

ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**Staff Report****ADDRESS:** 536 Sixth Street, Application Number HDC10-124**DISTRICT:** Old West Side Historic District**REPORT DATE:** October 14, 2010**REPORT PREPARED BY:** Jill Thacher, Historic Preservation Coordinator**REVIEW COMMITTEE DATE:** Monday, October 11, 2010**OWNER**

Name: Julia & Robert Oswald
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APPLICANT

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BACKGROUND: This two-story gable-fronter features wide frieze board trim, clapboard siding, a stone foundation, and clapboard siding. The house appears in the 1894 City Directory as the home of George J Welker, carpenter, and various Welkers lived in the home until 1911 when Mrs Catherine Welker is listed. Its address prior to 1898 was 14 Sixth Street. This section of Sixth Street does not appear on Sanborn Maps until 1931, when the house's footprint appeared as it does today, with the exception of the rear sunporch. At that time there was a single-car garage in roughly the location of the current two-car garage. It is not known whether the slightly unusual mansard roof on the front porch is original to the house or a later addition or modification.

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

APPLICATION: The applicant seeks HDC approval to 1) remove a 1950s one story sunporch addition and construct a 1 ½ story addition and one story mudroom on the rear of the house, 2) remove a side door on the north elevation near the rear of the house and install a large stair window in a new opening, 3) replace a non-original picture window on the single-story portion of the south elevation with a pair of doublehung windows in the same opening, 4) replace a non-original slider or casement window on the first floor of the south elevation near the rear with triple one over one casement windows in an enlarged (width and height) opening, and 5) remove non-original shutters and iron porch columns and guardrails, and install simple square wood porch columns. The addition would be sided with 4 ½" to 5" cement board siding and new windows would be wood clad in aluminum or vinyl.



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.
- (5) Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
- (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):

New 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.

Designing new additions in a manner that makes clear what is historic and what is new.

Locating the attached exterior addition at the rear or on an in-conspicuous side of a historic building; and limiting its size and scale in relationship to the historic building.

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. In either case, it should always be clearly differentiated from the historic building and be compatible in terms of mass, materials, relationship of solids to voids, and color.

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: Designing new exterior additions to historic buildings or adjacent new construction which is compatible with the historic character of the site and which preserve the historic relationship between a building or buildings, landscape features, and open space.

Identifying, retaining, and preserving buildings and their features as well as features of the site that are important in defining its overall historic character. Site features can include driveways,

walkways, lighting, fencing, signs, benches, fountains, wells, terraces, canal systems, plants and trees, berms, and drainage or irrigation ditches; and archeological features that are important in defining the history of the site.

Retaining the historic relationship between buildings, landscape features, and open space.

Not Recommended: Introducing new construction onto the building site which is visually incompatible in terms of size, scale, design, materials, color and texture or which destroys historic relationships on the site.

Removing or radically changing buildings and their features or site features which are important in defining the overall historic character of the building site so that, as a result, the character is diminished.

STAFF FINDINGS:

1. The ridge height of the addition is drawn slightly lower than the ridge of the front portion of the house (see especially the rear/west elevation drawing). The measurement on sheet A8 shows both at a height of 23' 8", which is assumed by staff to be incorrect for the proposed south elevation.
2. No information was provided on the materials or dimensions of the basement egress window wells on the addition.
3. There is a landmark maple in the center of the backyard that is not proposed to be removed and should therefore be protected during construction of the addition. Steps need to be taken to protect the critical root zone of the tree, which lies under the dripline of the canopy. No materials or equipment should be stored in this area. For more information, contact Kerry Gray, Urban Forestry Coordinator, at 734-794-6000 x43703.
4. The proposed addition is compatible in design with the house. It is distinct from the house and reads as an addition by virtue of being bumped in from the southwest corner of the house and bumped out from the northwest corner. Also, the ridge heights vary, the width does not exceed the width of the current house, and the foundation material (cmu or poured concrete) are different from the stone of the original foundation. Design elements of the house are echoed in the addition without replicating them.
5. Staff is not typically supportive of new window openings on side elevations of the historic structure, but the new window proposed on the north elevation is located on a wall that is inset from both the front section of the house and a one-story bumpout (this is best illustrated by drawing A5, the existing west elevation, as well as drawing A6, the proposed north elevation). Its large size distinguishes it from the original two-over-two windows found on the second floor and does not confuse the historic record.
6. The one-over-one windows proposed to replace non-original windows on the south elevation are compatible because of their paired and triple designs, which read as non-original.
7. Staff has some general reservations about a large rear addition that converts a 1,480 SF house (per the City assessor's office, which does not include the 190 SF sunporch since it is not finished space) to a 2,300 SF house. If the commission is not put off by the size

of the addition, staff feels that it is well-designed and otherwise compatible.

8. The proposed addition is generally 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*, in particular standards 2,5,9 and 10, and the guidelines for new additions and building site.

POSSIBLE MOTIONS: (Note that the motion supports staff findings and 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 536 Sixth Street, a contributing property in the Old West Side Historic District, to remove an existing addition and build a rear addition as proposed. The proposed work is compatible in exterior design, arrangement, texture, material and relationship to the rest of the house and the surrounding area and meets *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* and *Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, in particular standards 2,5,9, and 10 and the guidelines for new additions and building site.

MOTION WORKSHEET:

I move that the Commission

_____ Issue a Certificate of Appropriateness

_____ Deny the Application

For the work at 536 Sixth Street in the Old West Side Historic District

_____ As proposed.

_____ Provided the following condition(S) is (ARE) met: 1) 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) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

_____ Is not generally compatible with the size, scale, massing and materials, and DOES NOT MEET the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, standard(S) number(S) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 for the following reason(S): 1) REASON(s)

ATTACHMENTS: application, letter, drawings.

2009 Aerial Photo



536 Sixth Street (May 2008 photos)

