



# City of Ann Arbor

## Formal Minutes

### Historic District Commission

100 N. Fifth Avenue  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104  
<http://a2gov.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

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Thursday, December 9, 2010

7:00 PM

City Hall - Council Chambers 2nd Floor

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#### CALL TO ORDER

*The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chair Ramsburgh.*

#### ROLL CALL

*Roll Call Taken.*

*Chairperson Ramsburgh on behalf of the Historic District Commission presented outgoing Commissioner Diane Giannola with a Resolution of Appreciation for her efforts and time spent as a Commissioner on the Historic District Commission.*

*Chairperson Ramsburgh also welcomed the newest member, Benjamin Bushkuhl, to the Commission and asked him to introduce himself to the Commissioners.*

**Present:** 5 - Robert White, Ellen Ramsburgh, Patrick McCauley, Thomas Stulberg, and Benjamin L. Bushkuhl

**Absent:** 2 - Kristina A. Glusac, and Lesa Rozmarek

#### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**A motion was made by Chair Ramsburgh, seconded by White, that the Agenda be Approved with changes. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.**

#### HEARINGS

- 1      **10-1273**      HDC10-161 - 536 Sixth Street - Modification to Rear Addition - OWS

**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.*

*This project received a Certificate of Appropriateness for a two-story, rear addition on October 14, 2010.*

**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 for a modification to the October 2010 proposal. Additionally, the applicant seeks to demolish an existing two-car garage and replace it with a new, more compatible two-car garage. Finally, the applicant wishes to build a low deck in the rear yard.*

**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.*

*(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):*

**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.*

*Retaining the historic relationship between buildings, landscape*

*features, and open space.*

*Removing non-significant buildings, additions, or site features which detract from the historic character of the site.*

*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.*

**STAFF FINDINGS:**

- 1. The previous proposal featured a mud room as the only entry at the west elevation/rear of the house. The current proposal relocates the mud room to the south side of the house and retains the western entrance onto a proposed, new rear deck.*
- 2. The proposed modification makes the rear addition slightly wider than the main volume of the house. However, the area of the current proposal remains the same as that approved under the COA issued in October.*
- 3. The mudroom modification is one-story high, is appropriately scaled and well-composed.*
- 4. The existing garage is estimated to have been constructed in the 1950's. The proposed design is simple and more appropriately located on the lot than the existing garage.*

**REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT:**

*Commissioners McCauley and Stulberg agreed that the proposed project would blend well into the surroundings.*

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:**

*Owners Julia and Robert Oswald were present to answer the Commissioners' questions.*

**A motion was made by Stulberg, seconded by White, 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 permit the construction of an addition, removal and construction of a garage, and construction of a deck as documented in the owner's submittal. As proposed, the work is compatible in exterior design, arrangement, materials, and relationship to the garage 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 building site and district or neighborhood setting. On a voice vote, the Chairperson declared the motion carried.**

**2      10-1276      HDC10-160 - 514 East Ann Street - Five New Egress Windows**

*BACKGROUND: This elaborate Queen Anne features colored glass panels framing the upper half of every window on the original part of the house, and a large arched window on the porch. The front porch has elaborate spindles and cut-out designs on the skirting, as well as numerous gables. Frank A. Howlett was the original occupant in 1890. Howlett served as the County Clerk and also president of the Ann Arbor City Council. He lived at this address until 1915, after which it was occupied by Joseph Staebler (1918-1925), and Martha and John Miller (1928 – 1950s).*

*This project received a Certificate of Appropriateness for a roof modification on July 8, 2010.*

*LOCATION: The site is located on the south side of East Ann, east of North Division and west of North State.*

*APPLICATION: The applicant seeks HDC approval to install five new egress windows, two of which will be located in newly constructed window wells. To accommodate one of the new window wells, steps on the side porch will be moved from the north to the south side of the porch.*

*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.*

*(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):*

*Windows - Alterations/Additions for the New Use*

*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.*

*Building Site*

*Recommended: Identifying, retaining, and preserving buildings and their features as well as features of the site that are important in defining its overall historic character.*

*Not Recommended: 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.*

**STAFF FINDINGS:**

*1. The sub-grade egress window at the rear/south elevation will replace an existing sub-grade window (see owner-provided image) and will increase the depth of the window well. All three sub-grade windows will meet egress requirements and will match one another.*

*2. According to the available documentation, the proposed replacement sub-grade windows appear to match the width of the existing windows. The proposed head heights of the sub-grade windows will match the head heights of the existing windows. The sill heights will be lower and will be below grade. The guardrails surrounding the proposed, new window wells will be the most notable change to the east elevation.*

*3. Two above-grade egress windows are located on the west garage elevation and are considerably removed from the street.*

