



Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

Living with History

HPC meeting date: 4/20/2015

Ald. Nik Kovac District: 3

Staff reviewer: Carlen Hatala

PTS #101858

Property	2104 E. LAFAYETTE PL. North Point South Historic District	
Owner/Applicant	MARY BETH GERACI FKA MARY BETH BORN 2104 E LAFAYETTE PL MILWAUKEE WI 53202	Judith Stark 5438 N. Pauline's Wood Drive Nashota, WI 53058 Phone: (262) 367-6374
Proposal	Applicant proposes to enlarge landing at 2104 East Lafayette with bluestone paving and construct an 18-inch seat wall at the entrance. The entrance walk will be paved with bluestone and a bluestone paved area will be added between the house and the garage. There will be an arbor at the entrance to this paved area and wooden pergola at the rear with a 6-foot trellis backdrop. Applicant also proposes to install a 4-foot metal fence around the property, with gates at each primary entrance and a portion of the fence removable for snow storage.	
Staff comments	<p>This building was constructed in 1937 as one of two duplexes that replaced the Thomas Gill House (1906). Here there are two dwelling units, one with an entrance on East Lafayette Place (2104) and one on Lake Drive (2010). The building sits on a corner. The proposed additions to the 2104 East Lafayette front of the property include cladding the front landing with bluestone, adding a low 18-inch tall seat wall with 18-inch wide bluestone cap, laying a bluestone front walk and adding some plantings to frame the front landing. The formal landscape is appropriate for the formality of the Georgian/Colonial Revival house.</p> <p>The area between the house and the garage is to be paved with dry laid bluestone and will serve as a private retreat for the owners who have no rear private yard. The entry to this space will feature a curved arbor and the rear will feature a lattice screen and pergola.</p> <p>As part of this project, a 4-foot tall metal fence will be installed around the perimeter of the property. It will feature two gates, one at each entrance to the duplex. The portion of the fence along the edge of the driveway will be removable to allow for snow storage in winter.</p>	

Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of the front entrance proposals and the landscape treatment between the house and the garage.

Fencing has always been a sensitive issue in the North Point North and North Point South historic districts. Part of the character of the neighborhood has been the open sweep of green lawn, uninterrupted by hedges and fencing. It was remarked upon that this park like setting is what made this neighborhood different from others in the city. The preservation guidelines to the district state "The traditional landscape treatment of the building lots and the period streetlights contribute to the maintenance of the district's traditional residential character" and "Use traditional landscaping, fencing, signage and street lighting that is compatible with the character and period of the district. Avoid introducing landscape features, fencing, street lighting or signage that are inappropriate to the character of the district."

However, there have been exceptions to this character, with some fencing and enclosures constructed at the time the houses were built and long before the historic district was created:

Villa Terrace 2220 North Terrace Avenue built in 1924

Sawyer-Vogel House at 2221 North Terrace Avenue built in 1905

Slocum House 2675 N. Terrace Avenue built in 1931

Other fences have been allowed as exceptions by the HPC such as at Hathaway-Brumder House at 2105 East Lafayette Place built 1887 (a salvaged 19th century fence was installed)

Albert F. Gallun House at 2014 East Lafayette Place built 1897 (a wall with short fencing was installed across the front of the house)

Jackson Bloodgood Kemper House at 2006 East Lafayette Place built 1895, (approved by the HPC but never installed)

Paul's staff report for 2006 East Lafayette Place reads: "Typically front yard fences are discouraged in the North Point South historic district, although in this case the neighboring two properties to the east already have front yard fences, which is a rarity in the district. Approval of this fence must not be considered a general approval for front yard fences in the rest of the district."

The HPC did not consider approval of the above fences to be a blanket approval for all front yard fences that are proposed in the North Point North and North Point South Historic Districts. The factors to consider included:

Was there an existing fence on the property

Were there fences on the adjacent properties

Was this a corner location

Was there a special need by the owner that required the fencing

Was the design of the fence appropriate to the house and district

Could the fence height be 3 feet instead of 4 feet

Could landscape design (hedge/shrubs) serve as a suitable substitute

Staff finds that the proposed fencing in this case is simple and unobtrusive. One thing it lacks in comparison to the other estate-style fencing is the installation of corner piers/posts , and regularly spaced piers/posts along the length of the fence. This would make the fence more substantial and give it more presence. Piers at other locations have been masonry but like the example at 2134 North Terrace, the corner piers and regular supports can be made of metal.

Conditions

All work must conform to the drawings as submitted.

The new seat wall at the front landing must be constructed of either bluestone or brick to match the house.

The arbor, lattice screen and pergola will be of decay resistant wood.

Approval of the fence will not be considered a general approval for front yard fences in the rest of the district.

Previous HPC action**Previous Council action**