

STAFF REPORT 06-12-2024 REGULAR MEETING

PREPARED BY: G. LANDSBERG

APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2024-00319

ADDRESS: 1566 BAGLEY

HISTORIC DISTRICT: CORKTOWN

APPLICANT/ARCHITECT: MICHAEL SKLENKA/SUBJECT STUDIO

PROPERTY OWNER: SWEET, DOUGLAS G. & LOBITANA, NIMFA

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 05-20-2024

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 05-24-2024

SCOPE: ERECT DWELLING

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The project site is a parcel at the northeast corner of Bagley and Tenth Streets. The lot is 50' wide and 130' deep, consistent with other nearby corner lots. Already erected on the parcel is a single-family dwelling, reviewed by this Commission in 2016, and of a stridently modern and contemporary design. This building, although reportedly designed to be a carriage house or "back house," sits aggressively forward on the parcel (towards Bagley, or southward) to allow on-site parking accessed from the alley. The remainder of the parcel, south of the existing dwelling and including the corner of the intersection, is currently maintained as a non-landscaped lawn. A wooden fence runs along Tenth enclosing the dwelling's "lot", then runs easterly to close off the northern section.



View of existing conditions at 1566 Bagley, view to the northwest. Staff photo, May 24, 2024.

It is staff's understanding that the intention to develop the southern (front) portion of the site was discussed with the Commission during the 2016 approval of the "back house," though no design was submitted for review at that time. At the March 2021 Regular Meeting of the Commission, your body approved a 2-unit, 2-story townhouse building in a contemporary design for this site. This approved design, shown below and prepared by a different architect than both the original rear building or today's application, referenced the materials and design of the "rear" building while introducing traditional materials like brick and wood to establish a street wall and "hold" the corner. Potential approval of another design for the site, as part of the current application, would not override or rescind the earlier approval.

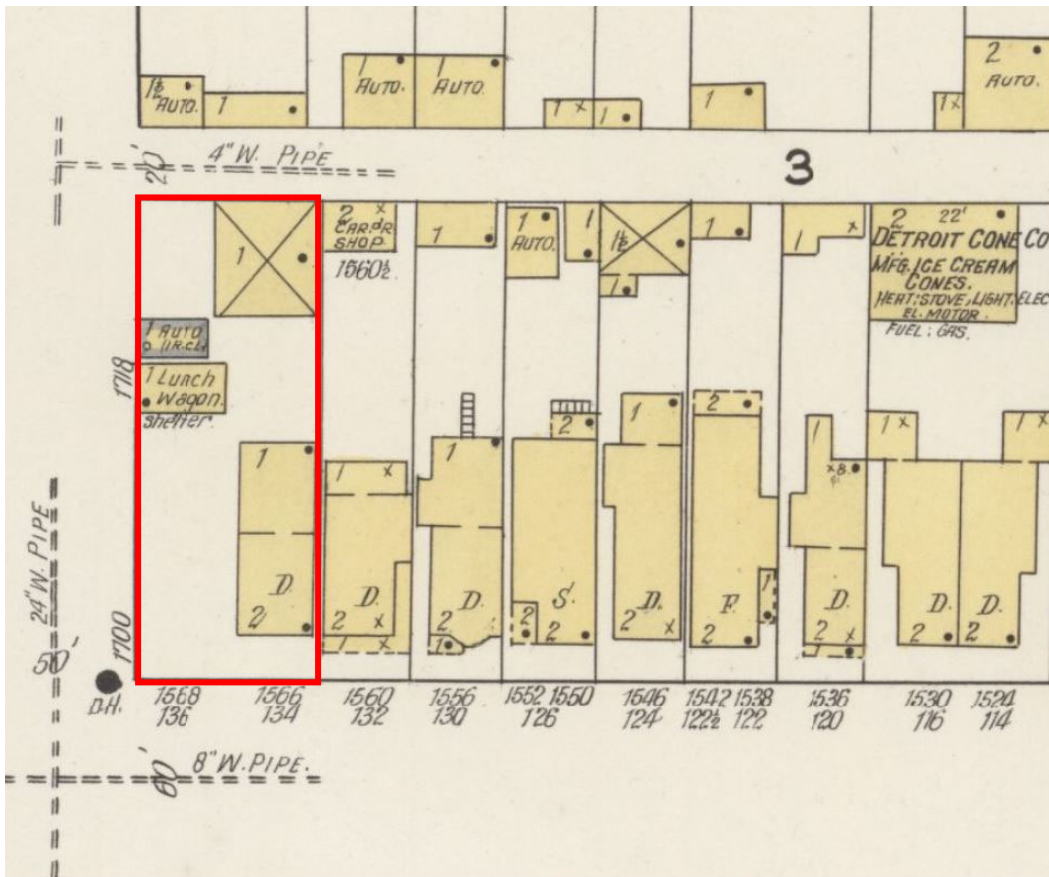


BAGLEY PERSPECTIVE

View of design for “front” building as approved by the Historic District Commission in March 2021.



