

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

(HDC)

June 20, 2006

Minutes

DRAFT

Wastewater Treatment Plant
Conference Room A
1415 North Harrison
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

Members Present: Lisa Poole-Woldring, Chair; Linda DeYoung; Nelson Nave; Bill Snyder; James Tribu

Members Excused: Fred Decker, Vice Chair; Bob Oudsema

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

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Poole-Woldring called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

APPROVAL OF ABSENCES

The excused absences of Mr. Decker and Mr. Oudsema were approved by unanimous voice vote.

AGENDA (June 20, 2006)

Mr. Snyder requested the addition of 820 W. Lovell at the end of the agenda, for discussion purposes.

Ms. Ferraro requested that 608 W. Kalamazoo be removed from the agenda at the owners request.

Mr. Snyder, supported by Ms. DeYoung, moved approval of the June 20, 2006 Historic District Commission Agenda as amended. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None

DISCLAIMER

Ms. Ferraro read the disclaimer into the record.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

704 Axtell (Case #IHA 06-0066)

Pat and Tracy Bullard were present to discuss the application. The application requests permission to open up the front porch and remove windows.

Ms. Snyder advised the applicants of the quorum rule: there are only four commissioners (quorum) present, so the commission must vote unanimously in order for a motion to pass. The applicants may postpone their application until the next meeting when more commissioners might be in attendance. The applicants chose to proceed with the application.

Mr. Bullard advised that he wants to open the east side of the porch to match the west side of the porch. A prior owner changed a window into a door, and part of the window frame is still there. The posts will remain but the entire front porch will be opened up. The door between the open and closed sides will also be removed.

Mr. Snyder commented that the proposed work is a restoration of the porch. Ms. Ferraro mentioned that the porch alternations may have achieved their own historic significance and that is why this issue has come before the HDC.

Mr. Bullard explained that the house is stucco over poured concrete. It appears that the porch originally had a tin ceiling but when it was closed in, wainscoting was installed on the ceiling of the enclosed portion. Wainscoting will be installed over the entire porch ceiling. The original arches and pillars are still intact and will be restored. The window sills are wood and those will remain.

Mr. Snyder, supported by Mr. Nave, moved approval of the proposed work in the application for 704 Axtell. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

(5:14 – Mr. Tribu arrived.)

1201 S. Westnedge (Case No.: IHA 06-0071)

There was no one present to represent the property, and the Commission proceeded to the next agenda item.

431 W. Vine (IHA 06-0082)

Joe Pitsch from Dan Vos Construction was present to discuss the application on behalf of Steve Duffy. The application requests replacement of the front, side and rear doors plus replacement of screen/storm doors, the addition of a privacy fence on the east side porch with a deck, and reconstruction of the front porch.

Mr. Pitsch advised that Mr. Duffy's daughter will be living in the house while she is a student at WMU. Mr. Pitsch plans to restore the existing wood clapboard siding and replace the existing, non-historic exterior doors. The applicant is proposing to install a new, historically appropriate, three-panel door on the front of the house. Ms. Ferraro concurred that none of the current doors are historic.

Mr. Nave expressed concern about the possibility of the door being kicked in where the lock goes into the jamb, and he inquired as to how the applicant might prevent that from happening. Mr. Pitsch stated that he hopes to use an insulated steel door, which will not be seen from the street. The intention is for the door to be as economical as possible and to provide maximum security for the occupants.

Mr. Nave inquired as to the dimensions of the door. Ms. Ferraro advised that the side door on the east is not in an original opening. The opening for the porch door on the west may also have been altered. Mr. Nave pointed out that 6'8" is a more recent door height. Mr. Pitsch stated that the front door is to be the size of the original opening. Mr. Nave inquired about the trim around the exterior doors, rear and side. Ms. Ferraro advised trying to match the trim that's around the other windows. Mr. Snyder mentioned that if the trim is not an exact match, it would be acceptable to make a shadow line that's similar. Discussion followed with regard to possible options.

Mr. Nave encouraged the applicant to install a front door frame that is similar to the windows. Another option would be to remove two existing windows from the back and putting them in the front by the door, and then mimicking the look of the original windows for the other openings. Ms. Ferraro suggested using the figure 8 shaped part of the window trim, since it would be less likely to rest on the doorframe. The back windows are plain with a drip cap, and that is acceptable for the back.

Discussion followed with regard to the east and west sides of the house. Mr. Pitsch stated that he planned to use screen doors from the same company; he referred to the information provided in the HDC packets. For the two back doors, he is looking at using updated aluminum screen doors, which are similar to the main door.

For the side porch Mr. Pitsch wants a deck with privacy from the street. Ms. Ferraro advised redoing the front lawn to remove the driveway tracks leading from the curb cut.. It was also suggested that bushes be added to break up the solidity of the fence.

