

**ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION****Staff Report****ADDRESS:** 1017 W Liberty Street, Application Number HDC22-1144**DISTRICT:** Old West Side Historic District**REPORT DATE:** August 11, 2022**REPORT PREPARED BY:** Jill Thacher, Historic Preservation Coordinator**REVIEW COMMITTEE DATE:** August 8, 2022

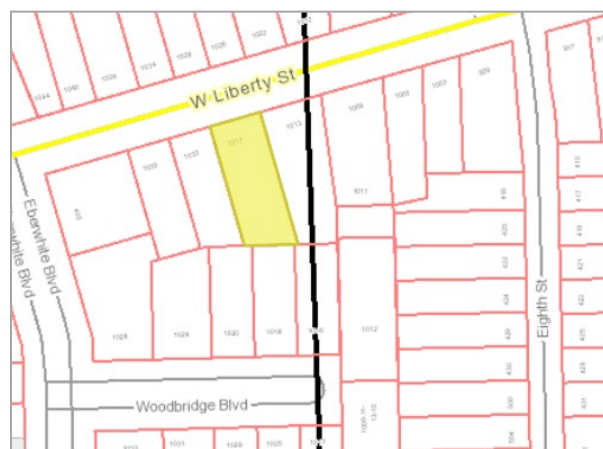
	<b>OWNER</b>	<b>APPLICANT</b>
<b>Name:</b>	Gregory Smith	Same
<b>Address:</b>	1017 W Liberty Ann Arbor, MI 48103	
<b>Phone:</b>	(414) 303-0641	

**BACKGROUND:** This stately house first appears in Polk Directories in 1928 as the home of John Huss, who worked in real estate. Mrs. Huss lived in the home until at least 1940. Some of its significant features include brick on the foundation and first floor, wood siding on the second floor, a shallow shed roof facing the street over wall dormers, exposed rafter tails, and a stone 3/4-width front porch supporting square half-columns.

In 2014 a screen porch was approved behind the house (HDC14-061 Trakit).

**LOCATION:** The house is located on the south side of West Liberty Street, west of Eighth Street and east of Eberwhite Boulevard.

**APPLICATION:** The applicant seeks HDC approval to pave a strip between the house and driveway and replace a wood overhead garage door with a steel overhead door.



**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.

- (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 or Neighborhood Setting**

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

**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. Site features can include driveways, walkways, lighting, fencing, signs, benches, fountains, wells, terraces, canal systems, plants and trees, berms, and drainage or irrigation ditches; and archeological features that are important in defining the history of the site.

Retaining the historic relationship between buildings, landscape, and open space.

*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 City of Ann Arbor Design Guidelines:**

**Residential Accessory Structures**

*Appropriate:* Maintaining and restoring historic barns, garages, sheds, trellises, and other accessory structures to match the historic materials and configuration.

Maintaining and repairing historic doors and windows on historic barns and garages to match the existing materials and configuration.

Where elements of historic out-buildings are deteriorated beyond repair, replacing the elements in kind.

Replacing a non-historic or missing garage door with a new door in keeping with the style and period of the existing garage, using the historic opening size.

*Not Appropriate:* Replacing repairable original historic doors, garage doors, and windows.

**Paved Areas**

Appropriate: On residential properties, retaining and maintaining existing historic driveways and curb cuts, including “two track” driveways and green space between the driveway and the house.

## STAFF FINDINGS:

1. *Paving*. In the application is an excellent summary of the proposed work and why it is necessary. In a nutshell: water infiltration is causing cracking, bowing, and settling in the basement walls, and it is necessary to divert water away from the foundation on the east side of the house to avoid further degradation. Concrete paving is proposed between the east elevation of the house and the concrete driveway. The first floor of the house is brick that extends all the way to the ground. The basement walls are poured concrete.
2. The proposed work appears to have been thoroughly researched by the homeowner. Despite the *Ann Arbor Design Guidelines for Historic Districts* stating that it is appropriate to maintain the green space between the house and driveway, paving the strip is a way to resolve a much more serious issue, and the work is reversible.
3. *Garage doors*. The garage is a contributing historic structure that is also in need of repairs, which are documented in the application. The current roll-up/overhead doors are wood. The bottom panels are rotted, cables are loose and seals are poor. Replacing just the lowest panel row is not an option, per the application.
4. Material changes must be reviewed by the HDC, not staff. The age of the wood overhead doors is unknown, but the garage is from the period of significance. It is likely that the garage was built at the same time as the house. Whether it originally had double-leaf doors or overhead doors is unknown. Staff generally supports this request for steel overhead doors that are similar in style and appearance to the wood ones, but looks forward to feedback from the Commission on this issue.
5. Staff believes the proposed work meets the standards and guidelines followed by the Historic District Commission.

## 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 share their observations at the meeting.)

I move that the Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for the application at 1017 W Liberty Street, a contributing property in the Old West Side Historic District, to pave a strip between the house and driveway and replace a wood overhead garage door with a steel overhead door, as proposed. The proposed 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 Accessory Structures and Paved Areas, and *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, in particular standards 2, 9 and 10 and the Guidelines for District/Neighborhood and Building Site.

