



City of Ann Arbor
Formal Minutes
Historic District Commission

301 E. Huron Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
<http://a2gov.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

Thursday, February 12, 2015

7:00 PM

City Hall, 301 E. Huron Street, 2nd Flr.

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Stulberg called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL

Jill Thacher called the roll.

Present: 7 - Robert White, Ellen Ramsburgh, Patrick McCauley, Thomas Stulberg, Benjamin L. Bushkuhl, John Beeson, and Jennifer Ross

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was unanimously Approved as presented. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

D. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION - PUBLIC COMMENTARY - (3 Minutes per Speaker)

E. HEARINGS

E-1. 15-0163 HDC15-003; 529 E Liberty Street - New Canopy Sign - SSHD

Jill Thacher presented the following staff report:

BACKGROUND:

This two-story commercial building is part of the west wing of the Michigan Theater Building. It was built in 1927 in the 20th Century Romanesque style, but underwent significant alteration in the 1950s that destroyed much of its original exterior character. All of the original windows and storefronts were changed and a large aluminum signboard was added running the length of the building. The storefronts are now mainly glass, framed in mill finish silver aluminum, with a low ashlar limestone sill and a few vertical panels of dark marble. In 1993, the HDC approved the remodeling of the entrance to 529 by removing the existing single door and squared-off show window and replacing them with a

double door and side window. The original occupant of this storefront was Marilyn Shops, and the most recent occupant was Hommus Express.

LOCATION:

The building is located on the north side of East Liberty Street, between Thompson Street and Maynard Street.

APPLICATION:

The applicant seeks HDC approval to install a canvas awning over the storefront display window. The awning is 15' long, 6 1/2' tall and extends 2' from the face of the building, with open ends. The color is royal blue with white lettering.

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.

From the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings:

Storefronts

Not Recommended:

Introducing a new design that is incompatible in size, scale, material, and color.

Using inappropriately scaled signs and logos or other types of signs that obscure, damage, or destroy remaining character-defining features of the historic building.

From the Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines (other Guidelines may apply):

Awnings

Appropriate:

Mounting a standard storefront awning so that the bottom of the fixed frame is at least 7 feet above the sidewalk, although 8 feet is preferred. Consideration should be given to the height of neighboring awnings.

Projecting the awning from the face of the building no more than 4 feet.

Attaching the awning just below the storefront cornice and fitting it within the storefront opening.

Using canvas, vinyl-coated canvas, or acrylic fabrics for awnings and banners.

STAFF FINDINGS:

1. The storefront entrance on this building is a modern design and does not contribute to the historic character of the building. The canvas awning would be mounted to the non-original aluminum sign band portion of the storefront façade. The design is very similar to the Tamake awnings a couple of storefronts down, and would be complementary to them. This awning had to work around two existing signs, so it isn't centered over the window, but it is centered on the entire storefront. The large letters are 16.6" tall, which can be compared to Tamake's 12" letters. The awning is not proposed to be illuminated.

2. Staff feels that the proposed awning sign is appropriate for this site, compatible with neighboring storefronts, and meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and guidelines and the Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines.

REVIEW COMMITTEES REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Commissioners Ramsburgh and Stulberg visited the site.

Ramsburgh said that in visiting the site and seeing the existing sign band, she felt that anything the Commission can do to improve the sign band by making the signs more consistent would be helpful to the overall historic nature of the building. She agreed with the staff comment that the sign should align with the neighboring 'Taste Kitchen' signage.

Stulberg said he agreed with Ramsburgh and staff comments that the signage should align. He said keeping in mind that the painting done by 'Taste Kitchen' has also helped with making the signage look more historic as well as more appealing in the business sense.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Gordon Wallace, for Signarama Signs, G-3322 Miller, Flint, MI, applicant for the project was present and answered questions from the Commission.

Noting no further public speakers, the Chair declared the public hearing closed.

Moved by Ramsburgh, seconded by White, that the Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for 529 East Liberty Street, a contributing structure in the Main Street Historic District, for the application to install a storefront awning with signage, on the condition that it aligns with the height of the 'Taste Kitchen' awning on the sign band. The 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 and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, in particular standards 2 and 9 and the guidelines for storefronts.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION:

The members of the Commission took into consideration the presented application and discussed the matter.

