

STAFF REPORT 06-09-2021 MEETING

PREPARED BY: G. LANDSBERG

APPLICATION NUMBER: 21-7308

ADDRESS: 240 MACK

HISTORIC DISTRICT: BRUSH PARK

APPLICANT: JAMES KORF, COMPOSITION WORKSHOP

OWNER: EMO PROPERTIES, LLC

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 06-06-2021

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 05-26-2021

SCOPE: NEW THIRD FLOOR ADDITION AT REAR OF BUILDING, REPLACE VINYL WINDOWS WITH WOOD WINDOWS

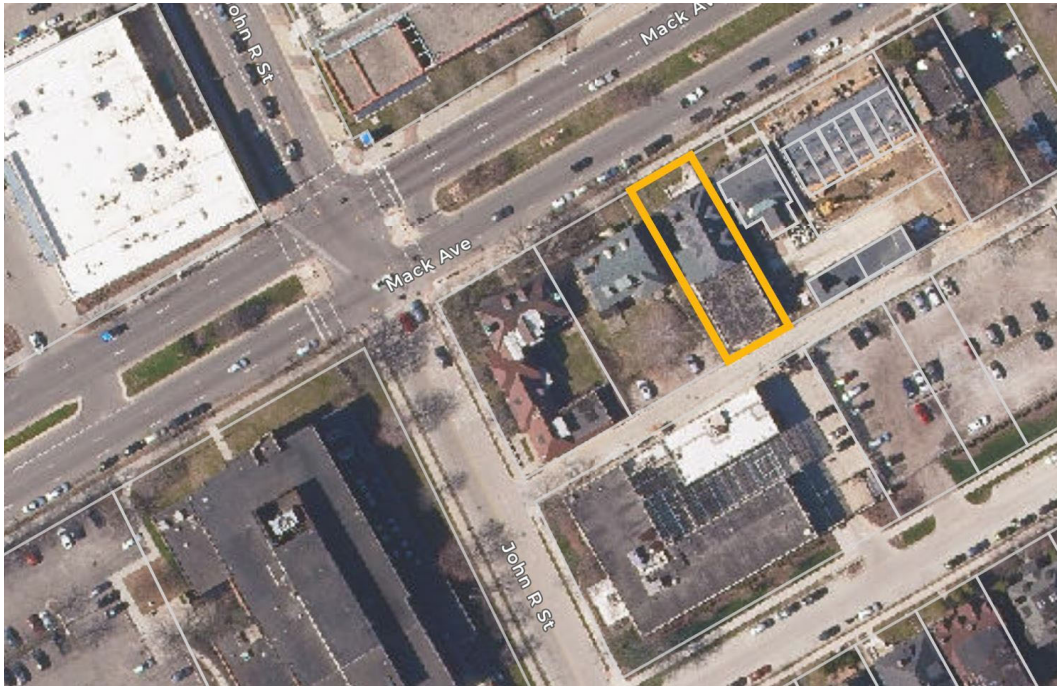
EXISTING CONDITIONS

The subject property is located just two parcels east of the Albert Kahn House along Mack at the northern limits of the Brush Park Historic District, between John R and Brush Streets. The building is a combination of two distinct sections built in different eras: a historic brown brick/stone home with a hipped roof featuring bracketed eaves, a prominent chimney, generous porch, recessed entry, and double height window bay; and a post-war, flat-roofed concrete block addition towards the rear, exhibiting almost no architectural character. In the second half of the twentieth century, the property served as a rooming house. The combined building extends nearly to the alley. The incompatible rear addition, erected prior to the creation of the historic district, has damaged the historic character of the property. In comparison, the street-facing expression is largely intact and readable.

