



Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

LIVING WITH HISTORY

HPC meeting date: 11/6/2017
Ald. Nik Kovac District: 3
Staff reviewer: Tim Askin
PTS #114393 CCF #170868

Property	3252 N. LAKE DR.	North Lake Drive Estates Historic District
Owner/Applicant	RICHARD J BARRETT 3252 N LAKE DR MILWAUKEE WI 53211	Mr. Chris Miracle LandWorks N69W25195 Indiangrass Lane Sussex, WI 53089 Phone: (414) 349-5921

Proposal Work consists of an ambitious landscape redesign to accommodate an outdoor basketball court, a small parking pad near the current coachhouse, and a replacement of the circle drive with paver blocks. The paver-covered area accommodates a new, conceptually approved 3-car garage near the house.

Modified slightly from applicant's description:

Install new specimen-grade trees, shrubs, and evergreens along with bedding areas filled with flowering shrubs, perennials, and low vegetative ground cover -- all designed in a classic, formal garden style befitting the home's [Georgian] architecture. Colorful containers plantings will also provide accents at the entry to the residence. Large shade trees will be placed to add to the already parklike feel of this property.

Flowering crabapple trees will mostly encircle the sport area adjacent to the existing coach house. They will be under-planted with evergreen shrubs. The north and south lot lines will be defined with 11-foot tall evergreen hedges (arbor vitae, viburnum, spruce etc.) which will include a limited number of retained existing trees.

A new driveway route is proposed that will be closer to the north lot line rather than the relatively centered route it is on now. Plans suggest that the driveway will remain dirt. The driveway connects to a reconfigured front to the home. This area features a large motor court with parking for 6 in front of the planned new garage. The motor court's paved area will be approximately 36 x 40' feet (1440 sq. ft.) with three parking spaces each to the north and to the south. The area will be paved with clay brick pavers in a creamy tone. From the motor court, the driveway continues to the north of the property toward the porte-cochere while a path of pavers leads to the front entry of the house. The front terrace of the home will be redone with similar pavers rather than the existing red brick across the entire façade.

Directly behind the existing coach is a multipurpose sport patio, it tightly Dimensions of the court area correspond roughly to the size of a regulation high school half court (40' x 45'). Additional area not directly tied to the basketball surface constitutes another 700 sq. ft. for a total of 2500 sq. ft.

The sport patio is directly behind the existing coach house, tightly abutting a neighbor's house and property line. There remains some visibility from Lake Drive; this will be compensated for when trees grow to maturity.

Background

This property was built for Robert and Mary Uihlein in 1915. It is amongst the finest examples of Georgian Revival architecture in the city. The architect for the design was William Kozick, about whom little is known, but the majority of his known work is commercial. Even less is known of the original landscape design for the property, excepting a 1937 aerial photo of this portion of the city.

The property contains 2.8 acres on a deep and narrow lot at the edge of the lake bluff. Since at least 1937, the property has had a circle drive near the house at the end of long driveway along the north side of the site. A garage and chauffeur's residence is relatively close to Lake Drive.

Staff comments

The majority of the project is reasonable and appropriate, even with a continuous history of circle drives the house front, the pavers are a reasonable solution to the current owner's needs.

The "sport patio" portion presents an unusual case. Work was begun on the sport patio long before the landscape plan was submitted for review, despite the directive from the Commission to submit a plan in July 2017.

Evidence supplied by the applicant's attorney establishes a strong precedent for an athletic facility near the coach house, back to the 1940s. A pool and surrounding patio were present from approximately 1941 to 1995. No evidence for this could be found in the city's building plan or permit files. There are no building plans on file and no permit records for this property between 1915 and 1957. Nonetheless, the attorney's filing presents indisputable evidence of athletic hardscape on the front lawn. Based on this historic precedent, the sport patio should be permitted.

The neighboring property owner, whose house is immediately adjacent to the sport patio, has submitted a letter stating the patio's current location is his preferred location. It better preserves his views than other locations. Therefore, staff recommends allowing it to stay at its present location.

Zoning code concerns:

The zoning code concerns mentioned in November remain an issue. They are mentioned as a reminder to take action on them rather than as a significant concern to the Historic Preservation Commission.

A 3-foot wide pedestrian path is required on all lots that are fronted with sidewalk, from the sidewalk all the way to the front of the house. Staff acknowledges that this would be an unseemly addition to this landscape plan and recommends that the applicant seek the necessary variance. (295-505-4-d. Pedestrian Access. d-1. General. Where a lot is adjacent to a public sidewalk, each principal building on the lot shall be served by a clearly identifiable walkway leading from the public sidewalk to the entrance to the building. The presence of an access drive does not fulfill this requirement.)

There is a maximum of four surface parking spaces allowed on a lot in a single-family zone (295-403-2-a) and the owner may not park more than four vehicles in surface spaces. The plan shows seven spaces explicitly and can be read to include many more. They may also not be located in the front yard (295-505-4-b-3). Previous BOZA approval of the second garage did not address these issues. However, such guest accommodations on this site are not unreasonable, given the distance of the home from Lake Drive.

Recommendation

Recommend HPC Approval with conditions and that it not set precedent.

This approval is specific to this site based on documentary evidence of prior athletic facility uses. This approval shall not set precedent for other historic properties in the city without similar proof of prior, historic and long-standing uses.

Conditions

1. Obtain fence permit for screening around sport patio, if screening is to remain after landscaping is complete.
2. Obtain required additional variances for sidewalk and excess surface parking
3. Submit full size scans or paper copies of source documents in attorney's filing for city's records.
4. No permanent lighting at the sport patio, per neighbor's request.
5. No further permanent/hardscape athletic facilities west of the house.

Previous HPC action

This case was held over from November at the applicant's request.

A new garage, landscape renovation, and kitchen remodel involving the alteration of fenestration were heard in July. The kitchen renovation was approved and is believed to be complete. Garage and landscape were held over for further review and submission of a complete and detailed landscape plan.

Previous Council action

Two variances for siting of the second garage were approved by the Board of Zoning Appeals.