Final Designation Study Report



Manegold/Gramling House

1202 South Layton Boulevard

City of Milwaukee Department of City Development Summer, 2003

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FINAL HISTORIC DESIGNATION STUDY REPORT

MANEGOLD/GRAMLING HOUSE

I. NAME

| Historic: | Manegold/Gramling House |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| Common name: | 1202 South Layton Blvd. |

II. LOCATION

1202 South Layton Boulevard

16th Aldermanic District, Ald. Michael Murphy

Legal Description: Clark's Addn in SW 1/4 Sec 31-7-22 Block 35 Lot 7 Exc W 15' for St

III. CLASSIFICATION Structure

- OWNER: Ascension Lutheran Church c/o Pastor Jon Jacobs 1236 South Layton Boulevard Milwaukee, WI 53215
- V. DESIGNATION REQUESTED BY: Historic Layton Boulevard Association, c/o Patricia Ann Davison

VI. YEAR BUILT: 1913¹

ARCHITECTS: Alexander C. Eschweiler²

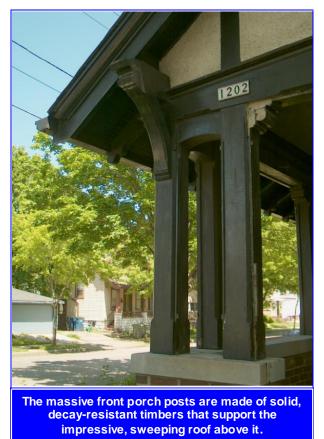
¹ Milwaukee Building Permit #5171 dated November 5, 1913. Filed at Development Center, 809 North Broadway, Milwaukee.

 $^{^2}$ Ibid, line 6.

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VI. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Introduction



The Manegold/Gramling house is a fine example of the type of residence that helped to make Lavton Boulevard the city's premier south side residential district in the decades between the two world wars. The Arts and Crafts style house is the only known South Side example of Alexander C. Eschweiler's residential design work. Houses designed by this prestigious architect are prized today throughout the Milwaukee area for their classic design and quality construction. The house is also a contributing structure in the middle of the South Layton Boulevard National Register 234 Historic District that features late nineteenth and early twentieth century houses fanned out over eleven contiguous blocks. It is the largest National Register Boulevard district in Milwaukee.

For nearly 90 years few changes were made to the stately house that is located on a southeast corner lot at the intersection of Layton Boulevard and Scott Street. But the house recently took a turn for the worse when a serious fire in February 2002 gutted the first floor maid's room beneath the central

staircase, destroyed a second floor bathroom, and caused extensive damage to the south elevation and roof. Firefighters also had to break out many windows and punch large holes into the lath and plaster walls throughout the building in order to contain the blaze and check for smoldering fires. The city's Department of Neighborhood Services inspected the house after the fire and at this point they believe that it is repairable.

The neighbors to the south, Ascension Lutheran Congregation, purchased the house after the fire. The congregation has presented a proposal that would include demolition of the house and creation of a new entry to the church. It is important to point out that in the event the building is locally designated, the standard preservation guidelines that are applied *may* permit its demolition if the structure is beyond economically feasible repair.³

³ See the Preservation Guidelines section of this report, page 16, item 4.

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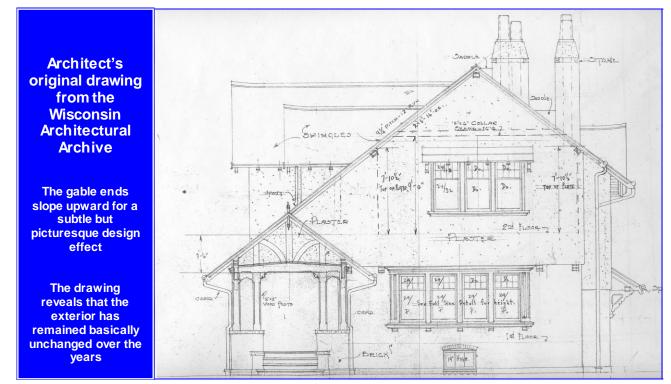
<u>Description</u>

The Manegold/Gramling house is a rambling, two-story, asymmetrical, Arts and Crafts style structure finished on the first story with fine tapestry brick, and popcorn-texture stucco on the second story and gable ends. The building is extensively trimmed with shaped rafter tails beneath the eaves, half timbering in the porch, and projecting shed-roofed hoods above several windows and a side entry door. The peak of each gable is gently and elegantly sloped upward in a manner that is reminiscent of a Chinese pagoda roof.

