

**N ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION****Staff Report****ADDRESS:** 721 East Huron Street, Application Number HDC23-0121**DISTRICT:** Old Fourth Ward Historic District**REPORT DATE:** July 13, 2023**REPORT PREPARED BY:** Jill Thacher, Historic Preservation Coordinator**REVIEW COMMITTEE DATE:** Monday, July 10, 2023

	<b>OWNER</b>	<b>APPLICANT</b>
<b>Name:</b>	The Episcopal Student Foundation Tom Rich	Eric Wubbenhorst OX Studio, Inc
<b>Address:</b>	721 East Huron Ann Arbor, MI	2373 Oak Valley Drive Ann Arbor, MI 48103
<b>Phone:</b>	(734) 846-5688	(734) 945-0110

**BACKGROUND:** The two-story structure at 721 E Huron was rehabilitated by Hobbs & Black Associates in the 1980s as part of a PUD for the site. Prior to that, the structure was a simple, two-story vernacular Queen Anne home with a  $\frac{3}{4}$ -length front porch and multi-paned upper sash windows. It first appears in the 1902 City Directory as the home of William F. Wanzeck and Mary Woodberty; by 1915, the building was home to Mackenzie Cash Grocery. Other grocers occupied the building through the years and a 1975 survey photo shows 721 E Huron as The Corner Cupboard.

A one-story garage and large rear addition are not present on 1947 aerial photos, but appear by 1960. A second floor appears to have been added to these two additions and extended forward in the 1980s.

In 2002 an application to demolish the house was denied by the HDC, as were appeals to the State Historic Preservation Review Board and Federal Court.

**LOCATION:** The site is located at the northwest corner of East Huron and North Thayer Streets.

**APPLICATION:** The applicant seeks HDC approval to install a bluestone patio at the southeast corner of the site, a low masonry seating wall along East Huron and part of North Thayer, and landscaping beds.

**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) 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 will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property will be unimpaired.

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

**District or Neighborhood Setting – Alterations, Additions**

*Not Recommended:* Introducing new construction into historic districts that is visually incompatible or that destroys historic relationships within the setting.

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

**Residential Decks and Patios**

“To be considered a deck or patio it must be located in the rear yard, unless special circumstances exist.” (Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines, page 4-14)

*Appropriate:* Installing a patio flush with grade using stone, brick pavers, or concrete. Custom materials will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Ensuring that a deck or patio drains away from the historic resource.

**All New Construction**

*Appropriate:* Designing new features so they are compatible with the historic character of the site, district, and neighborhood.

*Not Appropriate:* Introducing a new feature that is visually incompatible with or that destroys the patterns of the site or the district.

**New Construction in Historic Residential Settings**

*Appropriate:* Selecting materials and finishes that are compatible with historic materials and finishes found in surrounding buildings that contribute to their historic character.

**STAFF FINDINGS:**

1. Canterbury House is an Episcopalian campus ministry serving UofM students from 721 East Huron Street. Since this structure was built as a residential house and retains that placement and massing, it should be a consideration in the HDC’s decision making.

Since the use of the structure has changed to a campus ministry, however, staff does believe this qualifies as “special circumstances” under the *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines* for Residential Decks and Patios when it mentions that patios must be located in the rear yard.

2. An existing front entry deck is in disrepair. Staff has approved a separate application to remove it and replace it with a smaller deck without guardrails. The new deck design is shown on the proposed patio plans.
3. The front yard currently has a wood picket fence that is in disrepair, a boxy hedge in front of the house, and ivy groundcover. The west half of the front yard would replace the hedge and ivy with lawn.
4. The patio on the east part of the front yard would use bluestone pavers between the street intersection and house. It would be approximately 17’ wide along East Huron and around 25’ deep on North Thayer, minus the area of the entry deck. Along most of East Huron and 10’ of North Thayer is a 16” tall stacked stone seating wall with a bluestone cap. The wall is inset a foot from the sidewalk to allow space for planting. There is another planting area north of the wall, along North Thayer.
5. While a patio would not typically be allowed in front of a residence, staff believes it is appropriate to allow a gathering and outdoor space for the new use (campus ministry). The project is site-specific and need-specific, and reversible. Based on the SOI Standards and Guidelines and the Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines, staff recommends approval.

**POSSIBLE MOTION:** (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 application at 721 East Huron Street, a contributing property in the Old Fourth Ward Historic District, to install a bluestone patio at the southeast corner of the site, a low masonry seating wall along East Huron and part of North Thayer, and landscaping beds 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 1, 2, 9 and 10 and the guidelines for District or Neighborhood Setting, as well as the *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines*, particularly as they pertain to Residential Decks and Patios, All New Construction and New Construction in Historic Residential Settings.

#### **MOTION WORKSHEET:**

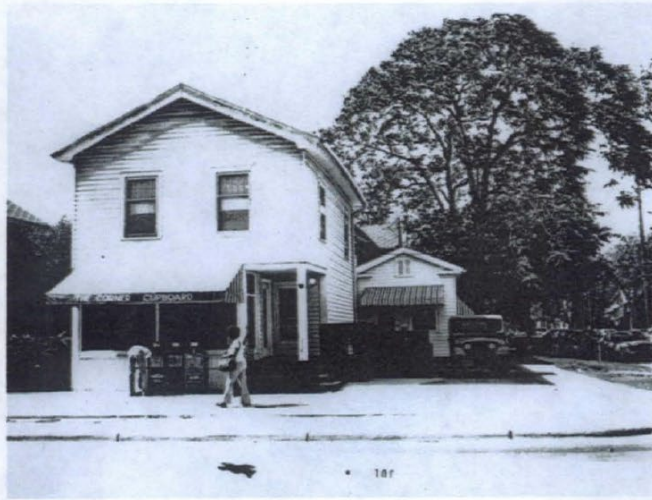
I move that the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work at 721 East Huron Street in the Old Fourth Ward Historic District

\_\_\_\_\_ 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:** drawings, photos.

721 E Huron (from a 2002 HDC application)



EXISTING CANTERBURY HOUSE SEEN IN 1975



EXISTING CANTERBURY HOUSE SEEN IN 2002

721 E Huron (1975 City survey photo)



721 E Huron (2007 Staff photos)

