

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Minutes

May 16, 2006

DRAFT

City Commission Chambers
City Hall, 2nd Floor
241 W. South St.
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

Members Present: Fred Decker, Vice Chair (Acting Chair); Linda DeYoung; Nelson Nave; James Tribu

Members Excused: Lisa Poole-Woldring, Chair; Bill Snyder

Members Absent: Bob Oudsema

City Staff: Sharon Ferraro, Historic Preservation Coordinator; Amy Thomas, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Decker called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

APPROVAL OF ABSENCES

Ms. Poole-Woldring and Mr. Snyder advised city staff that they would not be present at the meeting.

Mr. Nave, supported by Ms. DeYoung, moved approval of the absence of Ms. Poole-Woldring and Mr. Snyder from the May 16, 2006 Historic District Commission meeting. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda.

Ms. DeYoung, supported by Mr. Nave, moved approval of the May 16, 2006 Historic District Commission agenda as presented. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

DISCLAIMER

Ms. Ferraro read the disclaimer into the record.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Decker inquired about the garage on 418-20 Pearl that was to be repaired. Ms. Ferraro advised that the owner asked for a postponement.

NEW BUSINESS

718 W. Willard (Case #: IHA 06-0035)

Lola Atkinson was present to discuss the application. The application requests the installation of vinyl siding on the house at 718 W. Willard.

Ms. Atkinson advised that other houses on this street already have vinyl siding. The houses in this area were the last (1997) to be included in the historic district. There is currently more than one type of siding on the house. Ms. Atkinson would like to have white vinyl siding installed to give the house a more uniform appearance.

Mr. Decker inquired if Ms. Atkinson intended to side over the cement-asbestos siding, and she stated that she intended to side over the entire building. Mr. Nave mentioned that it will probably be necessary to take off the cement-asbestos siding. He warned that the nails will probably shatter the siding. Ms. Atkinson advised that her contractor has experience with siding over cement-asbestos. Ms. Ferraro stated that applicants are advised to take off the cement asbestos siding because the extra layers tend to trap moisture and that causes more damage.

Discussion continued with regard to some water damage on the house, and Ms. Atkinson advised that the new roof corrected that problem. Mr. Decker inquired if the applicant intended to keep the decorative treatment on the gables, and Ms. Atkinson stated that she would also like to cover that area with siding.

Mr. Tribu inquired as to the condition of the rest of the wood on the house, and Ms. Atkinson advised that it is splintered and peeling but not rotten. Mr. Tribu suggested repairing the wood and painting it. The siding under the asbestos might still be in good shape. He advised Ms. Atkinson that if she spent money to repair the existing wood siding it would be to her advantage in the long run. Ms. Atkinson stated that she had hoped to install siding with a 30-year warranty.

Mr. Nave inquired if Ms. Atkinson intended to continue to use the house as a rental and she responded in the affirmative. Mr. Nave informed the applicant that the Historic District Commission doesn't typically approve vinyl siding and Ms. Atkinson stated that

she was aware of that. Mr. Nave advised that he could provide a prescription for paint that should last at least 10 years.

Ms. Ferraro informed the applicant that she would need unanimous approval from the Historic District Commission at this meeting since there were only four commissioners (quorum) present, and that she had the option of postponing her application until more commissioners are available. Ms. Atkinson stated that she would like to proceed with her application at the current meeting.

Ms. Atkinson stated that there are other houses on the street that have vinyl siding and they were in the historic district long before her property became a part of the district. Ms. Ferraro stated that the Historic District Commission is not allowed to consider precedents; they must look at each case separately.

Mr. Nave inquired if 718 Willard had previously been on the HDC agenda. Ms. Ferraro responded in the affirmative and advised that this property had been on the HDC agenda in the past, the application pertained to the front porch. Ms. Atkinson stated that the house has remained as is since she purchased it, with the exception of a side door that was added (at the city's request) for access to the basement.

