

HISTORIC PRESERVATION STUDY REPORT

JAMES S. PECK HOUSE

(Written Spring 1988)

I. NAME

Historic: James S. Peck House

Common: Same

II. LOCATION

Street Address: 1105 North Waverly Place

Tax Key Number: 393-0102-000

Legal Property Description: Subdivision of block 105 in the NW ¼ of Sec. 28-7-22. Block 105, Lot 3, and the South 10 feet of Lot 2.

III. YEAR BUILT

1870-71

Architect: Unknown (original house, 1870-71)
Henry C. Koch & Sons (front porch, 1912)

IV. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The James S. Peck House is a two-story, cream brick, L-shaped, low hip roofed, Italianate villa. The gabled façade steps back from Waverly Place with the entrance recessed in the ell. The entrance is sheltered by the deep Ionic order porch that wraps around the front. The porch was erected in 1912 to replace an earlier wooden porch.

The basically rectangular house is given a picturesque appearance by the stepping back of the façade on the south side, the variety of window types used and the numerous embellishments. Bay windows, flat head, round-arched, segmental, oval and ocular windows are used to fenestrate the house. A variety of carved ornament is employed to decorate the windows, most notably the elaborate window caps on the front windows, and the foliated wood carving at the round attic window in the front gable. Among the other decorative features are the deep molded soffits and the unusual brick quoining at the first story level that is surmounted by pilaster strips at the second story level.

The windows are a combination of one-over-one and two-over-two, double-hung wooden sash set in deep molded reveals, some embellished with rope molding. The entrance consists of double, half-glazed, paneled wooden doors surmounted by a tall, segmentally arched, one-light transom.

The exterior of the house has been little altered since 1912 when the handsome porch was added. The interior is also intact and contains many fine features including a curving walnut staircase, molded plaster cornices, parquet floors and carved marble mantels.

VII. SIGNIFICANCE

The James S. Peck House is architecturally significant as one of the city's finest and best-preserved Italianate style cream brick houses. Its exterior design displays high quality materials and superb craftsmanship. It is historically important as a surviving remnant of the once fashionable Yankee Hill residential area.

VIII. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The house at 1105 North Waverly Place was built about 1870-71 as the residence of James Sidney Peck. At the time it was built, Waverly Place was being developed as a fashionable upper middle class residential street of substantial brick houses. The first house on Waverly Place was built in 1867, after which all of the other houses on the block were built in rapid succession by affluent merchants and professionals. Since that time, all of the other houses on Waverly Place have been razed except for the Peck House and the Button House at the corner of State Street. Throughout the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the neighborhood remained a fashionable residential precinct.

James S. Peck bought his lot in 1870 shortly after his marriage to Nellie M. Hayes. He soon had the present dwelling under construction. Peck was an executive with Angus Smith and Co., a grain trading company. Angus Smith eventually married James Peck's sister and the two families developed close ties. Peck also invested in real estate and speculated in iron mining. He later became president of the Converse Cattle Company and spent considerable time in Cheyenne, Wyoming, where the cattle company conducted most of its business.

After Peck's death in 1897, his widow continued to occupy the house until her death in 1909. Mrs. Peck was socially prominent and was a charter member of the Women's Club of WI, the Atheneum Association, the College Endowment Association and the WI Chapter of the Society of colonial Dames. She was also active in the Milwaukee Daughters of the American Revolution and the Society of Mayflower Descendants. She authored a chapter for Howard Louis Conard's History of Milwaukee County (1895).

After Mrs. Peck's death in 1909, the house passed to her only daughter, Katharine Hubbard, who sold it to William H. Dodsworth. Dodsworth, the general agent for the American Express Co., added the present porch in 1912 while the house was occupied by his daughter, Mrs. Samuel J. Pierce, and her husband. In May of 1930 he leased the house to Mrs. C. R. Gilman, an interior decorator. Mrs. Gilman and later her successor in the design business, Marjorie Fiedler, occupied the house until 1981. Ms. Fiedler had purchased it in 1948 and both lived and worked in the house. In 1981 William Blake, the present owner, acquired it and restored the exterior. The building now houses Mr. Blake's business, the Rice-Black Management Company, and an apartment on the second floor.

IX. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the James S. Peck House, 1105 North Waverly Place, be designated a City of Milwaukee Historic Structure as a result of its fulfillment of criteria five of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, Section 2-335(2)(e).

X. PRESERVATION GUIDELINES

The following preservation guidelines represent the principal concerns of the Historic Preservation Commission regarding this historic designation. However, the Commission reserves the right to make final decisions based upon particular design submissions. These guidelines shall be applicable only to the James S. Peck House. Nothing in these guidelines shall be construed to prevent ordinary maintenance or the restoration and/or replacement of documented original elements.

