

ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Staff Report

ADDRESS: 529 Detroit Street, Application Number HDC21-238

DISTRICT: Old Fourth Ward Historic District

REPORT DATE: August 12, 2021

REPORT PREPARED BY: Jill Thacher, Historic Preservation Coordinator

REVIEW COMMITTEE DATE: August 9, 2021

OWNER	APPLICANT
Name: Redeemer Church of Ann Arbor	Same
Address: 7500 Brookville Rd Plymouth, MI 48170	See highlighted portion of the motion, below COOPER DESIGN INC., G. Cooper, 08.11.2021
Phone: (734) 502-3809	

BACKGROUND: This proposal includes two parcels, 521 and 529 Detroit. The house at 521 was constructed in the 1890s by Herman Krapf. It replaced an earlier house on the site. 529 Detroit appears on 1853 City maps and is listed as Miller and Reyer's Planing Mill in the 1868 city directory. By 1874 it was called J.G. Miller's, "manufacturer of sash, doors, blinds and mouldings" per the Washtenaw County Atlas. In more recent history, the building was home to the Warehouse Furniture Store from 1932 to 1950, and Treasure Mart from 1960 to 2020.

LOCATION: The site is located on the northwest side of Detroit Street, northeast of East Kingsley and southwest of North Division.

APPLICATION: The applicant seeks HDC approval to restore the exterior of the main building including recreating the historic cornice and barn door openings and replacing non-original windows with aluminum clad wood windows that match the original opening sizes; demolish the sheds on the north side; pave and formalize the parking lot; clad the rear stair addition and office addition with metal siding; construct a new second floor on top of the office addition; and construct a new two-story stair/lobby addition on the north side of the building.

APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

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

- (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.
- (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):

Alterations/Additions for the new use

Recommended: Designing additions to roofs such as residential, office, or storage spaces; elevator housing; decks and terraces; or dormers or skylights when required by the new use so that they are inconspicuous from the public right-of-way and do not damage or obscure character-defining features.

Additions

Recommended: Designing new additions in a manner that makes clear what is historic and what is new.

Considering the attached exterior addition both in terms of the new use and the appearance of other buildings in the historic district or neighborhood. Design for the new work may be contemporary or may reference design motifs from the historic building. In either case, it should always be clearly differentiated from the historic building and be compatible in terms of mass, materials, relationship of solids to voids, and color.

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.

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.

Not Recommended: 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.

Duplicating the exact form, material, style, and detailing of the historic building in the new addition so that the new work appears to be part of the historic building.

Constructing additional stories so that the historic appearance of the building is radically changed.

Designing new additions such as multi-story greenhouse additions that obscure, damage, or destroy character-defining features of the historic building.

Building Site

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

Removing non-significant buildings, additions, or site features which detract from the historic character of the site.

Not Recommended: Introducing a new building or site feature that is out of scale or of an otherwise inappropriate design.

Windows

Recommended: Designing and installing new windows when the historic windows (frames, sash and glazing) are completely missing. The replacement windows may be an accurate restoration using historical, pictorial, and physical documentation; or be a new design that is compatible with the window openings and the historic character of the building.

District or Neighborhood Setting

Recommended: Designing and constructing new additions to historic buildings when required by the new use. New work should be compatible with the historic character of the setting in terms of size, scale, design, material, color, and texture.

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

Entrances

Recommended: Identifying, retaining, and preserving entrances – and their functional and decorative features – that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building such as doors, fanlights, sidelights, pilaster, entablatures, columns, balustrades, and stairs.

From the Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines:

Guidelines for All Additions

Appropriate: 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 a new addition in a manner that makes clear what is historic and what is new.

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

Commercial Entries

Appropriate: Replacing missing original doors with a design that matches original doors remaining on the building, or with a compatible new design that fits style and period of the building and the existing opening.