Mr. Pitsch advised that he wants to speak with the owner about the possibility of adding landscaping. Mr. Snyder pointed out that the fence is behind the half-way point of the property line on the side. Therefore, it would be acceptable to have an 8-foot tall fence.

Mr. Snyder commented that the house originally had a different style roof with more of an overhang over the front porch. Ms. Ferraro advised that it would be allowable to have a porch rail shorter than 32" and still meet the rental housing code. A rail is required only if the porch is more than 29" off the ground. It was suggested that Ms. Ferraro work out the details of the roof and porch with the applicant.

Mr. Nave stated that he has 3 Italianate columns in the basement of his office that are for sale. Mr. Pitsch expressed interest in getting more specifics and Mr. Nave advised that he would contact the applicant with more information.

Porch

Mr. Snyder, supported by Mr. Nave, moved approval of the application as submitted for 431 W. Vine with the following exception: the front porch reconstruction is to be overseen by the Historic Preservation Coordinator and she is to be given authority to approve any and all work. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Door

Mr. Nave, supported by Ms. DeYoung, moved approval of the screen doors at the rear and side entrance of 431 W. Vine with flat trim as discussed, no brick mould. The doors are to have the same top as the rear windows. This motion also includes approval of the wood core storm/screen door by Anderson.

Mr. Snyder mentioned that self-storing storms are not permitted in the historic district. Ms. Ferraro added that the problem with self-storing storm doors is the line in the middle doesn't look appropriate on a historic house.

Mr. Nave, supported by Ms. DeYoung, amended the motion to add that the storm door at 431 W. Vine should have a single lite, not be self-storing, and have a two-panel bottom. The Historic Preservation Coordinator is to have final approval. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Nave suggested that the applicant have a separate deck with a railing. He commented that cedar might deteriorate quickly, and that Trex Deck has been allowed on some projects. He also suggested covering the exposed railing with cypress since it will last longer than pine.

Porch

Mr. Nave, supported by Ms. Poole-Woldring, moved approval of the side porch at 431 W. Vine with an 8-foot high privacy fence on the northeast side and a porch behind with historic railing on south side. The applicant has the option of using Trex flooring with correct spacing and correct overhang to meet Historic District Commission standards. The railing and steps must also meet historic district standards.

Ms. Ferraro added that the steps are to be constructed of wood not a composite made to look like wood.

Discussion followed with regard to the construction of the porch.

Mr. Snyder, supported by Mr. Nave, amended the motion to state that the east side deck at 431 W. Vine not be lag-bolted or attached to the house in any way, the east side deck must be free-standing. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

1201 S. Westnedge (Case #: IHA 06-0071)

Joe Fabian was present to discuss the application. The application requests the addition of a poured concrete wall with exposed aggregate and iron fence on top between the house and the Knight's Inn Motel. The total proposed height is 7' 2" (4' concrete with a 38" iron fence on top).

Mr. Fabian advised that the curb is the property line. When cars park at the Knight's Inn their bumpers extend over the property line and the applicant wants to stop that from happening. There is concern that a metal fence would be pushed over by a snow plow. Therefore, the applicant would like to have a concrete fence/wall installed to solve that problem and provide more security. The concrete would also be more durable and beneficial for blocking part of the view. The building has been a doctor's office since the 1970's and the applicants wants to continue to use it as a professional office for now, but they might use it as their residence at some point in the future.

Mr. Nave inquired as to why the wall is 18" wide; he questioned if the depth was right. Mr. Fabian advised that the 18" portion is the frost-free footing, which will allow for brick to be added at a later date; it is 24" below the ground and will have a 2x rod. Mr. Nave mentioned that the ground in this area freezes to a depth of 3'6". The wall will be 8" thick on two foot centers with 1/2" rod. Mr. Nave mentioned the need for expansion joints to prevent cracking. Mr. Fabian stated that he would be incorporating supports in the wall. Mr. Nave advised having it slope one way or the other for appropriate drainage. Mr. Fabian advised that there will be expansion joints every 20 or 30 feet. The applicants have experience with concrete work and they will do the work themselves. The concrete

wall will be 4 feet tall to provide adequate privacy and a 32" metal fence will be installed on top of the wall.

Mr. Snyder expressed concern that an aggregate stone wall in that location in the first place. The wall will be a hardscape and the appearance of it should be softened with plantings. He also suggested reducing the height of the wall by one foot. Mr. Fabian indicated that reducing the height of the wall would defeat the purpose of blocking the view. Discussion followed with regard to the plantings, and Mr. Fabian indicated that he would be in favor of adding landscaping if it were aesthetically pleasing.