Mr. Tribu mentioned that the applicant didn't list details of materials to be used on the exterior corners or the J-channel. He inquired if the applicant intended to wrap the windows in aluminum. Ms. Atkinson confirmed that she intends to wrap the windows in burgundy aluminum. Mr. Tribu expressed concern that such treatment would make the house look like every other new house rather than a historic building. Ms. Atkinson advised that none of the other houses in the block look historic. Mr. Tribu reminded the applicant that such a precedent could not be considered.

Ms. DeYoung, supported by Mr. Tribu, moved to deny the application for vinyl siding for 718 W. Willard. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Decker advised that the other houses on the street did not come before the Historic District Commission for approval of vinyl siding because the work was done before the Stuart Area district addition in 1997. Mr. Tribu commended Ms. Atkinson's efforts to upgrade the property, but stressed the need to do the work properly. Ms. Ferraro confirmed that the applicant would not be forced to remove the asphalt siding.

422 Stuart (Case #: IHA 06-0047)

John O'Brien and Abraham Porter were present to discuss the application. The application requests installation of a copper, standing-seam metal roof over the front porch, south side bay window, and southwest corner flat roof.

Mr. O'Brien advised that the aluminum siding has been taken off and the contractor is in the process of repairing the exterior wood. Mr. Nave inquired if the applicants intended to restore the wood trim/crown mold, and Mr. Porter responded in the affirmative. He stated that the crown mold is in good shape except for a few spots, which will be replaced in kind. The gables on the ends of the porch will be replaced with cedar shakes the same as the original material.

Mr. Nave inquired about the 6-inch porch overhang on the side by the gables. Mr. Porter stated that the area that flares out on the south side would be replaced with cedar shakes. The north side has moldings on the opposite sides and everything will be replaced in kind. Ms. Ferraro mentioned that many of the details are still intact. The applicants advised that the original roof was probably cedar shake.

Mr. Nave inquired if insulation would be added under the ceiling in the bay window. Mr. Porter responded in the affirmative and advised that the intention is to make everything as weather proof as possible and insulate it as well. A rubber membrane will be added over the insulation before the roof is reconstructed; a different contractor will take care of that work. Mr. Nave mentioned that there is no way to ventilate the bay window. Accordingly, he suggested that it be packed solid with insulation. Mr. Porter advised that high-density board would be used under the roofing material, then a layer of rubber membrane and then the copper roofing material. The seams of the copper will be soldered. Ms. Ferraro mentioned that there would be limited visibility of the copper roof.

Mr. Nave inquired as to what would be done with the round section over the bay window. Mr. Porter stated that the original trim is still intact, but there is one section that needs to be replaced. A copper drip edge and copper gutter (½ rounds) will be installed in that area. Mr. O'Brien mentioned that the roof on the round section was added later and extends a little over the edge. It will be torn off in order to get back to the original roof.

Mr. Porter stated that the copper gutters will be installed in two foot sections. They will be ½ rounds coupled together. Mr. O'Brien mentioned that without the gutter, the water is pouring onto the window sill and the brick below the window that was redone. Mr. Nave suggested putting plastic between the joists and then installing the insulation over it to form a vapor barrier. Mr. O'Brien advised that the two parlors were the only two rooms on the first floor that were not gutted so the plaster is still good.

Mr. Nave, supported by Mr. Tribu, moved approval of the application as presented for 422 Stuart. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

512 W. Walnut (Case #: IHA 06-0051)

Roger W. Jones, Jr. and Sr. were present at the meeting. The application requests removal of the chimney, lengthening of the front windows to match other windows on the house and the addition of a door on the rear of the house.

Ms. Ferraro stated that there was a fire at this house three months ago. There is a lathe and plaster wall that faces the chimney on the first floor. Mr. Jones mentioned that the chimney was added through an existing room. Discussion followed as to whether this structure used to be two buildings or whether a significant addition was added.

The applicants advised that the gas/electric bills for this property have been around \$667.00 per month. Accordingly, they would like to add insulation and install a high efficiency furnace, which means the chimney will no longer be needed. The PVC pipe will exit the back of the home so it will be out of public view. The air ducts will go where the chimney is. The applicants would like to construct a chimney façade, or something that would give the appearance of a chimney, on the exterior of the house. The chimney façade would be the same color as the house.

