

STAFF REPORT: OCTOBER 11, 2023 MEETING

PREPARED BY: A. DYE

APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2023-00024

ADDRESS: 2244 WABASH

HISTORIC DISTRICT: CORKTOWN

APPLICANT: JILL BLEEDA

PROPERTY OWNER: JILL BLEEDA

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: SEPTEMBER 18, 2023

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: SEPTEMBER 12, 2023

**SCOPE: DEMOLISH REAR OF HOUSE* (WORK COMPLETED WITHOUT APPROVAL);
ERECT REAR ADDITION**

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The structure at 2244 Wabash is a single-story wood-framed dwelling. The building is rectangular in shape and has a front-facing gable. Clapboard siding covers the front and south-side elevations, while the north-side elevation is covered with wide flat boards (which might be late 19th century or early 20th century sheathing to which the clapboard siding was attached). The façade includes a single-entry door and a wide window opening, both of which have decorative surrounds and contemporary styled hoods. The remaining details include a small circular window near the peak of the gable, a wide, flat rake board and dimensional dentil trim which is placed on the north side only. A small raised front porch consists of a concrete pad which sits on concrete block.



The front elevation at Wabash. Staff photo, September 12, 2023.



The south-side elevation. Staff photo, September 12, 2023.

The rear extensions of the house and side wing were recently demolished without HDC approval; a large deep hole currently covers this area of the lot.

PROPOSAL

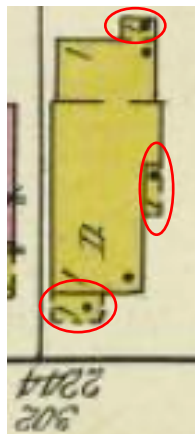
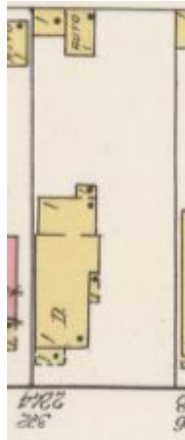
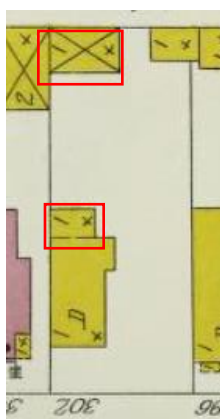
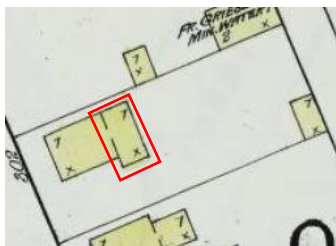
The property owner demolished the rear portion of the house and proposes to erect an addition that will extend directly from the existing rear corners of the house. The addition will be faced with wood siding to match the existing siding; matching dimensional asphalt shingles will be installed on the new roof. A new concrete block foundation for the existing house will be laid, in addition to the foundation for the new construction. The lawn will be regraded to remove the raised yard and a new front and side porch will be erected.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Corktown Historic District was established in 1984.

Sanborn symbols

- 1 Single story structure
- X Shingle roof
- D Dwelling
- Composite roof



Staff comments on Sanborn maps:

--The location and number of windows were not noted on any map.
 --The composite roof symbol is shown at the three porches on the 1921 map, identifying each porch had a roof.



1884 Sanborn

The drawing depicts a wood framed structure with a wider than deep rear area that possibly was an addition.

1897 Sanborn

The former addition is integrated into the body of the structure (now identified as a dwelling). Another rear addition was erected, as well as another outbuilding at the alley.

1921 Sanborn

It is possible the rear addition was enlarged, and a front, side and rear porch were added.

