PROCESSED**)

Public Act 169, Michigan's Local Historic Districts Act, was amended April 2004 to include the following language: " the applicant has certified in the application that the property where the work will be undertaken has, or will have before the proposed completion date, a a fire alarm or smoke alarm complying with the requirements of the Stille-DeRossett-Hale Single State Construction Code Act, 1972 PA 230, MCL 125.1501 to 125.1531."

Please initial here: PKH

Section 5: Description of Proposed Changes (attach additional sheets as necessary)

1. Provide a brief summary of proposed changes. Front porch at 423 W. Liberty was fully replaced with an Azek material deck of the same width and appearance. The pre-existing white wooden rail/fence system was kept to maintain the prior appearance of the porch from the street.

2. Provide a description of existing conditions. Prior to replacing the deck, the boards had rotted to the ~~point~~^{point} of being structurally unsound, and additionally developed a very significant amount of black mold on the bottom of the boards and into the basement. The porch contained no substructure and was at risk of collapsing anytime.

3. What are the reasons for the proposed changes? Due to the rotting of the wooden boards and my serious health concern about the black mold, I felt I had no option to wait to remove the deck without risking potentially serious health/injury consequences to me and my family.

4. Attach any additional information that will further explain or clarify the proposal, and indicate these attachments here.

I truly apologize for not first seeking the Commission's approval, but I simply did not feel like I could wait to make the change after discovering the black mold and lack of a substructure to the porch.

5. Attach photographs of the existing property, including at least one general photo and detailed photos of proposed work area.

STAFF USE ONLY

Date Submitted: _____ Application to _____ Staff or _____ HDC

Project No.: _____ HDC _____ Fee Paid: _____

Pre-filing Staff Reviewer & Date: _____ Date of Public Hearing: _____

Application Filing Date: _____ Action: _____ HDC COA _____ HDC Denial

Staff signature: _____ _____ HDC NTP _____ Staff COA

Comments:

423 West Liberty (on the left) prior to renovations



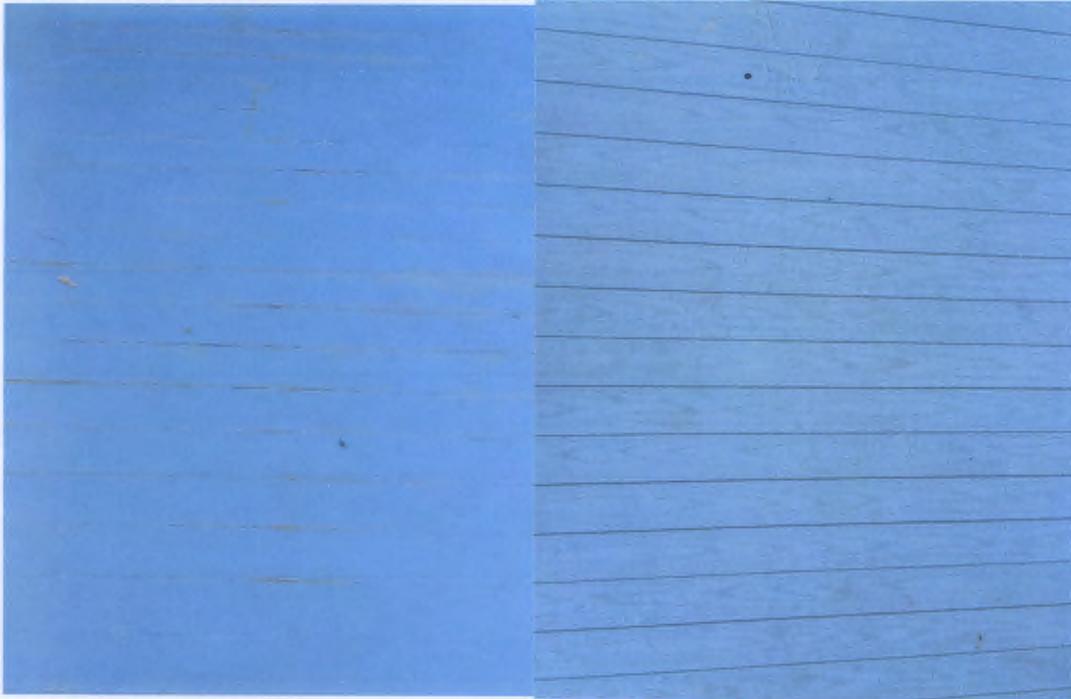
Wood porch prior to renovation



Porch after renovation - please note prior fence/railing system was kept



Width of the old porch boards and new Azek boards are the same



Rotting threshold board that was not replaced



Exterior view (423 W. Liberty on the left) after the porch renovation. Due to keeping the old fence/railing, the exterior maintains the same appearance from street view as before

