



Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

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HPC meeting date: 11/6/2017
Ald. Nik Kovac District: 3
Staff reviewer: Tim Askin
PTS #114393 CCF #170868

Property 3252 N. LAKE DR.

Owner/Applicant RICHARD J BARRETT
3252 N LAKE DR
MILWAUKEE WI 53211

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LandWorks
N69W25195 Indiangrass Lane
Sussex, WI 53089
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Proposal Work consists of an ambitious landscape redesign to accommodate an outdoor basketball court, a small parking pad near the current coachhouse, and a replacement of the circle drive with paver blocks. The paver-covered area accommodates a new, conceptually approved 3-car garage near the house.

Modified slightly from applicant's description:

Install new specimen-grade trees, shrubs, and evergreens along with bedding areas filled with flowering shrubs, perennials, and low vegetative ground cover -- all designed in a classic, formal garden style befitting the home's [Georgian] architecture. Colorful containers plantings will also provide accents at the entry to the residence. Large shade trees will be placed to add to the already parklike feel of this property.

Flowering crabapple trees will mostly encircle the sport area adjacent to the existing coach house. They will be under-planted with evergreen shrubs. The north and south lot lines will be defined with 11-foot tall evergreen hedges (arbor vitae, viburnum, spruce etc.) which will include a limited number of retained existing trees.

A new driveway route is proposed that will be closer to the north lot line rather than the relatively centered route it is on now. Plans suggest that the driveway will remain dirt. The driveway connects to a reconfigured front to the home. This area features a large motor court with parking for 6 in front of the planned new garage. The motor court's paved area will be approximately 36 x 40' feet (1440 sq ft) with three parking spaces each to the north and to the south. The area will be paved with clay brick pavers in a creamy tone. From the motor court, the driveway continues to the north of the property toward the porte-cochere while a path of pavers leads to the front entry of the house. The front terrace of the home will be redone with similar pavers rather than the existing red brick across the entire façade.

Staff comments

This property was built for Robert and Mary Uihlein in 1915. It is amongst the finest examples of Georgian Revival architecture in the city. The architect for the design was William Kozick, about whom little is known, but the majority of his known work is commercial. Even less is known of the original landscape design for the property, excepting a 1937 aerial photo of this portion of the city.

The property contains 2.8 acres on a deep and narrow lot at the edge of the lake bluff. Since at least 1937, the property has had a circle drive near the house at the end of long driveway along the north side of the site. A garage and chauffeur's residence is relatively close to Lake Drive.

(continued)

Staff comments (cont.)

The majority of the project is reasonable and appropriate, even with a continuous history of circle drives the house front, the pavers are a reasonable solution to the current owner's needs.

However, the "sport patio" remains a sticking point. Even with the sincere efforts to hide it, it remains as a basketball court on a front lawn. It seems unlikely that such a feature would be tolerated at any other property in the city, historic or not, and regardless of lot size. Further, work was begun on the sport patio long before the landscape plan was submitted for review, despite the directive from the Commission to submit a plan in July.

Dimensions of the court area correspond roughly to the size of a regulation high school half court (40' x 45'). Additional area not directly tied to the basketball surface constitutes another 700sq ft for a total of 2500 sq ft.

The sport patio is directly behind the existing coach house, tightly abutting a neighbor's house and property line. There is some visibility from Lake Drive that will be moderately compensated for when trees grow to maturity.

Zoning code concerns:

A 3-foot wide pedestrian path is required on all lots that are fronted with sidewalk, from the sidewalk all the way to the front of the house. Staff acknowledges that this would be an unseemly addition to this landscape plan and recommends that the applicant seek the necessary variance. (295-505-4-d. Pedestrian Access. d-1. General. Where a lot is adjacent to a public sidewalk, each principal building on the lot shall be served by a clearly identifiable walkway leading from the public sidewalk to the entrance to the building. The presence of an access drive does not fulfill this requirement.)

There is a maximum of four surface parking spaces allowed on a lot in a single-family zone (295-403-2-a) and the the owner may not park more than four vehicles in surface spaces. The plan shows seven spaces explicitly and can be read to include many more. They may also not be located in the front yard (295-505-4-b-3). Previous BOZA approval of the second garage did not address these issues. However, such guest accommodations on this site are not unreasonable, given the distance of the home from Lake Drive.

Recommendation

Recommend HPC Approval, with conditions, of all but sport patio.

Conditions

1. Staff recommends denial of the sport patio
2. If the Commission approves the sport patio, staff recommends that the Commission require that it be moved to be adjacent to the new garage. It is presently uncomfortably close to a neighboring house. It seems unreasonable to place this specifically against a neighboring home with so much space available on the lot. Further, the form letter sent as notification by neighbors did not indicate that neighbors could object to landscaping alterations.
3. Obtain required additional variances
4. Obtain fence permit for screening around sport patio, if screening is to remain after landscaping is complete.

Previous HPC action

A new garage, landscape renovation, and kitchen remodel involving the alteration of fenestration were heard in July. The kitchen renovation was approved and is believed to be complete. Garage and landscape were held over for further review and submission of a complete and detailed landscape plan.

Previous Council action

Two variances for siting of the second garage were approved by the Board of Zoning Appeals.