LIVING WITH HISTORY

Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission
Staff Report

HPC meeting date: 11/06/2023

District: 3, Ald. Brostoff
Staff reviewer: Andrew Stern
CC File # 230900

Property	2409 N. Terrace Ave.	North Point North Historic District
Owner/Applicant	Anna Goldman 3849 S. Packard Ave. 1A. St. Francis, WI 53235	

Proposal

The applicant wishes to build a new 2 1/2-story brick veneer residence with a one-story rear attached garage with a covered patio above. Cladding is primarily “Arctic White” brick veneer laid in a running bond/Flemish bond hybrid pattern with black metal panel finish system at select window bays. The roof is standing seam 24-gauge steel with metal coping at a raised gable end. The house sits low to the ground atop a minimal foundation exposure, but appears to have a comparable rise from grade to the neighboring new houses. The top of the gable is 37’ front grade.

The house is set back 28’ from the property line behind a gently sloping front lawn. A concrete driveway is located along the south property line and leads to a three car garage. A 5’ tall brick wall is proposed along the back parking slab to screen the garage area from the neighbor’s property.

The house itself is a sided-gabled structure with approximately 4,400 sq. ft., excluding the attached garage and basement. The primary block is 44 feet wide by 49.75 feet deep, with an additional 6.5 foot deep hyphen connection to a 25.5 feet wide by 37.25 feet deep attached garage. The front entrance is slightly recessed and on a 15 feet by 3 feet stoop. Two side entries are located in the ell between the house and the garage, accessed from a raised side patio. Behind this main block is a 36 foot long one story, flat roofed L-plan wing that connects with the attached garage. The garage also has a personnel door located on the back façade.

FRONT (EAST) FAÇADE
The front façade is symmetrically arranged. The focal point is the black metal panel finishing system bay on the right that contains a bank of four multi-paned steel windows. The bay protrudes slightly from the elevation and is capped with a protruding steel fascia. The center bay contains paired steel windows on both first and second levels. The left bay contains a recessed entryway lined in limestone with paired doors and a flat-roofed, steel awning above. Windows on the first floor will be fixed, while the center and right windows on the second level will be casement windows. A limestone trim band runs across the façade approximately three feet from the ground level. Window sills are limestone and a limestone fascia runs across the top of the façade. Metal scuppers are located at the ends of the façade. The standing seam, 7/12 pitched steel roof will be prominently visible from the front façade.

NORTH ELEVATION

The north elevation is simple in design. It features three bays on the primary block. The left bay contains paired steel casement windows on the first level and paired fixed windows on the second level. The center bay has a protruding garden window with casement windows on the first level and paired casement windows on the second level. The right bay contains a smaller fixed window on the second level and paired casement window on the second level. A small fixed window is located between the right and center bays in the second level. A limestone band runs along the lower portion of the façade and below the gable. A single fixed window is in the center of the gable. All windows have limestone sills. Four three-foot deep by four-foot wide egress wells are proposed on this façade below grade. A metal panel finish system hyphen with fixed windows continues past the primary block of this façade, connecting the main block of the house to the garage. The garage has two fixed paired square windows flanking a protruding chimney. Above the garage is an open air patio covered by a 7/12 pitch steel standing seam roof that mirrors the main house roof. Five skylights are located on the roof. Support posts and beams finished with SmartSide trim will be visible below the roof. Four metal downspouts will be located off the garage roof.

SOUTH ELEVATION

The south elevation continues with the three bay motif on the primary block of the house. The right bay contains a metal panel finishing system with paired windows illuminating the stairway from the basement to the second level. The lower two bays contain paired casement windows. The upper two bays are contained within a metal panel finishing system projecting bay. These windows are a fixed window in the center bay and paired casement window in the left bay. A double-hung window with limestone sill is located in the gable. The side entry door is located in the hyphen portion of this façade, accessed from a small porch stoop. A metal awning and wire rod support are located above the door. A paired window is located in the second level of the hyphen. The garage portion of this façade has a double and single steel garage doors with transom windows. A metal awning and wire rod support are located above the garage doors. The covered patio portion is located above the garage. Five skylights are located in the metal standing seam roof. A limestone band runs along the lower portion of the façade and above the second story. A limestone band is also located within the gable. Two metal downspouts flank the garage roof.

