

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Minutes

July 18, 2006

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

Members Present: Lisa Poole-Woldring, Chair; Fred Decker, Vice Chair; Linda DeYoung; Nelson Nave, Bob Oudsema; Bill Snyder, James Tribu

Members Absent: None

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.

AGENDA

Ms. Ferraro advised that the owner of 733 Axtell could not attend the meeting tonight. She requested that this item be moved to the end of the agenda for discussion. She also advised that Mr. Tribu would be giving the presentation for 522 Minor on behalf of the owner.

Mr. Snyder requested that a status report regarding 820 W. Lovell be added to the end of the agenda.

Mr. Nave requested that a discussion regarding the properties in the vicinity of 716 W. Walnut be added to the end of the agenda.

The July 20, 2006 HDC agenda, as amended, was approved unanimously by voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

DISCLAIMER

Ms. Ferraro read the disclaimer into the record.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

230-32 S. Kalamazoo Mall (Case #: IHA 06-0094)

No one was present yet to represent the property and the commission proceeded to the next agenda item.

733 Axtell (Case #: IHA 06-0092)

Brad Ketchel was present to discuss the application. The application requests replacement of the fire damaged windows and siding and replacement of the front and rear attic windows with vents.

Mr. Ketchel stated that the only change to the front elevation would be the front peak by the gable, and he advised that he would like to install a cedar, louvered vent in that location to replace the window opening currently only covered with a wood framed screen. Pictures were provided. He advised that he was not sure what was there originally. Mr. Ketchel doesn't want a window in that location because of the lack of soffit venting. He stated that he would like to add venting in the front and maintain the existing louvered vent in the back.

Mr. Nave suggested setting the louver in, putting a screen over it, and then adding full trim and a sill so it would resemble the window as it used to be. Mr. Ketchel stated that he liked the look of the wood louver. Mr. Nave advised that it should resemble the original. There should not be a problem with drainage since water should drain down the window sill just as the window would. It is right under the soffit so there is minimal exposure. Mr. Ketchel stated that the louver has a metal grate since there is concern that rodents would eat through the wood.

Mr. Ketchel advised that he would use one piece of glass with a muntin over it. Mr. Snyder stated that he was not in favor of that suggestion and he mentioned that the thickness of the double-paned glass should be taken into account. Mr. Ketchel indicated that he would router out the frame from the inside to accommodate the glass and remove the muntin. Mr. Snyder stated that he wouldn't approve the changes without the muntin. The applicant advised that the window in the bay wasn't double-hung but it had a muntin, and the other two windows are double-hung; modifications may have been made. Mr. Snyder stated that it looks like a storm window that wound up being used as a primary window.

Mr. Nave inquired if it would be possible to build another oriel window in the bay, but Ms. Ferraro expressed concern that it would not look appropriate. Mr. Snyder suggested having a site visit to further examine the bay window.

Mr. Nave inquired if the applicant intended to replace the “criss-cross” (diamond pane) window and the rear porch rail on the east and back of the house. Mr. Ketchel stated that the window is in good shape and it will remain. A post has replaced on the rear porch otherwise, it will remain as is for the time being. Mr. Nave advised that the railing and the stair is against code and he would like to see it changed to comply with historic district standards, when/if it is changed in the future. Mr. Ketchel stated that he will either be renting the property or selling it.

Mr. Oudsema inquired if the house would need to be brought up to code after fire. Ms. Ferraro advised that, if the house were to become a registered rental, it would have to be brought up to code. If it is sold as a single-family residence, it could probably stay the way it is.

Mr. Nave suggested that two double-hung windows, instead of one, be installed on the west side on the second floor. The satellite dish needs to be removed since it is no longer in use. For the kitchen window, he suggested that two, wood casement windows be installed instead of the vinyl slider. Ms. Ferraro advised that the slider might predate the historic district designation, therefore, it wouldn't have to be replaced at this time. Mr. Nave suggested replacing the 2 x 2 piece of plywood (by the dryer vent) between the west side door and the foundation. Mr. Snyder advised removing the siding and reinstalling the water table board in that location. He mentioned that there may have been a larger entry door there at some point and this would be another discussion for the site visit.

Mr. Snyder inquired as to the meaning of the term “wood look” steel or fiberglass entry door. Mr. Ketchel stated that the door is actually fiberglass with a wood texture; when poly stain is applied it will look like wood. Mr. Snyder stated that textured doors and siding have not been allowed in the past. Ms. Ferraro added that the wood texture looks like weathered wood; the old doors don't have that texture. The door has to look like it's well maintained not weathered. Mr. Snyder stated that the siding has been altered in that location. Also, the skirt board has been truncated; it's short by two feet and the siding has been filled in. He advised that it isn't part of the original house and he'd like to take a look at it.

