



Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

LIVING WITH HISTORY

HPC meeting date: 6/4/2018
Ald. Milele Coggs District: 6
Staff reviewer: Tim Askin
PTS #114528 CCF #180239

Property 1823 N. PALMER ST. Brewers Hill HD

Owner/Applicant STEPHEN J BIALK Steve Bialk
ANGELA DUCKERT 1823 N. Palmer St
1823 N PALMER ST Milwaukee, WI 53212
MILWAUKEE WI 53212 Phone: (414) 640-6003

Proposal Project consists of adding two distinct additions to the existing garage. There will be a fully-enclosed, metal shingle clad connector segment with a rooftop deck connecting to a lath house, which is a type of garden building. The lath house would be used as both a garden building and a wedding chapel/event space.

Staff comments The application was received after the published deadline, but accepted for the agenda, as the mailed notice period had not expired. However, as of noon Friday, June 1, 2018, the file remained incomplete. There are no site plans, no photographs, no specified roof pitch, and no description of foundations as other than "already existing."

Staff will proceed with reviewing project as conceptual, but must recommend a hold. In addition to the incomplete file, staff has significant design concerns about both structures.

First, the definition of a lath house is needed. A lath house is a structure of wood slats that is designed to shelter plants slightly from the sun and wind while still allowing natural sunlight and free movement of air. It is distinct from a greenhouse in that there is enclosure. The applicant intends to use it for both plants and for event space. The lath house used strictly as a garden building has a long history in gardening. As a public event space with plantings that is distinct from a gazebo, it dates to the 1910s in the San Diego area.

The first segment is a rectilinear connector unit with a rooftop deck. The placement and dimensions make it out of line and out of proportion with both the existing garage and the proposed lath house. The rooftop deck is reached by an external spiral staircase, which while minimally visible, is not something that would typically be approved on an exterior. The structure is clad in pressed metal siding in a brick texture. If this were a freestanding garden shed, this might be acceptable, but as a connector unit, it does nothing to tie the three distinct buildings together visually. Staff recommends a redesign.

The lath house conceptually and in size is acceptable. Unfortunately, the design presented is a combination of gothic and colonial revival/cape cod/minimal traditional features. The adjoining house and the adjoining neighborhood are consistently 19th century. A true carpenter gothic design or Italianate features that tied in with the main house would be necessary for the lath house to be an appropriate and complementary addition. Further, in what would be an exception to our usual standards for wood construction, it is proposed as unpainted. Lath houses are, however, traditionally unpainted. A stain might be necessary to comply with usual Commission standards, but paint would be inappropriate. It would be better as an independent structure.

Staff believes the siting of the lath house may be acceptable, but as no site plan has been provided, cannot endorse it as presented.

Recommendation Hold as incomplete and for revisions.

Conditions

**Previous HPC
action**

Brewers Hill

A. Guidelines for New Construction

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 Brewer's Hill. 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. New buildings should not obstruct the vistas from the street to the house.

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 Brewer's Hill. The physical composition of the materials may be different from that of the historic materials, but the same appearance should be maintained.