## MOTION WORKSHEET

I move that the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work at 1017 W Liberty Street in the Old West Side Historic District

\_\_\_\_\_ Provided the following condition(S) is (ARE) met: 1) STATE CONDITION(s)

The work is generally compatible with the size, scale, massing, and materials and meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, standard(S) number(S) (*circle all that apply*): 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

**ATTACHMENTS:** application, photos, drawings

1017 W Liberty Street (Survey photos, 2008)



Specification;

We are requesting approval to excavate the planting bed between the house and driveway to remove existing plant material and soil. We would lay a base of compacted washed stone and pour a 4 inch concrete apron that is consistent with Mr. Arnsdorf recommendation. An expansion joint would be placed between the concrete and the foundation. In the process we would correct the area under the existing walk in the northeast corner that runs approximately 18 inches west along the north wall of the foundation

My wife and I are submitting a request to replace a 30-by-2 1/2 foot planting bed that sits on the east side of our house, between house and driveway. We are proposing to replace it with a concrete apron to avoid further costly damage to the foundation of our historic home.

We purchased the house at 1017 W. Liberty St. in early May of 2022. We understand that the previous owner did not reside in the house between 2017 and 2022 and that during this period, she conducted no maintenance on the house, garage or grounds. Therefore, the home has a number of very immediate and material maintenance needs.

We hired Matt Westlund of Fletcher Inspection to conduct a complete analysis of the house prior to purchase. One of his primary areas of concern was the home's foundation. His written comments and photographs regarding the foundation are as follows:

4. Foundation - many areas of the interior foundation are crumbling due to water intrusion, evidence of active water intrusion in areas, recommend having a professional basement waterproofing company evaluate for necessary repairs. Cracking and bowing of the foundation noted in multiple areas, horizontal cracking in multiple areas, multiple areas of the foundation are bowing, crumbling areas noted throughout the basement, it appears that repairs will be needed to the foundation, recommend having a foundation repair company evaluate further.

6. Grading around the exterior of the home was poor, low areas next to the foundation, areas of the grading are pitched towards the home

23. Settling cracks noted on the interior of the home in many areas, setting cracks are consistent with settling in the structure



Horizontal cracking/bowing of the foundation, the foundation is flaking due to water intrusion



The foundation is flaking/crumbling due to water intrusion



Settling cracks in the foundation, bowing present, the foundation is flaking/crumbling due to water intrusion, active water intrusion in this area



Areas of the foundation are flaking due to water intrusion, horizontal cracking and bowing noted in areas

All of the above photos are of the east foundation wall that abuts the driveway. Unfortunately the foundation has also impacted the plaster and lath walls on the east side of the house resulting in some large vertical cracks, up to 4 feet in length, that will need to be repaired after the foundation is stabilized. There are also large horizontal cracks where the wall meet he ceiling, especially above windows. Mr. Westlund's comment regarding interior walls being affected by the foundation is below.





Settling cracks in living room wall



Settling crack in plaster wall covering

The report categorized these foundation/grading problems as a “major concern.”

As a result of the Fletcher Inspection Report we engaged Dave Arnsdorf PE, Structural Engineer to conduct a more complete analysis. An excerpt from his report is below.

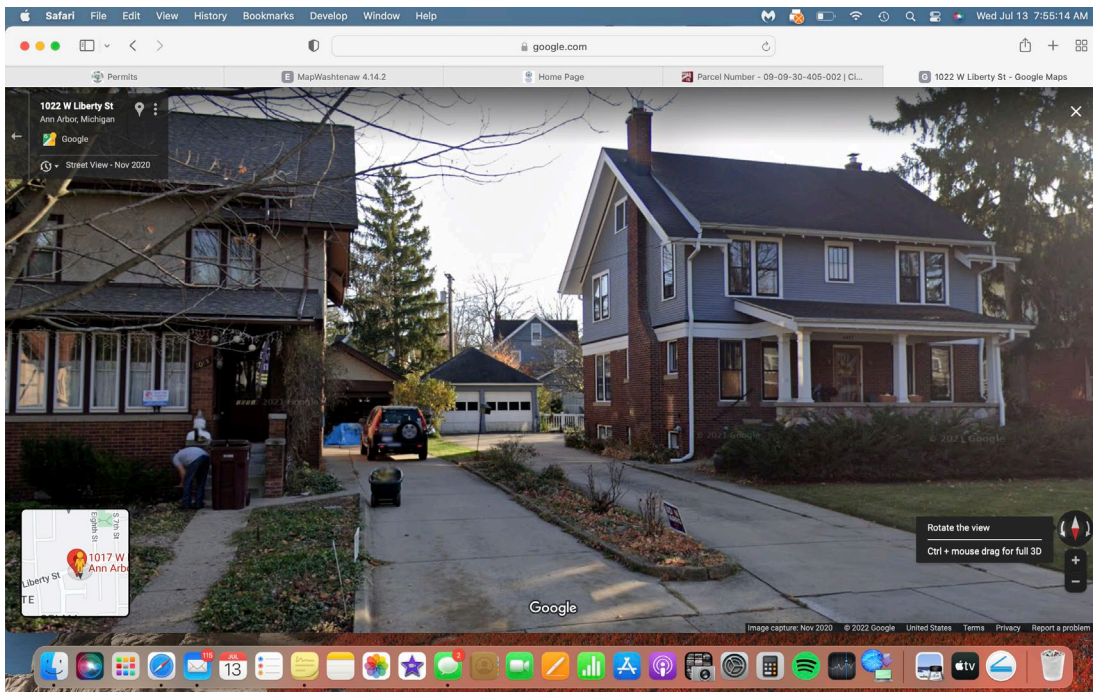
I was asked to inspect this house. The house was built in 1922. It is a two story with a poured concrete basement. In the east corners next to the driveway, there is a lot of spalling from the block wall and a large vertical crack. This has been caused by years of water infiltrating through the wall. This causes spalling, which is small pieces of the surface breaking off. This has removed at the worst locations about 3/8" of concrete. The repair is to stop the water from soaking the soil. This area has a small grass strip bounded by the house and the driveway. The best solution is to cover this area with concrete that is sloped away from the house.

