

ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Staff Report

ADDRESS: 331 E. Ann Street, Application Number HDC23-0177

DISTRICT: Old Fourth Ward Historic District

REPORT DATE: October 12, 2023

REPORT PREPARED BY: Jill Thacher, Historic Preservation Coordinator

REVIEW COMMITTEE DATE: Tuesday, October 10, 2023

OWNER

Name: 511 East Ann St LLC
Address: 201 East Ann Street
 Ann Arbor, MI 48104

APPLICANT

Robert Burroughs/OX Studio, Inc
 2374 Oak Valley Dr, Suite 180
 Ann Arbor, MI 48103

BACKGROUND: This 2-story side-gable house features wide-board trim, corner returns, and a full-width front porch. The street-facing gambrel dormer appears to have been added at some point. According to Sanborn maps, in 1908 a large house stood where the two houses at 327 and 331 are now. Those two houses replaced the large house by 1916. It is possible that they were moved to this site from elsewhere.

LOCATION: The site is located at the north side of East Ann Street, east of North Fourth Avenue and west of North Division Street.

APPLICATION: The applicant seeks HDC approval to add a second floor addition one top of an existing single-story rear wing and a single-story addition behind the rear wing. The work includes replacing a non-historic side door, changing a window into a door on the rear porch, new aluminum storm windows, and installing several basement egress windows and skylights. Four gravel parking spaces are proposed.

APPLICABLE REGULATIONS:

From the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

(other SOI Standards may also apply):

- (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.

- (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):

Building Site

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.

Locating any new construction on the building where important landscape features will be damaged or destroyed.

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 and designing a new addition so that significant site features, including mature trees and landmark status trees, are not lost or damaged.

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.

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.

Roofs

Recommended: Retaining and preserving roofs—and their functional decorative features—that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building. This includes the roof's shape, decorative features such as chimneys, and roofing material.

Not recommended: Changing the configuration of a roof by adding new features such as vents or skylights so that the historic character is diminished.

Windows

Recommended: Designing and installing additional windows on rear or other non-character defining elevations if required by the new use. Such design should be compatible with the overall design of the building.

Not Recommended: Removing or radically changing windows which are important in defining the historic character of the building so that, as a result, the character is diminished.

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

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.

Locating and designing a new addition so that significant site features, including mature trees and landmark status trees, are not lost or damaged.

Designing the addition so it is compatible in terms of massing, materials, relationship of solids to voids, and proportion of openings.

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 not exceed half of the original building's footprint, or half of the original building's total floor area.

Not Appropriate: Designing an addition that requires the removal of significant building elements or site features.

Constructing an addition that significantly changes the proportion of built mass to open space on the individual site.

Additions to Historic Residential Structures

Appropriate: Separating a larger addition from the primary historic structure and linking it with a smaller connecting structure.

Placing new walls in a different plane from the historic structure in a subordinate position to the historic fabric.

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

Landscape Features

Appropriate: Retaining and maintaining mature trees, hedges, and other historic plantings.

Retaining historic relationships between buildings, landscape features, and open spaces.

Not Appropriate: Removing mature trees, hedges, and other historic landscaping.

Windows

Appropriate: Retaining and maintaining windows in good condition.

Not appropriate: Removing or radically changing a window that is important in defining the overall historic character of the property.

Historic District Design Guidelines for Roofs

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

Not appropriate: Changing the shape or configuration of an existing roof. Removing or altering historic roof features such as chimneys.

Site Features: Paved Areas

Appropriate: Installing new parking areas, which are compatible with the scale, proportion of yard area, and characteristics of the historic district, behind buildings. These shall also be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Not appropriate: Installing driveways or parking areas that are too wide or large for the building site and are out of character for the district.

Design Guidelines for Residential Doors

Appropriate: Replacing a missing original or non-original door with a design that matches original doors remaining on the house, or with a compatible new design and material that fits the style and period of the house and the existing opening. The Commission will review materials on a case-by-case basis.

Not Appropriate: Installing a new door opening.

Replacing a non-original door with a new door that is not compatible with the house style, or that has frosted or decorative glass that is not replicating an original door. HDC should discuss the appearance of the proposed new doors.

Design Guidelines for Residential Porches

Appropriate: Repairing and maintaining all porches and not allowing them to deteriorate. Repairs which match the original in scale, material, and design are not considered changes.

Using replacement features that match the documented historic design. If no documentation exists, using a simple, plain design.

Not appropriate: Using stock, unframed, crosshatched skirting in a diamond pattern.

Mechanical Equipment

Appropriate: Installing mechanical equipment and wiring in a location so it is not visible from a public right-of-way.