*4. This house is not subdivided and is currently used as a six-bedroom rental. To make use of all the bedrooms, the owner intends to convert the structure into a two-family dwelling.*

*5. The proposal includes the installation of new guardrails on the side porch in a style similar to the existing guardrails, with an additional top rail added to bring the assembly to its code-required height.*

**DISCUSSION BY COMMISSION:**

*Applicant Mike Van Gore explained the recent history of the house and the new application. He answered Commissioners' questions about the garage and siding.*

*Commissioner Stulberg discussed the density of the area and stated that he had no concerns about adding a unit.*

**A motion was made by Chair Ramsburgh, seconded by White, that the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application at 514 East Ann Street, a contributing property in the Ann Street Historic Block, to permit the installation of five new windows, as documented in the owner's submittal. As proposed, the work is compatible in exterior design, arrangement, materials, and relationship to the garage 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 building site and district or neighborhood setting. On a voice vote, the Chairperson declared the motion carried.**

## **B OLD BUSINESS**

**B-1 10-1277** HDC10-143 - 1121 West Liberty - Install Vinyl Siding - ASHD

### *STAFF FINDINGS AND REVISIONS:*

*The revisions include leaving the wood trim on the house exposed, rather than wrapped in aluminum, and using smooth-surfaced vinyl instead of woodgrained. Staff's opinion is that these are appropriate steps to bring the application closer to meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Also attached for your information is Preservation Brief 8: Aluminum and Vinyl Siding on Historic Buildings, which was partially presented by the owners' representative at the November HDC meeting.*

*The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, in particular standards 2, 5, 6 and 9.*

*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.*

*5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be*

*preserved.*

*6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.*

*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.*

*Given the following considerations, a revised staff recommendation is below.*

*1. The window, eave, and other wood trim is a character defining feature of the house. It is appropriate to leave it exposed, as proposed. Corner board trim installed over the vinyl should also be wood.*

*2. The first floor of the house has only lath beneath the aluminum. Therefore, the use of smooth vinyl is comparable to the existing aluminum. Ideally, the first floor would be restored to stucco and the second floor exposed and repaired or replaced in kind. In this particular situation, however, it is financially unrealistic for that to happen, so exchanging the aluminum for vinyl over the whole house, even if the second floor siding is in repairable condition, is an acceptable alternative.*

*3. Since there is no siding beneath the first floor aluminum, if vinyl were installed it would abut the window casing flush, without extending beyond the casing, as the aluminum does now. On the second floor, the aluminum protrudes slightly beyond the casing, which would be the case with the vinyl. The installer would have to take steps to insure that the wood window casing is protected from water by furring out the wood trim or by other measures.*

*DISCUSSION BY COMMISSION:*

*Chair Ramsburgh asked staff about insulation value of vinyl siding.*

*Commissioner McCauley asked about the transition from the first to the second floors and suggested a piece of wider board trim. Stulberg found the Presentation Brief helpful and encouraged others to look at it.*

*Chair Ramsburgh stated that she had difficulty with vinyl in historic districts but felt that the proposed project was appropriate.*

**A motion was made by Vice Chair McCauley, seconded by White, that the Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for the application at 1121 West Liberty, a contributing property in the Old West Side Historic District, to replace the existing aluminum siding with vinyl siding per their revised application, on the condition that wood corner boards are installed. As conditioned, the work is compatible in exterior design, texture, appearance and relationship to 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, 6 and 9. On a voice vote, the Chairperson declared the motion carried.**

**B-2 10-1279** HDC09-062 - 537 Detroit Street - Window Assessment - OFWHD

*Item removed from Agenda.*

**C NEW BUSINESS**

**PUBLIC COMMENTARY - (3 Minutes per Speaker)**

*None*

**A APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**D REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS / COMMISSION PROPOSED BUSINESS**

*Chairperson Ramsburgh reminded the Commissioners of the annual retreat and asked them for ideas on possible topics.*

**E ASSIGNMENTS**

**Review Committee; Monday, Jan 10 at noon for the January 13, 2011 Regular Session**

*Commissioners McCauley and Ramsburgh volunteered for the January 2011 Review Committee.*

**F REPORTS FROM STAFF**



F-1 10-1280 November 2010 Staff Activity

*Reviewed*

F-2 10-1281 2011 HDC Meeting Calendar

**Moved by Commissioner White, Seconded by McCauley to approve the 2011 Historic District Commission Meeting Schedule. On a voice vote the motion was approved.**

### **Old West Side Survey Follow-up**

*Postponed by Staff.*

### **CONCERNS OF COMMISSIONERS**

### **G COMMUNICATIONS**

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**A motion was made by Chair Ramsburgh, seconded by White, to Adjourn. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried. Meeting Adjourned at 8:00 pm.**