The principal elevation facing west Layton Boulevard is composed of a front gabled block that is topped with a distinctive, sweeping roof that features one side much longer than the other. Also known as a cat slide roof, the longer side of the roof shelters the half-timbered front paneled woodwork is centered on the first story and centered in the gable above it is a bay of three windows topped with a shed-roofed, bracketed hood.

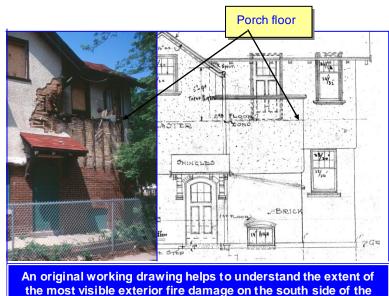
The side elevation that faces north features a gable projecting from the roof and is randomly fenestrated with windows that respond to the needs of the interior. The rear elevation is relatively simple in character featuring randomly placed windows. The major features of the fire-damaged side elevation facing south include a soaring projecting chimney stack near the front of the elevation, a projecting bay for the interior stair case roughly centered on the elevation and a small, walk-out second story porch near the rear of the elevation. Windows and two doors are randomly placed to respond to the needs of the interior. A fine shed-roofed hood shelters the door that is located near the center of the elevation.

The south elevation has suffered extensive damage from a recent fire and the second story porch and its stuccoed wing walls have been completely destroyed (see illustration on page 5). A substantial part of the stoccoed wall on the second story near the center of the building has been burned away to expose the bathroom behind it. In addition to the fire damage, the house



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has suffered some deterioration and water damage to the stuccowork on the other elevations. Despite the wounds to the building. it remains relatively intact on the other elevations and passers-by on the street have little view of the fire damage. A wood frame 2-car garage built in 1926 at the northeast corner of the property is a non-contributing structure, which means that it presently is not known to possess any architectural or historic significance.



house.

VII. SIGNIFICANCE

The Wisconsin State Historical Society has encouraged the preservation and conservation of early twentieth century boulevard residential districts, including South Layton Boulevard where the Manegold house is a pivotal structure on a prominent street corner. The house is also important as a fine, custom-built, Arts and Crafts style residence designed by a leading Milwaukee architectural firm, Alexander C. Eschweiler and Co., that contributed significantly to the design of the city and especially its residential neighborhoods.

VIII. HISTORY

Architecture

The Manegold/Gramling house is a good example of the Arts and Crafts style that began in England and was very influential on American architecture during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The English Arts and Crafts style is not to be confused with the English Tudor style. While the two styles share much in terms of detail and design philosophy, the Arts and Crafts style was uniquely modern in concept stressing an honest use of materials, economy of construction and a picturesque but simple character that often incorporated sweeping roofs, block-like projecting bays and asymmetrical massing.

The materials, massing and relative simplicity of the Manegold/Gramling house all reflect a studied application of the Arts and Crafts style. Perhaps the most striking feature of the house is its asymmetrical, sweeping roof that is much longer on one side than the other. Also called a cat slide roof, it is a fine example of the massing that is strongly associated with the work of important Arts and Crafts style architects in England including Charles F.A. Voysey, Edwin Lutyens, Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin.

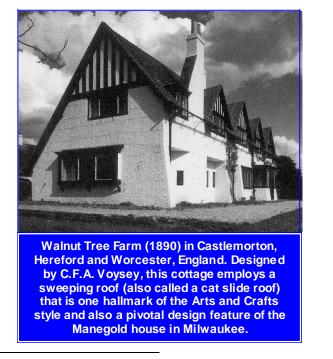
One of the important Arts and Crafts style details of the building are the peaks of the gables that gently slope upwards. It was a design technique favored by C.F.A. Voysey and to some observers it was meant to simulate the picturesque appearance of an old cottage roof that had sagged over the centuries but it is also attributed to the influence of Far Eastern architecture in Britain that, in turn influenced the architects here in Milwaukee. Other impressive exterior details of the house include the shaped rafter tails beneath the deeply projecting eaves that were built to support custom-made, half-round rain gutters. The tapestry brick used on the first

story of the house is laid in mortar that was carefully tinted to a complimentary warm brown color.

