

## ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

### Staff Report

**ADDRESS:** 422 S Seventh Street, Application Number HDC23-0080

**DISTRICT:** Old West Side Historic District

**REPORT DATE:** June 8, 2023

**REPORT PREPARED BY:** Jill Thacher, Historic Preservation Coordinator

**REVIEW COMMITTEE DATE:** June 5, 2023

	<b>OWNER</b>	<b>APPLICANT</b>
<b>Name:</b>	Brian Altschuler	Same
<b>Address:</b>	422 S Seventh St Ann Arbor, MI 48103	
<b>Phone:</b>		

**BACKGROUND:** This one-and-three-quarter story vernacular home features 3/1, 4/1, and 5/1 windows, a simple rake board, beadboard soffits, a 2/3 width front porch with tapered round columns, shed roof, wood decking and a sculpted concrete block foundation that matches the foundation. The front and side doors appear to be original. The south side has a bay window on the first floor and large gable wall dormer upstairs. The roof features a red brick chimney. The house was first occupied in 1917 per City Assessor records.

**LOCATION:** The site is located on the west side of South Seventh Street, south of West Liberty and north of West Jefferson.

**APPLICATION:** The applicant seeks HDC approval to construct a 550 square foot, one-and-three-quarter story, rear addition on a crawl space.

#### **APPLICABLE REGULATIONS:**

##### **From the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:**

- (1) A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
- (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 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 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:* 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.

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.

*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):**

**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.

Limiting the size and scale of the addition in relationship to the historic building so that it does not diminish or visually overpower the building or the district. The addition's footprint should exceed neither half of the original building's footprint nor half of the original building's total floor area.

*Not Appropriate*: Designing an addition that overpowers or dramatically alters the original building through size or height.

### **STAFF FINDINGS:**

1. All of the existing house was present during the period of significance with the exception of the rear mudroom. The 1931 and 1948 Sanborn maps show nothing on the rear of the house (no mudroom, porch, or other).
2. The house is currently 1,200 square feet, including the mudroom, which is proposed to be replaced. The 1944 floor area was 1,132 square feet. The addition is 550 square feet, for a total increase in floor area of 49%. The 1944 footprint was 571 square feet and the proposed addition's footprint is 275 square feet, for an increase of 48%. The increases in size to both the floor area and the footprint comply with the Design Guidelines.
3. The addition maintains 12' between the historic one-car garage and new rear of the house.
4. The design of the addition is straightforward and compatible with the historic house. The roof ridge is 1'3" below the existing. The chimney is being retained in the attic and above the roofline and removed below the attic. This is very appropriate and appreciated. The addition has a low gable wall dormer on the north elevation that is compatible with the historic house. Proposed windows are fiberglass clad wood (Andersen 400 series) double hung with three lites over one. A rear door has one full-height lite.
5. The addition is highly compatible with the historic design but is distinguished in visible ways. The proportions of the windows are varied from the historic home, the window trim differs from the original (stacked corners, not mitered), and the siding is cementitious lap with a reveal that matches the existing aluminum. Also, the smooth (not sculpted) concrete masonry unit foundation is a crawl not a basement.
6. Staff recommends approval of the addition and believes it meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitation, and the Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines.

**POSSIBLE MOTIONS:** (Note that the motion 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 422 South Seventh Street, a contributing property in the Old West Side Historic District, to construct a 550 square foot, one-and-three-quarter story, rear addition on a crawl space, 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 1, 2, 5, 9 and 10 and the guidelines for additions and building site; and the *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines* for additions.

**ATTACHMENTS:** drawings, photos

422 South Seventh Street (November 2020, courtesy Google Street View)

