

STAFF REPORT

CONCERNING APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS



Date: April 4, 2019

Application Number: 2019-0401A

Property Location: 508 S St Joseph

Architectural Style/Date/Architect or Builder: Queen Anne Free Classic / 1901

Property Owner: DIVOY ENTERPRISES, LLC

Landmark or District Designation: Taylor's Field, Ordinance #8952-98

Rating: *Contributing*

DESCRIPTION OF STRUCTURE/ SITE: Large irregular two story (plus attic) Free Classic Queen Anne stylistic cues on a brick foundation. Vinyl/aluminum siding is found throughout. The roof is cross-gabled with asphalt shingles, with smaller gables, inset gabled fronts, and gabled returns. The ground floor has a full front porch with doric columns on brick piers with stone caps supporting a hip roof and pediment over the entry stop. A plain frieze with dentil course and brackets are under the entablature. Windows are wood, 1/1 double hung. Three slim fixed single pane windows are in the front gable.

ALTERATIONS: RME #2016-1026B allowed for the replacement of the asphalt shingle roof. RME #2018-0911B allowed for the repair of the front porch, including replacement of decking and underlying structure as needed. Replacement of railing, repair of columns as needed. COA #2019-0211 allowed for the retroactive replacement of the front door and called for the installation of wooden storm door.

APPLICATION ITEMS: *"the new front door was approved at the February Meeting with the condition that a wood storm door be added. I am requesting the committee approve the door without a storm door. The reasons for this request are: 1. The previous door did not have a storm screen door. 2. The front door enters a small vestibule. The vestibule leads to a the front door of apartment one downstairs and apartment 2 upstairs. Since it is a vestibule it does not provide any additional protection from cold in the winter and does not make sense to have a screen door in the summer since the door to each apartment does not have a screen."*

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED PROJECT: Applicant seeks a Certificate of Appropriateness for improvements on the structure, including:

1. Not installing a screen door (as requested by the Commission as a condition of the approval of COA #2019-0211) on the front entrance.

The door provides access to an entrance vestibule that provides access to multiple units.

PRESERVATION SPECIALIST REPORT:

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES: *Taylor's Field Local Historic District Guidelines*

I. THE ENVIRONMENT

[...]

II. EXISTING STRUCTURES

A. BUILDING MATERIALS

[...]

B. ROOFS AND ROOFING

[...]

C. WINDOWS AND DOORS

Window and door frames are in most cases wood. Brick structures have stone sills and brick lintels. In some cases where additional siding has been applied window trim has been covered. Many structures in the district have aluminum storm windows. Some houses retain wood framed storm windows.

Required

Original windows and doors shall be retained including sashes, lintels, sills, shutters, decorative glass, pediments, hoods, and hardware. When deteriorated beyond repair, they shall be replaced with units and trim resembling the original.

Recommended

Wood frame storm windows and doors painted to match the original should be used but should not damage existing frames and should be removable. If new sashes or doors are installed, the existing or original materials, design, and hardware should be used. When metal storm doors and windows are used, they should be painted, anodized or coated to match the existing. When awnings are used they should be of canvas material.

Prohibited

Original doors, windows, and hardware shall not be discarded when they can be restored and re-used in place. New window and door openings which would alter the scale and proportion of the building shall not be introduced. Inappropriate new window and door features, such as aluminum insulating glass combinations that require the removal of the original windows and doors, shall not be installed.

Not Recommended

Awnings, hoods, and fake shutters made of metal, vinyl, or fiberglass should not be used if they would detract from the existing character or appearance of the building.

[...]

III. SAFETY AND BUILDING CODE REQUIREMENTS

A. BUILDING CODE REQUIREMENTS

Required

Building code requirements shall be compiled with in such a manner that the existing character of the building is preserved.

Recommended

Local code officials should be consulted to investigate alternative life safety measures that will preserve the architectural integrity of the structure. Variances for historic properties should be investigated.

Prohibited

Construction of new stairways and elevators that would alter important architectural features or existing exits and spaces is prohibited.