Ms. Ferraro mentioned that the fence will extend to the end of the yellow curb where the light post is. Mr. Fabian stated that he plans to have a 6-foot tall gate, depending on the materials that are available, so it won't be as high as the fence. The gate will open to the inside. Discussion followed with regard to possibilities for the construction of the gate.

Mr. Fabian stated that the wall will be constructed using 9" welded metal brackets, which will be set in concrete and attached to re-rod. The posts of the fence will be set in a receiver that comes out of the shaft. The components of the fence will be dipped in an anti-rust compound.

Mr. Nave inquired as to how the fence would be finished at the ends; he mentioned the need to have something thicker by the street for more durability. Mr. Fabian suggested having a steel rail on the ends of the wall. He advised that he should be able to fabricate something to meet that requirement.

Mr. Snyder commented that the fence presented by the applicant is a hybridization. The HDC would never allow a fence to sit directly on a support structure because of the potential for problems with rust. However, the proposed fence is much lighter fence and is compatible with the rest of the design. Ms. Ferraro stated that the subject property is on the style boundary of the historic district, but not the legal boundary. Accordingly, this property provides a transition between the historic buildings and the non-contributing buildings. There is a commercial parking lot on both sides of this property. Mr. Snyder expressed concern about having a structure this height in front of the house. He suggested that it be 3 rather than 4 feet. Ms. Ferraro suggested a compromise of 3 ½ feet and Mr. Snyder agreed.

Mr. Nave, supported by Ms. Poole-Woldring, moved approval of the wall for 1201 S. Westnedge at three feet with a 38" high steel fence on top of the wall and heavier steel posts at the ends and corners of the wall for stability and aesthetics. The steel fence is to be sunk into the concrete. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Fabian stated that he is considering a light, rust-colored fence similar to the brick on the property, and that he would work with Ms. Ferraro regarding the color.

1201 S. Westnedge (Case #: IHA 06-0072)

Joe Fabian was present to represent the property. The application requests a barrier-free ramp leading to the northeast rear door. The ramp is to have a protective roof overhead.

Ms. Ferraro advised that the applicant has applied for a building permit. There is currently no ramp at this address, just a small concrete stoop that leads to the back door at the corner of the house. There was also a small deck on the upper level.

Ms. Snyder inquired if there was enough clearance at the turning point for a wheelchair. Mr. Fabian stated that the ramp will be 42" and the turn will be 40". Inspector Larson requested that two of the posts have been moved to provide more clearance.

Ms. Ferraro stated that the basement windows had bricked in during the 1970's.

Mr. Nave inquired as to the slope of the ramp and Mr. Fabian stated that Inspector Larson had already approved it. Mr. Nave stated that a handrail will be required on each side of the ramp. Inspector Larson did not approve the ornate iron fence as infill for the ramp; Ms. Ferraro suggested a classic spindle rail.

Mr. Nave requested details about the roof overhang and deck. Mr. Fabian stated that he would trim the ramp to look like the old porch, and the ceiling of the ramp will be constructed of the same material as the porch. The trim will be wrapped in aluminum and the 4 x 4's will probably be wrapped. The ramp will be a free-standing structure.

Mr. Nave requested that the applicant provide drawings to show the details of the project. He expressed concern regarding the overhang and columns; they should be plain since the building is plain.

Mr. Nave, supported by Mr. Snyder, moved approval of the barrier-free ramp but not the ramp roof for 1201 S. Westnedge. Details of the ramp roof are to be provided to the Historic District Commission. The edge of the ramp should match historic standards and should follow the example of the old porch roof edge. The posts under the ramp are to be wrapped. A skirt board and overhang of decking is required. The 4 x 4's are to be wrapped; the historic railing between the columns should meet historic district standards. The stair is to meet historic standards. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Nave stated that he would like the applicant to provide details of the roof, beams and columns for the ramp project to the Historic District Commission. Mr. Snyder also expressed interest in seeing more details of the construction. Ms. Ferraro stated that she would set up a time that she could meet with the applicants and the two commissioners to go over the details of the project.

1220 S. Westnedge (Case #: IHA 06-0081)

Todd Hamilton was present to discuss the application. The application requests the replacement of a front porch, deck, rails and steps and a rear addition with an open upper porch.

Mr. Hamilton stated that he replaced the front porch roof and that he wants to replace the balustrade according to HDC standards. The balustrade is not original and was approved by the HDC in 1996. He would like to have the columns clad with cedar in a square design. There are currently 6 x 6 posts and he wants to put on wood cladding. He would like to cover the existing deck style porch floor boards that run parallel to the front of the house with appropriate tongue & groove decking set perpendicular to the front of the house. Ms. Ferraro advised that the decking should be no smaller than 7/8" thick. The porch screens and down spouts can be approved administratively.