On a voice vote, the vote was as follows with the Chair declaring the motion carried.

Certificate of Appropriateness was Granted.

Yeas: 7 - White, Ramsburgh, McCauley, Chair Stulberg, Vice Chair Bushkuhl, Secretary Beeson, and Ross

Nays: 0

E-2. [15-0164](#) HDC15-006; 1211 Traver Street - New Shed - BHD

Jill Thacher presented the following staff report:

BACKGROUND:

The c.1845 Horace Church house is a two-story side-gable Greek Revival. The original mass of the house is very visible, though significant alterations and a large two-story rear wing render it a non-contributing structure. See the attached survey sheet for more information.

LOCATION:

The site is on the west side of Traver Street, just north of the railroad crossing.

APPLICATION:

The applicant seeks HDC approval to install a 10' x 10' cedar shed in the backyard.

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.

(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.

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 Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines (other Guidelines may apply):

Residential Accessory Structures

Not Appropriate:

Introducing new structures or site features that are out of scale with the property or the district or are otherwise inappropriate.

STAFF FINDINGS:

1. The shed's design is simple, with cedar siding, an asphalt shingle roof, and a single-leaf door. There will be a narrow transom window over the door (not shown on the photo). It will be installed on treated lumber on a 4" gravel base. The house has a three-car garage (and three cars) and an existing shed, but the homeowners are finding themselves in need of additional storage since their basement is damp and unsuitable for storage. The shed's proposed location on the lot meets zoning setback requirements, which are a minimum of 3' from the side and rear property line. It will be next to an existing shed that is also 10'x10' and cedar sided.

2. Staff recommends approval of the application. Given the limited storage space inside the house, the large size of the lot, and the shed's location, staff believes that the design, size, location, and materials of the shed are appropriate and will not detract from the historic character of the surrounding neighborhood.

REVIEW COMMITTEES REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Commissioners Ramsburgh and Stulberg visited the site with Jill Thacher as part of their review.

Ramsburgh said she felt the staff report covers everything and there was nothing in the application that does not fit within the guidelines.

Stulberg stated that he wanted to disclose that he lived across the street from this applicant, and that the existing shed was quite inconspicuous as he believed this proposed shed would also be.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Noting no public speakers, the Chair declared the public hearing closed.

Moved by McCauley, seconded by White, that the Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for the application at 1211 Traver, a non-contributing property in the Broadway Historic District, to construct a new shed in the backyard as proposed. The work is compatible in exterior design, arrangement, materials, and relationship to 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 and 10 and the guidelines for building site, as well as the Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines, particularly as they pertain to residential accessory structures.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION:

The members of the Commission took into consideration the presented application and discussed the matter.

On a voice vote, the vote was as follows with the Chair declaring the motion carried.

Certificate of Appropriateness was Granted.

Yeas: 7 - White, Ramsburgh, McCauley, Chair Stulberg, Vice Chair Bushkuhl, Secretary Beeson, and Ross

Nays: 0

E-3. [15-0165](#) HDC15-012; 529 Sixth Street - Remodel Addition -- OWSHD

Jill Thacher presented the following staff report:

BACKGROUND:

This two-story gable-fronter first appears in the 1890-1891 Polk City Directory as 9 Sixth Street, the home of Frederick C. Strecker, a driver for John Ross. A Strecker lived in the home until at least 1910. The house features some original two-over-two windows and a bump-out on the north side. The two-story addition, the addition behind it, and the screen porch were added sometime after 1971.

LOCATION:

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

APPLICATION:

The applicant seeks HDC approval to expand the existing non-original front porch; install a new canopy over the north side door; install a new roof with a steeper slope on the north side bump-out; construct a new gable over the addition at the south-west section of the house; demolish a modern screen porch on the rear and construct a new, larger one with an adjacent deck and pergola; move a window on the rear of the post WWII addition 27"; remove the aluminum siding on the entire house and restore the underlying wood; install 7" cementitious lap siding on the non-original portions of the house; and on the garage, alter the doors, install photo voltaic panels, and reside it to match the house.

