

HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION REPORT
Certificate of Appropriateness
Section 20-92

TO: Heritage Preservation Commission
FROM: Planning Staff
MEETING DATE: May 28, 2026

PROPOSAL: The applicant is proposing to replace three exterior staircases and repair and restore the cast iron fence to the building located at 429 7th Street N. (Hixon House)

PROPERTY OWNER:

La Crosse County Historical Society
145 West Ave
La Crosse, WI 54601

APPLICANT:

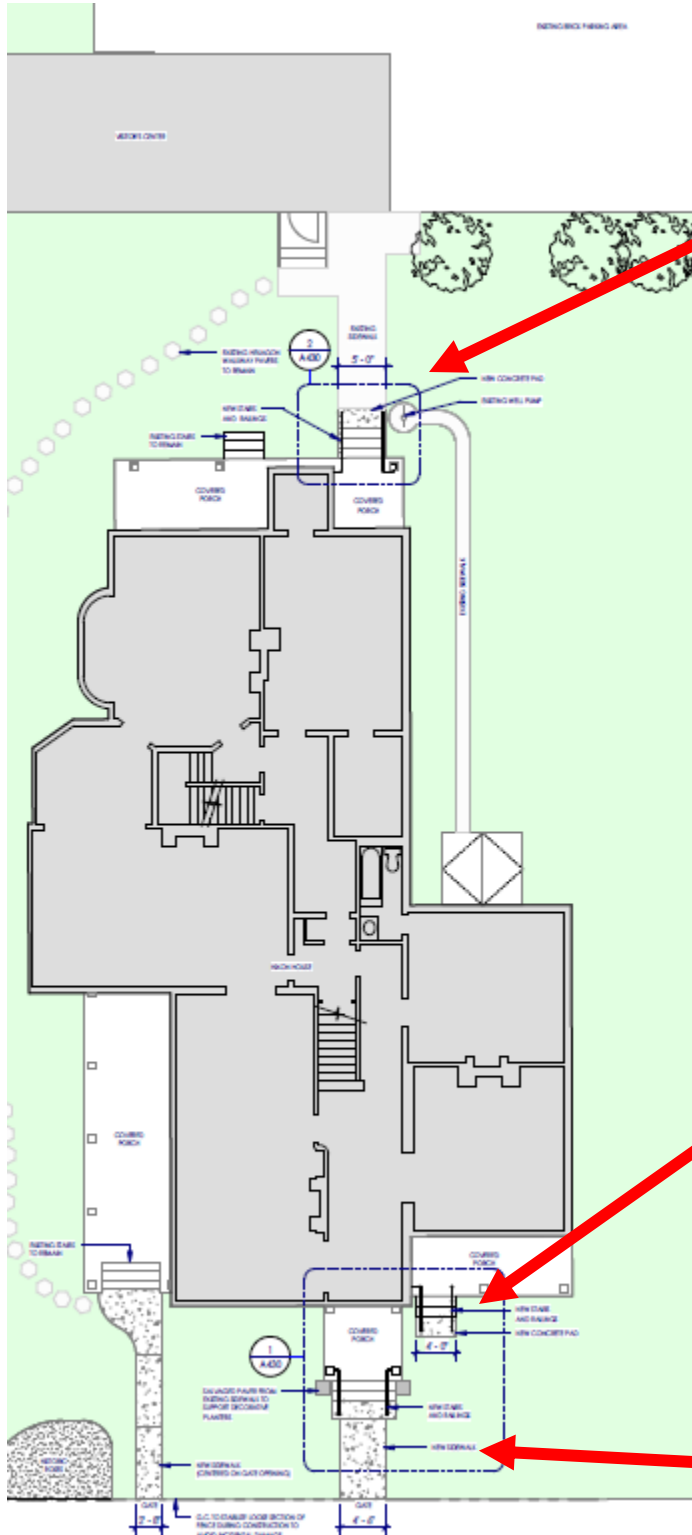
Margaret Lichter
Hixon House Site and Guides Manager
La Crosse County Historical Society

BACKGROUND: The HPC was given responsibility to review all exterior work that requires a permit from the City on Locally Designated Landmarks per Section 20-92 of the La Crosse Municipal Code.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The applicant is proposing to reconstruct three of their exterior staircases, including railings. These staircases are the ones used by the visitors to the Hixon House. Two are located on the east side of the house facing 7th St N. The third one is located to the rear of the house (west) and faces the carriage house and parking lot. The risers on the stairs are not of equal height, code compliant, or are complimentary to the Hixon House. The applicant states that both the stairs and the railings are not original to the house and in some cases are less than 10 years old.

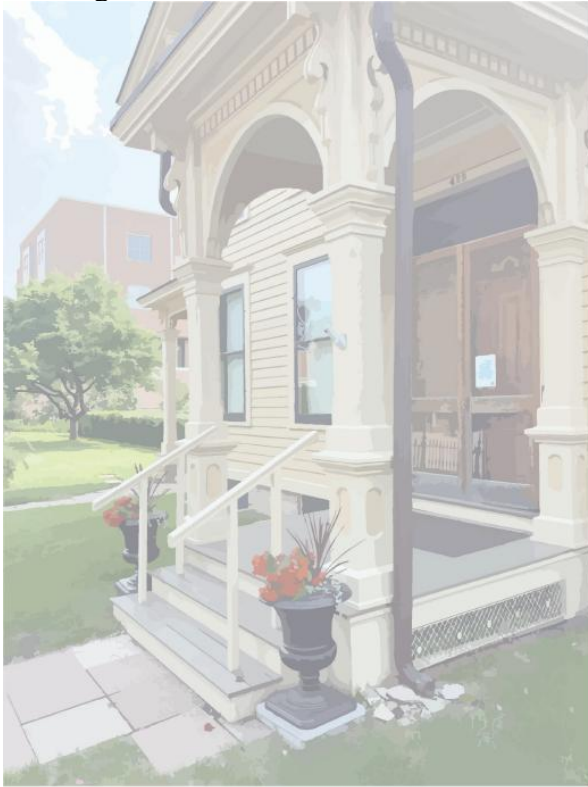
Additionally, the applicant is proposing to have the existing, original, cast-iron fence that borders the north and east property lines removed so it can be repaired and restored. It will be dry ice-blasted and repainted black, which is the original color. Any missing elements to the fences will be recast and repaired. The existing footings will also be removed and replaced.

