

Applicant Response to Staff Report

Summary

The March 2023 HDC meeting addressed design changes to the rear elevation of the Dr. Sweet House.

Following Commission approval, COA 23-8237 was issued on 3/15/2023:

Removal of rear elevation enclosed upper porch; installation of membrane roof; installation of perimeter railing (upper and lower porches); new wood deck and concrete stairs at rear lower porch. At basement, repair masonry window openings; repair existing wood sash; remove glass block and fabricate wood sash (to match historic sash); per the submitted documents and drawings.

With the conditions that:

- ***The applicant will propose a period and architecturally appropriate painted wood railing for the upper porch as well as the lower porch and stairs. An alternate option for the upper porch would be to rebuild the knee wall that is heavily documented in pre-demolition photographs.***
- ***The applicant will modify the previously submitted rear elevation drawings to show the location, dimensions, design, materials, and finish of the porch railings and concrete steps; the drawings will be submitted for Staff review. Painted wood steps, in lieu of concrete, shall also be appropriate.***
- ***The retention and repair of the existing basement windows on the north and south elevations, the removal of glass block and installation of wood hopper windows (matching existing) at the west elevation, with paint color for sash listed, will be noted on the architectural drawings submitted for permit.***

Applicant met Staff on 5/8/23 and 8/2/23 to review proposed designs to satisfy COA 23-8237. Applicant submitted a full design on 10/16/23 for consideration. Despite numerous requests, Staff did not provide feedback on the proposed design, work with or otherwise meet with Applicant as requested to approve a design in accordance with COA 23-8237. Applicant remains fully open to modifying the design to comply with existing COA 23-8237.

Communication Timeline

- 3/15/23- COA 23-8237 issued.
- 4/13/23- Applicant provides first proposed railing design to Staff
- 4/20/23-
 - Applicant follows up with Staff.
 - A. Dye responds stating she will be reviewing on 4/21/23
- 4/28/23- Applicant follows up with A. Dye and Staff for an update
- 5/1/23- Applicant follows up with Staff a second time and requests a meeting
- 5/8/23- Applicant meets with Staff. Initial Design proposed on 4/13/23 is Rejected
- 8/2/23- Applicant meets with A. Dye
 - Follow on to COA 23-8237
 - Applicant proposes 6 additional potential perimeter rail designs. Staff suggests a perimeter rail design they believe is most appropriate.
 - Jointly review additional changes required for proper restoration.

- **COA 23-8494** issued ***Remove existing concrete hardscape at rear porch and replace with exposed aggregate hardscape, remove non-historic masonry porch pier and concrete steps, per the submitted documents and photographs.***
- **8/6/23-** A. Dye issues COA 23-8499 ***Replace existing asphalt shingle roof with new asphalt shingle roof, and install custom wood entry doors, per the submitted documents and product data.***
- **10/16/23-**
 - Applicant submits a full perimeter rail and porch design for discussion. Perimeter rail in design is modeled off the design suggested by A. Dye on 8/2/23.
 - Staff acknowledges receipt of application.
- **10/18/23-**
 - Staff informs applicant design is added to HDC Agenda for 11/8/23
 - Applicant advises Staff that COA-23827 addresses this application, forwards the COA and asks for clarification as to why the application has been added to the meeting agenda.
- **10/24/23-** Applicant requests an update
- **10/25/23-**
 - A. Dye responds asking for additional details and stated that the proposal was going to be placed on the HDC agenda.
 - Applicant stated they were open to adjusting height and further conversation to amend the design to be approvable at Staff level in accordance with the Commission.
- **10/27/23-**
 - Applicant provides requested detail. Applicant reiterates desire to work with Staff on an acceptable design.
 - A. Dye States she will meet with G. Landsberg on 10/30/23 to discuss.
- **11/3/23-** Staff report issued rejecting 10/16/23 submission.

At no point from 10/16/23 did Staff meet with applicant to provide feedback, discuss potential changes or otherwise suggest what may be appropriate as had been requested by applicant. Applicant has submitted, and has had multiple change requests approved by, the HDC since the 3/15/23 COA and has diligently communicated with the HDC as demonstrated by the Communication Timeline.

