

STAFF REPORT: 9/13/2023 REGULAR MEETING

PREPARED BY: D. RIEDEN

APPLICATION NUMBER: #23-8520

VIOLATION NUMBER: #764, #765

ADDRESS: 1490 IROQUOIS

HISTORIC DISTRICT: INDIAN VILLAGE

APPLICANT: KRISTY THORNTON

PROPERTY OWNERS: TAMMY SOTO & MIKE WONG

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 8/21/2023

DATES OF STAFF SITE VISITS: 8/1/23, 8/3/23, 8/30/23

SCOPE: REPLACE CLAY TILE ON CARRIAGE HOUSE ROOF WITH ASPHALT SHINGLES, REMOVE EVERGREEN TREE (WORK COMPLETED WITHOUT APPROVAL)

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The parcel at 1490 Iroquois includes two substantial buildings of complementary design, the main house and a carriage house at the rear. The main house was erected in 1913, the two and half-story dwelling once featured a clay-tiled roof, which after a fire prior to September 1986, was replaced with an asphalt roof. A large brick chimney with three chimney pots, overlooks the mansard roof with exposed rafters along the eaves. The red brick cladding features stone banding between the two stories. Pairs of double hung windows line the second story, while a ribbon of 6/1 divided lite windows with wood beam trim is featured on the first floor. Half-timbering roof and matching timber columns line the recessed porch and entrance. A brick lined walkway with brick and stone steps descends from the porch between a foundation planting of evergreens through the partially shaded front lawn to the main public sidewalk.

The brick-paved driveway leads to a sizeable, two-story carriage house to the rear that, until recently, had original clay tile roof that once matched the house and is the subject of this proposal. The hipped roof features extended eaves over the red brick cladding of the house. The carriage house's east wall runs along the alley's brick wall with metal gates that creates a courtyard-like space on the north side of the building. A metal awning overhangs the series of carriage doors and a side door that sports its own address above the wood and glass paneling. At the south elevation, and only visible from the alley, an upper balcony on this carriage house has a wood railing that is also addressed in this application.



Site Photo 1, by Staff August 30, 2023: (West) front elevation of house, showing location of removed evergreen at southwest corner of the house, work completed without approval.



Site Photo 2, by Staff August 3, 2023: (North) side elevation of house and carriage house at rear, showing removed roof materials, work completed without approval.

This property has the following HDC approvals and violations for work done without approval:

- Violations: Removal of carriage house clay tile roof. Removal of front yard evergreen tree.
- September 1986, HDC COA (Certificate of Approval): Replace main house clay tile roof with asphalt shingles.
- March 2016, HDC COA: Replace main house asphalt shingle roof with asphalt shingles.
- August 2023, HDC COA: Remove overgrown yew shrubs at rear of property.



Site Photo 3, by Staff August 1, 2023: East elevation of carriage house, showing removed roof materials.



Aerial of Parcel # 14012174.



Site Photo 4, by Staff, August 1, 2023: Southeast elevation of carriage house, showing removed roof materials and balcony railing.



Site Photo 5, by Staff, August 1, 2023: Showing clay tile shattered on the ground in the alley.

PROPOSAL

The proposal consists of three areas of work:

replacement of the carriage house clay tile roof with asphalt shingle roof, replacement of the carriage house balcony wood railing with in-kind material, and removal of an evergreen tree at the front yard. *(See also submitted materials.)*

CARRIAGE HOUSE ROOF DETAIL

- Remove and dispose all carriage house clay tile shingles
- Repair and replace wood roof
- Install ice and water shield along eaves up 6' and in valleys, tarpaper and ventilate to code
- Install new Landmark Pro, dimensional asphalt shingles, color "Red Oak"
- Install new cap on all hips and ridges, new ridge vent on all ridges, and new pipe covers on all pipes
- Gutters, fascia and soffits will remain untouched.

CARRIAGE HOUSE RAILING DETAIL

- Remove carriage house wood railing and replace in-kind with same design, and with pressure-treated lumber to match existing.

LANDSCAPE DETAIL

- Remove large evergreen tree, identified as a juniper, by a certified arborist.
- The tree was identified as diseased and planted too close to the house by the certified arborist.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

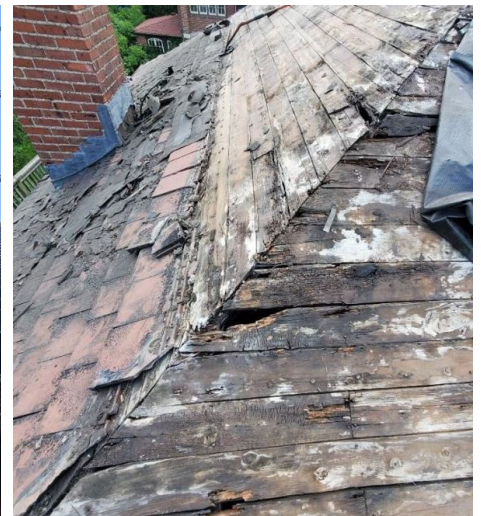
- The Indian Village Historic District was established in 1970.
- The main dwelling, built in 1913, had a clay tile roof and the carriage house, built in 1922, had matching clay tile, whose manufacturer was Ludowici Celadon Co. (*see detail photo 1*).
- From HDC staff hard files, photos and documents show that damage had occurred to the main house's roof in 1983, with what appears to be a fire. (*See site photo 6.*) In 1986, the City issued an interdepartmental complaint about the city-owned property being vacant and subject to vandalism, requesting the property to be securely boarded. Also in 1986, City and HDC COA records show a permit to replace the main house clay tile roof with asphalt shingles. The main house's roof was then replaced again in 2016 with asphalt shingles. During this period, no mention of the carriage house roof was found.



