



Sherman Park Community Association

Residents Committed to our Diverse Urban Community

Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission
City of Milwaukee
200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202

March 4th 2014

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Re file #141675
Washington High School Windows

Dear Commission Members,

Sherman Park is proud of its historic areas. In the past we have spoken for retaining and restoring the original windows in Townsend Street School. If anything, our concern for Washington High should be even greater. It's presence and participation in the streetscape of historic Sherman Boulevard is critical and its' handsome architecture, in the English Collegiate Gothic style, is outstanding (Van Ryn & DeGelleke 1916). Additionally, among its graduates are many important figures representing decades of Wisconsin History. Among the most notable are Senator Herb Kohl, Governor Dreyfus, Bud Selig, and Gene Wilder. Considering that Washington was a prestigious school that had for a long time drawn students from surrounding counties, many who boarded in the nearby neighborhood, there are certainly other important graduates as yet uncounted.

Having reviewed the proposal for replacement of windows and doors, our concern is focused on the original structure, more so than the additions. We feel that as much original fabric should be retained as possible. Our strong preference is to see the original windows restored. Their longevity is proof of the stability and extended service of the old growth woods used. Sustainability being a concern, this is the "greenest," approach.

If replacement windows are deemed absolutely necessary, they should be of wood construction on the original building, front and back; the sash having true muntins and lights with substantially the appearance of the originals. Applied grills even if somehow they attain the correct appearance, often have dubious survivability. They have been known to separate from the surface on which they have been mounted, and are then prone to being discarded. Substitute materials including metals should be avoided if possible. Expert opinion has said, the term "low maintenance, more likely means – can't be fixed."

Doors on the original part of the building should be of traditional paneled appearance. There should be lights in the upper portion of doors where they would have been expected historically, having functioned to prevent those exiting from whacking someone entering.

If the beautiful "W," leaded glass central entrance transom is not to be returned to its place at this time, it should be retained and carefully preserved for possible future reinstallation.



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This is not a building that should be treated casually. It has too much meaning for the neighborhood, the City, and the State. We encourage Milwaukee Public Schools to act with care accordingly. Protecting a landmark such as Washington High School has its intrinsic value, but also should be seen as part of MPS' essential educational mission.

Respectfully,



Barry Givens, President
SPCA Board



Geoff Grohowski, Chair
SPCA Housing Committee