WEST (REAR) ELEVATION

The west of rear elevation contains a four-bay section off of the back patio, with three fixed windows and one door to access the patio. The upper level contains three casement windows with limestone sill. The garage portion of this façade has one man door with metal awning with metal rod supports. A limestone band is located along the lower portion of the façade. The open patio ends contain pre-engineered wood scissor trusses exposed below the roofline. The truss, posts, and beams on the patio are proposed to be finished with Smartside trim. Two skylight tubes are located in the back roof to provide light to the laundry and owner’s closet on the second level of the house.

LANDSCAPE FEATURES

A raised planter bed is proposed along the north side of the driveway. “Green wall” type plantings are proposed adjacent to the brick wall proposed to the south of the parking area behind the house. Other base plantings are depicted adjacent to the house and at the rear of the driveway.

Staff comments

The location of this property serves as a transition between the newer houses located to the south and the historic properties to the north and across the street. The house is compatible in scale, massing, and height to the historic properties to the north but eschews traditional ornamentation in favor of a more modern aesthetic. The house has very minimal detailing and applied ornament is not present. The metal panel system further emphasizes the modern touch. Brick is an external cladding material found throughout North Point North, though the proposal calls for a more modern white brick look.

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

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 attached rear garage. The house is the primary visual component with the accessory parking uses screened behind the house. Front setbacks must be within 20% of the average of the two nearest residential buildings on the same block face. The house to the north is 30' from the right of way, the house to the south is 28' from the right of way. This would allow a front setback for the subject property of 29' +/- 2.4". The current plans proposed the house to be set back 28' from the right of way. The plan shows a 3' setback from the property to the north. Per the zoning code, the air-conditioner condenser cannot be located in this setback, as the adjacent dwelling is less than 15' from the lot line. The bay window and chimney intrusions into the side yard setback must also be adjusted to adhere to the zoning requirements. Likewise, the egress window wells for the basement windows is proposed to extend from the house 3', taking up the entire setback. The downspouts are shown tying into the combined sewer, which is not permitted. Site drainage will need to be reconsidered to prevent drainage to the properties to the north and south (MCO 225-4).

SCALE
The scale of the house (width and height) is compatible with other houses in the district. The roof ridge is 37 feet from grade to top of the gable. The dimensions of the main house are 44 feet wide by 49.75 feet deep. The top of the chimney on the garage patio is 31 feet with the garage roof approximately two feet lower than the chimney. The garage will be minimally visible from the right of way.

FORM
The house has a rectangular form with rear dependencies, which is a form found within the historic district. The side-gabled roof is also present on a number of houses within the district. The large, plain standing seam roof is out of place with side-gabled houses within the district. Side-gabled houses almost exclusively have dormers or other architectural detailing within the roof. There is precedent of slightly recessed entries within the historic district that are accessed via minimal porches, though this is not the norm and most often recessed entries contain more substantial porches internally incorporated into the house.

MATERIALS
Brick is a historic material found throughout the district, though the non-historic color of the brick differs from the more traditional colors found in the district. Standing seam metal roofs were used in rural settings and industrial settings historically, so there is precedent for that material. The metal panel finishing system, while not a historic material, is found on one of the new houses located south of the subject property. The garden window on the north façade is not a window style found within the district and staff suggests a paired casement window to match the upper level. If projection from the main body of the house remains desired, a bay or oriel can be

built as has been done on the opposite elevation. The single double-hung window in the gable ends appears too small for large gable and staff recommends paired windows. SmartSide engineered wood trim located on the exposed beams and posts of the garage patio is not a product found within the historic district and an alternate finish is recommended for this area. HPC has rejected this material every time it has been proposed, even for alley garages.

Recommendation

The design needs more work to make it compatible with its surroundings. The siting of the house will need to be adjusted to meet the base zoning requirements, to consider water drainage, and to better integrate with the neighborhood. Egress window wells are not found in North Point North, as the historic houses were built upon raised foundations. The basement has two means of egress via the stairways obviating any need for egress windows. Staff suggests removing egress wells. Smaller basement windows are possible. The large, unadorned roof contrasts with the historic district. Staff recommends bringing the metal panel finish system design up to the attic level to create a dormer and adding dormers in the other two bays on the front façade. Staff recommends increasing the metal panel framing system on the south façade to better frame the stairway bay. The limestone water table around the house appears diminutive and the thickness should be increased. Staff does not have an issue with the light tubes on the rear-facing roof but recommends flat skylights versus the bubble design shown. Refer back to staff.

Conditions

Previous HPC action

Previous Council action