#### ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

#### **Staff Report**

- ADDRESS: 545 Sixth Street, Application Number HDC15-136
- **DISTRICT:** Old West Side Historic District

**REPORT DATE:** August 13, 2015

**REPORT PREPARED BY:** Jill Thacher, Historic Preservation Coordinator

**REVIEW COMMITTEE DATE:** August 10, 2015

# OWNERAPPLICANTName:Cynthia Koch & Chris GardnerSameAddress:545 Sixth St<br/>Ann Arbor, MI 48103SamePhone:(734) 546-8303Same

**BACKGROUND:** This gable-fronted, two-story vernacular house first appears around 1886 as the home of Christian Weidemann, a carpenter. The full-width front porch has turned posts, a simple balustrade and unique, pierced upper trim. The 1931 Sanborn map is the earliest version that reaches this block of Sixth Street. It shows a 1 ½ story house with a full-width front porch and a large one-story rear wing that wraps around the northeast corner.

A second story rear wing addition was approved by the HDC in 1993, and administrative approvals were given for a one-story addition in 1996 and a bedroom addition in 2000. In 2005 the HDC approved a two-story addition on the south side of the house.

**LOCATION:** The site is located on the east side of Sixth Street, south of West Jefferson Street and north of West Madison Street.

**APPLICATION:** The applicant seeks HDC approval to construct a two-story addition with a basement on the north side of the house, and to install three new windows and a new slider on the south elevation of the existing rear 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.

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

#### Additions

<u>Recommended</u>: 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.

<u>Not Recommended</u>: 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**

<u>*Recommended*</u>: 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.

<u>Not Recommended</u>: 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.

#### Windows

<u>Recommended</u>: Designing and installing additional windows on rear or other non-characterdefining 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.

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

#### **Guidelines for All Additions**

<u>Appropriate</u>: Locating a required addition on the least character-defining elevation and keeping it subordinate in volume to the historic building.

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

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.

Designing the addition so it is compatible in terms of massing, materials, relationship of solids to voids, and proportion of openings.

<u>Not Appropriate</u>: Designing a new addition so that the size and scale in relation to the historic property are out of proportion.

#### Additions to Historic Residential Structures

*<u>Not Appropriate</u>:* Designing an addition that overpowers or dramatically alters the original building through size or height.

#### **STAFF FINDINGS:**

- 1. The project architect and homeowners were unfortunately unaware of ordinance changes that were adopted by City Council in 2007, and of *Design Guidelines* that were adopted in 2012. The proposed design is therefore based on past rules and policies of the Historic District Commission that no longer apply. Staff was not aware of this pending application until the day it was submitted, at which time staff went through the drawings with the architect and advised him that it did not meet the current standards and guidelines and that staff's opinion was that it could not be approved by the HDC. Since the drawings had been completed and the plans were the culmination of a long-term plan for their home, the owners opted to submit the application for HDC review anyway.
- 2. The original house and its existing additions work well together, and the additions are complimentary to the historic home.

From the 1931 Sanborn map and assessor records, staff estimates that the house was about 1,020 square feet with a 684 square foot footprint at the end of the period of significance for the Old West Side Historic District. Per assessor records, the house is currently 1,885 square feet, with a footprint of 1,045 square feet. The existing additional floor area is 85% of the original, and the existing additional footprint is 53% of the original.

This structure therefore already meets the maximum size recommended by the *Design Guidelines*, which states "The addition's footprint should exceed neither half of the original building's footprint nor half of the original building's total floor area".

The addition proposed in this application would add approximately 550 new square feet of floor area with a footprint of 305 square feet. It would enlarge the kitchen and family room on the first floor, and 245 square feet on the second floor would become a master bath and closets.

3. The roof ridge of the proposed two-story addition is a little more than two feet taller than

the ridge of the current rear addition, and four feet taller than the ridge of the original house. The proposed addition extends the north side of the house an additional 12' beyond the original wall location. The new addition is out of proportion with the height and width of the historic structure, and is not subordinate to the historic structure or its existing additions.

