

ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Staff Report

ADDRESS: 425 Second Street, Application Number HDC22-1206

DISTRICT: Old West Side Historic District

REPORT DATE: December 8, 2022

REPORT PREPARED BY: Jill Thacher, Historic Preservation Coordinator

REVIEW COMMITTEE DATE: December 5, 2022

	OWNER	APPLICANT
Name:	Dan & Ellen Sheman	Custom Deck Creations, LLC
Address:	425 Second St Ann Arbor, MI 48103	46036 Michigan Ave STE 285 Canton, MI 48188
Phone:	(734)	(734) 931-6700

BACKGROUND: This two story Italianate features a hip roof, decorative eave brackets, and symmetrical windows. It has a one-story addition that wraps around the east (rear) and north (side) elevations. Modern changes to the house include an enclosed front entry, aluminum siding, and half-height imitation stone on the front façade. It appears in the 1894 City Directory as number 19 Second Street, and is likely older. The occupant that year was named Feldhauser, and that name appears through at least 1930 in City Directories.

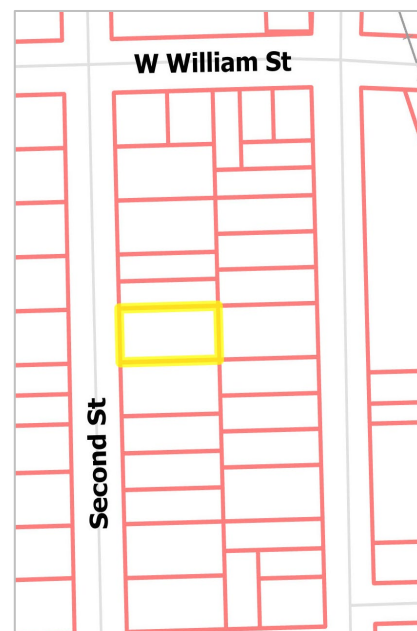
LOCATION: The house is on the east side of Second Street, south of West William and north of West Jefferson Streets.

APPLICATION: The applicant seeks HDC approval to demo an existing rear deck and build a new 675 square foot two-level deck.

APPLICABLE REGULATIONS:

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

- (9) 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 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):

District/Neighborhood

Not Recommended: Introducing new construction into historic districts that is visually incompatible or that destroys historic relationships within the setting.

Setting

Recommended: Retaining the historic relationship between buildings and landscape features of the setting. For example, preserving the relationship between a town common and its adjacent historic houses, municipal buildings, historic roads, and landscape features.

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

Residential Decks and Patios

Appropriate: Installing a deck in the rear of the property that is subordinate in proportion to the building.

Installing a deck that is free standing (self supporting) so that it does not damage historic materials.

Installing railings made of wood. Custom railing designs will be reviewed case-by-case

Installing flooring made of wood or composite wood.

Not Appropriate: Installing railings with spindles attached to the sides and top and bottom rails.

Installing top and bottom rails that are vertically proportioned (taller than wide like a 2 x 6 turned vertically).

STAFF FINDINGS:

1. This proposal is to construct a two-level deck behind the house. The main deck is 29' wide by 20' deep. A smaller 11' x 6' deck connects the large deck to the rear of the house. The site plan drawing is not to scale, but the width of the deck (29') is slightly smaller than the width of the rear elevation of the house (31' per city assessor sketch). The deck is structurally freestanding, per the application materials. The main deck has four sets of stairs, one on each side, plus a set leading up to the small deck. There is an open octagonal tree pit in the center of the deck that surrounds a large pine tree that does not appear on 1947 aerial photos. Between the main deck and the house is a round stone wall with a concrete roof that appears to enclose stairs to a cellar. The deck does

not impact the enclosure.

2. Materials: Deck framing and posts are treated wood. The decking and stairs are Trex composite. Decking is not square with the framing, but runs at an angle. Fascia is 8" Azek PVC. All stairs have stair riser lights. Railings and posts are Trex, with round aluminum balusters.
3. The deck is approximately the footprint of a large two car garage. The railing design, composite with aluminum balusters, is modern, but because it most likely won't be visible at all from the sidewalk staff feels it is appropriate. Trying to save the large pine tree by incorporating it into the deck is laudable. Staff has some concerns about the footers damaging the tree's roots and the amount of impervious surface being placed above it, but the tree is not a historic feature of the lot since it was not present in 1947.
4. Staff believes the deck meets historic preservation design guidelines and will not detract from or compete with the appearance of the historic home or other historic buildings in the district.

MOTION

(Note that the motion is only a suggestion. The Review Committee, consisting of staff and at least two Commissioners, will view the site and make a recommendation at the meeting.)

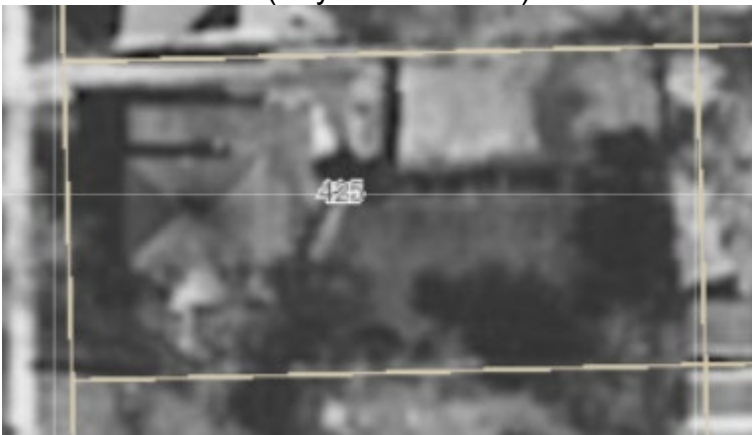
I move that the Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for the application at 425 Second Street, a contributing property in the Old West Side Historic District, to demo an existing rear deck and build a new 675 square foot two-level deck as proposed. The work is compatible in exterior design, arrangement, texture, material and relationship to the surrounding resources and meets the *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines* for Residential Decks and *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, in particular standards 9 and 10 and the Guidelines for District/Neighborhood and Setting.

ATTACHMENTS: narrative, photos, drawings

425 Second Street (Google Streetview, July 2019)



1947 Aerial Photo (City of Ann Arbor)



2020 Aerial Photo (City of Ann Arbor)