The original drawings for the house are in the permanent collection of the Wisconsin Architectural Archive, which is located in the Milwaukee's Central Public Library at 804 West Wisconsin Avenue. The drawings reveal that the exterior had remained nearly unchanged since the house was built. The fact that the plans were drawn on tracing paper (also known today as butter paper) rather than linen, which is more expensive and lasts longer, indicates that the architect was working within a very tight budget and probably did not consider it a major commission.⁴ Nevertheless, a master draftsman identified only by the initials "R.C.B" drew the meticulous plans that exist today. It is likely that Mr. Eschweiler provided thumbnail concept sketches for the house and then had his draftsmen work out the details and produce the working drawings. Bernard R. Bernardini, who worked as a draftsman, took out the building permit for the residence and it is vaguely possible that the initials on the plans were a play on his name. Mr. Bernardini was listed in city directories after 1913 as an architect. The original drawings also show that a significant revision of the original plans were made to accommodate the addition of a spacious maid's room beneath the staircase in an area that had originally been designed as a half-bath. The recent fire began in this room.

Boulevard Planning

The Manegold/Gramling house exemplifies the type of quality residence that was constructed in response to the ideals of Boulevard City Planning during the early twentieth century. The creation of a boulevard was a formal, legal action that had several implications and streets were carefully selected for the designation. The central intent of boulevard planning was to create a network of landscaped thoroughfares that would interconnect the city's expansive system of public parks. Layton Boulevard ostensibly connects Mitchell Park on the north with another park-like venue, Forest Home Cemetery on the south, which, incidentally was actually used for recreational activities for many years. Heavy trucking was prohibited on boulevards





Stanley Parker Cottage (1908) designed by Parker and Unwin for the renowned Letchworth Garden City development in England. Roughly contemporary with the Manegold house in Milwaukee, it incorporates many of the details of Voysey's earlier Arts and Crafts design work. Parker and Unwin's work was highly influential with architects in America.

⁴ Interview, 5/31/02, with Thomas Eschweiler, curator of the Wisconsin Architectural Archive and grandson of architect Alexander Eschweiler

and their park-like design made them ideal settings for prime residential construction that was also often subject to special deed restrictions requiring the use of premium building materials.

Relatively few boulevards were constructed in Milwaukee during the early twentieth century. Historic boulevards are scattered throughout the city but concentrated mainly on the east and west sides with Layton Boulevard being the only major south side example. The preservation of early boulevards is a priority for Wisconsin's State Historical Society, which has encouraged listing Wisconsin's best examples on the national register. Layton Boulevard was placed on the National Register in 1996 in response to the state's plan.

In sum, the Manegold/Gramling house is important as a pivotal structure in the city's premier early 20th century residential district on the South Side. Though it is decidedly not the best example of the architects' work, it is believed to be the only south side house designed by Alexander Eschweiler's prestigious architectural firm. The Manegold house is also a vital part of the Layton Boulevard National Register historic district that has retained most of the houses that were built there since the 1890s.

The Manegold and Gramling Families

Until the recent fire, the house had changed very little in nearly 90 years. Perhaps that's partly due to the fact that only three families owned it during the first 80 years of its history. Today the picturesque corner house gets its historic name from the first two families that made it their home prior to World War II. Typically a house takes its historic name from the original owner, but in this case the first owners lived there for a relatively short period of time and the second owners, the Gramling family, really established a historic identity for the property and are still remembered today in both published and verbal histories of the community.

