

ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Staff Report

ADDRESS: 515 West Washington Street, Application Number HDC11-048

DISTRICT: Old West Side Historic District

REPORT DATE: May 5 for the May 12, 2011 HDC Meeting

REPORT PREPARED BY: Jill Thacher, Historic Preservation Coordinator

REVIEW COMMITTEE DATE: Monday, May 9, 2011

	OWNER	APPLICANT
Name:	Robert S. Northrup	Same
Address:	515 W Washington St Ann Arbor, MI 48103	
Phone:	(734) 222-0617	

BACKGROUND: This one-and-a-half story gable-fronter has a triple window in the upper front and a large parlor window below. The house first appears in the 1910 Polk Directory as the home of Mary Rogers, a music teacher, and Andrew Rogers. Asphalt siding and a non-original brick front porch were removed by the previous owner, and the current porch was constructed after receiving a certificate of appropriateness from the HDC in 1993. Replacement basement walls received a staff approval in 1993. Several landmark maple trees are located along the west side of the house.

LOCATION: The site is located on the south side of West Washington between Third and Fourth Streets.

APPLICATION: The applicant seeks HDC approval to 1) construct a second floor addition over the existing one story rear addition; 2) remove the brick chimney; 3) add roofs over the back entryway and back patio; 4) screen the back patio, 5) pave the driveway, and 6) move the garage 10 feet toward the rear of the lot. See the application for an attached detailed description of the work proposed and justifications.

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.
- (4) Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
- (5) Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall 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.

Retaining the historic relationship between 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.

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.

Roofs

Recommended: Identifying, retaining, and preserving roofs--and their functional and decorative features—that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building.

Not Recommended: Removing a feature of the roof that is unrepairable, such as a chimney or dormer, and not replacing it; or replacing it with a new feature that does not convey the same visual appearance

STAFF FINDINGS:

1. The existing house consists of a one-and-a-half story main block with a single story rear addition behind it, and a single story mudroom addition behind that. The first addition appears to date to the 1930s and extends seven feet into the west side yard. It has a nearly-flat roof, which can be accessed by a second floor door on the rear elevation. The mud room is newer than the period of significance.
2. The proposed addition would place a new box with a nearly-flat roof on top of the flat-roofed rear additions. In the rear, the new addition would overhang the existing rear wall of the older addition by six feet, and a shed roof and screening would extend another six feet beyond that to enclose an existing paver patio. On the east (driveway) side, the second floor addition would be inset approximately two feet from the existing east mudroom elevation, and extend six feet beyond the mudroom to form a new covered porch underneath. On the east side, the addition would be aligned with the current first floor wall, but stepped back three feet from the north wall of the existing rear addition. This would create a notch that preserves an existing original window on the second floor of the house, and delineates the new from the old. In addition, the existing eave and trim would be retained on both first floor additions.
3. Materials on the addition include wood clapboards and trim to match the rest of the house (not vertical siding, as the drawings might lead you to believe - - I believe this was to distinguish the new from the old). The north-facing window on the second floor would be a wood double-hung, and the other operable windows would be casements. Staff does not object to the proposed large picture window across the rear of the second floor addition, since this elevation is not visible from the street and would not detract from any character-defining features of the house.
4. Staff believes that the boxy shape of the second-floor addition is appropriate giving the applicant's desire to minimize the height of the addition and preserve the large whole-house fan located in the rear gable. Since the existing rear wing occupies a portion of the side yard, adding a second floor on top of it will not increase the footprint of the house into the side yard. The addition also would not compromise the relationship between this house and the non-contributing house next door to the west.
5. The chimney is in need of repair, and the applicant proposes to remove it in order to install pull-down stairs to the attic for storage. There is currently a small attic access in the ceiling that is barely large enough to allow a person on a ladder entry. Staff believes the chimney is a character defining feature of the house, though this one is not particularly ornate or of significant craftsmanship. The tradeoff of removing the chimney in order to utilize the attic for storage is in this case reasonable.
6. Paving the driveway would help accessibility and drainage on the site. Per a conversation

with the applicant, the driveway would be concrete, with a slight slope from either side toward the middle, which would then slope toward the street. The concrete would extend the width of the current driveway, from the house to the lot line. Staff is generally not in favor of allowing driveway paving where it hasn't existed before, since it is a historic feature of the site, but the applicant makes a reasonable argument for improving accessibility for him and his wife in this newly owner-occupied structure.

7. The garage was constructed during the district's period of significance and first appears on the 1925 Sanborn Map, in the current location. At some point, the roof was altered from flat to gabled. Staff feels that moving this garage ten feet toward the rear of the lot would not diminish or radically change the character of the site or neighborhood.
8. The proposed work 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 2,9 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 515 West Washington Street, a contributing property in the Old West Side Historic District, to construct a second floor addition over the existing one story rear addition and a rear screen porch; remove the brick chimney; pave the driveway, and move the garage 10 feet toward the rear of the lot, as documented in the owner's submittal. The work is generally 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, 4, 5, 9, and 10 and the guidelines for new additions, building site, and roofs.

MOTION WORKSHEET:

I move that the Commission

____ Issue a Certificate of Appropriateness

____ Deny the Application

For the work at 829 W Washington 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, two window worksheets, drawings, photos, cut sheets.

515 W Washington (2008)



2010 (County) Aerial