When I reviewed the Arnsdorf recommendations with Matt Westlund he agreed that removing the existing plantings and adding soil to improve drainage would be insufficient and ineffective in resolving the problem on the east side of the house; attempting to solve the problem with anything other than a concrete apron will only exacerbate the damage to the home. Additionally, erosion has occurred under the walkway to the front porch and continues to undermine soils in the northeast corner of the foundation that would not be corrected by adding soil to improve drainage. Infiltration of water would continue and therefor damage to the foundation and interior plaster and lath wall will continue.

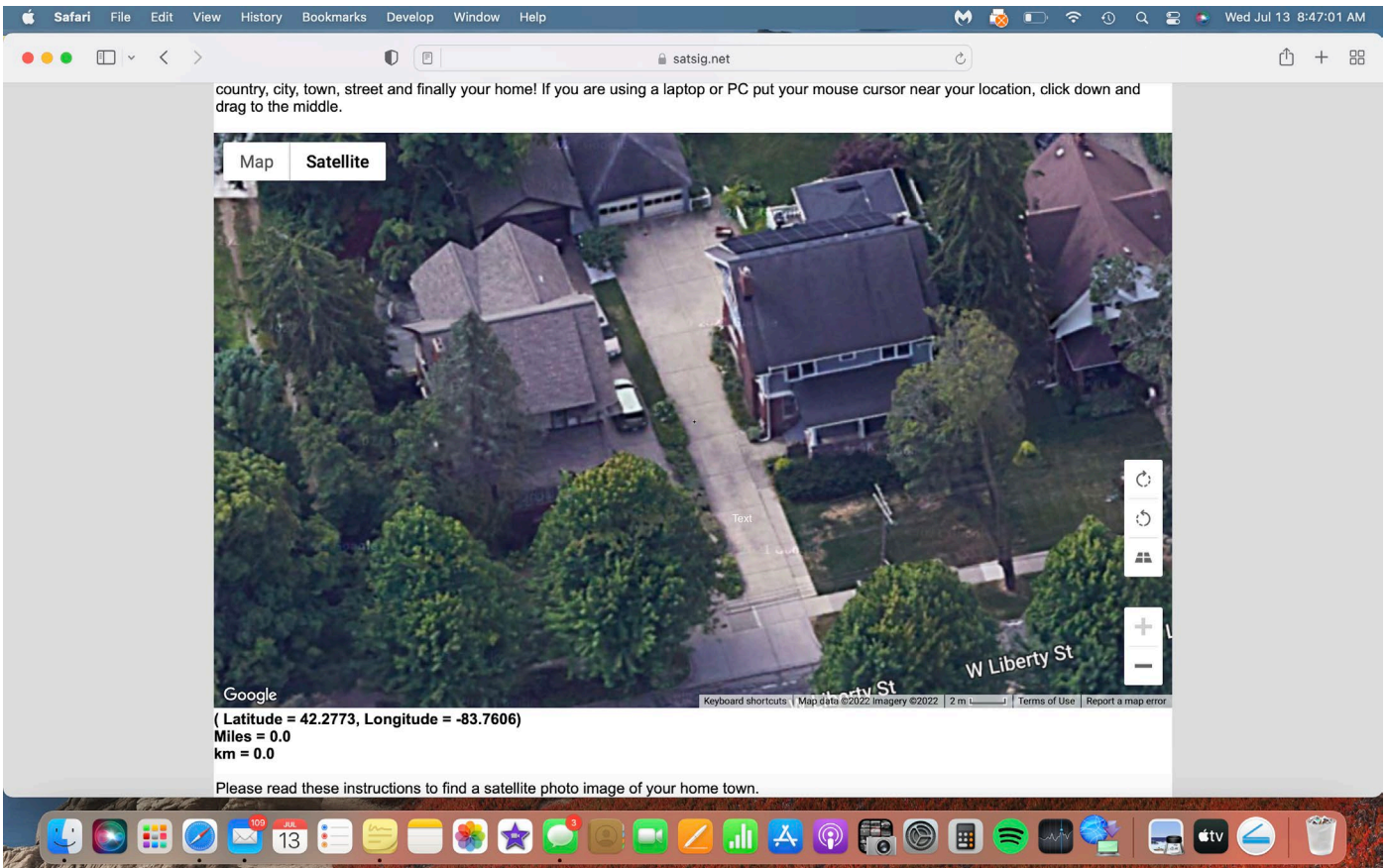
Finally, we do experience water in the basement when it rains. Our real estate agent, Matt Westlund and Mr Arnsdorf can all attest to this fact. During their visits water was present in the basement as a result of spring rains. Water seeps into the basement in the northeast corner from the vertical crack show in photographs above. For a moderate rain we will have roughly a quart of water pooling in the corner of the basement. A heavy rain will product enough water to produce a small stream to a drain that is about 10 feet from the corner. In the southeast corner the concrete spalling becomes noticeably worse during periods of rain and deterioration of the wall continues.

