



## Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report—Amended

LIVING WITH HISTORY

**HPC meeting date: 11/6/2017**  
**Ald. Milele Coggs District: 6**  
**Staff reviewer: Tim Askin**  
**PTS #114399**

**Property** 100 W. BROWN ST. Brewers Hill Historic District

**Owner/Applicant** CITY OF MILW Mr. Gregory Baer  
809 N BROADWAY 234 N Broadway #414  
MILWAUKEE WI 53202 Milwaukee, WI 53202  
Phone: (414) 276-0310

**Proposal** Project consists of a new house with an attached garage on a corner lot in the Brewers Hill Historic District. It has a Temple and Wing form with strong Greek Revival character and subtle Italianate influences.

The design features a typical Greek Revival Temple-front (two stories with front gable) facing Brown Street. A wing to the east is setback to allow a 6-foot deep wraparound porch with simple wood detailing and chamfered columns and pierced skirting. The main entry resides in the porch at the inside corner of the setback.

Roof is a three-part cross-gable over the two main wings and the garage wing. The main gable fronting Brown Street features an 8/12 pitch while the cross gable is 6/12 and the garage is 10/12. The roofline along the 1<sup>st</sup> Street frontage is decidedly complex. Major rooflines feature a large fascia board connecting to corner boards.

Windows are 2/2, a majority of which are 36"x78". Others are paired in smaller sizes as needed to fit interior conditions. These are primarily on secondary elevations. A few secondary elevation windows are awning style, but retain a four-pane appearance.

All is set on a gray, modular brick foundation (not veneered). The porches have been redrawn separately from the main drawings and the revised version consists of chamfered columns and simple balusters.

### Staff comments

#### *Overall*

The design is refined, appropriate, and carefully thought through. It would blend well with the surrounding Brewers Hill neighborhood. Staff has no objections to the design at this point, with the exception of light fixtures. The design and siting are entirely consistent with guidelines. There is minor concern with the exterior light fixtures, but that can be addressed by staff at a later date.

#### **Materials**

##### *Roof*

Roofing will be Certainteed Landmark (a light shadow product), with color to be determined. This is acceptable as proposed.

##### *Windows*

Windows are proposed as double-hung 2/2 windows and one circular window at a gable peak. An aluminum-clad Marvin product has been specified (Ultimate Double Hung Next Generation or similar). The Commission has never approved clad windows on any single-family residential structure anywhere in Brewers Hill whether new construction or not.

**Staff comments  
(cont.)**

Clad windows, unless hand-painted after the fact, cannot match appropriate color schemes. No manufacturer makes a unit where the sash, sill, and frame, are appropriately differentiated in color to give the window its proper depth.

Clad windows also have a history of water issues. The extraordinary number of seams creates a likelihood of a leak in one of them at one point, often within 10 years, but rarely more than 30 years. Further, "clad wood window manufacturers build the sash around the glass making it virtually impossible to replace the glazing."<sup>1</sup>

*Siding*

James Hardie Smooth Lap siding is proposed for the clapboards. The Commission has previously only approved this for secondary structures such as garages and sheds. It is certainly a better match to wood than the vinyl originally proposed for this project. However, it is not a wood product.

Additionally, all butt joints between boards must be flashed, with room for expansion and contraction, this does not result in a finished, smooth surface that happens more readily with wood. Price is can be comparable to real wood, but installation costs are higher because of weight.

Research conducted by staff indicates that spruce or eastern white pine would be cheaper than the hardieplank prices quoted by the applicants.

*Porch*

Staff is not opposed to the synthetic porch decking, if the porch is trimmed such that the edge of the synthetic boards is not visible. However, in October 2017 the Commission directed an applicant in Brewers Hill to use all wood decking on a new construction garage. Most of the decking on this project would be directly street-facing. Approving the synthetic decking would be unfair to this applicant and inconsistent with numerous prior decisions.

The proposed gray color will read as painted wood for at least a few years. This is a much better option than the wood-toned colors. Nonetheless, these materials make poor stair treads on primary elevations, their side profiles do not adequately imitate real wood and their limited compressive strength requires substantially more stringers than natural wood.

*Trim*

Selected trim will also be an Azek product, this is the least concerning application of a synthetic material on this project. Nonetheless, it remains as a plastic-based product that has not previously been approved.

*Columbus "Alternative Materials" Study*

The Columbus study is a comparative report. It is not analytical and does not make recommendations. Their study was not comprehensive and primarily involved guidelines that the study's authors had written themselves in smaller cities. It also indicated that wood trim tends to be required when modern siding materials are permitted.

*Precedents*

Staff has attached extensive file research on past approvals of new construction in Brewers Hill in an appendix. There is a consistent history of all-wood for approvals of new construction homes and major additions. There is also a concern that anyone who previously agreed to wood could have standing to sue the city for inconsistency in its processes and procedures.

**Recommendation**      Recommend Denial

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.woodworkingnetwork.com/wood-blogs/industrial-woodworker/production-industry-guest-blogs/Historic-Wood-Windows-Offer-Long-Term-Benefits-Over-Aluminum-Clad-163778016.html>

**Conditions**

If the Commission wishes to find a way to approve the project, it could be done in the two following ways:

Conditions for approval based on Brewers Hill precedent

1. All wood siding
2. All wood windows. Shop drawings to be submitted to staff.
3. All wood window trim.
4. All wood decking.
5. All wood trim
6. Approve exterior lights separately.

To approve with limited use of artificial materials:

1. Hardieplank Artisan Siding on secondary elevations that do not face the street, standard hardieplank is too thin to create the shadow lines created by thicker wood. Wood siding is to be required on the street-facing elevations.
2. All wood windows. Shop drawings to be submitted to staff for approval.
3. All wood trim on all elevations
4. Allow composite decking for rear elevations, but require wood on the front
5. Approve exterior lights separately

**Previous HPC  
action**

Held over from November 2017

**Previous Council  
action**

Appendix

**NEW INFILL BUILDINGS AND MAJOR ADDITIONS IN THE BREWERS HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT**

**HOUSES**

ADDRESS	DATE	WOOD SIDING	WOOD TRIM	WOOD WINDOWS
1840 N 1 <sup>ST</sup>	1993	YES	YES	YES
112 E Brown Major Addition	1993	Yes	Yes	Yes
1933 N 1 <sup>ST</sup>	1994	YES	YES	YES
1941 N 1 <sup>st</sup>	1995	Yes	Yes	Yes
1850 N 1 <sup>st</sup>	2000	Yes	Yes	Yes
1906 N 2 <sup>nd</sup> Three condo structures	2002	Yes	Yes	Yes
2017 N 1 <sup>st</sup> Major Addition	2003	Yes	Yes	Yes
116 W Lloyd Rebuild on old foundation NOT BUILT	2004	Yes	Yes	Yes
116 W Lloyd Modify design NOT BUILT	--	Yes	Yes	Yes
2018 N 2 <sup>nd</sup>	2008	Yes	Yes	Yes

**GARAGES**

ADDRESS	DATE	WOOD SIDING	WOOD TRIM	WOOD WINDOWS
1934 N 2 <sup>ND</sup>	1994	Yes	Yes	Yes
1938 N 2 <sup>nd</sup>	1997	Yes	Yes	(No windows)
1840 N 1 <sup>st</sup>	2005	Yes	Yes	Yes
2104 N 1 <sup>st</sup>	2007	Yes	Yes	Yes
2034 N 1 <sup>st</sup>	2016	No (alley-facing)	No	Yes
2019 N Palmer	2018?	Yes	Yes	Yes