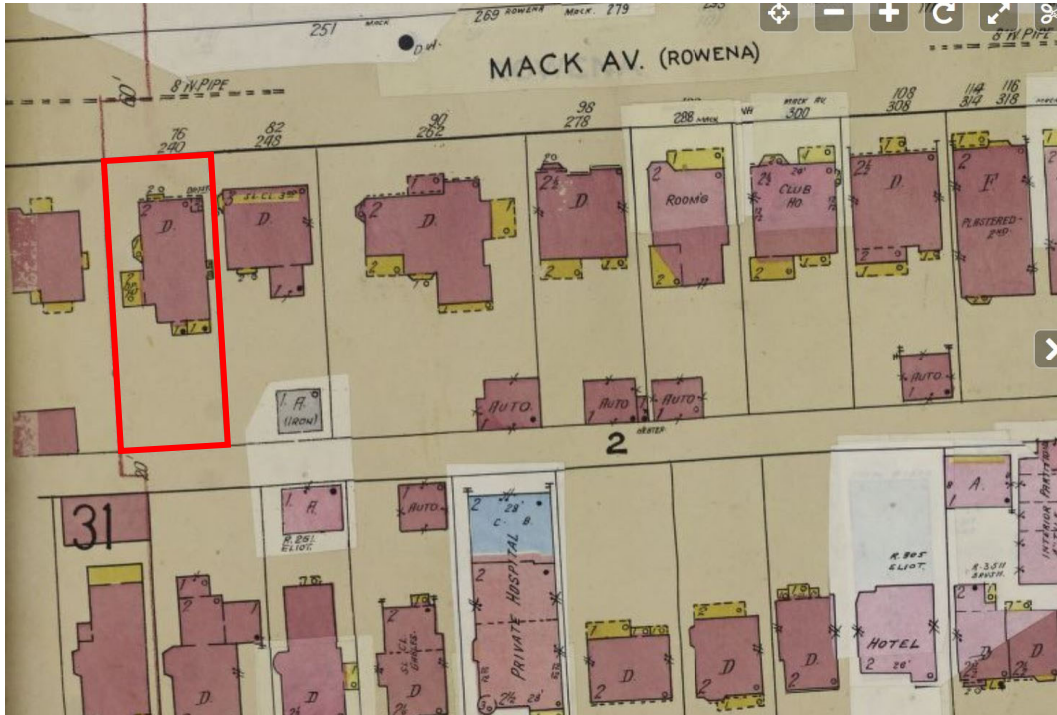


View of 240 Mack to the southeast, as seen from Mack, showing the large, non-historic rear addition towards rear. Staff photo, May 26, 2021.

The property has been in a vacant and deteriorating condition for some time. Approximately ten years ago, inappropriate vinyl windows and unpermitted construction were initiated on the property, which was halted soon after. This has left an unsightly, half-complete bay visible along this prominent street for years. The home's substantial chimney is in visible disrepair and shedding brick. No original/historic windows appear extant. However, in general, the shell of the historic building appears sound. The property is located on a busy arterial street in a commercial context, directly across from large institutional and retail properties.



Parcel view of vicinity, subject parcel outlined in yellow.



Sanborn map of vicinity, circa 1950. 240 Mack outlined in red. Note that the large rear addition had not yet been constructed, although rooming houses and small hotels already populate the vicinity.



Front view of 240 Mack. Staff photo, May 26, 2021.



Rear (alley) view of 240 Mack, looking northwest. Staff photo, May 26, 2021.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Per the submitted drawings, the applicant is proposing to rehabilitate the building and add a third story to the rear non-historic section, to return the building to service as apartments.



STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Brush Park Historic District was established in 1980.
- The main element of the current proposal is to crown the rear non-historic addition with a third level enclosed in a hipped-type roof that seeks to complement the historic building. The proposed ridgeline of the new roof rises discernibly higher than the historic roofline towards Mack, overwhelming the main house. Any addition to a historic building should remain subordinate to the historic property.
- Though the project requires the demolition of a rear-facing dormer on the historic house in order to build an integrated roof between the house and the addition, the dormer and its historic context is already obscured and degraded by the currently existing incompatible block addition, and staff advises that the subject dormer does not currently “characterize” the property under the Standards. Looked at as a whole, and given the commercial context of the street and the current negative expression of the rear block, staff feels it is reasonable and appropriate for a roof addition to be built, subject to a revision in scale/height per the point above.
- Vinyl windows in the rear addition, installed without permit, are currently proposed for retention. These windows have already been denied by the Commission once in 2017. Consistent with the Commission’s interpretation of the Standards and Elements of Design for several districts, vinyl is not appropriate on historic properties when more appropriate materials (wood/metal) are easily available. The vinyl windows installed appear to be poor quality, and are likely to deteriorate at a rapid pace, detracting from the historic character of the property.

ISSUES

- The windows proposed for the rear addition should be redesigned in appropriate materials, with operation and configuration that complements its historic context. Such windows are a condition of the proposed recommendation to approve, given below.

RECOMMENDATION

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

The proposed rear third-story addition to the non-historic block is compatible with the massing, size, scale and architectural features of its environment, and does not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. Staff therefore recommends that the proposal should qualify for a Certificate of Appropriateness, as it meets the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and the Brush Park Historic District’s Elements of Design, with the condition that:

- No windows at the property will be vinyl. Windows for the non-historic rear block will be of a type, configuration and material that complements the historic context, approvable by staff.
- The scale of the roof addition will be reduced. The height of the proposed roof addition will be less than or equal to the height of the historic roof. Such revision in scale and height will be subject to staff approval.