



Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

LIVING WITH HISTORY

HPC meeting date: 10/9/2017
Ald. Nik Kovac District: 3
Staff reviewer: Tim Askin
PTS #114386 CCF #170834

Property	2555 N. SUMMIT AV.	North Point North Historic District
Owner/Applicant	MICHAEL K MCCHRYSTAL 2555 N SUMMIT AVE MILWAUKEE WI 53211	Hill & Valley Landscaping 6831 W Ryan Rd Franklin, WI 53132 Phone: (414) 423-8873
Proposal	Install a retaining wall with Highland Stone, a cementitious block product along the Downer Avenue frontage of the property to replace a fence.	
Staff comments	<p>Applicant has an irregular lot with frontages on both Summit and Downer Avenues. The retaining wall proposed for replacement is highly visible and abuts the sidewalk along the Downer Avenue frontage.</p> <p>Milwaukee County topographic information indicates that this property has a 25' drop off between the back of the house and the Downer sidewalk frontage. This suggests that the retaining wall is entirely necessary and some sort of retaining wall should be allowed to replace the existing one if it is failing. Given the expense of such a project staff assumes that the current structure is failing.</p> <p>Historic Preservation Commission policy and published guidance of the Commission in Living With History have been very explicit about not allowing block products for retaining walls. Poured concrete, natural stone or clay brick has been the strictly stated policy for many years. These can be applied as a veneer, but exposed cementitious block is not allowed.</p> <p>Staff recommends denial and a redesign with a veneer. Because of neighboring materials—a red brick garage to the north and a rusticated coursed ashlar limestone retaining wall to the south—staff can only recommend a veneer of red brick or coursed limestone.</p>	
Recommendation	Recommend HPC Denial	
Conditions		
Previous HPC action		
Previous Council action		