



## Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

LIVING WITH HISTORY

**HPC meeting date: 9/11/2017**  
**Ald. Robert Bauman District: 4**  
**Staff reviewer: Tim Askin**  
**PTS #114377 CCF #170668**

**Property** 3011 W. STATE ST. Concordia Historic District

**Owner/Applicant** ANDREW LARSEN Andrew Larsen  
JASON TETZLAFF 3011 W State St  
3011 W STATE ST Milwaukee, WI 53208  
MILWAUKEE WI 53208 Phone: (414) 640-8250

**Proposal** Install two architectural accent lights in front lawn, 35 feet from the house on the State Street side. Lights will be hidden from daytime view by existing plantings or new small plants of one of four varieties.

**Staff comments** This property was built c. 1850 by Robert Faries, an early dentist in the city and an amateur astronomer. He had the property through February 1854. Later owners included Sydney L. Rood (1854-1863) and Philetus Yale (1863-1905). The house stood on a multi-acre site that was later subdivided. It stands as the oldest house in the Concordia Historic District and is believed to be the oldest house in city limits remaining in single-family use.

This one of four test cases for a neighborhood project by Near West Side Partners. The project is called "Brighter Near West Side" and includes providing neighborhood property owners with heavily subsidized lighting (permitting, fixtures, and labor) for an increased perception of security. Lighting options include the house accent lights as in this proposal and replacement porch fixtures. Amongst other areas, the program will be available to the entirety of the Concordia district during the initial phase and will likely be expanded to the McKinley/Cold Spring Park (McKinley Boulevard) historic district.

The proponents have worked extensively with staff to find fixtures that could be purchased at a bulk rate, be moderately priced, and be sensitive to the character of the district.

Porch fixtures have been selected for both Queen Anne and Craftsman style buildings. Each homeowner will only be offered fixtures appropriate to the style of their building. Additional fixtures remain to be selected for Colonial style properties and for potential expansion of the project area to include McKinley Boulevard.

Staff succeeded in discouraging the program from offering any carriage lampposts and going strictly with porch or lawn fixtures. Replacement of historic fixtures will not be permitted under this program. Porch fixtures are planned for staff approval under the ordinary process as minor alterations. No applications to use the porch fixtures have yet been received.

This is the second of four pending applications for house accent lighting. Approximately five more applications are expected in the near future. Amongst the four applications, both types of staff-approved accent lighting fixtures are proposed.

(cont.)

**Staff comments (cont.)**

The initial proposal involved requiring an entire block face to participate with some sort of light fixture. This raised some concern about the effect on the historic districts as a whole, but this requirement has been removed having been found to be impractical. Properties may now participate individually.

The citywide landscape guidelines reference lights similar to these, but only allow for foundation lights (see slides with LWH pages). The lights in this program are generally 20+ feet out into the front yard. They are arranged such that they will be hidden by existing plantings or new plantings of one of four proposed species.

The house accent lighting is presented to the Commission as several policy questions:

1. Whether to allow such lighting that has the potential to change the character of two entire historic districts.
2. Whether these kinds of lighting projects should be subject to staff approval when they are districtwide programs
3. Whether to approve this program for staff approvals
4. What sort of screening plants should be allowed, four are proposed.
5. Whether to grant staff the ability to approve new fixtures and plants to be included in the program

Staff takes a neutral position on the house accent lighting component to the program as a whole, but has comments on specific features if it is to be approved.

One letter of support has been received for one of the other properties proposing this type of lighting tonight.

The fixtures to be used for this lighting have the support of staff, if the program is approved. Staff believes not all of the screening plants are ideal. Staff recommends the elimination of lemongrass from the program as it would look quite awkward in the middle of a Concordia lawn unless incorporated into a full professionally designed landscape plan. The lemongrass could be acceptable adjacent to the foundations or next to walkways. Staff would like to see a few native species included in the plant selection.

**Recommendation**

No recommendation.

**Conditions**

If the program and/or this site are approved, the following conditions are recommended.

1. Inclusion of some native species in the screening plant selection
2. Elimination of the lemongrass as an option
3. Provide and guarantee landscape restoration after trenches are dug for hardwiring the fixtures.

**Previous HPC action****Previous Council action**