We are requesting approval to excavate the planting bed between the house and driveway to remove existing plant material and soil. We would lay a base of compacted washed stone and pour a 4 inch concrete apron that is consistent with Mr. Arnsdorf recommendation. An expansion joint would be placed between the concrete and the foundation. In the process we would correct the area under the existing walk in the northeast corner that runs approximately 18 inches west along the north wall of the foundation.

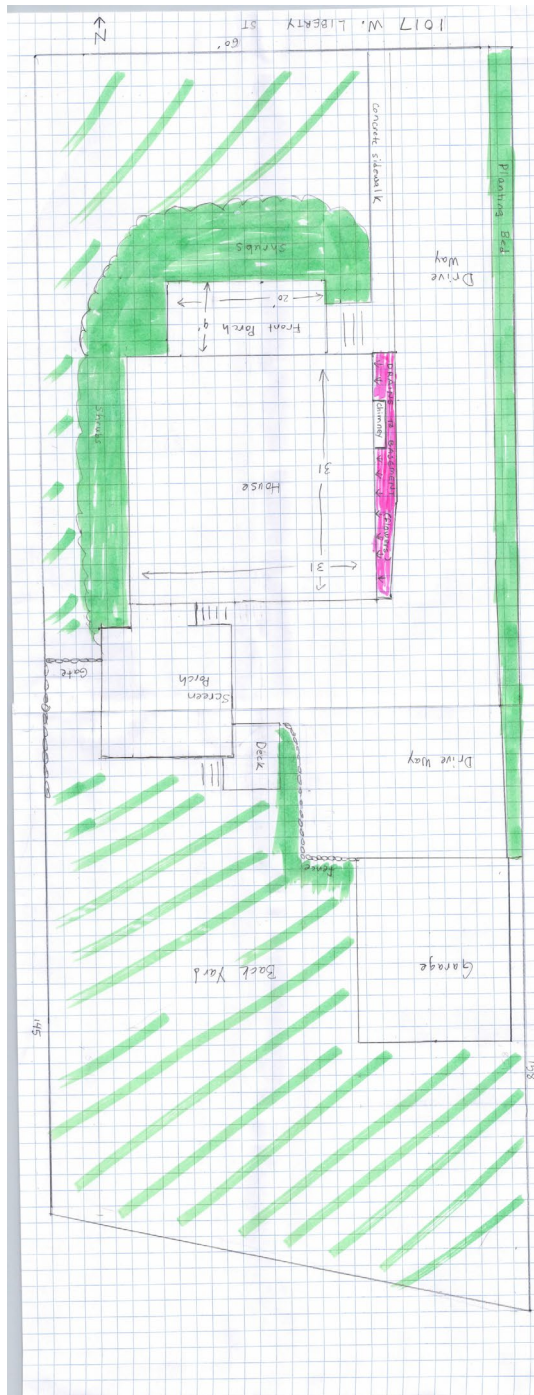
Below are two images of our property, one aerial and the other from a street perspective. The planting bed we propose to remove is between the house and the driveway. It should be noted that there is an additional planting bed between our driveway and the driveway that is immediately east. That planting bed is about 5 1/2 feet in width and extends from the the front sidewalk to the garages on the two properties. The shared planting bed has perennials for the front 3/4 and grass



