

ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Staff Report

ADDRESS: 1040 West Liberty Street, Application Number HDC12-212

DISTRICT: Old West Side Historic District

REPORT DATE: December 6, 2012

REPORT PREPARED BY: Jill Thacher, Historic Preservation Coordinator

REVIEW COMMITTEE DATE: Monday, December 10 for the Thursday, December 13, 2012
HDC meeting

OWNER

Name: Daniel Kruger
Address: 1040 W Liberty
 Ann Arbor, MI 48103
Phone:

APPLICANT

Thomas B Getty
 3330 German Rd
 Columbiaville, MI 48421
 (810) 625-3987

BACKGROUND: This one-and-a-half story vernacular house features a full-width front porch with battered square columns, large front windows with simple trim, and wood shingles on the upper story. The house first appears in the 1919 City Directory and lists Frank W Heusel, a driver for the Ann Arbor Dairy Company, and his wife, Ruth, as the first occupants. The Heusels resided there until 1975. Per the attached photos, it has been very well maintained by the current owner over the last six years.

LOCATION: The site is located on the north side of West Liberty Street between Eighth Street and Crest Avenue.

APPLICATION: The applicant seeks HDC approval to install a new basement egress window and window well in the east elevation.

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):

Windows

Recommended: Designing and installing additional windows on rear or other non-character-defining 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.

Not Recommended: Changing the number, location, size or glazing pattern of windows, through cutting new openings, blocking-in windows, and installing replacement sash which does not fit the historic window opening.

Introducing a new design that is incompatible with the historic character of the building.

Health and Safety

Recommended: Identifying the historic building's character-defining spaces, features, and finishes so that code-required work will not result in their damage or loss.

Complying with health and safety codes, including seismic code requirements, in such a manner that character-defining spaces, features, and finishes are preserved.

Not Recommended: Altering, damaging, or destroying character-defining spaces, features, and finishes while making modifications to a building or site to comply with safety codes.

Making changes to historic buildings without first exploring equivalent health and safety systems, methods, or devices that may be less damaging to historic spaces, features, and finishes.

STAFF FINDINGS:

1. The applicant states that the basement will be converted to living space, which will require a new egress window to be installed to meet city code. An existing basement window is proposed to be replaced. The window is located on the east elevation, towards the front of the house. The location is visible from the street.
2. The house has a foundation that is coated with stucco, which is a character-defining feature of vernacular houses if installed during the period of significance. Installation of the egress window would involve removing a portion of the foundation wall below the existing window to accommodate the egress window. Although the proposed changes would result in the loss of a small amount of the historic foundation materials, these materials are located below grade and may not be easily visible.
3. Egress windows are required by building code if the basement is to be used as living space. They are required in any finished space in the basement, like an office or bedroom, though not a laundry or storage room. For a single casement window, the minimum well size required by building code is 36" x 36".

4. The proposed egress window is a 29" x 48" casement. The contractor emailed the attached photo of a window with a rectangular well built of pressure-treated landscape timbers equivalent to what he intends to build. Since the well dimensions and window materials were not supplied, staff has made a recommendation of approval on the condition that the well equals the minimum size required by code, and that the window be all wood or clad wood. The applicant agreed to this approach. The building permit application will need to be amended to show this work, and staff will review the building permit for compatibility with any HDC approval before building permits are issued.
5. Converting basement space is preferred to putting an addition on a house to gain living space because of the significantly smaller impacts to the original structure. Therefore, as conditioned, staff finds the work generally compatible in exterior design, arrangement, material, and relationship to the rest of the building and the surrounding area, and finds that it meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation.

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 application at 1040 West Liberty, a contributing property in the Old West Side Historic District, to install a new basement egress window and window well on the condition that the well is no larger than the minimum required by building code, and that the window is all wood or clad wood. As conditioned, the work is compatible in exterior design, arrangement, 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 windows and health and safety.

MOTION WORKSHEET:

I move that the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work at 1040 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, drawings, photos.

1040 West Liberty (April 2008 photos)