The house was custom-built for Arthur Manegold, who at the time was a foreman for the Wisconsin Motor Manufacturing Company that made automobile engines at 49th and Burnham in West Milwaukee. The attractive, Arts and Crafts style house represented a substantial boost in prestige and investment for Mr. Manegold who had been living in a relatively modest, working-class neighborhood at 2568 North 21st Street on the city's north side. His future was probably looking especially bright when the house was being designed in 1913 because he apparently ordered a major change in the plans to accommodate a maid's room on the first floor.⁵ During the eight years that he and his wife Lenore lived in their fine Layton Boulevard house, Mr. Manegold advanced within the firm becoming a purchasing agent in 1916 during the industrial growth of World War I, and then moving on to the position of service manager in 1920. A year later, he and his wife apparently left the city and their names disappeared from listings in the Milwaukee city directory.

In 1922 Joseph J. Gramling, a prominent local physician and businessman, purchased the house. His wife had died in 1913 and he moved into in the house with his four young children. The former maid's room, which has its own separate side entry door, is believed to have served as a small home office for the doctor. Some older neighbors recall going to the doctor's house for medical treatment in the days before World War II. Dr. Gramling, however, also had an office, the *Gramling Clinic*, at 2740 West Forest Home Avenue in the late 1920s. Dr. Gramling apparently made no major changes to the house, according to building permit

⁵ Refer to the original Eschweiler floor plans and elevations in Wisconsin Architectural Archive file #WAA-01-895. 01/08/09 Jakubovich/word/Manegold/Gramling House
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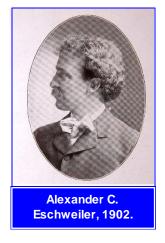
records, although he did have the frame garage built in 1926 that is still standing near the rear lot line.⁶

He and his brother Henry J., also a physician, owned the Fort Gramling Farms in Dousman where they raised purebred Holstein-Fresian cattle on 500 acres.⁷ Henry, incidentally, lived down the street from his brother at 2203 South Layton Boulevard and he was vice president of the Layton Park State Bank.

During the mid-1930s at the peak of the Great Depression, Dr. Gramling moved his office downtown to a prestigious new Art Deco style office building, the Mariner Tower, Suite 809, at 606 West Wisconsin Avenue. In 1940 city directories indicate that Dr. Gramling moved from Layton Boulevard to the Ambassador Hotel at 2308 West Wisconsin Avenue. His house then passed to his nephew Gregory, a lawyer, who lived there with his family until 1956.

The house was subsequently sold to Robert R. Jonas, who worked for Chour's boats and motors and ice skating studio at 1410 South 16th Street on the near South Side. He lived there at least until 1993 according to the city directories, but during the late 1990s the directories do not list an occupant. The last occupant in 2001 was George Peterson. The Federal National Mortgage Association (Fannie Mae) owned the house before it was recently purchased by Ascension Lutheran Congregation.

Architect



Alexander Eschweiler's prestigious architectural firm designed some of the city's finest residences, schools and commercial buildings during the early twentieth century. Known for their meticulous, scholarly work, many of the firm's buildings are now on the local and national registers. The enduring value of Mr. Eschweiler's architectural contributions to the community has earned his firm an exclusive spot in Milwaukee's history. After the practice went out of business in 1975, the Eschweiler family established the Wisconsin Architectural Archive in Milwaukee, which is a unique public repository for the firm's remarkable collection of 1,250 architectural drawings that include the plans for the Manegold/Gramling house. Over the years the collection has grown substantially to include sketches and working drawings done by many other architects, builders and engineers.

Alexander Chadbourne Eschweiler (1865-1940) was born in Boston but lived most of his early life with his parents in Michigan's upper peninsula where his German-immigrant father worked as a mining engineer. His mother, Hannah Lincoln Chadbourne, was from an established New England family. The young Eschweiler moved with his family to Milwaukee in 1882 and enrolled in Marquette University but dropped out after just one year and went to work as a clerk. He began a new job in 1886 as an architectural draftsman and found his calling; he left the city in 1887 to study architecture at Cornell University in New York State.⁸ After graduating from the ky League school in 1870, he returned to Milwaukee to work for the prestigious

⁶ Milwaukee Building Permit #25508 dated September 24, 1926. Filed at Milwaukee Development center, 809 N. Broadway, Milwaukee

⁷ History of Milwaukee, Volume III. Chicago: the S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, p. 510-511.