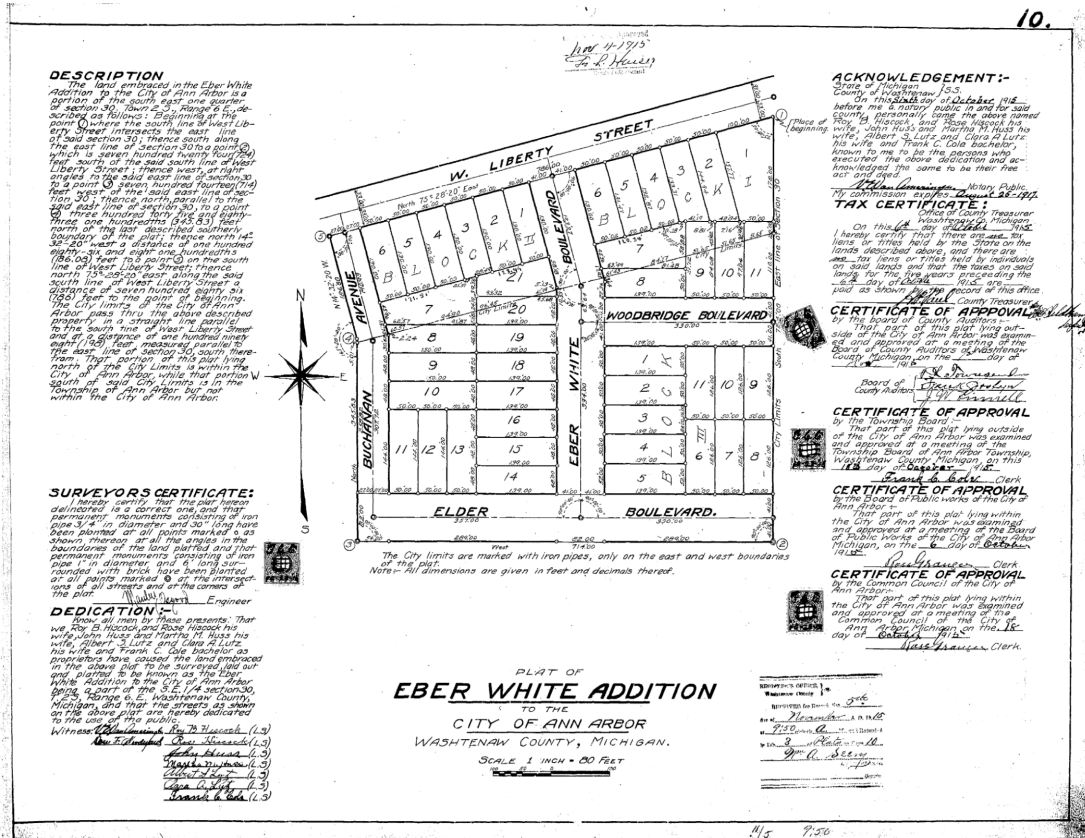
on the back 1/4. This planting bed provides visual relief that is more pronounced than the planting bed between our house and driveway.



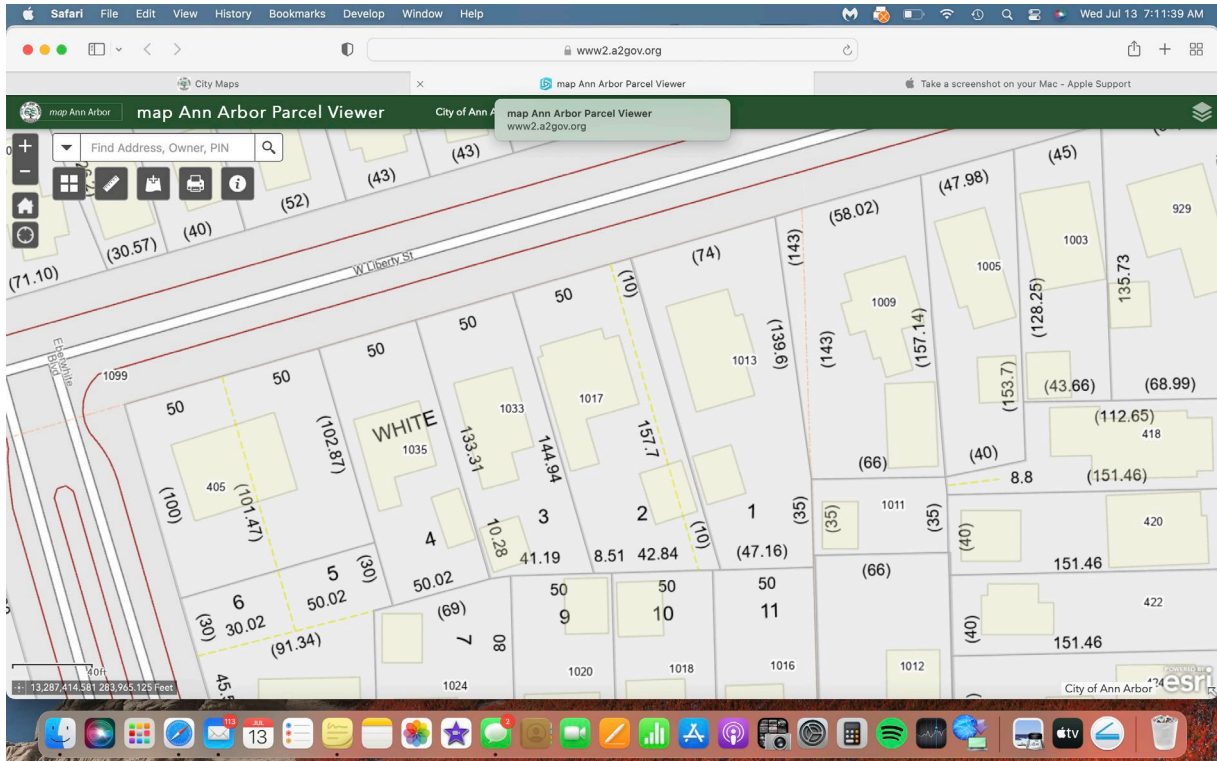
Although we were unable to provide a detailed aerial plan we have constructed a diagram of our property to scale. It represents an aerial viewpoint. The area highlighted in red is the planting bed we are requesting to modify. The areas in solid green are planting beds and shrubs visible from the street and hatched green is lawn.



