



Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

Living with History

HPC meeting date: 5/13/2013
Ald. Willie Wade District: 7
Staff reviewer: Paul Jakubovich
PTS #87258

Property 3360 N. SHERMAN BL. **North Sherman Boulevard Historic District**

Owner/Applicant CITY OF MILWAUKEE
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Proposal Remove all existing multiple pane wood windows and replace them with all metal units with divided lite grids.

Staff comments The Townsend Street School is part of the North Sherman Boulevard Local and National Register Historic District. The school has changed little since it was built in the 1920s and all of the impressive, multi-pane, tru-divided-lite windows appear to be original to the building. The windows give the building a substantial part of its character.

All houses in North Sherman Boulevard Historic District have retained their historic wood windows or when necessary replaced them with new all wood windows to match since the district was first designated more than 20 years ago. This is a standard that is outlined in the city's book "**Living with History**" which is an official guideline book for the city's historic districts.

The windows in the school are completely restorable and all lead-based paint can be safely removed from both the sash and the jambs. It is possible that the actual cost of restoration may be less than the cost of purchasing and installing a new metal window that would mimic, but not recreate the appearance of the wood window. During restoration of the wood windows there are multiple options for upgrading their thermal efficiency. Plus, wood is much better insulator than a metal window which is made of aluminum and actually conducts cold.

Modern restoration techniques have advanced greatly in recent years and the lasting, permanent repair of historic wood windows is common place. The old windows were made of high-quality old-growth wood that lasts much longer, is more decay resistant and holds paint better than the species of wood commonly used today for millwork and windows. At one point the State Historical Society reviewed the window replacement project because of the funding source that was being tapped at that time and their recommendation was to restore the windows.

Given that restoration is feasible and that the guidelines call for retention of original windows and that the other owners in the district have followed these guidelines over the years, the installation of new metal windows in place of the existing windows is not recommended.

Recommendation Recommend HPC Denial

Conditions

Previous HPC action

Previous Council action