

MEMORANDUM

To: Historic District Commissioners

From: Jill Thacher, Historic Preservation Coordinator

Date: July 12, 2016

Re: Historic Plaques for 525 South First Street & 224 Crest Avenue

This month staff received two (2) applications for historic building plaques for the house at 525 South First Street (east side of First north of W. Madison and south of W. Jefferson), and 224 Crest Avenue (west side of Crest north of Buena Vista and south of W. Washington).

The Historic District Commission will consider all of the following when reviewing an application for a historic property plaque.

- a) The building must be at least fifty years old, as documented by a combination of records (title search, tax records, wills, etc.).
- b) The building must have been maintained, over time, in its original condition, or must have undergone historically appropriate restoration or rehabilitation.
- c) The building may not have historically inappropriate features, enclosures or repairs.
- d) The principal facades of the building visible from the street or any public right of way must maintain integrity of form, materials, and architectural features consistent with the dominant period of the building.

525 South First Street:

The Koch-Horning House was constructed in 1888 (per documentation provided by the homeowner) by the Koch Brothers Construction Company for John George Koch and his wife Maria Katharina Niethammer Koch. Their daughter, Barbara Koch Horning was the first white child born in Washtenaw County. She lived there until 1903, and members of the Horning family continued to live in the house until 1919. Koch Brothers built several homes on the block.

The home is brick and features elaborate brick hood molds over the windows, decorative brick banding in the front gable and at the base of the first and second floors, a cut stone foundation, a round window in the front gable, a wood sunburst in the rear gable, and a full-width L-shaped front porch. It is located in the Old West Side Historic District.

Does it meet the criteria for a historic property plaque? Staff responses in italics.

- a) The building must be at least fifty years old, as documented by a combination of records (title search, tax records, wills, etc.).

The house is at least 128 years old, per published city directories.

- b) The building must have been maintained, over time, in its original condition, or must have undergone historically appropriate restoration or rehabilitation.

The significant architectural features of the house appear to be intact.

- c) The building may not have historically inappropriate features, enclosures or repairs.

A rear addition received a certificate of appropriateness from the HDC and was constructed in 2014.

- d) The principal facades of the building visible from the street or any public right of way must maintain integrity of form, materials, and architectural features consistent with the dominant period of the building.

Staff believes this all to be accurate.

Staff feels that a historic plaque is appropriate for the Koch-Horning House, located at 525 South First Street, based on the age of the house, the house's history, and the relatively unaltered appearance of its character-defining architectural features and most prominent elevations.

Sample Motion

I move that the 1888 Koch-Horning House at 525 South First Street meets the criteria for a City of Ann Arbor Historic Building marker based on its age, historic and architectural significance, and contribution to the history of Ann Arbor.

224 Crest Avenue:

This two-story gable-fronter first appears in the Polk City Directory in 1917. It features double-hung windows with divided top sash, shingles on the upper floors, and clapboard on the ground level. The house's first occupant was William Nimke, a carpenter. Mr. Nimke lived in the house until at least 1930. The front porch roof material was changed from asphalt shingles to standing seam metal in 1996. The work received a certificate of appropriateness.

Does it meet the criteria for a historic property plaque? Staff responses in italics.

- a) The building must be at least fifty years old, as documented by a combination of records (title search, tax records, wills, etc.).

The house is 99 years old, per published city directories.

- b) The building must have been maintained, over time, in its original condition, or must have undergone historically appropriate restoration or rehabilitation.

The significant architectural features of the house and garage appear to be intact. The front porch roof material was changed from asphalt shingles to standing seam metal in 1996. The work received a certificate of appropriateness. The HDC will need to decide whether this work was historically appropriate, or whether it changed the appearance of the house too significantly.

- c) The building may not have historically inappropriate features, enclosures or repairs.

The structure was added on to during the period of significance for the OWSHD, so the entire house contributes to the character of the district. The enclosure of a circa 1939 rear screen porch received a certificate of appropriateness from the HDC in 2016.

- d) The principal facades of the building visible from the street or any public right of way must maintain integrity of form, materials, and architectural features consistent with the dominant period of the building.

Other than the question about the porch roof material, staff believes this to be accurate.

Sample Motion

I move that the 1917 William Nimke House at 224 Crest Avenue meets the criteria for a City of Ann Arbor Historic Building marker based on its age, historic and architectural significance, and contribution to the history of Ann Arbor.

Historic Property Plaques

The Ann Arbor Historic District Commission considers requests for bronze plaques honoring significant historic buildings in the City of Ann Arbor. Plaques show the original or earliest known owner's name and the year in which the structure was built. Current property owners may apply to the Commission and, if approved, purchase a bronze plaque for their building.



What criteria will be applied?

The Historic District Commission will consider all of the following when reviewing an application for a historic property plaque.

- a) The building must be at least one hundred years old, as documented by a combination of records (title search, tax records, wills, etc.).
- b) The building must have been maintained, over time, in its original condition, or must have undergone historically appropriate restoration or rehabilitation.
- c) The building may not have historically inappropriate features, enclosures or repairs.
- d) The principal facades of the building visible from the street or any public right of way must maintain integrity of form, materials, and architectural features consistent with the dominant period of the building.

If one or more of the criteria cannot be met, staff and the Commission will consider whether the building has special historic or architectural significance on a case by case basis.

The property must meet one of the following four criteria:

- 1) Listed or determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places or State Register of Historic Sites
- 2) Included in the Individual Historic Properties Historic District listed in Title IX of the Ann Arbor Register of Historic Places prior to 2001
- 3) Received an award from the Ann Arbor Historic District Commission
- 4) Others may be approved for a historic property plaque by the Ann Arbor Historic District Commission on a case-by-case basis

How to Apply for a Historic Property Plaque

1. The current property owner should fill out the application and return it to the Historic Preservation Coordinator via email to hdc@a2gov.org, or by dropping

it off at the Planning & Development desk on the first floor of City Hall, 301 E Huron Street.

2. Be sure to include a description of how the property qualifies for a plaque (from the list above), and any information or history unique to the home. The application will be evaluated based on the information it provides.
3. After an initial screening by staff for completeness and content, the request will be placed on a Historic District Commission agenda for consideration. If the request is approved, the historic preservation coordinator will contact the plaque manufacturer (Arnet's, Inc. at 4495 Jackson Road) with the correct historic name and date of construction of the house. The cost of the plaque fluctuates based on the price of bronze, usually between \$175 and \$225. Arnet's will fax a proof to the Historic Preservation Coordinator, which the applicant must sign off on. Once the proof has been approved, Arnet's will manufacture the plaque and notify the applicant when it is ready to pick up. The applicant picks up and pays for the plaque at Arnet's at 4495 Jackson Road.
4. The applicant must mount the plaque on a visible spot at the front of the building, preferably near the front door, in a location that does not destroy or obscure historic architectural features of the building.

Questions? Please contact the Historic Preservation Coordinator at hdc@a2gov.org or 734-794-6265 x42608.