STAFF BRIEF

This document is the staff’s comparison of the Secretary of the Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation, Design Guidelines for Denver Landmark Structures and Districts, the Landmark Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 30, Revised Municipal Code) and other applicable adopted area guidelines as applied to the proposed application. It is intended to provide guidance during the commission’s deliberation of the proposed application. Guidelines are available at www.denvergov.org/preservation

Project: #2021-COA-502
Address: 3717 Decatur Street
Historic Dist/DLM: Potter Highlands (Prior to and Including 1943)
Year structure built: C. 1940
Applicant: Moshe Schwab | SH Architecture

LPC Meeting: December 7, 2021
Staff: Brittany Bryant

Project Scope Under Review:
Additions – dormer additions & garage additions

Staff Summary:
The applicant, Moshe Schwab, is requesting to add three dormers onto the rear of the home and a new 290 square foot, one-story, garage addition to the existing carriage house at the rear of the lot. No changes will be made to the front façade of the home, other than replacement of the entry light fixture. The new dormers will be located on the south, west, and north elevations of the home, on the rear roof slope of the side facing gable. The new dormers will be clad in lap siding with new aluminum clad casement windows. On the south elevation, two windows at the rear of the home will be infilled with brick. At the basement level on the north and south side of the home an existing basement windows will be enlarged to accommodate an egress window and metal window well. On the west elevation, an existing window opening will be converted into a door opening. A chimney stack on the rear of the home will be demolished to accommodate the new addition, however this chimney is not visible from the public right of way. The existing homes windows are vinyl sliders and have been vinyl for several years (Google Image shows vinyl to as early at 2007). A new deck will be constructed at the rear of the home.

A new 290 square foot, one-story, flat roof garage addition will be added to the south side of the existing carriage house. The new garage addition will be visible from the public right-of-way and face onto to the street and be accessed via the existing drive aisle off of Decatur Street. There is no alley behind this home to allow for alley access. The new garage will be clad in 4” lap siding. On the east elevation of the carriage house two existing windows will be lowered and on the north elevation a new window opening is proposed. The existing asphalt shingle roof on the carriage house will be replaced

Materials:

| Dormer Addition: Lap siding, exposure and material not noted. | Garage Addition, Lap siding, 4” exposure, material not noted |
| Dormer Addition Roofing: Asphalt shingle, to match existing | Carriage House and Garage Roofing: Asphalt shingle and membrane roofing |
| Dormer Addition Windows: Aluminum clad wood casement windows | Carriage House windows: Existing and a new aluminum clad wood slider window |
| Brick infill: To match existing | Window well: Metal |
| Decking: Trex decking | Light fixture: Wall scone in “old bronze” |
| Garage door: metal roll up | Man door: Unknown |
Registered Neighborhood Organization (RNO) comments:
The application was referred to HUNI on September 15, 2021. The RNO was unable to comment and formally met with the applicant due to their monthly meeting schedule, however, Tim Boers Chair of HUNI’s planning and community development committee did not that “many of the proposed changes are not visible from the street. The north and south dormers would be visible, but not the west.”

Excerpted from the Design Guidelines for Denver Landmark Structures & Districts, January 2016

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<th>Guideline</th>
<th>Meets Guideline?</th>
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<td>2.14 Maintain the pattern and proportion of historic window and door openings. a. Preserve the position, number and arrangement of historic windows and doors in a building wall. Modifying a window or door on the rear of a contributing structure may be considered on a façade that is not visible. See page 24 for more information. e. Avoid enclosing a historic window or door opening or adding a new opening.</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td>All alterations to original window openings on the primary structure will occur on secondary and rear elevations and will not be visible from the public right-of-way. On the south elevation, the brick infill should be inset at least an inch to indicate the placement of the original window openings. On the carriage house a new window opening will be introduced on the north elevation, this is an interior lot elevation and is not visible from the public right-of-way. Two windows on the ground floor of the east elevation will be lowered. Although altering original window openings, these opening are on a secondary structure and not highly visible from the public right-of-way.</td>
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<td>2.18 Locate and design a new egress window to be as inconspicuous as possible. a. Place an egress window on a less visible façade that does not face the street, if possible. See “Egress windows” on page 31 for more information. b. Align a new basement egress window or expansion of an existing window with other windows and features on the façade. c. Match a new basement egress window to a historic basement window type or use a simple single-light casement window. d. Do not place an egress window on a primary façade.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>All new egress windows and window wells will be located on side elevations, towards the rear of the home. Existing basement windows will be enlarged to accommodate the new egress windows. Egress on the north elevation will be screened from the public right-of-way by an existing fence and egress on the south elevation will be screened by an existing architectural feature of the home.</td>
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<td>2.26 Minimize the visual impacts of skylights, dormers and other rooftop alterations.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Dormers are located at the same height as the existing ridge line.</td>
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| a. Locate a new dormer or skylight below the ridgeline of the roof.  
b. Locate a new dormer or skylight on a rear (preferred) or side-facing roof slope, when possible.  
c. Set back a side-facing gable from the front façade to minimize its visibility from the street and sidewalk.  
d. Set dormers back behind the roof eave and the building wall plane below to ensure that the building’s original roof lines and building form are predominant. A setback of at least one foot from the adjacent wall plane is strongly recommended.  
e. Design a dormer to be subordinate to the overall roof mass and in scale with those on similar historic structures.  
g. Do not remove or alter sizes of historic dormers on street-facing elevations.  
j. Do not install a dormer or skylight on a front-facing roof plane.  
k. Do not visually overwhelm the original roof, particularly street-facing elevations, with dormers, skylights and other features. |   | The side facing gable roof of this structure conceals the dormer additions from the public right-of-way and the dormer/rear additions will have limited visibility from the public right-of-way.  
No alterations are being made to the street facing roof slope.  
Dormer additions are setback in the rear of the home and do not visually overwhelm the roof.  
Dormers are subordinate to the overall roof mass and similar to those in the surrounding context.  
Although dormers are not inset into the wall plane they are totally at the rear of the structure and identifiable as new dormers/new rear addition. |
| **3.1 Locate an addition to be subordinate to the original structure.**  
a. Plan an addition to the rear of the original structure whenever possible. | Yes | Addition is located to the side and rear of the existing historic structure.  
The new carriage house addition is subordinate in massing to the existing carriage house. |
| **3.2 Design and addition to a historic structure to respect the character-defining features of the historic district, the surrounding historic context, and the original primary structure.**  
a. Design an addition to be compatible with the scale, massing, and rhythm of the historic structure and context. | Yes | Proposed addition is compatible with the scale, massing and rhythm of the historic structure and surrounding historic context.  
The size of the addition is limited to adding dormers to the rear of the home. They are subordinate in scale and will be minimally visible from the public right-of-way. |
| **3.6 Design windows, doors, and other features on a new addition to be compatible with the original structure and surrounding historic context.**  
a. Incorporate windows, doors, and other openings at a ratio similar to those found on nearby historic structures. For additions with public visibility, doors and windows should have similar proportions | Yes/No | The dormer addition windows will be aluminum clad wood casement windows. The Commission has often required a false mullion to give the appearance of a double hung windows. However, there are not double hung windows on this home as all windows have been replaced with vinyl sliders. Staff feel that it is probable this home originally hade casement windows due to the style and era |
and rhythms as windows on historic facades.