I have also enclosed the original plat map for the property and a screen shot of our parcel for your use in



evaluating our request.



If this proposal is approved and once the work is completed we would follow Mr. Arnsdorf's recommendations for repairing the inside of the basement foundation wall. With the basement foundation wall complete we would repair the plaster and lath walls throughout the house.

My wife, who studied art history and served as a Docent at the Milwaukee Art Museum for many years, and I are committed to "safeguard[ing] the heritage of the city by preserving historic districts which reflect elements of the city's history," including our beautiful home. Ann Arbor City Code, Chapter 103, 8:406(1). To ensure the preservation of our home, we need to begin work on the concrete apron very soon. As was made clear to us by Matt Westlund and Dave Arnsdorf, to delay for long constitutes a hazard to this historic home and will require repairs that may substantially impact the appearance and historical integrity of the home as well as our costs.

We look forward to working with the Commission on caring for and revitalizing this historic home.

Greg and Mary Ellen Smith  
1017 W. Liberty St.  
Ann Arbor, Mi. 48103

1017 W. LIBERTY ST

60'

N ↑

concrete sidewalk

Drive Way

Planting Bed

Shrubs

Front Porch

20'

9'

DRAINS TO EASEMENT (flowers)  
chimney

31

House

31

Screen Porch

Deck

Drive Way

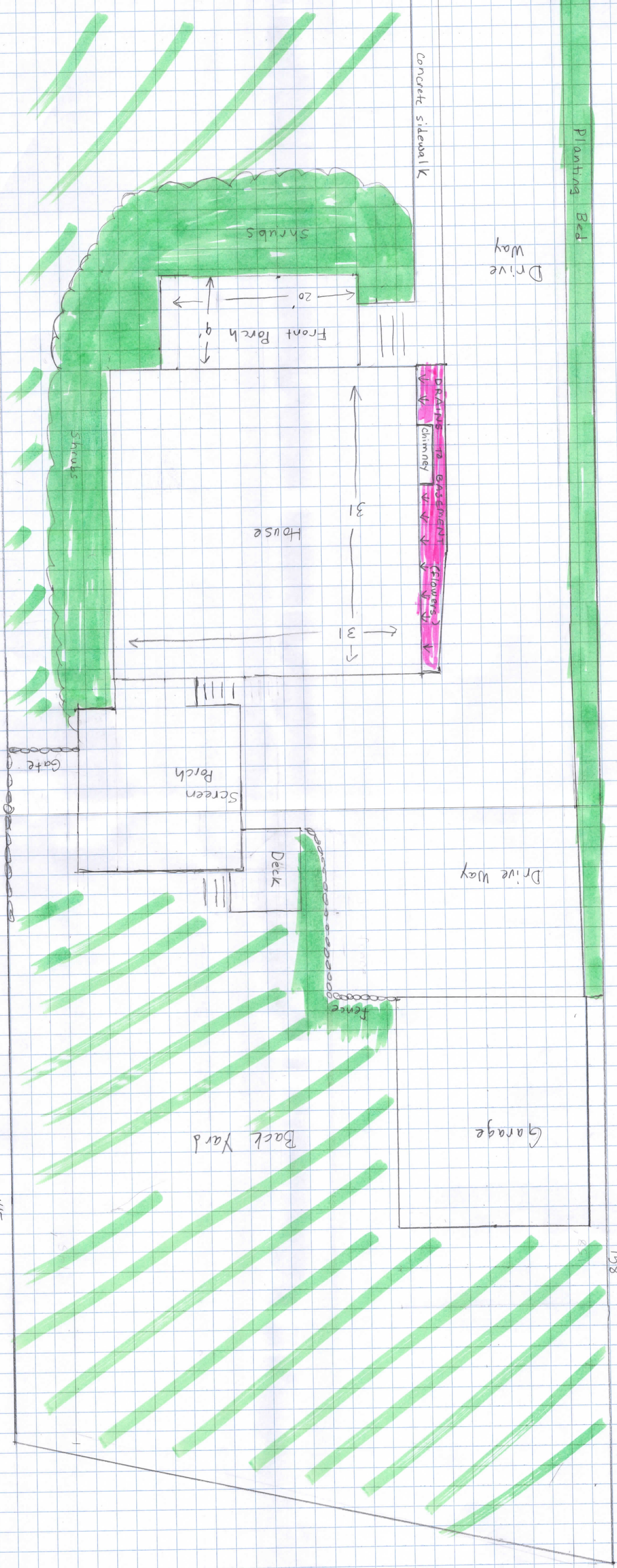
fence

Garage

Back Yard

158

145





My wife and I are submitting a request to replace two garage doors with doors of the same design. Both doors have extensive wood rot on the lower panels caused by a lack of proper maintenance and subsequent water infiltration. Additionally, the seals on the bottom of the doors are substantially damaged or missing, which has exacerbated the problem. We propose to replace the two doors with steel doors of the same design, size and window and panel configuration. We are committed to maintaining the historic integrity of our home and garage, and we are eager to work with the Commission.

We purchased this house in early April of 2022. We understand that the previous owner did not reside in the house between 2017 and 2022 and that during this period, she conducted no maintenance on the home, garage or grounds. Therefore, the home has a number of very immediate maintenance needs, the garage doors being one.