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.

(3) Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.

(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 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):

Additions

Recommended:

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.

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.

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:

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

Retaining the historic relationship between buildings and the landscape.

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.

From the Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines (other guidelines may apply):

Design Guidelines for Residential Doors

Appropriate:

Replacing a missing original or non-original door with a design that matches original doors remaining on the house, or with a compatible new design and material that fits the style and period of the house and the existing opening. The Commission will review materials on a case-by-case basis.

Design Guidelines for Residential Porches

Appropriate:

*Using replacement features that match the documented historic design.
If no documentation exists, using a simple, plain design.*

Not Appropriate:

Creating a false historical appearance by adding a porch, entrance, feature, or detail that is conjectural or comes from other properties.

*Guidelines for All Additions**Appropriate:*

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

Placing new walls in a different plane from the historic structure in a subordinate position to the historic fabric.

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

Not Appropriate:

Designing an addition that overpowers or dramatically alters the original building through size or height.

Designing a new addition so that the size and scale in relation to the historic property are out of proportion.

STAFF FINDINGS:

1. Front Porch. The application proposes extending the front porch south to make it a usable size and help tie in the large addition to the remainder of the house. The expanded porch would be constructed of wood, with asphalt roof shingles to match the existing. Porch posts would match the ones on what's left of the porch, and the skirting would be square lattice. Since the pediment and posts of the existing porch will remain as is, staff feels that this work is appropriate and complementary to the house.

2. North Side Door Canopy. The proposed small gable roof over the side door would help shield both pedestrians and the door from the elements. It is unknown whether the house ever had a covered entrance here. The addition of one would not detract from the historic features or overall character of the building, and would provide a basic amenity in the smallest size possible. Its simple design would not create a false historical appearance. The canopy would also be mostly hidden behind

the bumpout.

3. Roof of North Bumpout. The bumpout on the north elevation (just in front of the side door) has a nearly-flat roof. Draining is insufficient, water infiltration is occurring, and the applicants would like to increase the pitch to 12/3 to facilitate runoff (see esp. drawings 9 and 15). The change in appearance would be negligible and correct a problem that could cause serious damage to a significant architectural feature of the house.

4. New Second Floor Gable. The existing large two-story addition on the south side has a low-pitched shed roof that makes a rather awkward connection to the original house. The applicants would like to install a south-facing gable that spans about half the width of the addition and ties in below the ridge of the original house. The applicants are taking great pains to delineate the original house from the addition (see also siding, below), and are proposing to restore the appearance of the missing eave on the original house to this end. The original eave is 12", and the new gable would have an 8" eave. The gable would lend the house more of a traditional upright-and-wing feel.

5. Screen Porch, Deck and Pergola, and Move a Window. The existing 7'10" x 10'2" screen porch was constructed after 1971. It would be expanded roughly 3' to the east and south, and the door would be moved to the south side to open onto a new 9'9" x 12' deck with a pergola. This deck fits within the back corner formed by the original house and a one-story rear addition, and is inset a foot from its south side wall. The design of the pergola is simple and ties the deck into the house without feeling heavy or imposing. There is a window on the rear addition overlooking the deck that would be moved 27 1/2" north. The addition also dates to post-1971. Staff has no objections to the larger screen porch, deck, or window shift, and feels that these modest changes to modern parts of the house would very positively contribute to its livability.

6. Siding. The aluminum siding was presumably installed when the addition was built after 1971. Removing the aluminum and restoring the underlying 4" wood is very appropriate. On the large two-story addition and smaller one-story behind it, aluminum is the original cladding so the owners have chosen cementitious lap siding with a 7" reveal for those sections of the house. Their goal is to distinguish the additions from the original house block, and to this end will finish the two parts differently – the original house will feature corner board trim and a skirt board, while the additions will have wrapped corners and no skirt board.

7. Garage. The work proposed for the two-car garage is appropriate. It will result in a classier, more traditional feel that is compatible with the

house. Photo voltaic panels installed on the south-facing roof will be nearly invisible from the street or sidewalk, and in a backyard installation, staff believes the use of black-on-silver panels is acceptable.