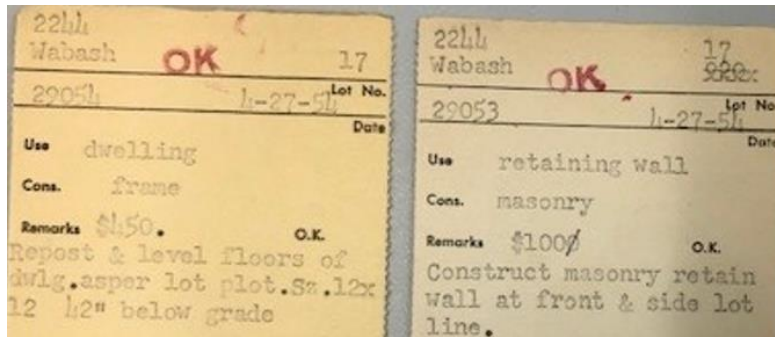
1921-1950 Sanborn

No changes to dwelling; changes to rear of lot structures, first shown in 1921 remain in place, but not visible in this image.

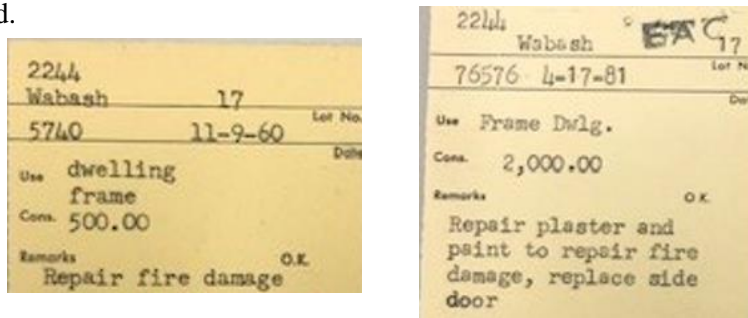
2023 Google aerial

It appears the additions shown in the 1897 and 1921 maps are gone, and a bay window had been added. All rear lot structures are gone. Staff located seven permits for rear yard commercial parking, beginning in 1954.

- Two permits were issued in April 1954 to:
 - Level the dwelling's floors and install supporting posts below grade, and
 - Construct masonry retaining walls at the front and side lot line, which in staff's opinion hints to the raising of the yard.



- Two permit cards document that fires occurred in the dwelling. The 1981 permit mentions the side door was replaced.



Designation photo – view from Wabash showing front and south-side elevations, 1984. HDAB.

No changes to the footprint of the pre-1884 addition are present (i.e., bay window).

Pre-1921 rear addition is visible and has a shed roof.

- Aluminum siding covered the house at time of designation. The front elevation's window opening appears to have a non-historic window. The pointed window in the side gable is a shape that was common on Gothic Revival structures. Staff doesn't know when this window was removed and replaced with a rectangular fixed window.

- In 2008, the Commission approved an application for the following scope of work: removal of aluminum siding at the front and side of the house and replace with wood siding to match, install two doors, replace three vinyl windows to match, build hood over door, paint building A:1 and trim A:8 & A:9. There are no documents in the paper file to offer a detailed scope of work.



Google street view, July 2009.

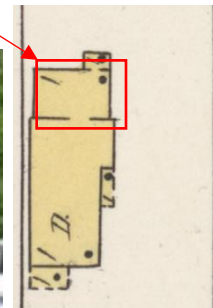
- The 2009 image shows the property as exterior work was nearing completion (note: the boards in the bay walls are not yet painted). Staff doesn't know if the bay window was part of the 2008 scope of work, or if the front façade's window/door hoods matched the Commission's approval. It is clear, however, that the bay window is not a historic feature.
- Staff doesn't know when the shed roof rear extension was demolished; however, it was gone prior to June 2009 based on the below photo.



*Google street view, June 2009.
The blue tarp covers the area where the rear extension had been located.*



*July 2018.
Although hard to see, it appears as though a wall was erected (and windows installed) to enclose the space where the extension had been.*



1921 Sanborn.

ISSUES

- The demolished side wing was part of the 1884 structure and a distinctive character-defining feature of the house. The applicant didn't submit sufficient visual or physical information to substantiate that the side wing was so deteriorated that it necessitated its entire removal, rather than completing repairs to the foundation and internal structural supports.

Staff obtained photos from BSEED's Dangerous Buildings Division that show the condition of the rear wall prior to the recent demolition of the rear section of the house. This view shows the historic gable's wood sheathing and rake board were intact. Staff believes this section of the house could have had temporary support while the structural issues were corrected.

