



Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

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HPC meeting date: 2/8/2021
Ald. Robert Bauman District: 4
Staff reviewer: Tim Askin
PTS #115057 CCF #201075

Property	2001 W. VLIET ST.	15 th District School/McKinley School
Owner/Applicant	CITY OF MILW 809 N BROADWAY MILWAUKEE WI 53202	Quorum Architects and Gorman & Co. 3112 W Highland Blvd Milwaukee, WI 53208
Proposal	<p>Construct four new single-family homes along Vliet Street and matching detached one-car garages along a newly created alley. The lots are 121 feet deep with 65-70 feet of street frontage.</p> <p>The houses vary in size but are proportionate to their respective lots and of quality new traditional design based on existing houses in the neighborhood. Garages are 13'x'23' and adjoin a small parking slab. Materials include, vinyl windows, composition shingle roofs, composite porch materials, and aluminum gutters. The project narrative disagrees with the drawings on siding materials. The narrative indicates cement board while the drawings indicate vinyl siding.</p> <p>Surface parking will be incorporated along the new alley and along the south side of the school building in compliance with zoning standards for surface parking adjacent to a residential zone.</p>	
Staff comments	<p>The designs are well-executed and appropriate to the neighborhood. With the new use for the school, the extensive blacktop area along McKinley Avenue is excessive and unnecessary for playground, parking, or athletic facilities. Creating a taxable use on part of this land is in the city's best interest.</p> <p>Based on over 20 years of precedent, staff cannot recommend approval of the proposed materials. Vinyl siding and vinyl windows have never been approved for any purpose. Cement board has only been approved for alley garages or garages otherwise not visible from streets. The public purpose of the project is recognized, but financial considerations are not in the purview of this body. Further, preservation guideline H.4 regarding materials for new construction is not met as all materials were "not available when the building was constructed" and windows would need to be at least of the same quality of material as those proposed for the school itself.</p> <p>Surface parking and its associated landscaping for the residences inside the school are appropriately landscaped and reasonably screened from surrounding residences.</p>	

February Comments

Applicants argue that this is not the typical new construction site. The site is not a registered historic district and the significance derives from the school, not the neighborhood. While the neighborhood itself may be significant, that has not been adequately researched and it is not the responsibility of the applicants to determine that. There was housing on this site from very early years. In 1910 the north end of the site included 18 buildings plus garages that was roughly 60% commercial and 40% residential. By 1963 all the housing had been removed. By 1967 all buildings had been removed.

The application has been revised to exclude vinyl materials. The new proposal retains synthetic decking, but has changed siding to smooth Hardieplank or Smartside. Windows are proposed as Marvin Essentials fiberglass or Quaker Brighton aluminum clad with wood interior. This Commission has accepted smooth Hardieplank for outbuildings that have minimal street visibility, but for no other purpose. Smartside has been rejected for all uses, including storage sheds. Staff believes that this is the first time that a fiberglass window proposal has reached the Commission. Clad windows have been summarily rejected in residential new construction. It is up to the Commission to consider the appropriateness of these various materials in this precise scenario.

If the Commission chooses to entertain the new window options, staff notes that divided light options are unacceptable in the fiberglass product as they appear to offer only between-the-glass grids. The aluminum clad product has exterior grill divided light options that may be acceptable. Staff is willing to entertain either non-vinyl window option for the garages.

Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of designs at this time.

Staff recommends approval of garages with either non-vinyl window option.

Staff declines to make a recommendation on materials on the houses. Guidance from the Commission is needed. Staff is strictly bound by precedent and guidelines as written.

Conditions

1. All wood windows
2. All wood siding and trim
3. All wood porches

Previous HPC action**Previous Council action**