Site Photo 6, by HDC Staff, 1983: Showing damaged roof of main house at south elevation.

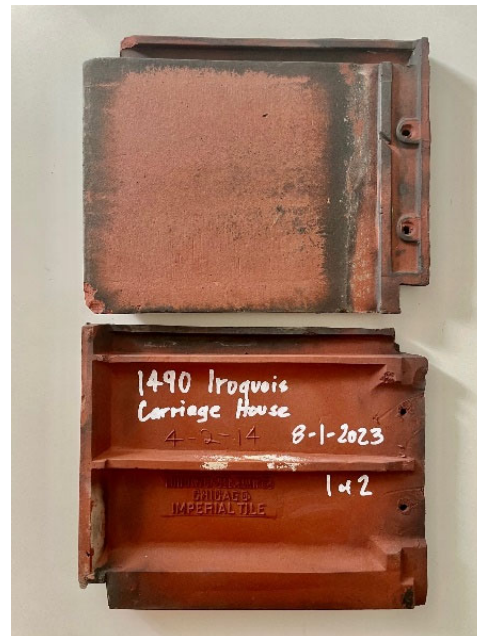


Site Photo 6, by Applicant, date unknown: Showing clay tile roof prior to removal.



Site Photo 7, by Applicant, August 1, 2023: Showing some clay tile roof in place and damaged roof conditions.

- Although the original house has lost its clay tile roof due to damage, it is staff’s opinion that the carriage house is of such a significant structure, scale, and architectural detailing that the clay tile roof itself is a distinctive character defining feature of the property and the district.
- Staff requested the applicant to provide any evidence of roof damage prior to the removal of the clay tile roof, including a professional estimate, photos, and a description of the conditions. Some photos were provided that showed roof conditions after the tiles were removed, one showed prior conditions (*See Photo 6*). Staff did not receive an expert opinion on the ability to carefully remove the tiles for replacement, but staff did receive an estimate for this cost, which is \$135,000 by Detroit Cornice & Slate Co., dated August 31, 2023, which is after the tiles have been already removed. The counter proposal presented by the applicant is from the applicant’s company, Detroit Build, dated July 20, 2023, at \$15,461. Staff found that these estimates are comparable to other roof work projects of this size. However, staff has the opinion that sufficient evidence of saving the clay tile units themselves for reuse was not demonstrated.
- Staff received an excerpt from an inspection report regarding the safety concerns for the balcony railing on the carriage house. Staff has no issues with the initial proposal but offers the opinion that the wood railing must be painted or solid stained so as not to create a “deck” impression of this feature.
- Staff requested the applicant to provide a statement from a certified arborist regarding the removal of the evergreen tree at the front yard, which was completed without approval. The applicant supplied a note from a certified arborist at Singing Tree LLC, who stated that the 40+ year juniper was planted very close to the house and had evidence of a foliar fungal disease. Staff would recommend approval for this removal and agrees with the arborist recommendation to plant an appropriate replacement.



Detail Photo 1, by Staff August 1 2023, showing original clay tile recovered from the carriage house, laying in the alley.



Site Photo 8, by Applicant, date unknown, south elevation: Showing existing carriage house railing.

ISSUES

- The removal of the carriage house tile roof and evergreen tree in this application was completed without Historic District Commission (HDC) approval.
- No documentation establishing that the original conditions of the clay tile units themselves were beyond repair was submitted or available. It is staff’s opinion that the roof’s repair could have been performed by removing the clay tile to repair the roof where required and replacing the tile. The condition of the clay tile with new individual pieces has not yet been shown clearly as “unrepairable”.
- Per the above estimates provided, the roof could have been repaired in kind, thus preserving the distinctive, character-defining slate roof. As in similar cases, new tiles can be procured to replace any broken or missing pieces.
- Staff identifies both the removal of clay tile roofing and the installation of asphalt roofing are inappropriate as they introduce a material and design that destroys the historic character of the property (Standards 2 and 3), removed distinctive features that have acquired historic significance in their own

right (Standards 4 and 5), does not match the historic character-defining feature of the roof (removed without permit) in design, texture, and other visual properties (Standard 6).

RECOMMENDATION

Section 21-2-78, Determination of Historic District Commission

Recommendation: Replace Clay Tile On Carriage House Roof With Asphalt Shingles, (Work Completed Without Approval)

Staff finds that the replacement of distinctive character-defining clay tile of the carriage house with asphalt shingles does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the following reasons:

- No documentation establishing that the original condition of the clay tile units themselves were beyond repair.
- Repair could have been performed by removing the clay tile to repair the roof where required and replacing the tile with new tiles procured as necessary to replace missing/damaged units.
- Replacing the historic clay tile with flat asphalt shingles drastically alters the appearance and features of the structure.

Staff therefore recommends that the Commission issue a Denial for the above work items, as it do not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, specifically Standards:

2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.

6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

Recommendation 2: Replace Carriage House Railing, Remove Evergreen Tree (Work Completed Without Approval)

It is staff's opinion that the replacement of carriage house railing and removal of the evergreen tree is appropriate. Staff therefore recommends the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work as proposed because it meets the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation and the Indian Village Historic District Elements of Design.

Staff recommends the COA be issued with following conditions:

- The applicant provides HDC staff with a paint or solid stain color for the railing.
- The applicant provides HDC staff with a replacement tree species and location for the property.
- The applicant provides HDC staff with a review of the above items before installation.