⁸ Henry and Elsie Withey. *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects*. Los Angeles: New Age Publishing co., 1956, p.199.

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architectural firm of H.C. Koch and Company. It was during this time that he reportedly worked on the plans for Milwaukee's Flemish Renaissance style City Hall at 200 East Wells Street.

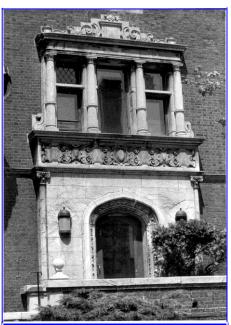
Mr. Eschweiler opened his own firm in 1893 after winning a design competition for the Milwaukee Downer College buildings that are still standing today at the northwest corner of North Downer and East Hartford Avenues. The firm's work captured national recognition when several early Eschweiler designs were published in the March 1905 issue of the *Architectural Record* magazine.⁹

The first three decades of the twentieth century were busy ones for the firm that developed an outstanding reputation for their original designs in English-inspired styles for fine residences. Representative examples of their design work include the Elizabeth Black Residence (1901) at 1537 North Prospect Avenue, The Robert Nunnemacher residence (1906) at 2409 North Wahl Avenue, and the Charles Allis House, (1910) at 1630 East Royal

Street. All are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Prominent commercial examples of the firm's work includes the Art Deco style office tower for the Wisconsin Gas Co. (1930) at 626 East Wisconsin Avenue and the Wisconsin Telephone Co. tower (1917-30) at 722 North Broadway. Both buildings are outstanding examples of early skyscraper design and are veritable icons of the downtown Milwaukee skyline.

After Mr. Eschweiler passed away, the practice was continued by his three sons, Alexander Jr., (d. 1951) Carl F. (d. 1977) and Theodore L. (d. 1966). The grandson of the founder, Thomas L. who now is curator of the Wisconsin Architectural Archive, worked for the family firm between 1954 and 1960. In 1966 he became director of construction for the Milwaukee Public Schools. In 1962 the firm took on a new partner and became Eschweiler, Eschweiler and Sielaff. More staff changes between 1966 and 1974 changed the firm's name to Eschweiler, Schneider and Associates, Inc. In 1975 when the firm finally dissolved it was known as Eschweiler and Schneider.

Over the years, Alexander Eschweriler and his talented team of construction professionals had a significant impact on the design of the city as it stands today. The timeless elegance and enduring popularity of the architect's work make it important and worthwhile to preserve his remaining buildings, including the Manegold/Gramling House on South Layton Boulevard.



Front entry of the Elizabeth Black House (1901) at 1537 North Prospect Avenue

⁹ Samuel Ilsley. "The Work of Alexander C. Eschweiler," in *Architectural Record*, v. 17, March 1905 pages 209-230.
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IX. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The Manegold/Gramling House meets two criteria (e-6 and e-9) for designation in the city's Historic Preservation Ordinance. It is pivotal to the architectural significance of the national register historic district in which it is located and the house is fine example of the residential design work of a very important Milwaukee architect, Alexander C. Eschweiler, and his firm.

- e-6 Its identification as the work of an artist, architect, interior designer, craftsperson, or master builder whose individual works have influenced the development of the City of Milwaukee, State of Wisconsin or the United States.
- Rationale: Criterion **e-6** is applied because the designers of the house, the firm of Alexander C. Eschweiler and Co., were some of the city's best architects during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Their work has contributed significantly to the architectural character of the city as it stands today.
 - e-9 Its unique location as a singular physical characteristic which represents an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community or the City of Milwaukee.
- *Rationale*: Criterion **e-9** is applied because the Arts and Crafts style house is one of the pivotal residences in the South Layton Boulevard National Register historic district.

REFERENCES

Architectural Record, volume 17, March 1905.

Peter Davey. Arts and Crafts Architecture. London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1980.

History of Milwaukee, City and County, Vol. III. Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Co. 1922.

Thomas L. Eschweiler. Interview, 5/31/02 with the grandson of architect Alexander Eschweiler and the curator of the Wisconsin Architectural Archive.

