



Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

LIVING WITH HISTORY

HPC meeting date: 4/4/2022
Ald. Milele Coggs District: 6
Staff reviewer: Jacqueline Drayer
PTS CCF 211810

Property	204 W Brown Street	Brewers Hill Historic District
Owner/Applicant	Robert Howard 204 W Brown Street Milwaukee, WI 53212	
Proposal	<p>204 W Brown is a three story 3,800 sf single-family home. It was previously a duplex and was converted to a single family when renovated by the current owner. Currently the house is a 4 bed 2.5 bath and the desire is to expand the interior into the third floor of the house adding two bedrooms to the third floor. A new dormer is required for a second bedroom.</p> <p>One internal stair already extends to the third floor and due to the residential building code requirements the owner will need to provide a second exit from the third floor by means of a new egress stair.</p> <p>The north side of the house will also have an addition on the first floor allowing for a mud room with laundry and an enlarged pantry off the existing kitchen. This 12'h x 22'w addition will only occur at the first floor, the second floor and roof of this addition will contain a new deck off the master bedroom. The owner can then discharge their exterior exit stair at this level.</p> <p>All new exterior materials will build upon the pallet and match those that currently exist on this house. Decorative gables exist on the north and south sides of the house, this detail will be carried along with similar materials to the new eastern facing dormer.</p>	
Staff comments	<p>The house is located on a corner lot and the proposed new dormers, addition, deck, and rear staircase will be visible from the street. The proposal for the new dormers on the north and east elevations and the continuation of existing materials is in keeping with the character of nearby homes in Brewers Hill. The in-line first floor addition and deck, while not necessarily present in nearby homes, is a design seen in original construction in other Milwaukee historic districts.</p> <p>The exterior rear spiral staircase, visible from the street, is a design feature with limited precedent in this historic district or others. The design is not prohibited by existing guidelines. It does represent a substantial change to the appearance of a publicly visible elevation of the house. One solution for removing the need for this staircase may be to convert the second floor den into a bedroom by creating a new second story window on the west elevation, which would not be visible from the street. Staff believes this would allow the applicant to achieve their goals for the space while removing the need for a third floor rear egress.</p>	
Recommendation	Recommend HPC approval with conditions.	

Conditions

1. All finish wood must be smooth and free of knots and must be painted or treated with an opaque stain upon completion. Note: when new, bare wood is left exposed to the exterior elements for a period of only a week or two, the life the of the paint job subsequently applied to it will be decreased. The use of a naturally decay-resistant wood species for exterior finish applications is required for porch areas. Using western white pine or Ponderosa pine is “at your own risk” because this wood has no natural decay resistance and can deteriorate in some exterior settings in just a few years.

Optional condition:

2. Do not approve rear egress staircase. Instead, permit creation of new wood window in existing second floor den to allow for conversion into bedroom.

Note that this would mean other proposed design elements on third floor (creation of dormers) would no longer make sense, as two bedrooms could not be created due to code requirements.

Previous HPC action

Previous Council action