Parcel view of vicinity, subject parcel outlined in yellow. Note that the “back house” takes up slight majority of the site. A fence divides the developed half (north) from the undeveloped half (south).



Sanborn map of vicinity, 1921. It is interesting to note that the site was addressed for two dwellings on Bagley, and more on Tenth, but had only one dwelling in the historic period.



View looking generally east down Bagley Street in front of subject site. Staff photo, May 24, 2024.



View looking generally west down Bagley Street adjacent to subject site. Staff photo, May 24, 2024.



View to the north along 10th Street. Subject site is at right, just out of the image. Staff photo, May 24, 2024.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Per the submitted drawings and documents, the applicant is proposing to erect a single-family dwelling with contemporary materials (including brick, true wood, fiber cement siding, and aluminum-clad windows) dominated by a traditional form. The gable-ended single-story structure will face Bagley, and run north along the 10th Street sidewalk close to the property line. A flat-roofed interior courtyard massing and attached carport is proposed to occupy the areas north and east of the traditional gabled form, and is designed to be subordinate to it. As described above, this newly presented design is not a revision of the previously approved 2021 design, instead it is a wholly original design from a different architect.



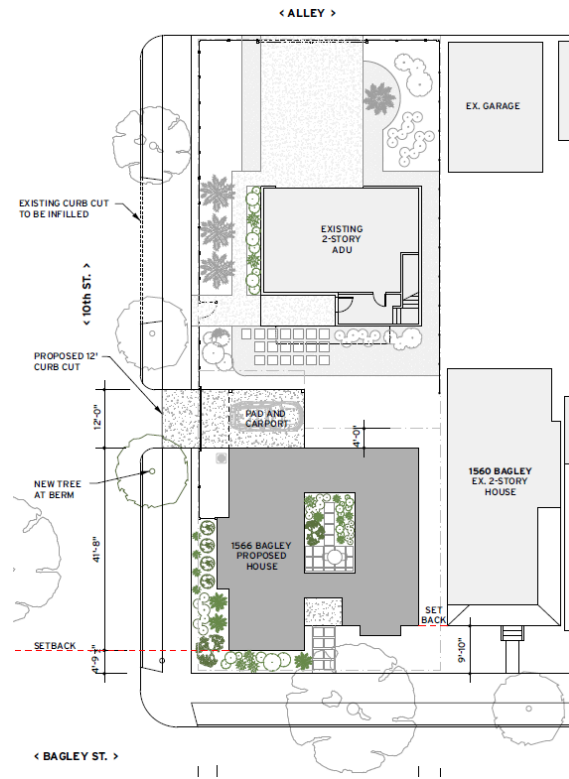
Rendering of proposed project, view towards the northeast from Bagley/10th Street intersection. From applicant submission.



Bagley Street elevation, with roof heights labeled. Proposed new construction is in color, existing in white. Applicant images.



10th Street elevation. Proposed new construction is in color, existing in white. Staff has added red arrow to the existing "back house" on both elevations, which will share the parcel with the new construction.



Site plan from applicant's submission materials.