Not Recommended

Fire prevention equipment should not damage the appearance or fabric of the building.

B. ACCESS FOR HANDICAPPED OR DISABLED PERSONS

IV. GENERAL

[...]

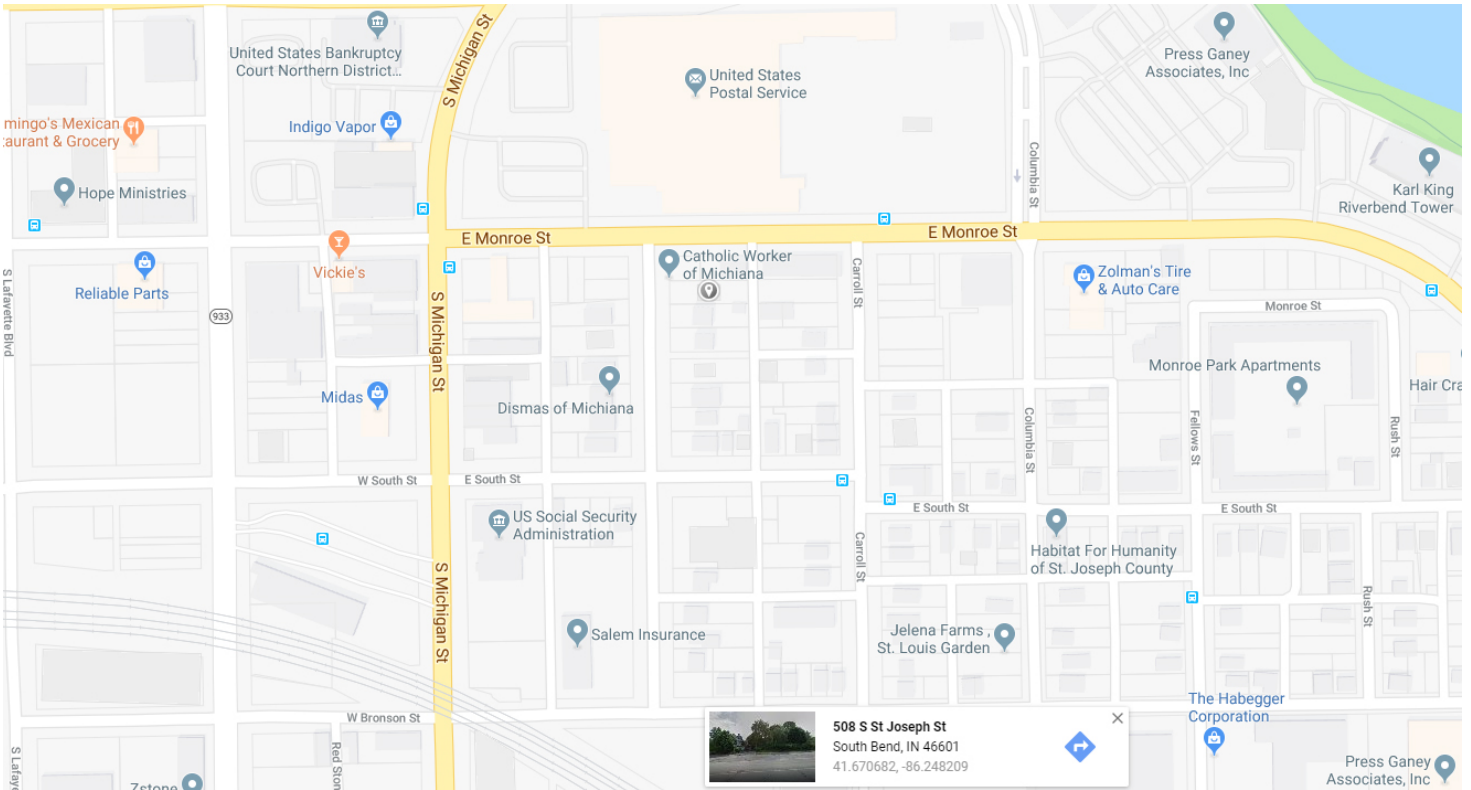
STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff previously suggested that a wooden storm door be installed so as to make the fiberglass replacement door less conspicuous. Staff makes no additional recommendation.

