

ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**Staff Report****ADDRESS:** 536 Sixth Street, Application Number HDC23-0136**DISTRICT:** Old West Side Historic District**REPORT DATE:** August 17, 2023**REPORT PREPARED BY:** Jill Thacher, Historic Preservation Coordinator**REVIEW COMMITTEE DATE:** Monday, August 14, 2023

	OWNER	APPLICANT
Name:	Kristin Evans	Same
Address:	536 Sixth Street Ann Arbor, MI 48103	
Phone:	(310) 200-8469	

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.

The HDC granted 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 to replace a modern rear porch on the house, make extensive garage repairs, add a small addition to the rear of the garage and to build a new accessory building/studio behind the garage.

APPLICABLE REGULATIONS:

From the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (other SOI Standards may also apply):

- (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 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):

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.

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

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

Placing new additions such as balconies and greenhouses on non-character-defining elevations and limiting and size and scale in relationship to the historic building.

Designing additional stories, when required for the new use, that are set back from the wall plane and are as inconspicuous as possible when viewed from the street.

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.

Designing and constructing new additions that result in the diminution or loss of the historic character of the resource, including its design, materials, workmanship, location, or setting.

Constructing additional stories so that the historic appearance of the building is radically changed.

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.

From the *City of Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines* (other guidelines from this document may also apply):

Guidelines for All Additions

Appropriate: Locating a required addition on the least character-defining elevation and keeping it subordinate in volume to the historic building.

Placing a new addition on a non-character defining or inconspicuous elevation and limiting the size and scale in relationship to the historic property.

Designing the addition so it is compatible in terms of massing, materials, relationship of solids to voids, and proportion of openings.

Placing functions and services required for the new use in non-character-defining interior spaces rather than constructing a new addition.

Locating a rooftop addition to be inconspicuous when viewed from the street.

Not Appropriate: Designing a new addition that requires the removal of significant building elements or site features.

Designing an addition to appear older or the same age as the original building.

Residential Accessory Structures

Appropriate: Maintaining and restoring historic barns, garages, sheds, trellises, and other accessory structures to match the historic materials and configuration.

Not Appropriate: Altering historic barns, garages, and sheds by using materials, configurations, and designs that do not match the existing or historic appearance.

Additions

Appropriate: Locating an addition within a new detached accessory structure located to the rear of a primary historic structure.

STAFF FINDINGS:

1. *Garage*. The two-car garage was present during the period of significance as illustrated by the 1947 aerial photo in the application and supported by materials, style and

massing. It needs considerable work, including replacing the concrete slab, removing and underpinning the foundation, replacing the roof structure, and replacing the historic cladding (under the current plywood exterior) with replica cladding. The garage doors will also be replaced with new wood doors to match the existing. Any other materials found deteriorated beyond repair (which the application says is likely) will be replaced with matching materials in matching dimensions.

2. The addition proposed on the rear of the garage is 6'5" by 19'3", or 125 square feet. This is 29% of the floor area and footprint of the garage. It is inset from the rear corners of the garage by one foot. The addition's roof sheds to the south side of the garage. Cladding is 5" reveal fiber cement clapboard, which is wider than the historic siding. and the rear elevation has a sliding overhead track door.
3. *Studio*. The new accessory building's footprint is aligned with the garage and matches its width (21' 4 1/2"). At its widest, it is 17'4 3/4". The studio contains a main room and a full bath. The building has a shed roof and at its tallest on the north side is 14' 4" tall. The garage is 10' 10" tall. Staff is not particularly concerned about the height discrepancy because the studio is over 42' from the front of the garage. The roof will be visible from the street but not looming or inappropriately large. A patio separates the garage from the studio. The size and placement in the rear corner of the lot are appropriate, and the neighbor's garage to the south buffers the new structure from the neighbor's yard and view.

Studio materials include fiber cement clapboard siding with a 5" reveal, fiber cement board trim, a CMU block foundation with a plaster parge coat, EPDM rubber roofing, and no gutters or downspouts due to the large maple tree nearby. New windows are aluminum clad from Marvin, as is the bi-fold patio door. The rear door is fiberglass.

4. *New landing*. On the south side of the house, the new composite landing is simple, small and an appropriate design that meets the *Design Guidelines*.
5. The proposed work is compatible in exterior design, arrangement, texture, material and relationship to the rest of the garage, the historic house, 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 residential accessory structures.

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 construct an addition to the rear elevation of the garage and to construct an additional accessory building behind the garage, 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 2, 5, 9, and 10 and the guidelines for additions, as well as the *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines*, in particular the guidelines for additions and residential accessory structures.

ATTACHMENTS: drawings, photos

536 Sixth Street (May 2008 survey photos)