We hired Matt Westlund of Fletcher Inspection to conduct a complete analysis of the house. Mr. Westlund noted in his report, "The panels on both garage doors are rotted/ water damaged, cables are loose, seal on the doors is poor, recommend having the doors evaluated for replacement, have openers serviced for repairs/replacement."

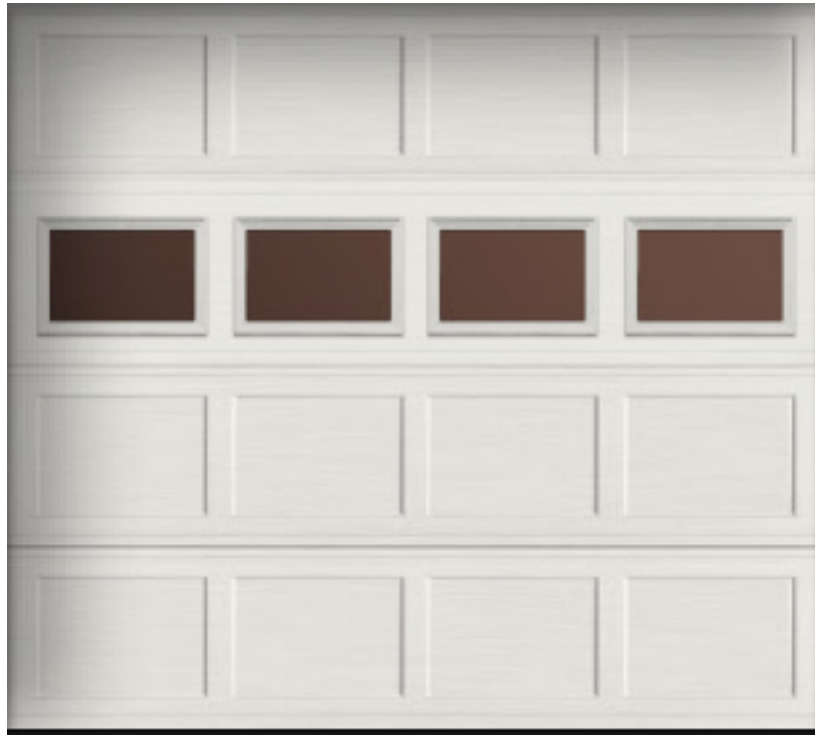


Additionally the west door lower panel is so rotted it can no longer hold the hardware necessary for the door to function. The east door damage is profound with all 4 lower panels almost fully rotted.





I have spoken to representatives from four garage door replacement companies. All four representatives indicated that the lower section of the doors can't be replaced. They all offered steel doors that have the same design/look, size of recessed panels and glass configuration. All four companies indicated they have used steel doors to replace wood doors in homes in historic districts of Ann Arbor. Below is a photo of the door proposed by Ann Arbor Door.



I am aware that the HDC would prefer the current wood doors be replaced with wood doors. I was able to find one company who could order and install doors that are similar but not exactly the same as the existing doors. The challenge with purchasing wood garage doors is two fold. First the simple design we would require is not a standard and therefore would be a custom build and take between 6 and 9 months before they were deliver. Second, the cost of two custom wood doors is roughly \$6,000 to \$7,000 more than the steel doors we are suggesting. Lastly, as noted earlier we have a number of project that must be completed on this historic home in the very near term (i.e. the next 6 months) that we view as “infrastructural” to assure the long term integrity of this beautiful home. Collectively that are quite expensive and include; a new roof on the house, porch, garage and potting shed; extensive work to preserve the original casement windows that are suffering from sun and water damage,

addressing a foundation issue (which is before the Commission in August), the subsequent repair of plaster and lath walls and ceilings, a variety plumbing issues including a non-functioning water heater, clogged drains, non-functional water taps and hose bibs, and the replacement of a shower head that will require opening a wall and tile work; electrical work including replacement of ungrounded outlets, elimination of knob and tube in the basement and attic; maintenance on the solar panels and storage batteries, and maintenance of the boiler that the previous owner ignored.