Using compatible screening around outdoor mechanical equipment such as vegetation and fencing.

Painting mechanical equipment to blend with the house or landscape.

STAFF FINDINGS:

1. The one-story rear addition appears on 1947 aerial photos but not on 1931 Sanborn maps. Staff's assumption is that the addition was present in 1944, since very little construction activity took place during WWII. Therefore, the entire existing structure is assumed to have been present in 1944.
2. The house is currently 1,322 square feet (not including the basement). The proposed addition adds 623 square feet, for an increase of 47%. The current footprint is 832 square feet and the addition's footprint is 413 square feet, for an increase of 50%.
3. The building additions will have cementitious 6" lap siding and trim. New proposed windows are wood Pella lifestyle with some sort of cladding. The non-historic side door would be replaced with a wood two-panel door. An existing door on the rear porch would be permanently fixed shut, and a small one-over-one window would be replaced with a two-panel wood door. Ground level additions will have a new ICF foundation wall. The ground-level and upper-level building additions will include a total of three hipped roofs, covered with asphalt shingles.
4. *Second-floor addition.* An addition off the rear-facing sloped roof surface would sit atop the flat roof of the rear wing. The addition does not interfere with the existing first-floor eave and extends about halfway back on the flat roof. This addition is nearly invisible from the public right-of-way. Three contributing second-floor windows would be lost to the addition.
5. *Ground floor addition.* This addition is inset 1' from the current northeast corner of the house, but the northwest corner is not delineated except by overlapping roof and eave structures. The design is distinct and compatible. One contributing one-over-one wood window would be lost to the addition.
6. *Skylights and windows.* Four Vellux skylights are proposed on the new roof surfaces; two on the rear hip of the 2nd floor addition, and two on the rear hip of the 1st floor addition. These are out of sight and appropriately located. New windows on both additions are

casement or awning. Proportions are compatible with the historic window openings. It is preferable to have a false muntin placed across the center of the casement windows to make them read as double-hung, but they may be compatible as proposed if the HDC thinks they are far enough away from the right-of-way to not be noticeable. New aluminum storm windows are appropriate on the building's historic windows.

7. *Egress windows.* Two new egress windows in one wide concrete window well are proposed off the back of the new addition. This is an appropriate location. One new egress window in a concrete well is proposed on the west side elevation beyond the rear porch entrance. This well has a guardrail that is parallel to the street. The location is far enough from the right-of-way to be appropriate.
8. *Doors.* The front door is to be repaired. The west side door, on the rear porch, would be fixed shut and walled over from the inside. A new door opening is proposed nearby in place of an existing window. The new door and a side door on the west side of the main house block would be replaced with two panel wood doors. Staff believes all of this work is appropriate. Converting a window to a door is general not appropriate, but this location on a rear porch that is invisible from the right-of-way makes it acceptable.
9. *Trees and parking and condensers.* Four trees on site are proposed to be removed, and possibly one on the neighboring lot. The Review Committee will confirm the approximate age and size of those trees, but they are not believed to be from the period of significance. Two condensers are proposed along the east elevation, near the back. The location is appropriate but screening would still be appropriate.

Four gravel parking spaces are proposed. Section 5.19.6.A.3 Design of Vehicle Parking Facilities says that no Parking Space shall be located closer than 10 feet to any Building used for a Dwelling Unit on the first Floor. The first parking space looks like it is around 4 feet from the rear addition. Further, filling the entire rear yard that was historically open with addition and parking that is unusable by human tenants is not compatible. Also, the turning radius for the parking spaces doesn't look viable unless there is an easement in place to use a large area of the neighboring property that shares the driveway. Staff suggests, at a minimum, removing one parking space closest to the house and replacing it with landscaping.

10. *Chimney.* The chimney would be retained above the roof. A portion of the interior chimney would be removed.
11. Staff's largest concern is for the loss of open space in the rear yard due to the addition and formalized parking.

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 331 East Ann Street, a contributing property in the Old Fourth Ward Historic District, to add a second-floor addition one top of an existing single-story rear wing and a single-story addition behind the rear wing. The work includes replacing a non-historic side door, changing a window into a door on the

rear porch, new aluminum storm windows, installing several basement egress windows and skylights, and formalizing four gravel parking spaces. 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 2, 5, 9, and 10 and the guidelines for building site, additions, roofs and windows, as well as the *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines* for all additions, residential additions, landscaping features, roofs, porches, doors, paved areas, and mechanical equipment.

ATTACHMENTS: drawings, photos, materials information

331 East Ann Street (courtesy Google Street View)



331 East Ann, 1947 City Aerial