Written by
Adam Toering
Historic Preservation Specialist

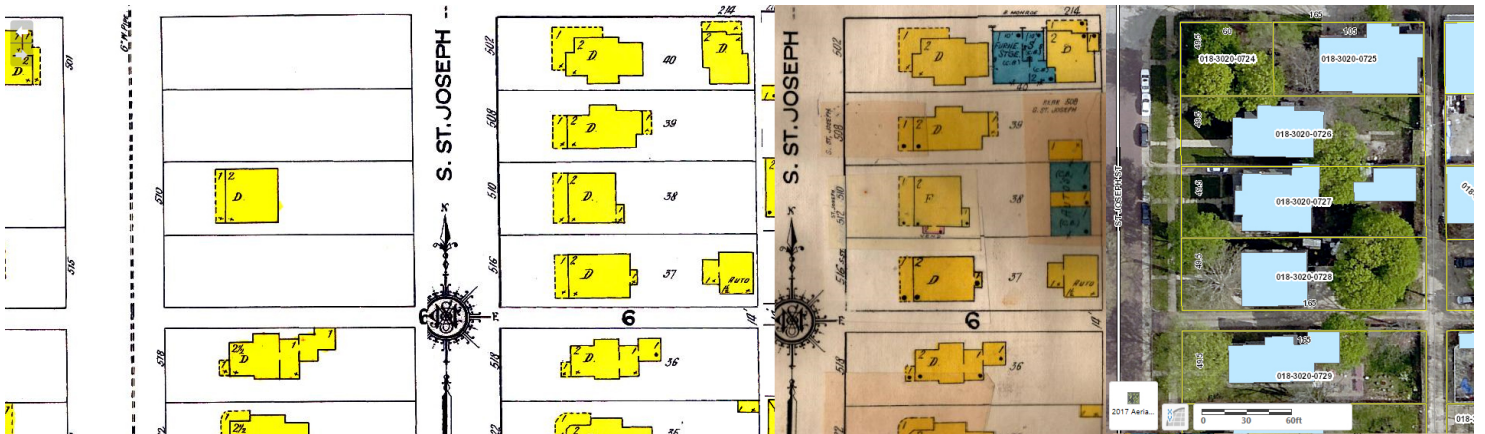
Approved by
Elicia Feasel
Historic Preservation Administrator

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION OF SOUTH BEND AND ST. JOSEPH COUNTY

LOCATION MAP - Map showing location of the property and surrounding area (Google Maps)



AERIAL MAP - Sanborn maps from 1899, 1917, 1960. Satellite imagery from 2017.



**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
OF SOUTH BEND AND ST. JOSEPH COUNTY**

FRONT PICTURE (WEST) - Picture of the front of the building, September 2018.



CLOSE UP (WEST) - Picture of the installed front door.



BACKGROUND 508 and 510 St. Joseph

I would like to give you some insight on my intentions for the property. I purchased this property in November of 2017. I was under the belief at the time that the property was in good condition and the 4 open rental units could quickly be rented without much work. We tried for a couple of months to rent these units without finding suitable renters who my property manager Cressy and Everett would approve. I decided to do some rehab of the units. Once getting someone in to look at the units it became obvious that there was a lot more which needed to be done. There were plumbing and HVAC problems, the units were dirty with broken doors and flooring paint and plaster which in need of repair. In addition there was a great deal of garbage all over the yard.

I found a contractor who gave me a reasonable price, had references and showed me a license. He said he would get everything done and where a permit was necessary he would have one pulled. I decided to go with him. He said he could start in March and should be done by June. About this time another renter moved out leaving 5 of 7 units open. Also, the renter in the upstairs unit in 508 St. Joseph stopped paying rent.

In April we took the tenant in 508 St. Joseph to court for eviction. He had not paid rent in 4 months. He convinced the Judge he had some bad luck and would be able to get back on track in 30 days. He never paid a cent more and finally moved out in early June. He left the unit a complete wreck with writing on the wall a room full of garbage, furniture and 3 loads of Junk.

