



Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

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HPC meeting date: 7/1/2024
Staff reviewer: Andrew Stern

Ald. Brostoff
CCF # 240282

Property 2705 E. Bradford Ave. North Point North Historic District

Owner/Applicant Chelsea Cross
2705 E. Bradford Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53211

Proposal

The applicant is proposing to remove front and side entry stairs and their associated railings and reinstall new concrete steps and new railings.

Staff comments

The existing steps for both entries consist of concrete treads that narrow as you ascend the stairway. The iron railing has a curved design that flairs out from the stairs. The handrail matches decorative ironwork found on first floor windows. Both the front steps and the side steps at this property have concrete deterioration. Both stairs also have risers of different heights, which is not code compliant. The applicant is proposing removing the existing stairs and railings and replacing with new concrete steps that are the full width of the landing. They are also proposing a replacing the decorative railing with a straight steel railing.

The preservation guidelines for the North Point North Historic District recommend to “avoid altering porches and steps by enclosing open porches or replacing wooden steps with cast concrete steps or by removing original architectural features, such as handrails, balusters, columns or brackets.” The guidelines also recommend to “repair or replace, where necessary, deteriorated material with new material that duplicates the old as closely as possible. Avoid using replacement materials that do not accurately reproduce the appearance of the original material.”

The design of the stairs and railings contribute to the design of this English Revival-style house and should be retained. Staff recommends the applicants replace both stairways with a code-compliant design that replicates the form and size of the existing stairs. It is valid to rebuild the steps to current code, which may require widening the top steps in addition to adjusting the rise and run, but this can be achieved without a significant design change, particularly as the current railing appears to meet current code requirements. Staff recommends reuse of the existing handrails or replication of the existing design if the existing handrail is too deteriorated for reuse. Staff are aware of local craftspeople who are capable of making necessary adjustments, repairs, or replicas.

Recommendation Recommend HPC Denial

Conditions

Previous HPC action

Previous Council action