It was suggested that the new porch be constructed of 1x's and sloped at the rate of 1/4" per foot drop; it needs to be an appropriate pitch so it doesn't rot. Mr. Snyder mentioned that the ordinance doesn't allow the existing deck to be covered over if it is rotted.

Front porch

Mr. Snyder supported by Ms. Poole-Woldring, moved approval of the front porch work as proposed for 1220 S. Westnedge. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Rear addition

Mr. Hamilton wants to remove the roof over the bump out, extend it across the back of the house and make a second floor balcony. On the north side, a porch is to be added to the first floor with post and rail to match the front. Mr. Hamilton is proposing to take out the second floor rear north/left window and put in a door from the Heritage Company and add an attic window. He also wants to move the first floor door from the west side to the north side for direct access to the porch. The window above the bump out will stay as is, and the three windows below will also remain. There won't be a window in the plain wall on the south side. The applicant was agreeable to putting in a window if necessary.

Ms. Ferraro advised that a 42" railing is to be installed on the upper deck. Mr. Hamilton stated that a beaded ceiling would also be installed on the lower back porch, and tongue and groove on the deck.

Mr. Tribu stated that he had recently read an article about building decks on flat roofs, and that he would provide Mr. Hamilton with the article. A brief discussion followed with regard to the construction of the roof. Mr. Hamilton advised that the overhang is about 12 inches.

Rear addition

Mr. Snyder supported by Mr. Nave, moved approval of the rear addition as proposed for 1220 S. Westnedge. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

417 Woodward (Case #IHA 06-0083)

Monica Poucher was present to discuss the application. The application requests replacement of the back steps with a 5' x 5'6" landing and steps.

Ms. Poucher stated that rain creates a muddy area at the bottom of the steps. She wants to have the landing constructed over the muddy area so people don't have to walk through it. The landing will be on the back, left part of the house and it won't obstruct the driveway. The handrail/post will go into the ground. This is a deck and, therefore, it is not attached to the house.

Ms. Poucher advised that she was undecided as to whether the deck will be constructed of Wolmanized wood. Mr. Snyder stated that the HDC needs to know the materials of construction. Ms. Ferraro commented that the intention is to make it easy for the next owner to remove the deck/landing without disturbing the house.

Mr. Tribu suggested the applicant put nicer finished wood around the posts so the Wolmanized wood doesn't show. Mr. Snyder added that it would not be necessary to have a railing since the deck is so low. Ms. Poucher stated that she would like to have a railing because of the kids, and Ms. Ferraro advised that she would help the applicant work out the details.

Ms. DeYoung, supported by Mr. Snyder, moved approval of the application for the new deck/landing at 417 Woodward, with details to be worked out with the Historic Preservation Coordinator. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Ferraro advised the applicant to make sure the treads extend beyond the risers. She also advised the applicant that the door should be ½ view or ¾ view; it should not be self-storing or flat.

MINUTES (May 16, 2006)

There were no changes to the minutes.

Mr. Nave, supported by Ms. Poole-Woldring, moved approval of the May 16, 2006 Historic District Commission Minutes. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Ferraro stated that the Clerk's office has proposed some changes to the board and commission rules. The new rules would no longer define the duties of City Commission liaisons in attending board meetings such as the HDC. The general consensus among the HDC members was that the language should remain in its original form

Mr. Nave advised that he would like to sign Phillip Hughes up for the mortar re-pointing class. He was advised to call and register him and he will put him on the list.

Ms. Ferraro included a revised guideline for storm doors. Mr. Snyder mentioned that he thought the guidelines would have to be approved. Mr. Snyder referred to the first bullet point regarding wooden doors vs. metal doors; why say metal is acceptable when it isn't. It should say metal "may be" acceptable in the historic district with regard to storm doors. The guidelines mention that self-storing storm doors are not permitted, but it was suggested that information be listed as a bullet point.

Mr. Snyder requested an update on 414 Davis, and Ms. Ferraro advised that a new owner has purchased the property. Mr. Snyder stated that the unapproved door was just recently installed.

Mr. Snyder also requested an update on 820 W. Lovell. Ms. Ferraro stated that she has been going through the Certificates of Appropriateness back through 2003. She has gotten through the letter "L" with violation letters, and the rest of the letters should go out this week. They should all be done before the next HDC meeting.

Ms. Ferraro stated that the official public hearing will be held on July 20th at 6:30 in the Recital Hall of the Light Fine Arts Building at Kalamazoo College for the six proposed new historic districts including West Main Hill Neighborhood. The meeting will be held to solicit public comment on the proposed districts.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Submitted by: _____ Dated: _____
(Recording Secretary)

Reviewed by: _____ Dated: _____
(Staff Liaison)

Approved by: _____ Dated: _____
(HDC Chairperson)