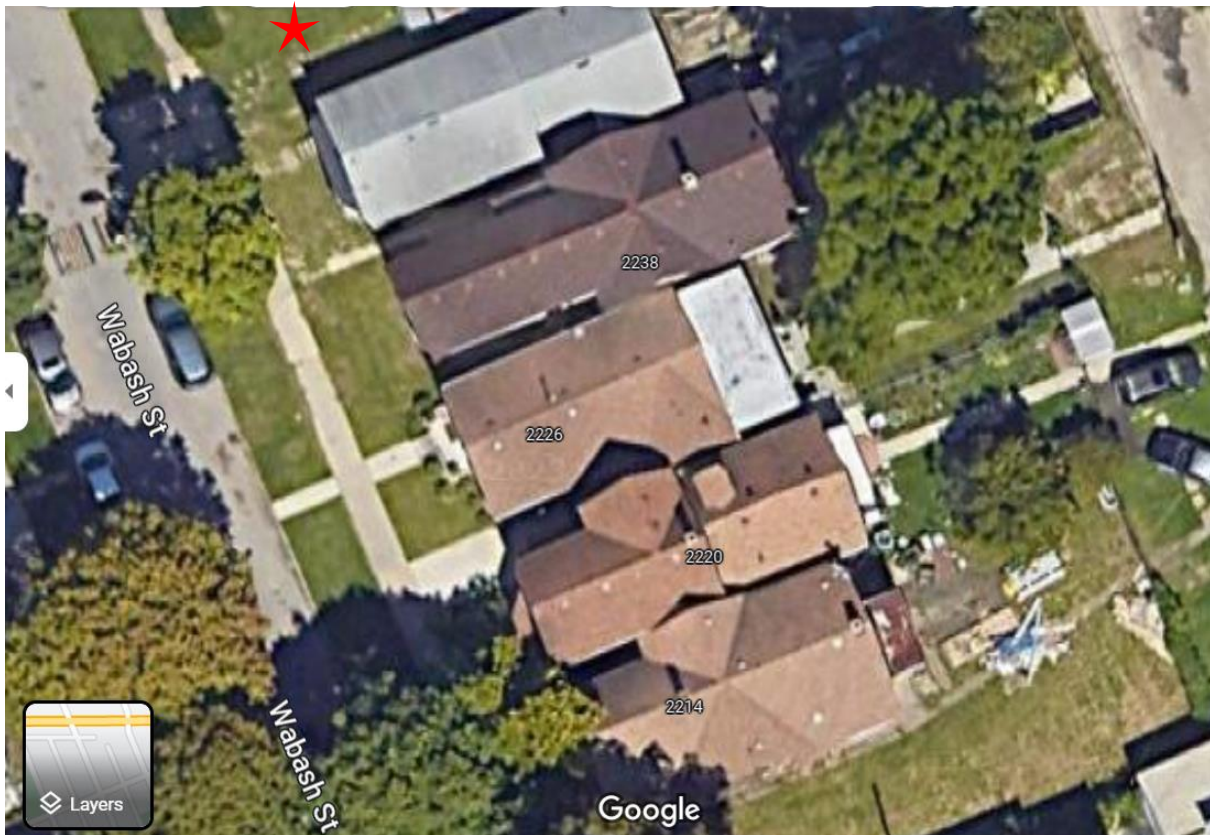


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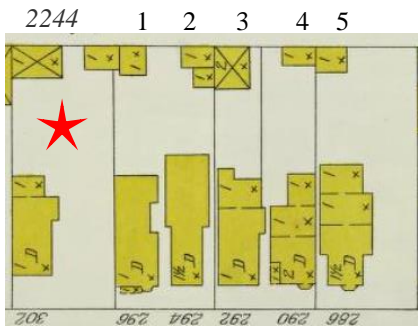
- The applicant states the new design is to duplicate the neighboring homes as a style and size reference. The Standards do not allow for a house to be changed to match other houses; a house must remain a product of its time and its individual architectural design. Beyond that, the previous footprint did match the neighboring homes that were built within the same 19th century time.

On the following page is an expanded view of the 1897 Sanborn map which shows that neighboring five dwellings had inset or extending walls and all but one had (and still have) cross gabled roofs.

