



Office of the City Clerk

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September 9, 2019

Tim Gokhman of At Terrace LLC
1840 N Farwell Ave
Milwaukee, WI 53202

RE: Proposed House 2381 N Terrace Avenue

Dear Mr. Gokhman,

This letter, approved by the members of the Historic Preservation Commission at its meeting of September 9, 2019, acknowledges the unique challenges of designing a home to fill a vacant property within an historic district. While we, in collaboration with Commission staff, have found your present submittal does not meet the design standards set forth in our governing ordinances and the guidelines of the North Point North Historic District, we hoped to stop short of a denial of your application and also wanted to offer assurances that the Commission welcomes creative, modern designs that are rooted in the historic context of the district.

By this, we mean that it is important to recognize that old and new buildings are compatible when they share similar underlying principles: proportion, form, level of detail, materials, and craftsmanship that are typical of the setting. Designing for compatibility is context-driven and is an active attempt to make a new building fit in and feel like it is “of this place.” That said, new buildings do not have to be copies of historic buildings to be compatible, and appropriateness is not the same thing as uniformity. A new building can make a statement of its own identity without subverting the character of the district.

Considering your present design, we observe:

- 1) The materials as presented are not inherently unacceptable. Wood and standard brick are common throughout the historic district. The brick color may add interesting character to the neighborhood and the accent bond is a version of the traditional Flemish bond. Still, there remains a deep concern about the clad windows and the durability of unpainted woodwork.



- 2) The level of fenestration is not unacceptable, but placement, form, and scale need to be adjusted to fit the context of the district.
- 3) The use of a porte-cochere is not unacceptable.
 - a. If it is to have supports, as provided in your later design, it would be preferable to have it supported by masonry supports.
 - b. There are a few appropriate examples within the district; all have a notable setback, generally by 1/3 the depth of the building.
 - c. Extending a porte-cochere further to the back and having living space above it may be acceptable as long as a reasonable setback from the primary façade is created.
- 4) A flat roof is not inherently incompatible with the district, but only on a building of substantially different massing.
 - a. Flat roofs emphasize the horizontality of shorter buildings. It would be difficult to achieve the massing necessary for this feature without at least three stories.
- 5) Raised basements are a common and welcome design feature, but they are typically articulated such that have a more complex appearance than a concrete curb.
- 6) Common features in the district that may help increase compatibility are steep roofs, symmetry of window placement, strong vertical emphasis, and prominent masonry chimneys.

We thank you for your understanding of the importance of this site both in and of itself and to the district as a whole. We very much look forward to a revised submittal and give our assurances that it will receive a prompt review.

On behalf of the members of the Historic Preservation Commission,



Ms. Marion Clendenen-Acosta
Chair