



Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

LIVING WITH HISTORY

HPC meeting date: 9/9/2019
Ald. Milele Coggs District: 6
Staff reviewer: Tim Askin
PTS #114815 CCF #190673

Property 1951 N. 2ND ST.

Owner/Applicant KATHLEEN M DEVLIN
SHANNON E BRENNAN
1951 N 2ND ST
MILWAUKEE WI 53212
Richard Smith
Inner City Services
1927 N. 2nd Street
Milwaukee, WI 53212

Proposal Remove existing brick retaining wall at the rear of the property as it is in poor condition. Construct a new retaining wall (dimensions 5' high and 10' long) of 8x16 blocks. The new wall will be faced with brick or salvaged stone from the original wall. The bottom of the wall will be filled with concrete with arrangements for proper drainage.

Repour concrete sidewalk and replace the existing wood fence with a new wood privacy fence in an appropriate style.

Staff comments The house is one of our rare survivors of the Stick Style and dates to the 1880s. The permit history for the house is thin, but the construction date is prior to when the city first required building permits.

The wall is historic and is essentially an oversized window well for the basement. The current foundation as large rusticated, coursed ashlar stone topped with a few courses of brick. The blocks used for the window well do not match the foundation and bond pattern could be generously described as random ashlar. The stone is visibly delaminating and shows signs of continuous water damage. As such, it is clear that the wall has exceeded its lifespan and current best construction practices would advise against rebuilding it identically. As this is, to a degree, foundation work, this constitutes an area where historic preservation has generally deferred to current building codes.

The proposal to rebuild with a veneered block wall is reasonable. Staff would recommend a new cream city brick, on the order what was used for the new facade at 627. N Broadway. The original stone does not look salvageable. The new wall will require a railing, which has not been addressed in the application.

New/replacement concrete walk should be approved as proposed.

Recommendation Recommend HPC Approval

Conditions

1. Fence to meet all zoning and construction requirements of city ordinances.
2. Fence design to be selected from time-period appropriate selections in Living with History or work with staff on alternates.
3. All wood for fences 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.
4. Mortar conditions only apply to the contact point between the new wall and the original foundation. The contractor may select whatever mortar he deems structurally appropriate for the new wall. 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.

Previous HPC action

Previous Council action