Although not critical to the “infrastructure “of the house, noted above, above we also plan to refinish the oak wood work to bring it back to life and paint the interior walls. Of course, this is not of interest to the Commission but is material to our costs and the integrity of our home’s history.

We are asking the Commission to be sensitive to the total costs we will experience over the next few months to ensure the stability and integrity of this house, and approve this minor change in the material used to manufacture the the garage doors. We look forward to your review.

## Drawings for Garage Door Replacement;

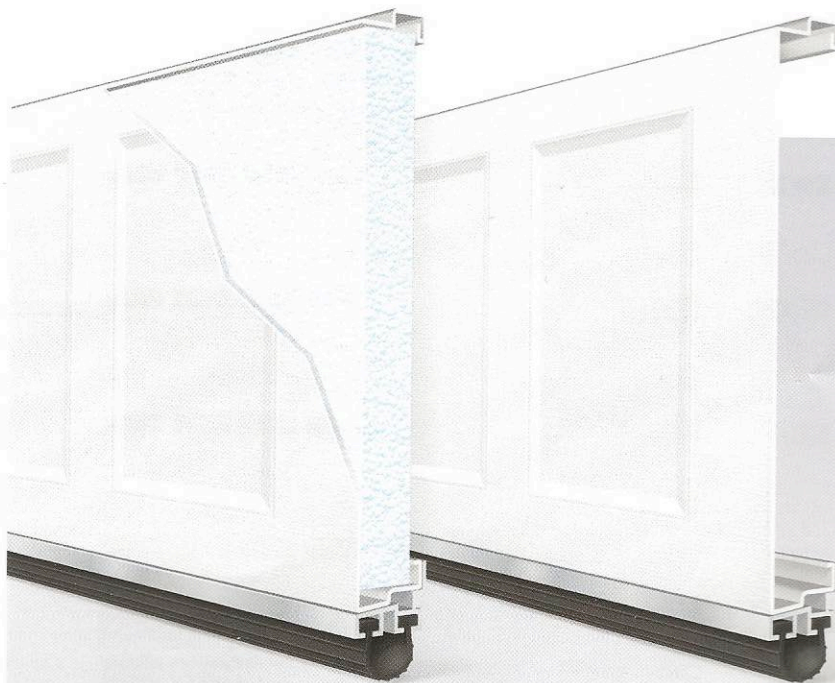
Due to the fact that I have not contracted for these these garage doors while waiting for the decision of the Commission we don't have detailed drawings or specifications. The photograph below is the door we propose to use. It is the same size of the current doors, has the same 4 vertical and 4 horizontal recessed panel design with window panels for the second panel from the top. They will look identical to the current doors.



# BRIDGEPORT™ STEEL

## garage doors

Bridgeport™ Steel garage doors combine the traditional symmetry of wood stile and rail door designs without the upkeep and maintenance. Create a look that complements the overall look of your home by selecting the window design, color and decorative hardware to give it that one-of-a-kind look. Available with or without insulation. The first fabulous impression becomes a lasting impression.



**2**  
LAYER  
CONSTRUCTION

**R-VALUE**  
**6.3**

**1**  
LAYER  
CONSTRUCTION

Model	Description
BD5NV	25 Gauge, Narrow Recessed Panel, Insulated
BD4NV	24 Gauge, Narrow Recessed Panel, Insulated
BD5EV	25 Gauge, Extended Recessed Panel, Insulated
BD4EV	24 Gauge, Extended Recessed Panel, Insulated

Model	Description
BD5N	25 Gauge, Narrow Recessed Panel, Non-Insulated
BD4N	24 Gauge, Narrow Recessed Panel, Non-Insulated
BD5E	25 Gauge, Extended Recessed Panel, Non-Insulated
BD4E	24 Gauge, Extended Recessed Panel, Non-Insulated

## STYLE AND CONSTRUCTION

- Narrow and extended recessed panels creates a transitional shaker style.
- 24 gauge or 25 gauge 2" steel frame construction for long-lasting performance.
- Hot-dipped galvanized exterior steel with a baked-on primer and top coat help ensure a virtually maintenance-free door with long-lasting beauty.
- Optional 1-5/16" polystyrene insulation improves energy efficiency. 6.3 R-value (Models BD5NV, BD4NV, BD5EV and BD4EV).
- Long-life nylon rollers are quiet and durable.
- Replaceable vinyl bottom weatherseal in a corrosion-resistant retainer helps seal out the elements.
- See your Clopay Dealer for WINDCODE® door availability.

*Calculated door section R-value is in accordance with DASMA TDS-163.*