



Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

LIVING WITH HISTORY

HPC meeting date: 8/2/2021
Ald. Nik Kovac District: 3
Staff reviewer: Tim Askin
PTS #115169 CCF #210519

Property 3138 N. CAMBRIDGE AV.

Owner/Applicant STEVEN F TILTON & NOLA J HITCHCOCK
CROSS LIVING TRUST
3138 N CAMBRIDGE AVE
MILWAUKEE WI 53211
Steven Tilton
845 N. 11th St
Milwaukee, WI 53233

Proposal Demolish lighthouse

Staff comments

Applicants request demolition of the lighthouse on the property. The lighthouse is an integral and vital part of the boat house complex and original to the design. The owners have had the property since 2018 and were sent requirements for historic properties in July of that year by registered mail. Conversations with owners after their receipt of the letter indicated they were already concerned with the condition of the light house. Staff indicated that they would need to figure out some manner in which to repair.

No evidence has been provided that the owners have attempted to repair the existing structure. It is presently stabilized by scaffolding, but no engineer or architect has been out there to evaluate the building. Potential solutions for repair proposed by staff around the time of this application have been rebuffed.

Criteria for demolition are as follows:

h. Criteria; Certificates to Allow Demolition. In determining whether to grant, grant with conditions, deny or defer action on a certificate of appropriateness to allow partial or complete demolition, the commission shall consider any of the following:

h-1. Whether the structure is of such architectural or historic significance that its demolition would be detrimental to the public interest and contrary to the general welfare of the people of the city.

h-2. Whether the structure, although not itself an individually-designed historic structure, contributes to the distinctive architectural or historic character of the district as a whole and should be preserved for the benefit of the people of the city.

h-3. Whether demolition of the structure on a historic site or within a historic district would be contrary to the purpose and intent of this section and to the objectives of the historic preservation plan for the applicable district as duly adopted by the common council.

h-4. Whether the structure is of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture or material that it could not be reproduced without great difficulty or expense.

h-5. Whether retention of the structure would promote the general welfare of the people of the city and state by encouraging the study of American history, architecture and design, or by developing an understanding of American culture and heritage.

h-6. Whether the structure is in such a deteriorated condition that it is not structurally or economically feasible to preserve, restore or use it, provided that any hardship or difficulty claimed by the owner which is self-created or a result of demolition by neglect cannot qualify as a basis for the issuance of a certificate of appropriateness.

Staff cannot see how any of these criteria are met in a way that justifies demolition. Staff would also suggest that criterion 6 applies, as three years have passed under this ownership without efforts to repair it. Owners were also told that demolition without an approved replacement design was unlikely to succeed. No replacement plan has been supplied and true replication would be nearly impossible for a unique structure such as this lighthouse.

Recommendation Recommend HPC Denial

Conditions

**Previous HPC
action**

**Previous Council
action**