View of existing conditions at 1566 Bagley, view to the north from Bagley. Staff photo, March 24, 2024.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Corktown Historic District was established in 1984.
- The proposed building sits forward of the typical setbacks of neighboring historic houses to the east. However, other corner buildings, including the historic building immediately across Tenth Street, are zero lot line buildings at both streets, “holding” the corner in an urban design sense.
- In staff’s opinion, the proposal skillfully incorporates new modern construction of a traditionally small scale (of which many examples exist in Corktown) into a varied urban context. One of Corktown’s most enduring characteristics is the heterogeneous mix of building types, forms, and sizes, giving it a vibrancy and energy not found in more staid and formally monotonous historic districts. The proposed design, in staff’s opinion, restores more of this desirable complexity and contradiction to the urban scale of the block.
- As a guide to new construction, the [Elements of Design](#) for this district offers the following (excerpted) relevant points. Also included, after each Element, is the architect’s comment concerning how the design satisfies the element, in their own words.
 - **Element 1, Height:** *Most residential buildings in the district range from one (1) story to two and one half (2½) stories tall*
 - **Applicant comment:** *The proposed height (20’) of the one-story structure with gable roof is consistent with many of the wood-framed cottage-style homes original to the district. While the majority of homes on the block east towards Trumbull Ave. are two stories, the majority of the existing historic homes fronting Bagley St. west of 10th St. are one-story with gable roof.*
 - **Element 2, Proportion of buildings’ front facades:** *Proportion varies in the district, depending on the age, style and type of building*
 - **Applicant comment:** *Due to the relatively wide (50’) by relatively shallow (50’) lot dimensions, the proportions of the overall proposed building are wider (39’) than tall to the highest point of the gable peak (20’). However the design splits the front façade into two massings each clad in distinct materials to create the impression of two structures with individual proportions more reflective of the surrounding single-story homes.*
 - **Element 3, Proportion of openings within the facades:** *Window openings are usually taller than wide, but there are also square openings and transom window openings which are wider than tall. Window openings are almost always subdivided...*
 - **Applicant comment:** *All proposed window openings are taller than wide with the exception of two square windows at a bay projection along 10th St. The glazed area at the primary front façade facing Bagley St. is 15%, and 7% at the secondary 10th St. façade.*
 - **Element 4, Rhythm of solids to voids in front facades:** *...post-1880s Queen Anne style buildings exhibit a greater freedom, with their bay windows and combinations of windows in gables...*
 - **Applicant comment:** *Window openings at the front facades are placed in a symmetric rhythm about each massing element reflective of the regularity of solids to voids in relation to the overall building proportions found in many surrounding historic structures.*
 - **Element 5, Rhythm of spacing of buildings on streets:** *The original pattern of spacing of buildings on streets was that of houses placed very close together.*
 - **Applicant comment:** *The small lot depth constraint and owner’s desire for a single-story footprint drove the need to maximize the lot coverage, which results in a consistency with the close spacing between homes in the district.*
 - **Element 6, Rhythm of entrance and/or porch projections:** *Most houses in the district have projecting front porches, usually on one (1) side of the front façade and sometimes wrapping around to the side...some Victorian houses have a secondary porch on the side*
 - **Applicant comment:** *The recessed entry is also meant to reflect those exhibited in the historic masonry rowhouse units across 10th St. While most single-family houses in the district have projecting front porches, the proposal seeks to distinguish itself as a contemporary structure with a recessed entry by including a void opening to break the*

- otherwise flat façade.
- **Element 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... There are some brick residential buildings in the district, the majority of these being duplexes and multi-unit dwellings*
 - **Applicant comment:** *The proposed structure is wood-framed to receive a combination of brick, horizontal fiber cement lap siding, and wood cladding reflective of materiality in the surrounding historic homes. The proposed roof is standing-seam metal (pre-finished steel panels) to establish distinction from historic treatments. The proposed windows are wood with aluminum-cladding.*
 - **Element 8, Relationship of textures:** *...Detailed brickwork on brick buildings contributes to textural interest when it exists*
 - **Applicant comment:** *An alternating protruding Flemish bond pattern detail to the brick veneer at the front façade facing Bagley St. is proposed to introduce textural interest to the most prominent portion of the structure, and reflect a gable treatment exhibited in single-story homes in the area where the cladding type or pattern differs at the gable vs. the lower portion of the house.*
 - **Element 9, Relationship of colors:** *Paint colors in the district generally relate to style*
 - **Applicant comment:** *The speckled light cream brick offers an understated and neutral counterpoint to the vibrant red-painted horizontal siding which is intended to reflect red/orange clay brick tones predominant in the district.*
 - **Element 10, Relationship of architectural details:** *These generally relate to style...In general, Corktown is rich in its diversity and quality of architectural styles and detail.*
 - **Applicant comment:** *Aside from the protruding brick detail at the front façade, detailing is minimal in order to distinguish the house as contemporary and allow materials and color to express themselves across each massing and bay projection.*
 - **Element 11, Relationship of roof shapes:** *Pitched roofs with frontal gables predominate in the district...commercial buildings generally have flat roofs.*
 - **Applicant comment:** *Pitched roofs with front gables predominate the district, which is reflective of the most prominent massing at the most public corner of the lot. The flat roof of the less prominent massing is setback and de-emphasized, but there are also several examples of flat roof structures found on corner lots throughout the district.*
 - **Element 12, Walls of continuity:** *The major wall of continuity is created by the buildings...*
 - **Applicant comment:** *The proposed setbacks aim to infill and negotiate between the walls of continuity established by the adjacent historic two-story homes and the masonry rowhouse across 10th St. A new tree is proposed at 10th St. next to a new curb cut leading to the proposed rear carport to further retain the secondary tree line of continuity.*
 - **Element 13, Relationship of significant landscape features and surface treatments:** *The typical treatment of individual properties is a shallow flat front lawn area in grass turf, subdivided by a concrete walk leading to the front entrance and sometimes a concrete walk leading to the side entrance.*
 - **Applicant comment:** *A shallow front lawn of grass turf is proposed in front of the more recessed portion of the front façade along Bagley, and a planting bed wraps the corner with foundation perennials, shrubs, and evergreens at the shallower setback in front of the gabled brick massing on the corner of the lot. A concrete paver and gravel walkway leading to the front entrance separates the front landscape treatments. A wood fence to match the height and design of the existing fence with retractable telescopic wood gate is proposed to extend to the rear of the projecting bay at the 10th St façade to cover mechanical equipment and enclose the new carport/driveway.*
 - **Element 14, Relationship of open space to structures:** *Open space in the form of front yards to buildings is generally very shallow*
 - **Applicant comment:** *A shallow open space is proposed along either front façade consistent with the adjacent homes. While the Sanborn maps indicate the western half*

