



Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission November Staff Report

LIVING WITH HISTORY

HPC meeting date: 11/07/2022

District: 3

Staff reviewer: Carlen Hatala and Tim Askin

PTS #115331 CCFILE # 220755

Property	2409 N. TERRACE AV.	North Point North HD
Owner/Applicant	Patrick R. Jones Ramsey Jones Architects 734 E. Wright Milwaukee, WI 53212	Terrace 2409 LLC 2649 N. Bremen St. Milwaukee, WI 53212

Proposal

The applicant wishes to build a new 2-story slab on grade masonry residence with a one-story rear component/wing and attached garage. Cladding is reclaimed cream city brick and zinc. The roof is standing seam zinc and some side walls are clad in zinc tiles that are different in color than the roof. Since there is no basement, the house sits low to the ground atop the concrete slab, but appears to have a comparable rise from grade to the neighboring new houses. It is also elevated higher than previous than mid-20th century infill construction directly across the street.

The house is set back behind a smooth gently sloping berm. It is not terraced as shown in the illustration. A pervious paver drive is located at the north side of the property and leads to a two car garage. A landscaped area is located to the rear consisting of patio, lawn and fencing.

The house itself is a sided-gabled structure, 24 feet by 42 feet, with recessed front entrance at the north and a shallow bay at the south. Behind this main block is a 36 foot long one story, flat roofed L-plan wing that connects with the attached garage.

FRONT FAÇADE (Changes to the façade are incorporated into the text)

The front façade is symmetrically arranged. The center focal point is the pair of multi-paned rectangular windows that illuminate the stairwell inside. It is positioned 10 feet above the foundation. Below the windows the bricks are slightly recessed and will have a decorative pattern (e.g., herringbone or other) and possibly a diamond shaped accent.

To the right (north) at the second story is a shed dormer that features a bank of three multi-paned steel windows. The dormer is clad in a zinc reveal pattern similar to the standing seam roof.

Below the dormer at grade is the porch, recessed into the body of the house and located at the corner of the building. The porch's lintel is a black steel beam. Above will be a wood beam overhang. Supporting this is a black steel post. The porch's walls are clad in thermally modified wood, run horizontally. The front door features a single light and it has a narrow sidelight to the left as well as a transom above. The door will be varnished wood. Steps are limestone and the porch floor has a limestone wall cap. A two-over-two rectangular window is located to the right of the entry door and is flanked with black metal sconces.

On the left or south side of the façade is a shallow bay with a shed roof. At the second story is a bank of three multi-paned windows. Below at the first story is a bank of three multi-paned windows that are taller than those above. In the spandrel area are horizontal zinc shingles. To either side of the windows are zinc reveal panels run vertically. The bay sits on a cream city brick base. A downspout is tucked into the right corner where the bay meets the wall of the house.

NORTH ELEVATION

The north elevation is simple in design. It features a vent in the gable end, a pair of two-over-two windows at the second story and two four-paned windows on the first story. These are black multi-paned metal windows.

SOUTH ELEVATION

The south elevation features a tall chimney with flat top that has a recessed channel with patterned brick. To either side of the chimney is located one two-over-two window at the second story and the same arrangement is located at the first story. Windows feature brick soldier course lintels. The windows are multi-paned black metal.

WEST/REAR ELEVATION

The west or rear elevation is arranged asymmetrically to accommodate access to the exterior and the connection to the one story wing. At the second story on the north or left side is a

shed dormer with a single light door. It serves the flat roof of the wing. On this flat roof is a deck set in a greenspace. To the south or right, still on the second story, is a shed dormer with a bank of three windows that have two-over-two sash. Below this at the first story is a large, multi-paned sliding patio door. One downspout is positioned next to the door and the drawing shows it collected by a rain barrel. Another downspout is located near the north corner of the house. The left or north side of the rear is connected to the long wing.

WING

The wing behind the front portion of the house is L-plan in shape extending to the west then turning east. This allows for a courtyard along the east side of the house. The short portion of the "L" abuts the garage. The wing itself has a brick base under a limestone belt course that separates this base from a bank of eight two-over-two windows. The cladding around the windows has zinc horizontal shingles. At the west or rear is a single light window and single light door. A shallow planter-like feature runs the length of the wing from house to garage driveway.

The south elevation of the wing features a bank of three two-over-two windows and a slender single light door. Zinc shingles clad this side of the wing as well. This side of the wing opens to a patio (facing south) that has a limestone wall, belt course and steps.

GARAGE

The garage is a rectangular gable roofed structure oriented east-west. The south slope of the roof carries solar panels. The north elevation feature the single two-car- wide garage door. The west side has a vent and pedestrian door. It has a downspout at the north corner that discharges into a rain barrel. The south side has a bank of three two-over-two windows at the west corner and a single two-over-two window near the east corner. Another downspout is located at this corner, also discharging into a rain barrel. The east side of the garage facing the wing has a pair of single light windows and a vent in the gable end. All windows are black metal.

Changes from the October HPC Meeting

The primary changes involve using an additional color of the zinc material and an additional pattern of the zinc material.

The east/primary façade now features a different zinc color than that of the roof to create a clear differentiation of façade and roof elements. The bay has been modified to include a spandrel detail of a horizontal block zinc pattern to add visual interest.

The porch now features a canopy that pulls the feeling of the porch forward, better connecting it to the streetscape. The addition of the transom to the door was at the specific request of staff.

