



# Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

LIVING WITH HISTORY

**HPC meeting date: 5/9/2022**  
**Ald. Russell W. Stamper, II District: 15**  
**Staff reviewer: Jacqueline Drayer**  
**PTS CCF 211994**

**Property** 2525 N Sherman Boulevard Sherman Boulevard Historic District

**Owner/Applicant** Milwaukee Public Schools  
1124 N 11<sup>th</sup> Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53233

## Proposal

This project generally includes converting the existing natural grass football/soccer field to new synthetic turf. In addition the existing two lane asphalt track with rubber surfacing will be reconstructed with a new two lane track consisting of new asphalt and new rubber surfacing. A new long jump event is being constructed in the north D-zone of the track between the football field and the track. Two half-court basketball courts will be installed in the south D-zone of the track.

If budget allows, a storage building will be constructed in the grass area between the track and the high school building. Two trees will be removed to accommodate the new storage building. Four new trees will be planted in the project area to compensate for losing the two existing trees. The storage building will be brick with concrete masonry block backup wall. See building floor plan, elevations, and details on drawing C13. The brick color will match closely to the existing brick color of the existing high school. The roof will be asphalt shingles (black or gray color) similar to the houses in the area. A small amount of trim will be painted to match the existing high school building color scheme.

If this new storage building is constructed, the existing shed at the northeast corner of the track will be removed and the area restored with new grass.

The existing chainlink fence around the track will remain in place and will not be modified.

An existing iron gate with masonry columns is present at the northeast corner of the track. The iron gate will be cleaned, primed, and repainted black to match existing conditions. The top five courses of brick on the columns will be removed and new brick installed to match existing conditions. The existing brick in the top five courses is damaged and deteriorated. The existing coping stones at the top of the columns will be removed and reinstalled in a new bed of mortar. See detail 9/C11.

An existing iron gate with masonry columns is present at the southwest corner of the track as well. The iron gate will be cleaned, primed, and repainted black to match existing conditions. The existing masonry columns are in good condition and will remain in place. No repairs are needed for these masonry columns.

**Staff comments** Washington High School was designed by Van Ryn and De Gelleke. Construction was completed in 1914, predating the erection of many houses on Sherman Boulevard. The main building is a beautiful example of English/Elizabethan Revival architecture.

Reconstruction of the existing track and installation of a new long jump and two half basketball courts are in keeping with the existing landscape. Construction of a new storage building as described is acceptable, as is demolition of the existing shed, which appears to post-date the 1911-1935 period of significance for the Sherman Boulevard Historic District. The existing shed is not compatible with the style of the school or the decorative gates. All proposed painting, repairs, and cleaning of the iron gates and masonry columns are acceptable.

Staff does not believe that artificial turf of any kind can be accepted at the site. The Sherman Boulevard Historic District's Preservation Guidelines say, in reference to landscaping, "Use traditional landscaping, fencing, signage, paving and street lighting that is compatible with the character and period of the district. Avoid introducing landscape features, fencing, street lighting or signage that are inappropriate to the character of the district." The proposed changes to the football/soccer field would be clearly visible from the street.

**Recommendation** Recommend HPC approval with conditions.

**Conditions** Astroturf football/soccer field is not approved.

New mortar must match the original mortar in terms of color, texture, grain size, joint width, and joint finish/profile. The compressive strength of the repointing mortar shall be equal or less than the compressive strength of the original mortar and surrounding brick or stone. The replacement mortar shall contain approximately the same ingredient proportions of the original mortar. Mortar that is too hard is subject to premature failure and could damage the masonry. See the city's books As Good As New or Good for Business, Masonry Chapters, for more information. In most cases, this means a lime mortar with natural hydraulic cement rather than Portland cement. No joint of a width less than 3/8" may be cleaned of damaged/decomposed mortar with power disc grinders. No over-cutting of the joints is permitted. Remove decomposed mortar back into the wall 2.5 times the height of the joint before repointing. When installing new flashing at a masonry feature, the flashing must be stepped or cut into the mortar joints. The bricks may not be cut to install flashing at an angle.

New brick/stone/terra cotta must match as closely as possible the color texture, size, and finish of the original.

A sample panel of the masonry materials and their mortar must be reviewed and approved by HPC staff prior to general installation of the material.

**UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHALL UNPAINTED MASONRY BE PAINTED, BE GIVEN A WATERPROOFING TREATMENT, OR CLEANED BY ABRASIVE MEANS; THIS STATEMENT SUPERSEDES ANY OTHER WORDING IN THIS DOCUMENT INDICATING THE CONTRARY.**

Powered abrasive cleaning methods are prohibited on historic buildings by Wisconsin state law. Exceptions can only be granted in writing by the Wisconsin Historical Society. Chemical and power-washing are acceptable methods of cleaning that the city can approve. Pressure washing is to be conducted ONLY with fan tips with a spread of 15-50 degrees, maximum 800psi at the tip, flow rate less than 8gpm, and from a distance from the surface of a minimum of 12" inches. PSI of 400-600 is typically adequate, though it may take more time and more passes than higher pressures.

**Previous HPC  
action**

**Previous Council  
action**