- Elements of Design #6) Rhythm of Entrance and/or porch projections: *Most houses in the district have projecting front porches, usually on one side of the front façade and sometimes wrapping around to the side, especially on corner lots. Some Victorian houses have a secondary porch at the side.*
- Elements of Design #11) Relationship of roof shapes: *Pitched roofs with frontal gables predominate in the district, although pitched roofs with side-facing gables, hip roofs, and hip roofs with intersecting gables also exist...*



Google aerial image. 2244 Wabash is not visible but is directly above where the star is located. This view shows how four of the five houses have cross gable roofs, many of which cover extending walls (identical to what was in place at 2244 Wabash). The photos on the following page offer streetscape views of the above dwellings.



1897 Sanborn map.
 2244 Wabash is highlighted.
 Photos on this page were taken by staff,
 standing at Wabash sidewalk.



House 1

House 2



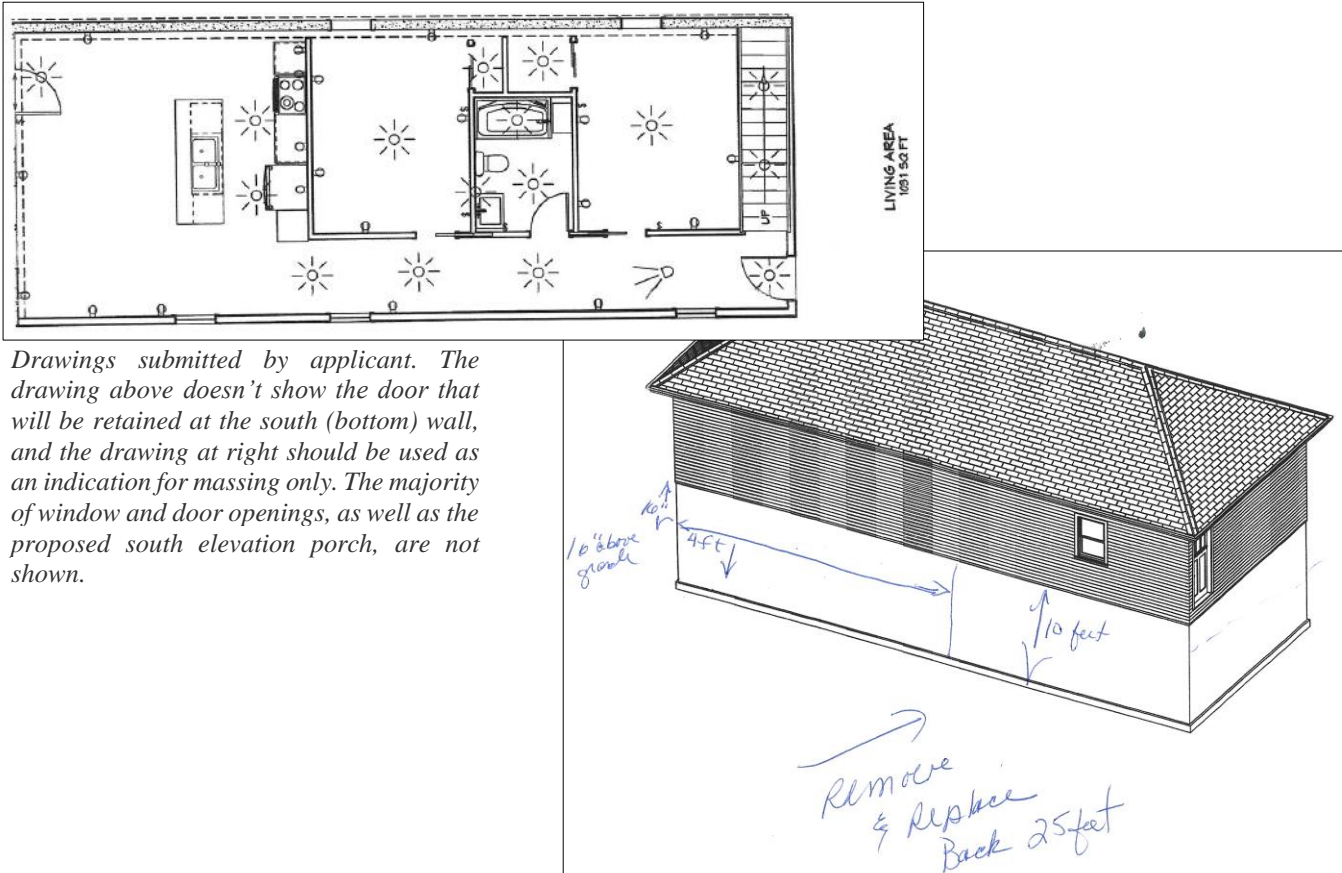
House 3

House 4



House 5 – two views

- In addition to the new construction, the applicant is proposing a new foundation/basement for the remaining existing portion of the house, and the re-grading/lowering of the front and side lawn to match the tree lawn and adjacent yards. 19th century houses in Corktown were typically built on piers and many houses have had full foundations added to the structures. Staff doesn't know if the raised yard is original to the site, or if it was added in 1954 along with the retaining walls. Staff doesn't dispute the idea of lowering the grade so that the lawn is similar to the other houses on the street. However, staff doesn't know if the applicant proposes to cover the area between the wood siding and grade with some type of skirting, which is a typical detail for houses in the district which are of similar age.
 - Elements of Design #7) Relationship of materials: *The great majority of buildings in the district are wood frame structures originally clad in clapboard with wooden skirting or brick foundations. Some have more recently been sheathed in aluminum, vinyl or asphalt siding, and original skirting has often been replaced with metal skirting or concrete block foundations.*



Drawings submitted by applicant. The drawing above doesn't show the door that will be retained at the south (bottom) wall, and the drawing at right should be used as an indication for massing only. The majority of window and door openings, as well as the proposed south elevation porch, are not shown.