The north façade of the rear corridor wing is substantially re-designed. The brick base is lower. Windows have been added and are now situated in a continuous band and taller than they were previously. The primary siding has been changed to a horizontally oriented zinc panel system. This provides for an improved aesthetic as compared to the October design.

The south courtyard area has been modified to use the horizontal zinc. It also features the same lowered brick base and larger, 4-pane metal hopper windows or European combination hopper/casement windows.

Staff comments

The proposed house design incorporates industrial and rustic aesthetics through its materials. There are suggestions of the Glasgow School of Arts & Crafts. The majority of the homes in North Point North are specifically English in their Colonial, Neoclassical, and Arts and Crafts styles. Detailing here is minimal giving a strong reference to Modern design principles. The materials themselves provide the detail and color of the facades. Applied ornament is not present. Standing seam metal roofs were used in rural settings and industrial settings historically, so there is precedent for that material. Likewise, reclaimed cream city brick from demolished buildings fulfills two functions, adding a texture that new brick cannot achieve and making a statement about sustainability. At the peak of the district's development, cream city brick had fallen out of favor in the local design world. By the 1930s and 1940s, with building materials in short supply combined with Depression and war inflation, a resurgence of interest in cream city brick occurred, using reclaimed brick from demolished buildings as the cream colored brick was no longer being manufactured. In the developing suburbs like Enderis Park, Shorewood, and Whitefish Bay you can see houses with this material. A single example of a cream city brick house from this later era exists in North Point South, which is defined separately because of its different development history and period of significance.

New Construction Guidelines look at four elements to inform decision making when an infill building is being proposed.

1. **SITING** The proposed building is sited in a traditional manner with space for a front lawn, rear yard and room for a side driveway with parking in the rear garage. The major portion of the building is at the front of the lot and "accessory" portions are set behind. The setback uses the city's formula in the zoning code. Accordingly, it cannot be closer than 24 feet from the front property line. In this instance the applicant proposes a setback of 24 feet. When reviewing setbacks for the construction for 2381 N. Terrace, other setbacks along the street were not uniform but varied in depth.

2. **SCALE** The scale of the house (height, width) is compatible with other houses in the district. The roof ridge is 31 feet from grade and the top of the chimney 3 feet 4 inches taller than the ridge. The dimensions of the main portion of the house are 42 feet wide by 24 feet deep. Other sections of the house are shorter in height, narrower in width and retain their appearance as dependencies.

3. **FORM** The rectangular form of the house with its rear dependencies echoes other houses in the historic district, some with and some without attached garages. In this instance the roof is a gable but set parallel instead of perpendicular to the street. This gives it a sense that it is shorter than other houses although the heights are similar. Changing the application of cladding in the shallow front bay and long wing as well as bringing in taller windows on the long wing help to add a sense of verticality. Front porches are also common in the district and add a sense of movement to the facades in the play of solid and void. The porch in this instance reverses the traditional arrangement in that it is recessed 5 feet 8 inches into the body of the house. An extension of its ceiling by several feet helps to signal where the entrance is located and ties it to its setting.

4. **MATERIALS** In contrast to most of the houses in the district, the use of reclaimed cream city brick, thermally modified wood cladding at the porch, and standing seam zinc lend a rustic and even industrial character to the building. Zinc shingles are now being more commonly used in contemporary design and add a different quality from an asphalt, tile or terra cotta roof. It is intended to use a fine and uniform palette of reclaimed brick. Most of the houses in the district have a uniform surface of either the same color brick, brick in the same color tones or shingles that create a textured but uniform surface. Yellow/yellow-gold brick was used in the early half of the twentieth century but looked different from cream city brick. Reclaimed brick can be either highly uniform in appearance or rough and spotted, depending on the use of the building the bricks were cladding (industrial, commercial, residential). The architect's stated intent is to specify and select a relatively uniform set of reclaimed brick.

The concrete block foundation is to be parged to create a smooth surface. The use of steel windows was common in some cities like Detroit during the first half of the 20th century but not

as common here although the muntins add to their traditional appearance. When steel sash were used in Milwaukee, they often incorporated stained glass components. That being said, they are within in the design vocabulary of British Arts & Crafts, both English and Scottish.

Pervious paver driveways have been found acceptable by the Commission when in a form factor comparable to standard brick.

Recommendation Staff has worked with the architect since the October HPC meeting exploring different finishes and textures with the resulting proposal for the HPC to review.

Approve

Conditions

1. Review landscaping separately when materials have been specified. The general landscape concept raises no concerns
2. Staff review of final window selections.

**Previous HPC
action**

**Previous Council
action**

C. Guidelines for New Construction North Point North Historic District

There has been very little new construction in North Point North. Only twelve buildings have been constructed since 1940. These were small apartment buildings, rowhouses or single-family residences. Only five original residences had to be demolished to accommodate these structures. It is important that additional new construction be designed so as to harmonize with the character of the district.

1. Siting New construction must reflect the traditional siting of buildings in North Point North. This includes setback, spacing between buildings, the orientation of openings to the street and neighboring structures, and the relationship between the main building and accessory buildings.
2. Scale Overall building height and bulk; the expression of major building divisions including foundation, body and roof; and, individual building components such as porches, overhangs and fenestration must be compatible with the surrounding structures.
3. Form The massing of new construction must be compatible with the surrounding buildings. The profiles of roofs and building elements that project and recede from the main block must express the same continuity established by the historic structures.
4. Materials The building materials that are visible from the public right-of-way should be consistent with the colors, textures, proportions, and combinations of cladding materials traditionally used in North Point North. The physical composition of the materials may be different from that of the historic materials, but the same appearance should be maintained.