



Historic Landmarks and Preservation Districts Commission

Report to the Committee

To: Butchertown Architectural Review Committee
Thru: Savannah Darr, Historic Preservation Officer
From: Katherine Groskreutz, Planning & Design Coordinator
Date: July 7, 2023

Case No: 20-COA-0007
Classification: Committee Review

GENERAL INFORMATION

Property Address: 1437 Mellwood Ave.

Applicant: James Daniel van Dijk
1437 Mellwood Ave.
Louisville, KY 40206
(502) 386-0164
vandijkjd@gmail.com

Owner: Same as above

Estimated Project Cost: Not provided

Description of proposed exterior alteration:

The applicant seeks after-the-fact approval for painting portions of previously unpainted, Victorian-era brick. The eave and porch trim, gutters, and door and window frames on the front and northeast side were painted blue with a sprayer, causing overspray onto the brick. The previously unpainted brick window arch and concrete sill on the front window was also painted blue with overspray to surrounding bricks. The rear of the building was also painted, but had already been previously painted red.

The applicant also seeks approval to paint the remaining masonry surfaces on all facades, of which the front and sides have not been previously painted. The applicant proposes a gray color for the entire building.

Communications with Applicant, Completion of Application

An enforcement case (ENF-ZON-20-000010) was opened on January 6, 2020. The application was received on January 10, 2020 and considered complete. It was assigned a case manager on January 13, 2020 and staff met with the applicant onsite on January 22, 2020 to discuss the issue and explain the options that would either be a staff level or committee level review. It was noted that the applicant was also competing tuckpointing

work. Typically, this work falls under general maintenance. The proper mortar to use on old brick was explained to him at that time, and that the excess mortar needs to be removed from the brick as the work continues. The applicant stated he was deciding on paint colors he would like to use on the body of the house. Staff explained painting the whole house would require committee level approval and asked for him to reach back out to staff when he was ready to move forward.

The COVID pandemic and extenuating circumstances significantly impacted the timeline of this project. Over time staff had continued conversations with the applicant through email, explaining how paint can affect Victorian-era brick and suggesting paint removal in lieu of painting the whole house, and providing multiple products/methods to do such that would have minimal damaged to the historic brick. On October 19, 2022 the applicant stated he would like to take his application to committee for review.

The case was initially scheduled to be heard by the Butchertown Architectural Review Committee (ARC) on January 18, 2023, but had to be cancelled due to loss of quorum. The case is now scheduled to be heard by the Butchertown ARC on July 12, 2023 at 6:30 pm in the Metro Development Center, 444 S. 5th Street, Room 101.

FINDINGS

Guidelines

The following design guidelines, approved for the Butchertown Preservation District, are applicable to the proposed exterior alterations: **Masonry** and **Paint**. The report of the Commission Staff's findings of fact and conclusions with respect to these guidelines is attached to this report.

The following additional findings are incorporated in this report:

Site Context/ Background

The site is zoned R5A within the Traditional Marketplace Corridor Form District. It is located approximately midblock on the northwest side of Mellwood Avenue, 14 parcels southwest of the intersection with N. Spring Street. The structure is a Victorian-era, one-story, masonry, shotgun-style building with a predominately front gabled roof with cross gable side roof in the rear with a rear shed roof addition. It has a slightly inset front entry and decorative dentil molding along the front eave. The sides and rear masonry of the home had been previously unpainted.

The property is bordered to the southwest by four similarly design sister shotgun homes and to the northeast by another sister shotgun home and other historic bungalow or shotgun homes of similar age and scale. There are two-story, masonry, industrial buildings to the southeast across Mellwood and undeveloped land used for industrial storage to the northwest.

A case file did not previously exist prior to this application, which was the first COA to be applied for at this address.

Conclusions

The proposed painting of all the masonry facades does not meet the Butchertown Design Guidelines for **Masonry** and **Paint**. Older brick, especially brick dating to the Victorian-era/turn of the 20th Century, is highly porous and delicate. Painting this type of older brick can have negative consequences by essentially sealing the brick. This traps moisture inside the brick, and with no way to release it, can lead to spalling of the brick face. If left untreated, this can deteriorate the structural integrity of the wall(s).

Since only a small portion of brick has already been painted on the front and sides, staff highly recommends the removal of the blue paint through one of the methods previously provided to the applicant. Staff feels the painting of the entirety of the front and side facades will have detrimental impact to the historic character and integrity of the building, especially due to the age and composition of the brick. The rear facade had been previously painted red; portions recently painted blue, which is not a masonry color. This portion of the previously painted brick will need to be repainted a masonry color.