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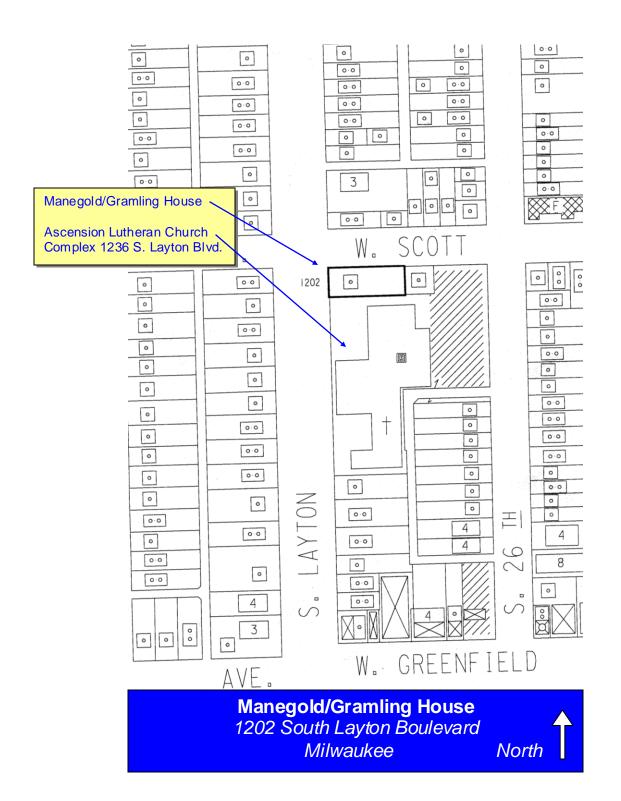
Milwaukee City Directories.

Notable Men of Wisconsin. Milwaukee: Williams Publishing Co., 1902.

David Watkin. English Architecture. New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press 1979.

Wisconsin Architectural Archive File No. WAA-01-895. Original working drawings for 1202 South Layton Boulevard, Arthur Manegold House, designed by the firm of Alexander C. Eschweiler. The archive is located at 804 West Wisconsin Avenue on the second floor of the Milwaukee Central Public Library.

Henry and Elsie Withey. *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects*. Los Angeles: New Age Publishing Co., 1956.



X. PRESERVATION GUIDELINES

The guidelines are primarily intended to preserve the exterior of the house and are not meant to inhibit or prevent ordinary repairs. Proper maintenance techniques are encouraged in the guidelines. The guidelines apply to the house and garage on the property, however the garage could be replaced with a new one that is designed to be compatible with the house (See New Construction in these guidelines). The preservation guidelines represent the principal concerns of the Commission regarding his historic designation. The commission reserves the right to make final decisions based upon particular design submissions.

A. Roofs

Retain the original roof shape. Avoid making changes to the roof shape that would alter the building height, roofline or pitch.

- B. Materials
 - 1. Masonry
 - a. Unpainted brick or stone should not be painted or covered. This is an alteration that would change the appearance of the house and could cause irreversible or expensive-to-repair damage if it was decided to remove the paint at a later date.
 - b. Exterior stucco repairs should be made with a mortar mixture of Portland cement and sand applied over metal lath. The use of contemporary bonding agents, reinforcing fibers and admixtures in making mortar for the stucco repairs is permitted.
 - c. Deteriorated mortar joints in the exterior brick walls should be tuckpointed using mortar that duplicates the original in terms of color, style, texture and strength. See the masonry chapters in the books, *As Good As Newor Good for Business* for explanations on why the use of a proper mortar mix is crucial to making lasting repairs that will not contribute to new deterioration of the masonry. Replaced mortar joints should be tooled to match the style of the original joints.
 - d. Clean masonry only when necessary and with the gentlest method possible. Sandblasting and other abrasive blasting to brick or stone surfaces is prohibited. These methods of cleaning erode the surface of the material and accelerate deterioration and the accumulation of dirt on the exterior of the building. Avoid the indiscriminate use of chemical products that could have an adverse reaction with the masonry materials (i.e., use acid cleaners with caution on limestone sills and trim). Please note that even when water blasting alone is used at very high pressure, it can cause irreversible damage to brick and stone. Because of the inherent dangers of pressure washing and chemical cleaning it should be done by experienced individuals.
 - e. Repair or replace deteriorated material with new materials that duplicate the old as closely as possible.

