



Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

LIVING WITH HISTORY

HPC meeting date: 12/8/2025

Staff reviewer: Andrew Stern

Property 2543 N. 47th Street.

CCF #251234

Ald. Stamper

47th Street Bungalow Historic District

Owner/Applicant Rodney Kenel & Bryan Kwapil
2543 N. 47th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53210

Thoughtful Craftsman
125 W. Melvina Street
Milwaukee, WI 53212

Proposal

The applicants wish to remove the existing asbestos cement tile roof and replace the roof with Brava synthetic shingles. Reconstruction of the chimney has already been approved separately.

Staff comments

The subject property was struck by lightning in September 2025, causing damage to the chimney, copper gutters, and roof. The homeowners wish to preserve the look of the asbestos tile roof rather than replace it with an architectural shingle. They are proposing a Brava Old World synthetic shingle. Marketing materials provide little detail about its constitution, saying only that it is a recycled polymer blend.

This is a complicated situation where a new roofing material is required. The original is no longer manufactured and it is clear that the historic appearance cannot be approximated with asphalt shingles. Brava Old World is one of several polymer options. There are concrete and clay options that could also approximate the look of the historic roofing material, but likely at greater cost. The applicant's contractor indicated the property insurance company was willing to cover a more expensive replacement roof than an asphalt roof.

The preservation guidelines for the 47th Street Bungalow Historic District recommend that "if replacement is necessary, duplicate the appearance of the original roofing as closely as possible." Staff recommends a concrete or clay option would be the most appropriate replacement material, rather than a polymer option. Companies such as Eagle Roofing Products product concrete tile roofing in several colors that would be a close approximation to the tile that is presently installed. If the insurance company is unwilling to cover the cost of a concrete or clay roofing tile, staff would reluctantly recommend approval of the Brava polymer shingle in this limited instance.

Recommendation

Recommend denial with the condition that the Brava product may be installed if the property insurance company will not cover the cost of a more appropriate concrete or clay tile.

Conditions

Previous HPC action

Previous Council action