Mr. Nave inquired as to why it would be a problem just to leave the old chimney in place. The applicants advised that they need the space to run the ducts for the new furnace. There are no empty walls in which to run the ductwork. The intention is to also have central air. Mr. Nave commented that sometimes in the past, the HDC has required applicants to keep the original chimney since the look of a new chimney can detract from the historic appearance of the property. Ms. Ferraro added that a significant determining factor is whether the chimney is a design element or if it is just utilitarian. She stated that this particular chimney is utilitarian. Mr. Tribu inquired if there was any evidence of a fireplace and the applicants advised that there is not.

Mr. Nave inquired about the siding. The applicants stated that the siding is cement asbestos and it doesn't need to be replaced in the gable. They further commented that the inspector for this property advised that the windows need to be a certain size for egress and the windows are not high enough now. Ms. Ferraro stated that the window used to be taller like the windows on the back and side. The applicants are asking that the window opening be restored to its original height and that a pair of double-hung windows be installed in order to pass code.

Mr. Nave inquired as to how close the edge of the window will be to the roof. The applicants advised that it is currently about a foot and a half. After a brief discussion it was determined that approximately a row and ½ of asbestos siding would need to be removed to accommodate the new window height. It was suggested that, for more efficient removal, a Sawz-all or a hacksaw should be used to cut the nails behind the asbestos siding since it tends to be very brittle. Mr. Nave inquired if the applicants repaired the roof after the fire and they stated that there had been no need to repair the roof.

Ms. Ferraro confirmed that the applicants want the door to be installed where the Herbie Curbie is located in the picture. The applicants advised that the intention is to use the house as a single-family residence. The door will be at ground level and the steps will be inside. The intention is to cut into the concrete block foundation and crawl space to

accommodate the new door opening. Some of the siding that is removed from below will be added over the door to fill in, if needed. The door will be approximately 32". Mr. Nave suggested putting in a transom above the door and leaving the door at the current height. The transom will allow air circulation without opening the door.

Mr. Nave, supported by Mr. Tribu, moved approval of the application as presented with details to be worked out with the Historic Preservation Coordinator. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Discussion followed with regard to possible ways to add insulation. Ms. Ferraro advised the applicants that she would send them a letter containing the details of the decision and some notes about a product for insulating their house.

MINUTES (April 18, 2006)

There were no changes to the minutes.

Mr. Nave, supported by Mr. Tribu, moved approval of the April 18, 2006 Historic District Commission minutes as submitted. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Ferraro stated that she had the housing department run off a list of the Certificates of Appropriateness that have been issued since 2003. She either finalized the certificates or earmarked the property for further action.

The Old House Network is doing a workshop on masonry repair at the end of June. Commissioners interested in attending the workshop should contact Ms. Ferraro.

An order of dismissal has been filed by the State Examiner to Willis and Willis regarding 628 South Park Street and the appeal has been dismissed. They have agreed to finish the changes requested by the HDC by the end of summer 2006.

Ms. Ferraro stated that she sent out notices to certain property owners requesting that they paint their buildings. So far, 3 or 4 property owners have started painting.

Mr. Nave inquired about the wall at 530 W. South Street. Ms. Ferraro advised that work has not yet begun on the wall and that she would send a reminder to the property owners.

Discussion followed with regard to Greenleaf's proposed project for the corner of South and Rose Streets. Concern was expressed about the proposed demolition of the Park building in conjunction with the Greenleaf project. Mr. Nave inquired if the Park Building is in the historic district. Ms. Ferraro advised that it is not in the local historic

district but it has been nominated for the National Register Historic District. The paperwork for the National Register designation was submitted but then returned for revisions. The National Register does not provide protection from demolition. A site plan for the project has not yet been submitted to city staff. Ms. Ferraro advised that the only original features remaining in the Park Building are the doors and part of the staircase.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Submitted by: _____ Dated: _____
(Recording Secretary)

Reviewed by: _____ Dated: _____
(Historic Preservation Coordinator)

Approved by: _____ Dated: _____
(HDC Chair)