8. Staff feels the work is compatible with the rest of the building and the surrounding neighborhood, finds that it meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation, and finds that the application is entirely positive.

REVIEW COMMITTEES REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Commissioners Ramsburgh and Stulberg visited the site with Jill Thacher as part of their review.

Ramsburgh commented that the staff report as well as the application was as complete as could be and the site visit was most interesting. She said she looks forward to see the proposed work take place to help bring out the historic elements of the house.

Stulberg said in visiting the site he looked at its location on the lot and proximity to the neighboring houses. He said the proposed work would have no significant negative impacts

PUBLIC HEARING:

Bonnie Greenspoon, Lewis Greenspoon Architects, 529 Sixth Street, Ann Arbor, applicant was present and answered questions from the Commission.

Justin Waugh, owner was also present to answer any questions.

Noting no further public speakers, the Chair declared the public hearing closed.

Moved by Stulberg, Seconded by White, that the Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for the application at 529 Sixth Street, a contributing property in the Old West Side Historic District, to expand the front porch; install a new canopy over the north side door; install a new roof on the bump-out; construct a new gable; remove the screen porch and construct a new one with a deck and pergola; remove the aluminum siding on the entire house and restore the underlying wood; install 4" or 7" cementitious lap siding on the addition and garage; and alter the garage, as proposed. The work is compatible in exterior design, arrangement, materials, and relationship to the house and the surrounding area and meets the City of Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines for doors, porches, and additions, and The Secretary of the Interior's

Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, in particular standards 2, 3, 5, 9, and 10 and the guidelines for Additions and Building Site.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION:

Beeson stated that he was very good friends with both the applicant as well as the architect but he had no financial gain from the application before the Commission.

The members of the Commission took into consideration the presented application and discussed the matter.

On a voice vote, the vote was as follows with the Chair declaring the motion carried.

Certificate of Appropriateness was Granted.

Yeas: 7 - White, Ramsburgh, McCauley, Chair Stulberg, Vice Chair Bushkuhl, Secretary Beeson, and Ross

Nays: 0

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

G. NEW BUSINESS

G-1. [15-0166](#) Awards Committee Nominations

Moved by Bob, seconded by Bushkuhl to approve the Awards Committee nominations list as presented. On a voice vote, the Chair declaring the motion carried.

G-2. Discussion on Annual HDC Retreat

The Commission discussed possible retreat dates as March 14 or 21 and suggested topics such as; annual slide show, bylaw review, review last year's workplan, new materials (slate roofing replacement and decking products).

H. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[15-0167](#) Minutes of the January 8, 2015 HDC Meeting

Beeson commented that Graig Borum, should be corrected to read Craig Borum on page 13 of the minutes.

The Minutes were unanimously Approved by the Commission with correction and forwarded to the City Council. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

I. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Bushkuhl reported from the Cobblestone Farms Association that they are planning and preparing to have the Farmers Market once again this year.

Ramsburgh said the Awards Committee will be meeting in March and requested that Commissioners weigh in with suggestions for awards as they drive throughout the City.

J. ASSIGNMENTS

Review Committee: Monday, March 9, 2015, at noon for the March 12, 2015 Regular Meeting

Ramsburgh and McCauley volunteered for the March Review Committee.

K. REPORTS FROM STAFF

15-0168 January 2015 HDC Staff Activities

Thacher reported that she had met with University of Michigan representative, Sue Gott on the notification and documentation process for historical buildings slated for demolition by the University of Michigan.

Received and Filed

L. CONCERNS OF COMMISSIONERS

M. COMMUNICATIONS

15-0169 Various Communications to the HDC

Received and Filed

N. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

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- *Cable: Watch CTN Channel 16 public meeting programming via Comcast Cable channel 16.*

The complete record of this meeting is available in video format at www.a2gov.org/ctn, on "The Meeting Place" page (<http://www.a2gov.org/livemeetings>), or is available for a nominal fee by contacting CTN at (734) 794-6150.