

**CITY OF SAINT PAUL
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT**

ADDRESS: 286-94 Laurel Avenue and 123-27 Nina Street
HISTORIC NAME: Riley Row House also known as Laurel Terrace
INVENTORY NUMBER: RA-SPC-4127
APPLICANT: John Yust, AIA
DATE OF PUBLIC HEARING: July 1, 2019
HPC SITE/DISTRICT: Historic Hill Heritage Preservation Site
PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: Pioneer Houses 1858-1930
WARD: 2 DISTRICT COUNCIL: 9
ZONING: RM1 **CLASSIFICATION:** Site Work
STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: George Gause

A. SITE DESCRIPTION:

Riley Row House (also known as Laurel Terrace) 286-294 Laurel Avenue, on the corner of Nina and Laurel. Designed by Clarence Johnston, it is considered to be one of the finest Victorian Romanesque style row houses in the country. It was built in 1887 and the exterior is made of sandstone, granite, brick and slate. The polychromatic exterior finish has different colored and textured stone for the window trim, arches, quoins, and belt courses. F. Scott Fitzgerald lived here between 1808 and 1809. The building was originally named for its first owner, William C. Riley, who owned the Northern News.

B. PROPOSED CHANGES:

The applicant proposes to remove the existing sandstone sidewalk panels and replace with concrete sidewalk in the same panel division.

C. STAFF COMMENTS:

The existing sandstone sidewalk is likely original to the site. The sandstone sidewalk only is present in front of Riley Row, the other sidewalk along the block and across the street are various types of concrete.

There is a concern with public safety along the public way. The sandstone gets extremely slick when moisture is present. There have been several slip accidents which have prompted the owners to request the change.

Approximately 45% of the sandstone panels are cracked or deteriorated. The estimated cost to replace the sidewalk with a concrete is \$39,000, the cost to replace with stone \$143,000.

The Historic Hill district nomination does not mention sidewalks. The guidelines discuss that stone sidewalks 'should' be maintained and retained. The stone only exists in front of this structure. There is more use of square or hexagonal concrete tiles in the Hill district than sandstone. Language concerning the concrete tiles is found in the Hill guidelines; *"When concrete tile public sidewalks need to be replaced, new poured concrete sidewalks should be the same width as the existing sidewalks and should be scored in a two-foot square or 18-inch square pattern to resemble the old tiles; expansion joints should match the scoring."* This illustrates the commonality and importance of concrete tile sidewalks in the district.

D. GUIDELINE CITATIONS:

The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation:

Guideline	Compliant?	Staff Comments
<p>2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>	<p>Sidewalks are not referenced in the local or national register listing. Although unique now that most other stone sidewalks have been removed, stone would have been common utilitarian feature historically.</p>
<p>6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>	<p>The deteriorated sections of sidewalk could be replaced with stone, but the stone has proven not to hold up in our climate, thus most stone sidewalks no longer exist. Concrete or concrete tile would match sidewalks found in the majority of the district.</p>

GUIDELINE		COMMENTS:
<p>Sec. 74.63. Intent and purpose.</p>		
<p>(b) These guidelines are intended to be flexible as well as clear. When applying the guidelines, for example, the commission will consider the particular merit of the building or area under review. It will also consider such factors as the expense and availability of historic materials and the economic impact of its decisions on property owners. The commission will be considerate of clearly defined cases of economic hardship or deprivation of the owner of reasonable use of the property.</p>		<p>This structure is a pivotal Clarence Johnston designed structure. Replacement stone will cost approximately three times that of concrete but would not deprive the residents reasonable use of the property.</p>
<p>Sec. 74-65. New Construction</p>	<p>Compliant?</p>	
<p>(g) Public infrastructure: (1) The traditional pattern of public streets, curbs, boulevards and sidewalks in the area should be maintained. Distinctive features of public spaces in the area such as brick alleys, stone slab sidewalks, granite curbs ...should be preserved.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Owners are requesting a change in material based on cost and public safety.</p>
<p>(2) Brick alleys and stone slab sidewalks generally should be maintained and repaired as necessary with original materials;</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>	<p>Owners recognize that the sidewalk needs repairs, cost and public safety are the concern with going back with the same material.</p>

E. FINDINGS:

1. On April 2, 1991, the most recent expansion of the Historic Hill Heritage Preservation District was established under Ordinance No. 17815, § 3(II), reflecting today's boundaries. The Heritage Preservation Commission shall protect the architectural character of heritage preservation sites through review and authorization or denial of applications for city permits for exterior work within designated heritage preservation sites §73.04.(4).
2. The existing sidewalk material is sandstone in which nearly half of the existing slabs have become deteriorated.
3. The sidewalk is a utilitarian feature which when replaced will not adversely effect, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment.
4. The replacement of the sandstone sidewalk with concrete sidewalk at 286-94 Laurel Avenue and 123-7 Nina Street will not adversely affect the Program for the Preservation and architectural control of the Historic Hill Heritage District [**§73.06 (e)**] so long as the conditions are met.

F. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the findings staff recommends approval of construction of the new accessory structure provided the following condition(s) are met:

1. Exposed concrete shall have a smooth finish, void of aggregate. Finish may include a light, one directional, broom finish.
2. Approval is written in conjunction with and referencing submitted application and approved plans. Conditions of this approval MAY supersede any contradictory notes or schedules found on project description or drawings. This approval is VOID if the approved description or plans are altered from the submitted application.
3. Work to be accomplished in accordance with all applicable zoning regulations and building codes, or Board of Zoning Appeals decision. This approval does not constitute or recommend a hardship for purposes of zoning review.
4. Further permits and approvals may be required. This approval signifies review and issuance based on the Heritage Preservation regulations and guidelines. No other city, state, or federal review and approval should be assumed or implied by this approval.

G. SUGGESTED MOTION:

I move to conditionally approve the replacement of the sandstone sidewalk with concrete sidewalk at 286-94 Laurel Avenue and 123-7 Nina Street per the findings of fact, presented testimony, submitted documentation and information provided in the staff report with the four conditions.

Motion Change

If the HPC decides to change the motion, then finding #3-4 and condition #1 will need to be changed.



C.1930



2019











Hex tiles at entrances to Riley Row



Sidewalk pattern across street