



Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

Living with History

HPC meeting date: 11/09/2015
Ald. Robert Bauman District: 4
Staff reviewer: Dean Doerrfeld
PTS

Property 2830 North State Street Concordia Historic District

Owner/Applicant DAVID GROSSE
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Proposal This project involves the construction of a hipped-roof garage at the rear of the property.

Staff Comments The building was constructed ca. 1891 in a vernacular Dutch Colonial Revival style with moderate ornamentation and detailing. The building is attributed to the architectural firm of Ferry and Clas for Irving H. Reynolds. This building displays all the elements of a well-executed example of this style: gambrel roof, varying wall materials, raking verge, and moderate ornamental detailing. Dwellings in this area vary in architectural style but have similar scale, massing, and proportions. Many have two and three car garages fronting the alley.

The Concordia Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1985, and locally designated in 1988.

The applicant proposes to construct a slab-on-grade, hipped-roof, three car garage facing the alley to the north of dwelling. The building measures 24x36', with an approximate ridge height of 16'. The garage will have one 12' and two 9' doors facing north. A 9' overhead door, half-light passage door, and a horizontal window pierce the south elevation. The lower wall surface will be stone to match the house and addition. The upper wall surface is proposed as "Smartside," a composite-wood weatherboard. The hip roof will have a 1' overhang, similar to the addition, and standard ogee gutters with rectangular downspouts. The hipped-roof is covered in black, asphalt shingles. The applicant proposes steel, sectional, overhead doors at each major opening.

The overall concept and design of the garage is appropriate; however, there are several issues that require discussion. The choice of "Smartside" is questionable. "Smartside" was introduced about 15 years ago by the Louisiana-Pacific Corporation. In widespread use across the US, reviews of the product are mixed. Some claim it is an excellent substitute for wood, while others report failures of the material within 5-7 years. Staff would recommend the use of wood siding rather than a composite-wood or cement-fiber sheathing.

Another issue is the south facing garage door. The submission offers conflicting configurations for the area between this door and the house. The site plan indicates only a walkway connecting the garage to the house, while the perspective view displays a wider path—more like a driveway. This is atypical of the Concordia Historic District. The south-facing door would promote additional paving, and possibly parking in the rear yard area. Staff recommends modifications to the south elevation: delete the overhead door and place the passage door in the center of the elevation flanked by horizontally-oriented window units.

Modifications are also needed to the north elevation. As shown, the wall surface

between the two left doors is considerably smaller than that to the right. The elevation should be re-designed with equal spacing between the doors to create a balanced elevation.

The final issue is the use of steel, overhead doors. Staff typically recommends the use of wood or wood-clad doors in the construction of new garages; however, the alley behind W. State St. contains numerous examples of steel doors. A visual inspection indicates that many of these were installed, without appearing before the Commission or the issuance of a COA, after the creation of the Concordia Historic District in 1988. Staff, however, continues to recommend wood or wood-clad doors in proposals such as this.

There are additional details that need consideration in this proposal, including: type, style, and configuration of the passage door; similar items relating to windows; and, materials and design of the soffit. These can be addressed by staff in consultation with the applicant.

Recommendation

Construct garage: Approve with Conditions

Conditions

Use of wood siding.
Reconfiguration of south elevation as stated above.
Reconfiguration of north elevation as stated above.
Installation of wood or wood-clad overhead doors.
Coordinate final details with staff for approval.

Previous HPC action

Previous Council action