Staff Report Points and Clarification (Staff Report excerpt is underlined)

- The applicant mentioned in a recent email that residential code for a guard rail is 36-inches, yet a 40-inch finish height that exceeds current building code is requested.
 - Code for a second-floor guard rail is 36". There is a 10" step down from the door to the deck as originally designed. To maintain code at the point of entry to the porch, the railing would need to be 46" from the height of the porch.
 - The proposed second floor railing height of 40" was chosen to be symmetrical with the first-floor height as determined by the shadow line on the original first floor nailer (per Exhibit 4 below).
 - A perimeter railing of 40" would result in a 30" railing at the door. This railing does not meet the current building code. A 30" railing would be graspable from the doorway and would provide some level of protection.
 - The original 25" knee wall with a 10" step down results in 15" of railing from the door. This would not be graspable and would not provide protection. The porch could not be safely

- utilized by visitors without some form of non-historically appropriate additional protection that would visually encumber the structure.
- Given the historical importance of the porch we believe allowing visitors to safely use it is vital in telling Ossian and Gladys Sweet's story.
 - Applicant assumes no liability for any design or structure that is built at direction of the HDC that does not meet building code.
 - A brick pier was proposed in the drawings that accompanied the Historic Structure Report.
 - It is Applicant's opinion, supported by Exhibits 2 and 3, and memory from the excavation of the prior patio, that a masonry support was not originally utilized in the rear porch structure.
 - Additionally
 - The drawing in the report showed the upper porch door being level with the upper porch floor. This did not, and does not, represent the original or current condition which has a 10" step down. This can be confirmed as an original feature based on the roofline at the rear of the house.
 - The Historic Structure Report included glass block windows, an iron railing and numerous other features that were rejected by the HDC.
 - Applicant remains open to reverting to the 36" Iron Railing originally proposed in the Historic Structure Report.
 - Staff Questions the use of a 1 x 6 wood support post to grade to support the outer corner of the first floor porch deck. The previously existing condition had a brick pier supporting the deck, which matched the condition at the side and front entrances.
 - The previously existing brick pier was assembled on top of a non-historic concrete porch without a footing. It was not properly placed under the support post as demonstrated in Exhibit 1 and 2. There was no evidence of brickwork underneath the prior concrete patio.
 - The wood post in Exhibit 1 is believed to be original. An in-kind replacement is proposed that would sit on a below grade footing poured during the replacement of the patio.
 - Applicant made an error in notation. The correction should state the post would be wrapped in cedar 1x6 above the porch floor.
 - Skirting around the lower porch floor consisting of 1x6 tongue and groove beadboard, bordered by rough sawn cedar 1x6 flat stock, are proposed. 1x6 tongue and groove beadboard was utilized in multiple locations throughout the house.
 - It is Staff's opinion that the proposed railing height was not typical for bungalow houses in 1925. It is too tall for this historic setting and location and would alter the features and spaces
 - The height the applicant proposed was based on the first-floor shadow line (Exhibit 4). This photo was shared with but omitted from the Staff report.
 - Applicant has requested Staff to provide feedback as to an appropriate height. No feedback has been provided.
 - Staff finds that the proposal for the erection of the historic brick at the front elevation, alteration of the front bay first floor windows and the complete replacement of the wood windows and brickmold do not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the following reasons:
 - Please advise context for the above statements. This work was done to the highest standard and in accordance with prior COA's and was not part of the 10/16/23 request.

Additional Photo Documentation:

2905 Garland- HDC approved concrete porch replacement (Exhibit 1)

Former brick pier and concrete steps. Both are believed to be non-historic. Brick pier is not aligned with the corner of the porch and utilized modern mortar. Modern mortar is evident throughout the pier in Exhibit 2 and 3.



Brick Pier Detail (Exhibit 2)

Modern mortar is evident on historic brick throughout the pier. Note the placement of the temporary support jack. Pier is not located in correct location to provide structural support.



Brick Pier Interior Detail (Exhibit 3)

Modern mortar is evident throughout the interior of the brick pier. This demonstrates the exterior and interior mortar is the same from when the pier was constructed.



Lower Porch Original Hand Rail Shadow Line (Exhibit 4)

The original wooden nailer remains attached to the brick corner of the house. A shadow line can be seen at a height of 41" from the porch floor support. Note 5/4" Tongue and Groove pine porch flooring has yet to be installed. Adjusted for flooring, it is believed that the height of the top of the original railing was 40".