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 be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

STAFF FINDINGS

1. The restoration of the historic mill building includes removing plywood installed around top of the building, restoring the brick beneath, and rebuilding the front cornice based on the 1874 Washtenaw County Atlas illustration and other sources. There were several barn door openings that are currently bricked in; this plan restores wood doors that are non-operable in the openings, to look closer to the original appearance.
2. Current windows are non-original and many openings have been altered. This proposal returns those windows on the historic mill building to their original size (including removing the storefront display window on the building front) and replaces all of the current windows on the historic building with six-over-six aluminum clad wood windows with applied muntins based on the style seen in a 1936 photo (at the end of the application attachments).
3. The north side of the building has a large open shed built toward the street and along (and possibly over) the north (side) lot line. It was used by the Treasure Mart for furniture storage. It is not from the period of significance and its proposed removal is appropriate.
4. The parking lot is currently gravel and is proposed to be paved and formal parking spaces delineated, as required by city code for site plan projects. The driveway would be extended to wrap around the north side of the building as a one-way drive.
5. The oldest addition to the rear of the building is the office. It dates to the period of significance but has no distinct character-defining features. It is proposed to receive several new metal windows in new openings, have a second floor added and be re-clad with metal siding. An existing service door on the back would be lowered to below grade and accessed by a new stairwell. The other rear addition is a large modern 3-story stairwell that replaced an earlier addition in approximately the same footprint. This stair addition would also be clad in metal siding and the rear door currently leading into the basement would be reworked with a two-story portico that matches the new entry proposed on the north side. Tall, narrow, metal windows in new openings would be added to this addition. The style is modern but compatible with the historic building while giving a subtle church-like vibe.
6. A new two-story entry/lobby on the north side features brick cladding with a two-story glass and metal entry facing Detroit Street. The north elevation has a row of four tall, narrow windows. The most striking feature of the new entry is the roof, which has standing seam metal roofing and a tower-like presence. This roof is the only work proposed in this application that staff thinks does not meet the standards and guidelines followed by the HDC. The mass of the tower is appropriate, and character-defining features of the historic building that it obscures are minimal. The roof tower, however, calls too much attention away from the historic building and centers the eye on the new entry and tower feature when those should be secondary to the historic building.

Both the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines and Ann Arbor's say that new additions should be placed on non-character-defining or inconspicuous elevations. The new north entry/lobby is appropriately situated against the historic building, but because of its height staff believes it does not meet the language of the guideline that says the size and scale of the addition should be limited in relationship to the historic property.

Staff believes a low roof would still accommodate and conceal a large skylight. The motion suggested below is conditioned on the metal roof not exceeding one-third of its current height (the height of the proposed roof is not included on the drawings, so no specific number is suggested), with final design approval by the HDC officers. This reduced height will return attention to the mill building instead of the tower roof.

7. At this time no work is proposed on the four-unit house at 521 Detroit.
8. Planning notes: The two lots (521 and 529) are separate parcels that will need to be combined before building permits may be issued. The zoning is R4C Multiple-Family Dwelling, and the church use will require a special exception use approval from the City Planning Commission. Final site plan approval would be from City Council.
9. The majority of the work being proposed is completely appropriate and the restoration work especially is appreciated. The tower roof height and design are not compatible with the historic building, and therefore staff recommends either a conditional approval (as in the suggested motions below) or postponement to next month if the applicants are willing to design a less prominent roof and resubmit the drawings by August 27.

POSSIBLE MOTIONS: (Note that the motion 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 Historic District Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for the portion of the application at 529 Detroit Street, a contributing property in the Old Fourth Ward Historic District, to do the following work, with conditions: restore the exterior of the main building including recreating the historic cornice and barn door openings and replacing non-original windows with aluminum clad wood windows that match the original opening sizes; demolish the sheds on the north side; pave and formalize the parking lot; clad the rear stair addition and office addition with metal siding; construct a new second floor on top of the office addition; and construct a new two-story stair/lobby addition on the north side of the building **on the condition that the new stair/lobby roof does not exceed 1/3 of the height of the current tower roof and is approved by the officers of the Historic District Commission before the site plan application is submitted to the City.** The work as conditioned is compatible in exterior design, arrangement, texture, material and relationship to the surrounding resources and meets the *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines*, especially those for all addition, and *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, in particular standards 1, 2, 9 and 10 and the guidelines for alterations for a new use, additions, windows, and district/neighborhood setting.

MOTION WORKSHEET:

I move that the Historic District Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work at 529 Detroit Street in the Old Fourth Ward 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, drawings, photos

529 Detroit Street, September 1960 (AADL Old News)