- 4. The proposed new pair of double-hung windows near the front of the house on the south elevation do not met the SOI guidelines for windows, which recommends installing additional windows on rear or other non-character-defining elevations.
- 5. The proposed work on the south elevation of the rear addition, to install three clad-wood windows and a sliding glass door, is appropriate. The work is on a modern section of the house and is hidden from view by the mudroom and the room above it. Staff believes that this work is appropriate and meets the standards and guidelines for additions.
- 6. Staff believes that with the exception of the new windows on the rear part of the south elevation, the proposed work does not meet the Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines, the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines, or the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, and that that work should be denied.

**POSSIBLE MOTIONS:** (Note that the motion is only a suggestion. The Review Committee, consisting of staff and at least two Commissioners, will meet with the applicant on site and then make a recommendation at the meeting.)

I move that the Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for the portion of the application at 545 Sixth Street, a contributing property in the Old West Side Historic District, to install three new windows and a new slider on the south elevation of the existing rear addition. As proposed, this 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 standard 9 and the guidelines for additions; and the *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines* for additions.

I move that the Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for the portion of the application at 545 Sixth Street, a contributing property in the Old West Side Historic District, to construct a two story addition on the north side of the house and two windows in a new opening near the front of the house on the south elevation. As proposed, the work is compatible in exterior design, arrangement, texture, materials 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 and 9 and the guidelines for additions and building site; and the *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines* for additions.

#### **MOTION WORKSHEET:**

I move that the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work at <u>545 Sixth</u> <u>Street</u> in the <u>Old West Side</u> 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, drawings, photos.

#### 2009 Aerial Photo 545 Sixth St



#### 2006 assessor photo



HDC15-136



### City of Ann Arbor PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES — PLANNING SERVICES

301 E. Huron Street | P.O. Box 8647 | Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107-8647 p. 734.794.6265 | f. 734.994.8312 | planning@a2gov.org

#### ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION APPLICATION

Section 1: Property Being Reviewed and Ownership Information
Address of Property: 545 GTH STREET
Historic District: OLD WEST SIDE
Name of Property Owner (If different than the applicant):
Address of Property Owner: 545 GTH STREET
Daytime Phone and E-mail of Property Owner:
Signature of Property Owner: gnllad 6/4 Date: 22.101 2015
Section 2: Applicant Information
Name of Applicant: CHNTHIA KOCH & CHRIS GARDINER
Address of Applicant: 545 GTH STREET
Daytime Phone: (734) 546-8303 Fax:()
E-mail: SEE ABOVE
Applicant's Relationship to Property: X_ownerarchitectcontactorother
Signature of applicant: Got Mach 1. M Date: 22 JULY 2015
Section 3: Building Use (check all that apply)
X Residential X 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: <u>Ek l.v.</u>

Section 5: Description of Proposed Char	nges (attach additional sheets as necessary)
1. Provide a brief summary of proposed	changes. Two STORY LODITION WITH
BASEMENT ON NORTH	
Provide a description of existing conc	litions. SEE SHEET AI, A2, A3 & A7
. What are the reasons for the propose	ed changes? ENLARGE FAMILY ROOM 4
KITCHEN AND TO ADD	
<ol> <li>Attach any additional information that these attachments here.</li> </ol>	will further explain or clarify the proposal, and indicate
5. Attach photographs of the existing prophetors of proposed work area.	operty, including at least one general photo and detaile
	STAFF USE ONLY
Pate Submitted:	Application toStaff orHDC
roject No.: HDC 15-136	Fee Paid: 550 00
re-filing Staff Reviewer & Date:	Date of Public Hearing 213-15
pplication Filing Date:	Action:HDC COAHDC Denial
Staff signature:	Action:HDC COAHDC Denial