Sample Perimeter Railing Designs Proposed to Staff

Railing Design Proposed on 4/13/23- Alternate Proposed Sample 1

The below railing photo was shared on 4/13/23 and discussed with Audra and Garrick on 5/8/2003. HDC representatives stated this railing was not appropriate and suggested driving around West and East Village to identify appropriate railing designs to propose.



Photos shared from the August 2, 2003 Meeting with Audra Dye

Per HDC request, Applicant photographed railings across West and East Village. Applicant met with A. Dye on 8/2/23 to review these photographs to determine which design Staff felt would be most appropriate and approvable by Staff in accordance with COA 23-8237.

Applicant stated on the call with Staff, that there was no preference in design. Applicant highlighted Alternate Sample 3 as being utilized in a duplex across from the Dr. Sweet House on Garland. Applicant believes this to be an original railing design as the porch was later enclosed and protected the original wood.

After reviewing the photographs, A. Dye suggested she believed Alternate Proposed Sample 2 as best suited to the home. A. Dye requested measurements of the elements of this railing. These measurements were added to the 10/16/23 proposal.

A total of 7 perimeter railing designs were proposed in conference with the HDC (1 on 4/13/23 and 6 on 8/2/23). This HDC proposal is based on the recommendation from the 8/2/23 call. All alternatives proposed to Staff, based on actual houses in East and West Village, are illustrated below.

West Village Sample that was basis for proposed design- Alternate Proposed Sample 2



Garland Duplex Example- Alternate Proposed Sample 3



West Village Example Railing- Alternate Proposed Sample 4



West Village Example- Proposed Sample 5



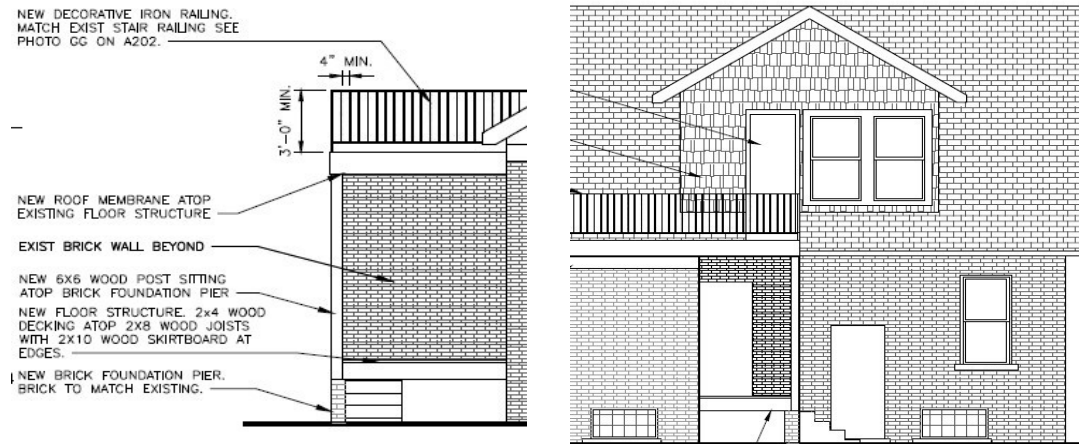
West Village Example- Proposed Sample 6



West Village Example- Proposed Sample 7



Original Existing Structures Report



May 1st Email from HDC

2905 Garland - next steps for HDC review Inbox x



Audra Dye <dyea@detroitmi.gov>
to me, Garrick, Jennifer ▾

Mon, May 1, 3:45 PM



Good afternoon, Alex.

Thank you for the photo as a baseline to start our conversation. Per the Commission's approval, the railing design must be period and architecturally appropriate, which would include solid bottom and top rails, between which the balusters would be installed, and newel posts.

You can supply another photo to illustrate the specific railing design. However, we also require a dimensioned sketch as well as a mocked-up rear and side elevation drawings identifying the locations for the railings. The material, finish and paint color of the railings must also be noted.

Other items that need to be shown on the elevation drawings before staff can approve the project include:

- the rear porch steps with dimensions, material, and finish called out -- the Commission approved concrete or painted wood steps at this location), and
- notations that the existing wood basement windows will be retained and repaired, and the glass block shall be removed in the rear openings and new wood windows will be fabricated and painted to match the existing historic basement units.

Thank you!

Regards,
Audra

Audra Dye

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