The following preservation guidelines represent the principal concerns of the Historic Preservation Commission regarding this historic designation. However, the Commission reserves the right to make final decisions based upon particular design submissions. These guidelines shall be applicable only to the James S. Peck House. Nothing in these guidelines shall be construed to prevent ordinary maintenance or the restoration and/or replacement of documented original elements.

A. Roofs

Retain the original roof shape. Dormers, skylights and solar collector panels may be added to roof surfaces if they are not visible from the street. Avoid making changes to the roof shape what would alter the building height, roofline, or pitch. Avoid using new roofing materials that are inappropriate to the style and period of the building. Replace deteriorated roof coverings with new materials that resemble the original roofing in size, shape, color and texture.

B. Materials

1. Masonry

- a. Unpainted brick, terra cotta or stone should not be painted or covered. This is historically incorrect and could cause irreversible damage if it was decided to remove the paint at a later date.
- b. Repoint defective mortar by duplicating the original in color, style, texture and strength. Avoid using mortar colors and pointing styles that were unavailable or were not used when the building was constructed.
- c. Clean masonry only when necessary to halt deterioration and with the gentlest method possible. Sandblasting brick, terra cotta or stone surfaces is prohibited. This method of cleaning erodes the surface of the material and accelerates deterioration. Avoid the indiscriminate use of chemical products that could have an adverse reaction with the masonry materials, such as the use of acid on limestone.
- d. Repair or replace deteriorated material with new material that duplicates the old as closely as possible. Avoid using new material that is inappropriate or was unavailable when the building was constructed.

2. Wood/Metal

- a. Retain original material, whenever possible. Avoid removing architectural features that are essential to maintaining the building's character and appearance.
- b. Repair or replace deteriorated material with new material that duplicates the appearance of the old as closely as possible. Avoid covering architectural features with new materials that are inappropriate or were unavailable when the building was constructed.

C. Windows and Doors

1. Retain existing original window and door openings. Retain the existing configuration of panes, sash, surrounds and sills, except as necessary to restore the building to its original condition. Avoid making additional openings or changes in existing fenestration by enlarging or reducing window or door openings to fit new stock window sash or new stock door sizes. Avoid changing the size or configuration of windowpanes or sash. Consider removing inappropriate later window units and restoring the fenestration to its original appearance.
2. Respect the building's stylistic period. If the replacement of doors or window sash is necessary, the replacement should duplicate the appearance and design of the original window sash or door. Avoid using inappropriate sash and door replacements such as unpainted aluminum combination storm and screen units. Avoid the filling-in or covering of openings with inappropriate units such as horizontal sliding sash in place of double-hung sash, the substitution of units with glazing configurations not appropriate to the style of the building or the use of vinyl or metal clad units.

D. Porches, Trim and Ornamentation

There shall be no changes to the existing trim or ornamentation except as necessary to restore the building to its original condition. Replacement features shall match the original member in scale, design and appearance.

E. Additions

The east, south and north elevations are integral to the structure's architectural significance. Additions are not recommended and require the approval of the Commission. Approval shall be based upon the addition's design compatibility with the building in terms of height, roof configuration, fenestration, scale, design and materials, and the degree to which it visually intrudes upon the principal elevations.

F. Signs

The installation of any permanent exterior sign shall require the approval of the Commission. Approval will be based on the compatibility of the proposed sign with the historic and architectural character of the building.

G. Site Features

New plant materials, wooden patio decks, fencing, paving and lighting fixtures shall be compatible with the historic architectural character of the building. Stockade and chain link fencing are generally not appropriate to the character of the building.

H. Guidelines for New Construction

It is important that new construction be designed so as to be as sympathetic as possible with the character of the Peck house.

1. Siting

New construction must respect the historic siting of the Peck House. It should be accomplished so as to maintain the appearance of the Peck House from Waverly Place as a freestanding structure in a landscaped setting.

2. Scale

Overall building height and bulk, the expression of major building divisions including foundation, body and roof, and individual building components such as overhangs and fenestration that are in close proximity to the historic building must be compatible to and sympathetic with the design of the Peck House.

3. Form

The massing of new construction must be compatible with the goal of maintaining the integrity of the Peck House as a distinct freestanding structure. The profiles of roofs and building elements that project and recede from the main block should express the same continuity established by the historic structure if they are in close proximity to the Peck House.

4. Materials

The building materials that are visible from the public right-of-way and in close proximity to the Peck House should be consistent with the colors, textures, proportions, and combinations of cladding materials used on the historic structure. The physical composition of the materials may be different from that of the historic materials, but the same appearance should be maintained.