Staircase locations:

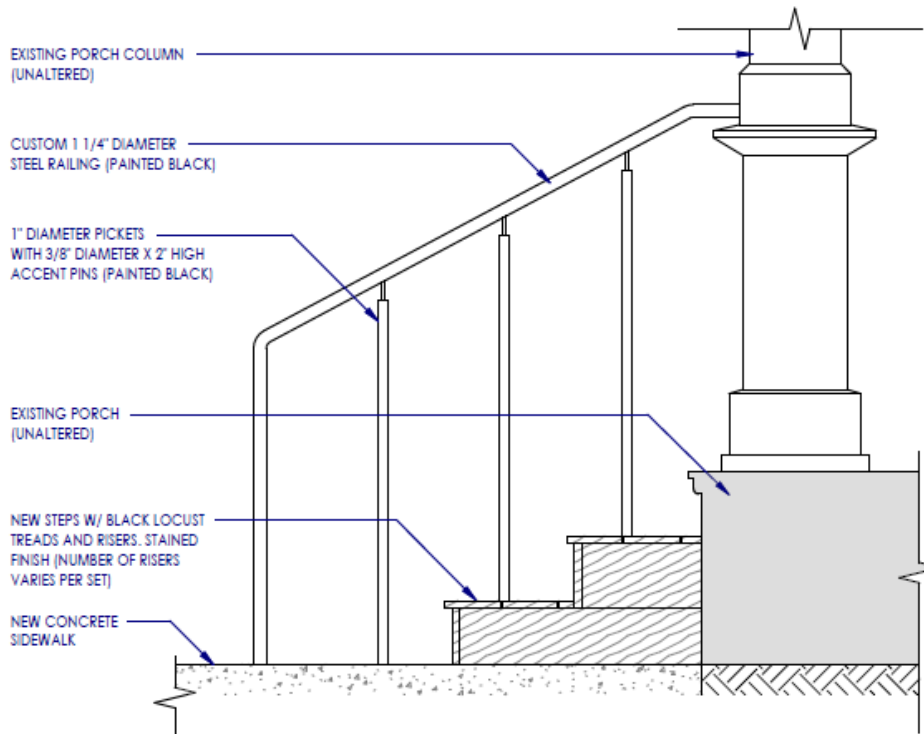
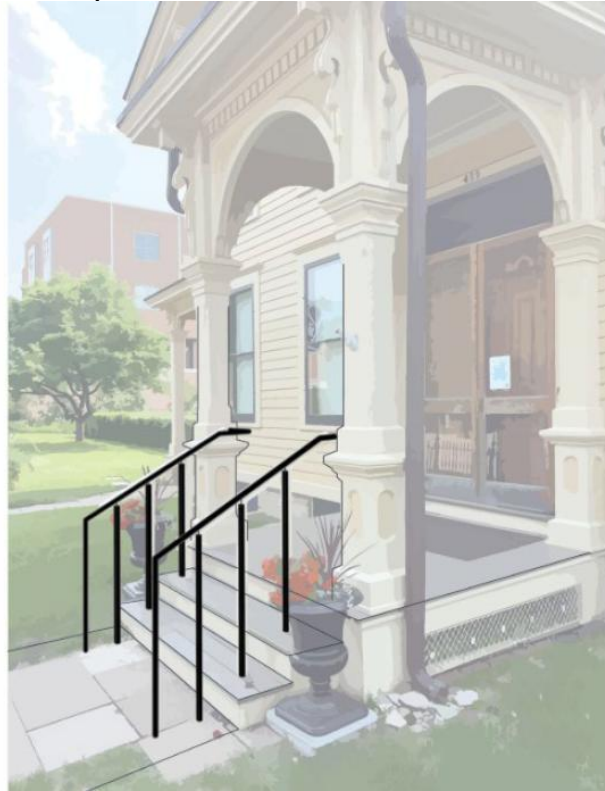


Proposed new look

Existing



Proposed



Design

The look of the proposed stairs will be constructed of wood and look similar to the in design the existing, original wood work of the porches they are attached to. The railings will consist of narrow steel and wood pickets. All painted black.

Existing Fence Condition:







SEE ATTACHED PLANS FOR MORE INFORMATION

ANALYSIS:

Staff attempts to apply best practices that should be used when restoring historic buildings, including reference to the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.

The proposed design and materials of the stairs will mimic the look and character of the existing house. The proposed design of the railings and pickets are minimalistic enough to not take away from the character of the main house, but different enough to separate the stairs from being considered “original”. It does still compliment other architectural features, such as the ornamental cast-iron fence. The fence will largely be repaired and restored. Any elements being recreated are minimal as a large majority of the original fence will remain. The look of the footings will be similar, but any difference will not overshadow the fence, which is the main aesthetic component of this element.

FINDING:

The proposed addition is appropriate to the primary historic building.

RECOMMENDED ACTION BY STAFF:

This Certificate of Appropriateness is recommended for approval.