



Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

LIVING WITH HISTORY

HPC meeting date: 11/6/2017
Ald. Milele Coggs District: 6
Staff reviewer: Tim Askin
PTS #114399

Property 100 W. BROWN ST.

Owner/Applicant CITY OF MILW
809 N BROADWAY
MILWAUKEE WI 53202

Mr. Gregory Baer
234 N Broadway #414
Milwaukee, WI 53202
Phone: (414) 276-0310

Proposal Project consists of a new house with an attached garage on a corner lot in the Brewers Hill Historic District. It has a Temple and Wing form with strong Greek Revival character and subtle Italianate influences.

The design features a typical Greek Revival Temple-front (two stories with front gable) facing Brown Street. A wing to the east is setback to allow a 6-foot deep wraparound porch with simple wood detailing and chamfered columns and pierced skirting. The main entry resides in the porch at the inside corner of the setback.

Roof is a three-part cross-gable over the two main wings and the garage wing. The main gable fronting Brown Street features an 8/12 pitch while the cross gable and is 6/12 and the garage is 10/12. The roofline along the 1st Street frontage is decidedly complex. Major rooflines feature a large fascia board connecting to corner boards that are all around the house.

Windows are 2/2, a majority of which are 36"x78". Others are paired in smaller sizes as needed to fit interior conditions. These are primarily on secondary elevations. A few secondary elevation windows are awning style, but retain a four-pane appearance.

All is set on a gray, modular brick foundation (not veneered). The porches have been redrawn separately from the main drawings and the revised version consists of chamfered columns and simple balusters.

Staff comments

Overall

The design is refined, appropriate, and carefully thought through. It would blend well with the surrounding Brewers Hill neighborhood. Staff has no objections to the design at this point, with the exception of light fixtures. The design and siting are entirely consistent with guidelines. There is minor concern with the exterior light fixtures, but that can be addressed by staff at a later date.

Materials

Roof

Roofing will be Certainteed Landmark (a light shadow product), with color to be determined. This is acceptable as proposed.

Windows

Windows are proposed as double-hung 2/2 windows and one circular window at a gable peak. An aluminum-clad Marvin product has been specified (Ultimate Double Hung Next Generation or similar). The Commission has never approved clad windows on any single-family residential structure anywhere in the city, with one exception (a new house that was never built).

**Staff comments
(cont.)**

Clad windows, unless hand-painted after the fact, cannot match appropriate color schemes. No manufacturer makes a unit where the sash, sill, and frame, are appropriately differentiated in color to give the window its proper depth.

Clad windows also have a history of water issues. The extraordinary number of seams creates a likelihood of a leak in one of them at one point, often within 10 years, but rarely more than 30 years. Further, "clad wood window manufacturers build the sash around the glass making it virtually impossible to replace the glazing."¹

Siding

James Hardie Smooth Lap siding is proposed for the clapboards. The Commission has previously only ever approved this for secondary structures such as garages and sheds. It is certainly a better match to wood than the vinyl that was originally proposed for this project. However, it is still clearly not a wood product. Even with dyes incorporated into the boards for the initial color, the boards are not maintenance free. The color does fade and will eventually need paint.

Additionally, all butt joints between boards must be flashed, with room for expansion and contraction, this does not result in a finished, smooth surface that happens more readily with wood. Price is comparable to real wood, but installation costs are higher because of weight.

Porch

Staff is tempted to grant the synthetic porch decking, if the porch is trimmed such that the edge of the synthetic boards is not visible. The proposed gray color will read as painted wood for at least a few years. This is a much better option than the wood-toned colors.

However, as recently as last month the Commission directed an applicant in Brewers Hill to use all wood decking on a new construction garage. The decking on this project would be directly street-facing. Approving the synthetic decking would be unfair to this applicant and inconsistent with other prior decisions. (Nonetheless, the applicant will return in December or January for design revisions, so this can be revisited.)

Trim

Selected trim will also be an Azek product, this is the least concerning application of a synthetic material on this project. Nonetheless, it remains as a plastic-based product.

Precedents

While this is not a RACM project, RACM has long held to HPC-inspired standards for projects within the Brewers Hill area. They are more explicit than the Brewers Hill new construction guidelines and stand as a matter of precedent. They were found in another COA files. Staff have conducted extensive file research on past approvals of new construction in Brewers Hill in an appendix. There is a consistent history of all-wood for approvals.

Final Note

There was a miscommunication regarding timing of this application and the HPC process. Therefore, staff would like the Commission to grant approval of a COA for foundations and footings immediately with decisions on materials either held over or required as all wood.

Recommendation

Recommend HPC Approval with conditions.

Conditions

1. All wood siding
2. All wood windows with dark spacer bar. Shop drawings to be submitted to staff.
3. All wood window trim.
4. All wood decking.
5. All wood trim
6. Approve exterior lights separately.

¹ <https://www.woodworkingnetwork.com/wood-blogs/industrial-woodworker/production-industry-guest-blogs/Historic-Wood-Windows-Offer-Long-Term-Benefits-Over-Aluminum-Clad-163778016.html>

Previous HPC
action

Previous Council
action

Appendix

**NEW INFILL HOUSES AND MAJOR ADDITIONS IN THE BREWERS HILL HISTORIC
DISTRICT**

HOUSES

ADDRESS	DATE	WOOD SIDING	WOOD TRIM	WOOD WINDOWS
1840 N 1 ST	1993	YES	YES	YES
112 E Brown Major Addition	1993	Yes	Yes	Yes
1933 N 1 ST	1994	YES	YES	YES
1941 N 1 st	1995	Yes	Yes	Yes
1850 N 1 st	2000	Yes	Yes	Yes
1906 N 2 nd Three condo structures	2002	Yes	Yes	Yes
2017 N 1 st Major Addition	2003	Yes	Yes	Yes
116 W Lloyd Rebuild on old foundation NOT BUILT	2004	Yes	Yes	Yes
116 W Lloyd Modify design NOT BUILT	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2018 N 2 nd	2008	Yes	Yes	Yes

GARAGES

ADDRESS	DATE	WOOD SIDING	WOOD TRIM	WOOD WINDOWS
1934 N 2 ND	1994	Yes	Yes	Yes
1938 N 2 nd	1997	Yes	Yes	(No windows)
1840 N 1 st	2005	Yes	Yes	Yes
2104 N 1 st	2007	Yes	Yes	Yes
2034 N 1 st	2016	No (alley-facing)	No	Yes
2019 N Palmer	2018?	Yes	Yes	Yes