of the lot at the corner was always vacant without a built structure, there is no other instance in the district of a similar open setback on a corner lot.

- **Element 15, Scale of facades and façade elements:** *The majority of buildings in the district are small in scale...Façade elements...are moderate in scale. Details within these elements are generally small in scale.*
 - **Applicant comment:** *The relative small scale of the home attempts to recall the predominate cottage-scale of the original neighborhood. Projecting bays and details on both front façade are proportioned to their host massing and moderately-scaled.*
 - **Element 16, Directional expression of front elevations:** *One-story residences are usually slightly wider than tall but their directional expression is vertical due to the gable of the steeply pitched roof.*
 - **Applicant comment:** *The proposed one-story residence is wider than tall, but with a divided expression so the gabled massing has a vertical expression from its main Bagley St. orientation.*
 - **Element 17, Rhythm of building setbacks:** *Setbacks vary from area to area...although they are usually consistent within blocks. In general, buildings have very shallow front yards...Buildings on the north-south streets and corners are very close to the front lot lines.*
 - **Applicant comment:** *The proposed staggered front setback serves to address both setbacks of existing structures at either side.*
 - **Element 18, Relationship of lot coverage:** *Lot coverage ranges...the average residential coverage being approximately forty (40) percent.*
 - **Applicant comment:** *Proposed lot coverage is 49%*
 - **Element 19, Degree of complexity within the façade:** *Early buildings are simple and straightforward. Queen Anne buildings are more complex in massing and detail but are not overly complex.*
 - **Applicant comment:** *Massings are simple and straightforward with minimal detailing.*
 - **Element 20, Orientation, vistas, overviews:** *Garages are oriented toward the alleys...the general overview is that of small-scale mixed-use neighborhood...*
 - **Applicant comment:** *The main orientation addresses Bagley St. with secondary consideration given to 10th St. in accordance with the more prominent thoroughfare and orientation of the house that previously existed on the lot.*
 - **Element 21, Symmetric or asymmetric appearance:** *Most buildings in the district are asymmetrical in appearance, but result in balanced compositions.*
 - **Applicant comment:** *The form is asymmetrical but with balanced proportions between the two distinct massings.*
 - **Element 22, General environmental character:** *The Corktown Historic District, with its narrow lots, shallow front yards, and small-scaled buildings, has a low-density, urban, mixed use character of a pre-automobile city...*
- Staff has no substantial disagreements with the applicant's self-assessment offered under the Elements of Design. The Commission, in its approvals, is only required to be satisfied that the proposal "conforms" to the Elements of Design. Conformance does not mean that every element must be fully satisfied; minor deviations are acceptable, if in the Commission's opinion, the overall proposal is appropriate. The Elements serve as a "map" to guide designs toward appropriateness; they are not a checklist.
 - As an individual building, the proposal uses a range of traditional materials and forms in contemporary and creative ways, referencing the historic context while avoiding the urge to simply "make it look historic" by sticking pseudo-historic details on an otherwise new building. It is clearly a building of our own era, yet respects the scale, texture, and materiality of its surroundings. As promoted through Standard 9, and the application of the Standards via the NPS Guidelines, such a proposal is well-aligned with historic preservation principles and Corktown's Elements of Design.
 - The proposed project restores some of the historically appropriate density which is also a major characteristic of this district, according to both the designation report and the Elements of Design.

ISSUES

- None, staff recommends approval.

RECOMMENDATION

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

The proposed new construction infills the location of a former dwelling with a structure built for the same residential purpose, compatible with the massing, size, scale and architectural features of its environment, and which does not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The design includes several features to add complexity and visual interest consistent with its historic context, and is compliant with the district's Elements of Design.

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 Corktown Historic District's Elements of Design.