Staff also noted in pictures that the tuckpointing was done on both sides, and the mortar was not cleaned off once completed. Staff highly recommends the mortar be cleaned off the brick surface to reduce any negative impact to the integrity of the brick.

RECOMMENDATION

On the basis of the information furnished by the applicant, staff recommends the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness be **denied**.

However, if the Committee determines that the application can be approved, staff recommends the following **conditions of approval**:

1. **The paint color shall be of a red to match the historic brick. The applicant shall work with staff to find an appropriate red tone.**
2. **The applicant shall use a "breathable" masonry paint that is compatible with and can create a strong bond with existing paint.**


Katherine Groskreutz
Planning & Design Coordinator

7/7/2023
Date

MASONRY

Design Guideline Checklist

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>+ Meets Guidelines</p> <p>- Does Not Meet Guidelines</p> <p>+/- Meets Guidelines with Conditions as Noted</p> | <p>NA Not Applicable</p> <p>NSI Not Sufficient Information</p> |
|--|--|

	Guideline	Finding	Comment
M1	Do not construct new masonry features that are either falsely historical (characteristic of periods prior to the building's actual construction) or are incompatible with the building or historic district in terms of size, scale, material, or color.	NA	
M2	Do not cut new openings into exterior walls on elevations that can be seen from a public way. Creating an opening for the installation of an air conditioning unit, for example, is not appropriate for a façade that is visible from a public way.	NA	
M3	Photographically document architectural features that are slated for reconstruction prior to the removal of any historic fabric.	NA	
M4	Match the existing bonding pattern, coursing, color, size, strength, and pointing mortar of masonry when replacing a section of brick wall. Bricks should always be toothed-in to historic brickwork, to disguise the joint between new and old.	NA	
M5	Do not remove or rebuild substantial portions of exterior walls if such an action would adversely impact a structure's historic integrity.	NA	
M6	Make sure that any exterior replacement bricks are suited for exterior use.	NA	
M7	Do not replace sections of historic brick with brick that is substantially stronger.	NA	
M8	Repoint only those joints that are no longer sound. Do not remove all joints, sound and unsound, in an effort to achieve a uniform appearance when repointing. Large-scale removal of mortar joints often results in damage to historic masonry.	+/-	Staff did note the mortar in multiple sections of the home were deteriorated; an inventory of locations was not made at that time
M9	Remove unsound mortar joints carefully with hand tools that are narrower than the mortar joint. Power tools should not be used, because they have the potential to scar adjacent masonry.	NSI	
M10	Remove unsound mortar to a depth of two-and-one-half the times the width of the joint or to sound mortar, whichever is greater.	NSI	
M11	Match historic mortar joints in color, texture, joint size, and tooling when repointing.	NSI	The mortar appears lighter in color than historic sections
M12	Use a mortar mix that is compatible with historic masonry. Repointing mortar should be equivalent to or softer than the original mortar. When repointing mortar is harder than the surrounding masonry, as is the case with many modern mixtures, moisture cannot escape through the joints. Trapped moisture will crystallize within the walls and fragment surrounding brick and stone.	NSI	It appears more modern mortar was used for the tuckpointing
M13	If possible, have your mortar analyzed. In order to determine an appropriate mortar mix for individual historic structures, it is recommended that property owners have a sample of the original mortar sent to a lab for analysis. If this is not feasible, a high lime and low Portland cement content mortar mix (1 part cement, 1 part lime, and 6 parts sand) is frequently acceptable.	NA	

