



Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

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HPC meeting date: 7/6/2020
Ald. Russell Stamper II District: 15
Staff reviewer: Tim Askin
PTS #114973 CCF #200233

Property 2864 N. SHERMAN BL.

Owner/Applicant City of Milwaukee/RACM Sarah Colacino & Isaac Rowlett

Proposal General rehabilitation of the house after a city tax foreclosure

1. Add two dormers to the roof near the rear of the house
2. Remove existing rear two-story porch and replace with a new, larger two-story porch
3. Complete window replacement with aluminum-clad windows and glass block for the basement.
4. Raise height of kitchen windows leaving sill in place and use wood infill
5. Reconstruct garage roof and change from hip roof to gable roof to allow more surface area for solar panels.
6. Remove most backyard trees, wood fence for backyard, remove concrete paver blocks from backyard. Add permeable paver patio/parking area at alley.

Staff comments

Dormers

One dormer will be added to the rear of each of the north and south slopes of the roof. They are of unequal size, but generally compatible with the character of the house. The upper level of the house presently has an unusual layout and these dormers will allow an additional bathroom and more logical circulation routes. With two minor alterations, the dormers are acceptable. Change from shake to smooth shingle cladding and widen to the mullions of the windows to a minimum of 5".

Rear Porch

The existing porch is in poor condition and has been partially rebuilt in an inappropriate manner. Replacing this porch with something in a larger size is acceptable, but a more compatible design is required. The brick base need not be reused if the brick is salvaged for window infill.

Windows

The one large front picture window is clear candidate for replacement. The glass is broken and as a sheet glass fixed window, replacing the glass is equivalent to replacing the entire window.

Overall, a survey of window conditions throughout the rest of the home is necessary. Most windows have a leaded glass component. Many, if not most are likely repairable, but they are boarded on both sides and not easy to inspect. Raising the kitchen windows and replacing them is acceptable, but the required infill of the opening should be brick rather than wood.

Glass block is permissible for the rear basement windows. Basement windows on the south side have strong visibility and should be retained. Only the frontmost basement window on the north side has sidewalk visibility, the others may be replaced. In the alternative, awning or hopper windows are welcome at any location in the basement with privacy glass or film and security bars if desired.

Garage

Changing the garage roof to a gable is not compatible with the Sherman Boulevard guidelines, which require that roof shapes be maintained. Staff believes the surface area gained by this proposal is already available on the south slope of the house roof where solar panels are not currently proposed.

Landscaping

Acceptable as proposed on the condition that paver blocks are clay and not concrete

Masonry

Masonry work is not mentioned in detail, but repairs are needed, particularly on the front bay windows.

Recommendation

Recommend HPC Approval with conditions. Staff is comfortable in working out the details on all issues except the rear porch with the buyers. The rear porch should be subject to additional review, but as long as a wood porch of this size is acceptable to the Commission, it should not delay the sale of the property.

Conditions

Windows

All new windows to be all wood both inside and out with no plastic or aluminum cladding permitted.

Wood—except fences

All finish wood must be smooth and free of knots and must be painted or treated with an opaque stain upon completion. Note: when new, bare wood is left exposed to the exterior elements for a period of only a week or two, the life the of the paint job subsequently applied to it will be decreased. The use of a naturally decay-resistant wood species for exterior finish applications is required for porch areas. Using western white pine or Ponderosa pine is “at your own risk” because this wood has no natural decay resistance and can deteriorate in some exterior settings in just a few years.

Masonry

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.

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

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

Landscaping

Permeable pavers must be clay-based and not concrete.

Fences

All wood must be smooth and equivalent to #1 grade cedar or better for use in rear and side yards. Sections of fence forward of or in line with the primary building’s front setback must be clear grain. Wood fences must be painted or stained with an opaque stain upon completion. Note: when new, bare wood is left exposed to the exterior elements for a period of only a week or two, the life the of the paint job subsequently applied to it will be decreased.