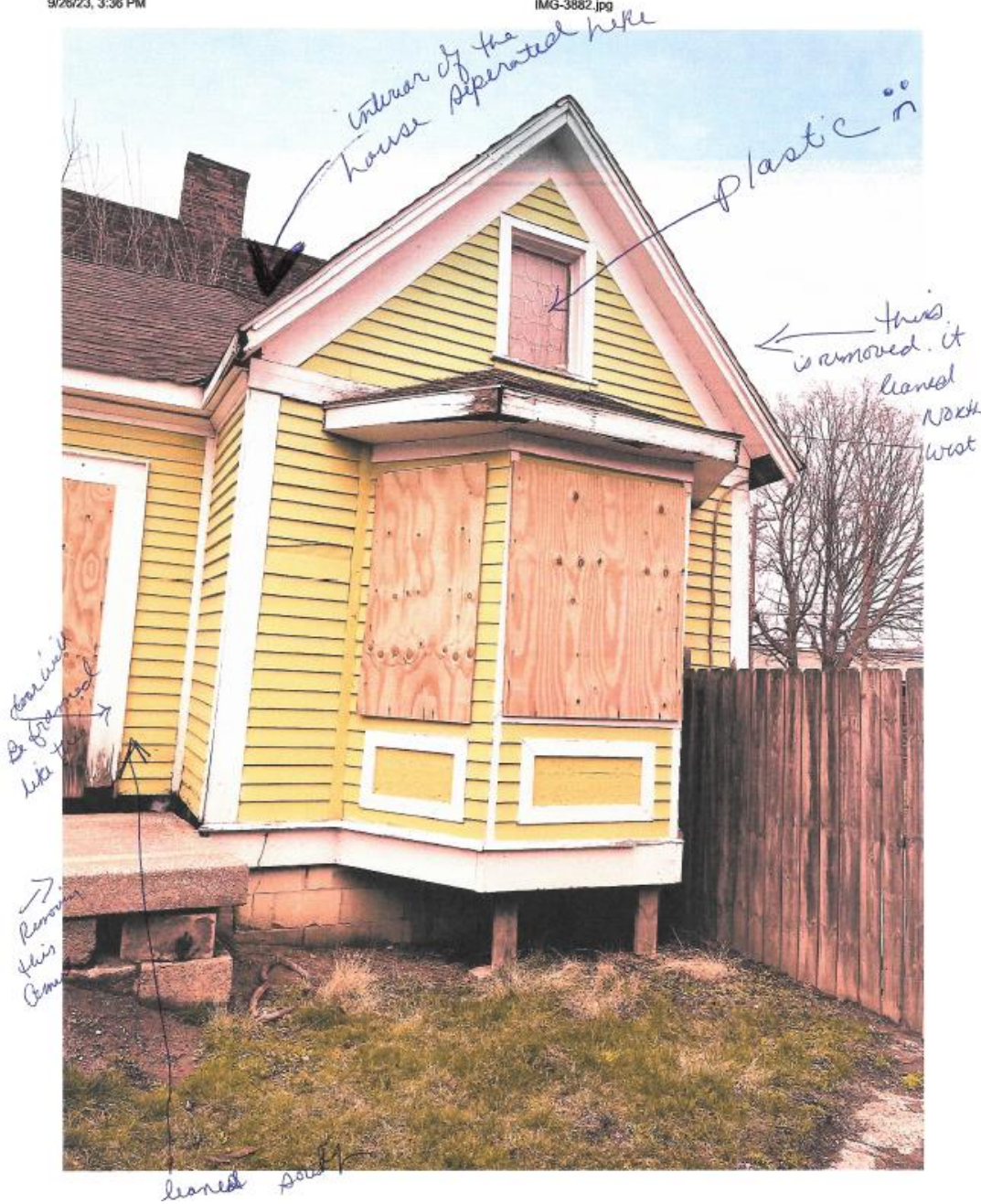


Google street view. 2244 Wabash is partially seen on the far-left side of the photo. This view shows the flat yards of the neighboring houses.

- While the rear portion of the house, shown in the below photo, may have had structural issues, this section of the dwelling could have been stabilized or rebuilt to retain the historic footprint. It is staff's opinion that the smaller pre-1921 extension that had a lower shed roof (as seen in the designation photo on page 3) was not a distinctive character-defining feature of the dwelling. Therefore, erecting a rear addition in that location might meet the Standards and achieve the additional square footage desired by the applicant while retaining the distinctive character-defining footprint of the 1884 dwelling.

9/26/23, 3:36 PM

IMG-3882.jpg



Applicant photo, showing rear section that was recently demolished.

- Staff consistently doesn't recommend additions being joined in plane with the walls of an existing structure, rather new construction should be recessed from existing walls. This allows the new framing and exterior materials to end cleanly against the existing structure and eliminates the problem of threading in new materials that will age differently than the existing adjacent materials. A recessed addition also allows the new construction to read as an independent component and a product of its time.

- The submitted documents do not clearly show how the house and lot will look with the proposed rehabilitation and new construction, and different dimensions for the addition are mentioned in the varying documents. A landscape plan, dimensioned site plan, and dimensioned elevations are necessary to review the proposal for its placement on the site as well as showing how the walls, window and door openings, new porches, exterior siding and trim and landscaping will be articulated. Staff sent multiple requests for detailed documents but only received additional hand drawings and marked-up photos.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the proposal will alter the features and spaces that characterize the property and district and does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and the Elements of Design for the district for the following reasons:

- The historic side wing was removed without substantiation that it was beyond repair. Its removal destroyed the house's historic massing and its contextual relationship to other 19th century houses within the district.
- The addition, proposed to be constructed in line with the remaining portion of the historic house, will continue to alter the features and spaces that characterize the property and district.
- The applicant states the new design is to duplicate the neighboring homes as a style and size reference. The Standards do not allow for a house to be changed to match other houses; a house must remain a product of its time and its individual architectural design. Beyond that, the previous footprint did match most neighboring homes that were built within the same 19th century time period. The side wing should be reconstructed as part of a new construction proposal.
- Detailed, dimensioned drawings that would adequately convey the finished appearance of the house and lot were not submitted, therefore the Commission can't review the proposal beyond the work completed without approval.

Staff therefore recommends that the Commission issue a Denial for the work as proposed, as it does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, specifically Standards 1, 2, 3, 6, 9 and 10:

- 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.*
- 3) *Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.*
- 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.*
- 9) *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*
- 10) *New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*