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| **3.7 Design the roof of a new addition to be compatible with the original structure and surrounding historic context.** | Yes            | The dormer roofs will compliment the existing roof profile.
|                                                                      |                | The carriage house addition will have a flat roof. Flat roofs are common on secondary structures. |
| **3.8 Locate an addition to a residential structure to be subordinate to the existing structure.** | Yes            | Dormer additions will be minimally visible from the public right of way.
| a. Design an addition to have minimal visual impact to the existing structure. |                | The new one-story garage addition to the carriage house will be visible from the public right-of-way. However, it is at the rear of the lot and will be using the existing drive aisle on the south side of the property to be accessible via vehicles. There is no alley behind this structure to allow for alley access. |
| b. Place a one-story addition to the rear of the existing structure, if possible. |                |                                                  |
| **3.9 Design an addition to a historic residential structure to be compatible with, but differentiated from, the existing structure.** | Yes/No         | Proposed addition will have features subtle changes in materials to differentiate the addition from the historic structure.
| a. Use subtle changes in material, color, and/or wall plane to differentiate an addition. |                | The additions are proposed to be clad in lap siding. The lap material on both the carriage house and garage is not noted. It should be wood, fiber cement with a smooth finish, or a recently approved engineered wood such as LP smartside.
|                                                                      |                | The lap siding is noted to have a 4” reveal on the garage addition but the reveal is not noted on the dormers. All siding should have a 4” reveal and be clearly noted in plan. |
| **5.23 When necessary, design and install new building light fixtures that are compatible with the historic building and surrounding historic context.** | Yes            | All lighting will be installed at the ground level and be oriented towards entries.
|                                                                      |                | Light fixtures are appropriately scaled to the building. Fixtures are proposed to have downlighting and scone style illumination. |
a. Install lighting at the ground level of buildings only.
b. Design and locate new light fixtures to be perceived but not seen, incorporating lighting into recessed entries, porches, canopies, and alcoves whenever possible.
c. Scale new light fixtures to the building (i.e., use monumental light fixtures only on monumental buildings)
d. Consider using building light fixtures with a contemporary design that are compatible in materials, quality, and design with the historic building.
e. Consider using period reproduction fixtures if they can be matched in style, quality, and materials with the historic building, and are subordinate to historic building architecture and features.
f. Do not design lighting for the sole purpose of attracting attention to building architecture or to building uses.

The fixture is compatible with the building architecture and does not create a false sense of history.

Recommendation: Approval with Conditions

Conditions:  
1. Confirm dormer and garage siding material in plan;  
2. Confirm dormer siding reveal in plan;  
3. Inset brick infill at least 1 inch on the south elevation to preserve original window opening locations;  
4. Confirm rear man door material in plan.

Basis: Proposed alterations are located at the rear of the home and are subordinate to the overall massing of the structure. Alterations will have limited visibility from the public-right-of-way.

Suggested Motion: I move to CONDITIONALLY APPROVE application #2021-COA-502 for the dormer addition and garage addition work at 3717 Decatur Street, as per guidelines 2.14, 2.18, 2.26, 3.1, 3.2, 3.6, 3.7-3.9, and 5.23, character-defining features for the Potter Highlands historic district, presented testimony, submitted documentation and information provided in the staff report with the following conditions:

1. Confirm dormer and garage siding material in plan;  
2. Confirm dormer siding reveal in plan;  
3. Inset brick infill at least 1 inch on the south elevation to preserve original window opening locations;  
4. Confirm rear man door material in plan.
Potter Highlands Historic District with 3717 Decatur Street outlined in red.
1929 (corrected 1956) Sanborn Map with 3717 Decatur Street outlined in red.