

## ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

### Staff Report

**ADDRESS:** 511 E Ann Street, Application Number HDC22-1261

**DISTRICT:** Ann Street Historic Block (ASHB)

**REPORT DATE:** January 12, 2023

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

**REVIEW COMMITTEE DATE:** Monday, January 9, 2023

	<b>OWNER</b>	<b>APPLICANT</b>
<b>Name:</b>	Ryan Pantaleo	O X Studio, Inc
<b>Address:</b>	603 E Ann St	2373 Oak Valley Dr Suite 180
	Ann Arbor, MI 48103	Ann Arbor, MI 48103
<b>Phone:</b>	(978) 420-7655	(734) 828-1854

**BACKGROUND:** The c.1860s Willcoxson-Easton House is an excellent example of the Greek Revival style with its end gables, six-over-six windows, narrow side lights and transom around the front door, and simple, symmetrical design. The earliest map it appears on is the 1866 birdseye and its first appearance in City Directories is in 1872 as the home of Richard and Emory W. Snell. The house was maintained until the late 1960s, when it was allowed to fall into disrepair. In 1976 it was purchased by Widdicombe and Martha Schmidt and was partially restored. The house was not consistently occupied in recent years and again fell into disrepair. The current owner purchased the house from the Schmidt estate in 2022.

**LOCATION:** The site is located on the north side of East Ann Street, east of N. Division and west of N. State Streets.

**APPLICATION:** The applicant seeks HDC approval for the following:

- Construct a two-story rear addition
- Replace the foundation on the two-story portion of the house
- Fill in a window well on the east elevation
- Install a timber egress well and new egress window on the rear elevation of the rear wing
- Replace an existing wood basement window on the east elevation with a new fixed wood window
- Replace the asphalt shingle roof and the metal front porch roof with matching materials
- Remove a chimney from the rear wing
- Demolish a non-contributing rear porch
- Install new wood shutters on the front elevation to replace missing historic ones

- Install aluminum storm windows on the existing house
- Remove and replace portions of the non-historic fencing
- Install three new gravel parking spaces in the northeast corner of the rear yard
- Install a new walkway to the rear door
- Add two air conditioning condensers behind the main house block

#### **APPLICABLE REGULATIONS:**

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

- (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 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.
- (6) Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
- (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:* 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.

Removing or relocating buildings or landscape features thus destroying the historic relationship between buildings and the landscape.

Designing new exterior additions to historic buildings or adjacent new construction which is compatible with the historic character of the site and which preserves the historic relationship between the building or buildings and the landscape.

## **Windows**

*Recommended:* Designing and installing additional windows on rear or other non-character defining elevations if required by new use.

Designing and installing additional windows on rear or other non-character-defining elevations if required by the new use. New window openings may also be cut into exposed party walls. Such design should be compatible with the overall design of the building, but not duplicate the fenestration pattern and detailing of a character-defining elevation.

*Not Recommended:* Introducing a new design that is incompatible with the historic character of the building.

**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.

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.

## Roofs

Appropriate Retaining and maintaining original historic roofing materials, roof shape, dormers, cupolas, chimneys, and built-in or decorative gutters and downspouts.

## STAFF FINDINGS:

1. The house consists of a two-story main block with a 1 ½ story rear wing that is half the width of the main house block. The house is currently 2,356 square feet and has no modern additions. The proposed new floor area is 1,060 square feet, or 45% of the original. The footprint is 1,178 square feet; proposed new is 530, for an increase of 45%.

### *Addition*

1. The rear addition has a rectangular 13'11" x 37' 10" footprint. It connects to the rear wall of the main house six feet from the northwest corner and the west elevation of the rear wing. The roof ties into the ridge of the wing's roof. The wing retains its east and north elevations, though its corner return on the northwest corner is clipped by the addition. The addition extends into the backyard approximately 20'.
2. There are three window wells, two on the west with fixed windows and one on the north with two casement egress windows. Cladding on the addition is vertical Hardie cementitious board and batten. Windows are Marvin Elevate fiberglass clad wood. Roof shingles are dark-colored asphalt, and the front porch roof is black metal with low ½" seams to replace the existing metal roof.
3. The addition has a very low slope (1/4"/12") where it connects to the rear wing, then pops up to a low gable. The gable pitch is not specified but it appears to match that of the rear wing. Its ridge is 1'9 ¾" lower than the ridge of the main house.

4. Staff believes the design, massing and materials of the addition are appropriate.

### *Basement*

5. The foundation proposed to be replaced is nominally visible and clearly failing when viewed from the interior. Replacing it with CMU is appropriate. Adding a second window well to the rear wing will not negatively impact the historic structure. The window well to be infilled on the east elevation is appropriate since it is no longer necessary and abuts the driveway. Replacing a basement window on the east elevation with a new wood fixed window is appropriate if the new window meets the *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines* and is separately approved by staff by submitting a new HDC application in STREAM. The motion is conditioned upon this.

### *Roofing, Chimney, Covered Porch, Window Work*

6. The roofing replacements are appropriate as proposed.
7. The house has three chimneys: two on the main block and one on the rear wing. (The center chimney on the main block does not appear in 1974-75 photographs and is presumably a restoration.) While the chimney on the wing is prominent, it is not visible from the street. The HDC will need to decide whether the rear chimney is a character-defining feature that should be retained above the roof.
8. There is an odd, large, covered shed or porch-like structure against the back of the house and the wing. It does not appear on Sanborn maps or aerial photos from around the period of significance. It is highly appropriate to remove it.
9. The wood shutters proposed as replacements for the historic ones match closely enough. They must be mounted to existing or replacement shutter hardware to make them operable. The motion includes this as a condition. The installation of aluminum storm windows that meet the *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines* is highly appropriate to protect the historic windows and provide thermal efficiency.

### *Rear Yard*

10. None of the fencing around the house is historic. Portions are proposed to be removed or replaced, including a section of new vinyl-coated chain link along the rear property line. This work is appropriate.
11. Three gravel parking spaces are proposed along the rear property line. Staff would like more details on how the parking will be contained within the area indicated and prevented from spilling over onto the rest of the backyard.
12. The location of the two AC condensers is appropriate. The walkway from the backdoor to the driveway is appropriate. Materials are not indicated, but concrete, stone, or pavers would be suitable.

**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 511 East Ann Street, a contributing property in the Old Fourth Ward Historic District, to do the following work: Construct a two-story rear addition; Replace a portion of the foundation; Install a timber egress well and new egress window on the rear wing; Replace the asphalt shingle roof and the metal front porch roof with matching materials; Remove a chimney from the rear wing; Demolish a non-contributing rear porch; Install new wood shutters on the front elevation; Install aluminum storm windows; Fill in a window well on the east elevation; Remove and replace portions of the non-historic fencing; Install three new gravel parking spaces in the northeast corner of the rear yard; Install a new walkway to the rear door; And add two air conditioning condensers behind the main house block. This work is as proposed, plus the following conditional work: Shutters must be operable, not fixed; and replace an existing wood basement window on the east elevation with a new fixed wood window on the condition that the new window meets the *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines* and receives a separate HDC staff approval for a new application in STREAM before building permits may be pulled. The work as conditioned 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, 6, 9, and 10 and the guidelines for additions and building site, as well as the *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guideline* for all additions.

**ATTACHMENTS:** drawings, photos, materials information



511 East Ann Street (courtesy AADL Old News, 2021 Steve Jensen)