We finally were able to find a renter for the upstairs unit in 510 St. Joseph and she moved in April.

During my visit in June almost nothing had been accomplished. I had a discussion with the contractor and he convinced me that for him to really get this project done I should give him 50% down so he can pay the worker as the project progressed. I agreed.

In July, nothing had been accomplished and with the move out of 508 not being cleaned up the yard was a mess. During my visit he started to do some work on the property and I was hopeful we were on our way. 2 weeks later my property manager sent me pictures of the steps on 510 which were obviously not done properly and he had started work on the front porch on 508 St. Joseph without my approval. I stopped work on 508 and he agreed to fix the steps on 510 St. Joseph. Unfortunately, with the porch being a hazard we had to stop trying to rent any of the units in 508 St. Joseph.

In August we received notice From the Historical Preservation Committee that work we were doing on the steps at 510 St. Joseph and the porch on 508 St. Joseph had not been approved and work needed to halt immediately pending approval from the Committee. My contractor said he would handle it and contacted Adam Toering. I followed up with the contractor and he said he would make sure the steps were done to code and would coordinate the approval with Adam. He requested I give him additional money upfront. I decided instead of giving him more

money I would handle it myself. I then contacted Adam and he helped me get my application in for the September 17th Meeting. At this meeting the steps and fence on 510 were approved and the porch at 508. Siding and windows were not approved.

In late September the boyfriend of the tenant upstairs in 510 moved in without approval. He put left a refrigerator in the front yard a couch on the steps and a car in the driveway. This made the property look even worse.

I decided to see if I could get the contractor to clean the property and fix the steps on 510 St. Joseph before my visit in October.

During my visit in October to the property did look a little cleaner. Unfortunately the fixes on the steps I paid for were not done property. We discussed this I gave him the requirements for the steps, he said he would find the right person and they would be fixed before my next visit. I also met with Adam to if there was any way to fix the windows in 510 St. Joseph. He had his inspector look at them. He felt they were beyond repair but we maybe able to find a matching movable portion of the window. I looked at 2 of the Habitat for humanities and Adam looked at a warehouse with replacement sashes. Unfortunately we did not find one. I decided I needed to figure that out once I had more pressing issues resolved.

At this point I did not have any renters in 508 St. Joseph or anyone in the downstairs of 510.

I came back in November to find that all the vacant units had been broken into. The front door area near the locks had been damaged beyond repair on both 510 and 508 St. Joseph. All the windows were open two windows in 510 St. Joseph and two window in 508 St. Joseph had been broken. At this point I did not know what to do. The only thing I could think of was to get the property secured as soon as possible and get the porch on 508 St. Joseph fixed enough so the property did not look like it was vacated derelict. I had fired my contractor and attempted to find someone to assist. All I could find at the time was a handyman. I hired him to put in new front doors, fix the porch on 510 St. Joseph and the railing on 510 St. Joseph steps and put some plywood in the window which was completely broken out.

In late November I was able to get Troy McKee, my current contractor on the job. I asked him to put the new windows I had ordered a couple of weeks before in 510 St. Joseph and go about getting all the issues on the property resolved. He began getting the trash off the property and then focusing on major plumbing issue and problems with the heating. He also started work on the interiors since it was very cold to work outside.

In early January we were red tagged by the building department and again notified we had not gotten approval from the Historical Preservation Committee.

The renters in 510 St. Joseph upstairs moved out.

Troy had a license in Mishawaka but not South Bend. He worked on getting his license in South Bend and getting the necessary building permits. I sent in a new application to the Historical Preservation Committee.

In February the application for 508 was approved and the one for 510 was rejected.

In March we finally received our permits to get the work done on the Steps on 510 St. Joseph.

I am hopeful with Troy McKee on the job, I will be able to finally get this property in a condition to rent to quality renters.

I currently have only 2 units rented and 2 additional units ready for rent.

I am hoping to find a way to partner with the Historical Preservation Committee and other home owners to find a way to make this a desirable neighborhood once again.