2. Wood/Metal

- a. Retain original material, whenever possible. Avoid removing architectural features that are essential to maintaining the building's character and appearance. The wooden rafter tails, window hoods and wooden bargeboards along the eaves are important features and should be retained.
- b. Retain or replace deteriorated material with new material that duplicates the appearance of the old as closely as possible. Avoid covering architectural features with modern materials that are incompatible with the historic character of the building. The installation of new vinyl trim or siding is not allowed.

C. Windows and Doors

- 1. Retain existing window and door openings. Retain the existing configuration of panes, sash, surrounds and sills, except as necessary to restore to the original condition. Avoid making additional openings or changes in existing fenestration by enlarging or reducing window or door openings to fit new stock window sash or new stock door sizes. Avoid changing the size or configuration of windowpanes or sash.
- 2. Respect the building's stylistic period. If the replacement of doors or window sash is necessary, the replacement should duplicate the appearance and design of the original window sash or doors. Many window sash were destroyed during the recent fire, and new wood replacement sash should match sizes and configurations that were specified in the architects' original drawings. Avoid filling-in or covering up openings with incompatible materials such as concrete or glass block. Avoid the installation of modern window units with glazing configurations that are incompatible with the style of the building (e.g., installing Colonial style windows in place of original Arts and Crafts style double hung windows). The remaining original wooden windows should be retained and repaired if at all possible.
- D. Trim and Ornamentation

Existing trim or ornamentation should not be changed except as necessary to restore the building to its original condition. Replacement features should match the original member in scale, design and appearance, but not necessarily in material.

E. Additions

Additions are permitted with the approval of the Historic Preservation Commission. Ideally an addition should either compliment or have a neutral effect upon the historic character of the building. The commission will review the compatibility of the addition with the historic house and may consider the following details: Window size and placement, scale, design, materials, roof configuration, height and the degree to which the addition impacts the principal elevation(s) of the house.

F. Signs

The installation of any permanent exterior sign requires the approval of the Commission. Approval will be based on the compatibility of the proposed sign with the architectural character of the building.

G. Site features

New plant materials, fencing, paving and lighting fixtures should respect and enhance the historic architectural character of the building.

H. Guidelines for New Construction that is separate from the house (i.e., garage, utility building, garden structure, etc.)

It is important that any new construction on the site will enhance and be compatible with the character of the house. The design of a new garage is important because it would be highly visible and face West Scott Street.

1. Location and massing of new construction

New construction must respect the historic setting of the house. It should be designed to maintain the appearance of the house from the street as a freestanding structure. A new, replacement garage should ideally be located at the back of the lot near the east property line.

2. Scale

A new building on the lot should be designed to appear as a secondary structure that complements rather than competes with or overwhelms the architecture of the house.

3. Materials

To enhance and complement the architecture of the house, the building materials used in any new construction project should generally be compatible with the house's colors, textures, proportions and combinations of cladding materials. Because the house is finished with quality, long-lasting, repairable materials such as stucco, wood, brick and stone, those materials are preferable for new construction on the property.

I. Guidelines for Demolition

Although demolition is not encouraged and is generally not permissible, there are instances when demolition may be acceptable if approved by the Historic Preservation Commission. The Commission shall take the following guidelines, with those found in subsection 9(h) of the ordinance, into consideration when reviewing demolition requests.

1. Condition

Demolition requests may be granted when it can be clearly demonstrated that the condition of a building or a portion thereof is such that it constitutes an immediate threat to health and safety and is beyond hope of repair.

2. Importance

Consideration will be given to whether or not the building is of historical or architectural significance or displays a quality of material and craftsmanship that does not exist in other structures in the area.

3. Location

Consideration will be given to whether or not the building contributes to the neighborhood and the general street appearance and has a positive effect on other buildings in the area.

4. Potential for Restoration

Consideration will be given to whether or not the building is beyond economically feasible repair.

5. Additions

Consideration will be given to whether or not the proposed demolition is a later addition that is not in keeping with original design of the structure or does not contribute to its character.