M14	Do not attempt to remove joints that have been repointed using a very hard mortar or in an unworkmanlike manner until natural weathering has begun to weaken and crack them. Removal prior to that time would likely damage the masonry units	NA	
M15	Do not use synthetic caulking to repoint historic masonry.	NA	
M16	Have realistic expectations of how the cleaned masonry surface will appear. Remember, it is better to underclean than overclean. A "like new" appearance is rarely desirable.	NA	
M17	Make sure that your contractor has a clear understanding of the physical and chemical properties of your masonry before proposing or testing any chemical cleaning treatments. Such treatments, if improperly applied, can result in permanent damage that significantly outweighs any benefits of cleaning.	NA	
M18	Test proposed cleaning treatments in an inconspicuous area of the building to evaluate potential adverse effects to the masonry. Observation over a complete seasonal cycle is preferable, so that long-term effects may be ascertained. If chemical treatments are found to be acceptable, be sure that those applying the treatment follow all manufacturers' instructions.	NA	
M19	Do not use sandblasting or high-pressure water to clean historic masonry. The process of sandblasting or cleaning buildings using water pressure greater than 300 psi removes the tough, outer-protective surface of the brick and loosens mortar joints, accelerating deterioration.	NA	
M20	Do not clean masonry on buildings with deteriorated mortar joints. Such masonry should be properly repointed prior to cleaning to ensure that water does not penetrate the wall during the cleaning process.	NA	
M21	Do not use any type of water- or chemical-based cleaning systems when a possibility for freezing temperatures exists. Masonry cleaning should not be undertaken until the temperature will remain above 50 degrees for 72 hours after cleaning.	NA	
M22	Remove graffiti as soon as possible, beginning with the gentlest means possible and taking care not to inadvertently etch an outline of the graffiti onto the wall.		
M23	Use solvent-based chemical strippers to remove paint from previously-painted masonry only after testing its effectiveness and evaluating its potential to damage brickwork. Testing should be carried out in an inconspicuous location.		
M24	Do not paint masonry or stucco that has never been painted. While one layer of paint may not affect the appearance of the masonry or stucco, accumulated layers will eventually obscure decorative detail.	-	The brick on the front and sides had previously not been painted and most of these facades remain unpainted
M25	Paint previously-painted masonry a color that is close to its existing color, approximates a natural masonry color as approved, or is recommended by staff. Staff is available to consult with you on appropriate colors.	-	The rear facade had been previously painted red; portions recently painted blue, which is not a natural masonry color. The applicant would like to paint the house grey; during the site visit with staff a red tone matching the historic brick was discussed and would be preferred by staff if approved.
M26	Use a "breathable" masonry paint that is compatible with and can create a strong bond with existing paint.	NSI	The type of paint is not known at this time
M27	Make sure that areas of patched stucco match the strength, composition, color, and texture of the original to the greatest degree possible.	NA	
M28	When patching stucco, cut back the successive layers to provide a key for the new layers to prevent new cracking.	NA	

M29	Carry out stucco repairs so that the dimension between the surface of the stucco and adjacent finishes remains unchanged.	NA	
M30	Do not install stucco, Dryvit, or permastone-type cladding over historic masonry or wood siding.	NA	
M31	Do not resurface historic masonry with exterior insulation.	NA	
M32	Use a masonry or terra cotta chimney cap if needed. Metal chimney caps are not historically appropriate.	NA	

PAINT

Design Guideline Checklist

+	Meets Guidelines	NA	Not Applicable
-	Does Not Meet Guidelines	NSI	Not Sufficient Information
+/-	Meets Guidelines with Conditions as Noted		

	Guideline	Finding	Comment
P1	Painting masonry or stucco that has never been painted is not recommended. Paint is difficult to remove, accumulated layers will obscure decorative detail, and paint coatings (even "breathable" paints) will affect the wall's vapor transmission performance. The presence of a lead oxide wash does not constitute a precedent for painting a building.	-	The brick on the front and sides had previously not been painted and most of these facades remain unpainted
P2	When removing paint from previously-painted masonry, use gentle treatments that have been previously tested in an inconspicuous location. Do not sandblast or use acid-based cleaners.	NA	
P3	Use a "breathable" masonry paint that is compatible with and can create a strong bond with existing paint, only on previously-painted masonry.	NA	
P4	If painting previously-painted masonry, select a color that matches the existing color, approximates a natural masonry color as approved, or is recommended by the staff. Staff is available to consult with you on appropriate colors.	-	The rear facade had been previously painted red; portions recently painted blue, which is not a natural masonry color. The applicant would like to paint the house grey; during the site visit with staff a red tone matching the historic brick was discussed and would be preferred by staff if approved.
P5	Have paint samples analyzed when possible. Paint seriation studies can determine historic pigments and appropriate colors for repainting, by analyzing a paint sample under special lighting conditions to ascertain specific color, hue, and value of paint layers.	NA	
P6	Do not expose metal types that require protection from the elements or apply paint or other coatings to metals that were historically meant to be exposed, such as copper, bronze, or stainless steel.	NA	
P7	Paint replacement gutters, downspouts, metal frame screen and storm windows, roof-vent assemblies, and fire escapes to match wall, trim, cornice, or roof color of the house, whichever is most effective in reducing the visibility of these elements.	NA	
P8	Be aware that historic structures often contain hazardous substances, such as lead paint and asbestos. Contact the Board of Health regarding proper methods of removal and disposal.	NA	