Discussion followed with regard to the possibility of having a site visit and when it should be scheduled. Mr. Nave advised that the DBB (Dangerous Buildings Board) is concerned about the exterior of the house. Mr. Ketchel stated that the DBB ordered the exterior repairs to be completed by October 1st.

Mr. Ketchel stated he would like some advice regarding the second floor, southwest corner door. Mr. Snyder inquired if there was a matching window in that location before, it looks like an addition. Mr. Ketchel stated that it is the stair to the attic but it won't remain there. There is some fire damage to the exterior wall in that area. When repairs are being made to the siding in that location, Mr. Ketchel would like to take the door out

and install siding up to the window. Ms. Ferraro questioned if there was originally a window in that location. She suggested having a site visit on August 1st at 5:00. Ms. Poole-Woldring, Mr. Nave and Mr. Snyder stated that they would be available for the site visit.

Mr. Ketchel inquired if there was any chance of getting approval for the installation of aluminum-clad windows. Mr. Snyder stated that he would only consider that an option if the fire had gutted the house and every window needed to be replaced. The HDC strives to bring houses back to their original condition when possible.

Ms. Ferraro stated that the site visit committee would meet on August 1st at 5:00 and the findings from that visit will be affirmed at the following HDC meeting.

Mr. Snyder requested further discussion regarding the aluminum windows. Ms. Ferraro stated that she had advised the applicant that the HDC is looking at the life of the house over the next century; a wood on wood window in this location and climate can last at least a century but we don't know how long aluminum windows will last. Aluminum windows have only been approved in the past for a basement application. Mr. Snyder referred to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines #6, which states that if historic material is deteriorated, it should be replaced with like material when available. Ms. Ferraro advised that she would like to see more details. Mr. Snyder stated that installation of vinyl or metal clad windows should only be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Discussion followed with regard to handicap ramps in the historic district. Mr. Snyder inquired about the handicap ramp at the Orr residence. Ms. Ferraro advised that she had requested that the owner remove the ramp, but she refused. Ms. Ferraro stated that the condition regarding removal of the ramp is not in the COA or the minutes so it cannot be enforced.

522 Minor (Case #: IHA 06-0069)

Mr. Tribu stated that Mr. Kelly was unable to attend the meeting, and Mr. Tribu gave the presentation on his behalf. The application requests replacement of the casement window on the west side first floor porch with an appropriate all wood, double-hung window.

Mr. Tribu advised that there is currently a 1970's metal-framed, casement window on the porch, but the mechanism has failed. The current window opens inward and blocks the door. The applicant would like to replace the casement window with a wood, double-hung window, match the trim to the existing trim, and install a sill. The existing drip edge will remain. The new window will be custom built to fit the existing opening and match the other windows.

Mr. Nave, supported by Mr. Oudsema, moved approval of the removal of the existing casement window on the west side porch and installation of a double-hung wood window to fit the rough opening and the reinstallation of a full wood sill to

standards. The trim should match the original trim. With a roll call vote, the motion carried with six ayes and one abstention. (Mr. Tribu abstained)

716 W. Walnut (Case #: IHA 06-0101)

The application requests demolition of the two-car garage on the northeast corner of the lot (rear of house).

Mr. Oudsema, supported by Mr. Snyder, moved approval of the demolition of the garage at 716 W. Walnut. The foundation is to be removed below grade. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Decker suggested salvaging the cove siding. Ms. Ferraro advised that the Habitat resale store has agreed to store a limited supply of such items. Mr. Oudsema pointed out that cove siding is available new for 61 cents per foot.

Ms. Ferraro advised that the garage was cited by the housing inspector so the owner has a deadline to complete the demolition. She stated that she could put in the letter to the owner that the demolition is to be completed by August 15th.

Mr. Nave mentioned that there is no railing on the front steps. The roof is falling apart, the crawl space window is open and there is trash next to the house. Ms. Ferraro stated that the HDC cannot initiate work. The new A+ housing program will focus on problems with owner-occupied properties. She advised the commissioners to call her with concerns and she would pass the information on to the inspection staff. If the property is the subject of demolition by neglect, then the HDC would have authority to initiate action.

230-32 S. Kalamazoo Mall (Case #: IHA 06-0092)

The application requests façade rehabilitation on the front and rear of the building. No one was present to represent the property, and discussion followed with regard to the application.

Mr. Nave stated that the railing for the rear balconies should be of a more historically appropriate style. The HDC needs to have more details regarding the windows, doors, mortar specs and cornice. The brick work should match the coursing and size of joints as close as possible and no Portland cement should be used. Repairs may have been made where the two-story, cast iron bay windows were located on the front facade, so not all of the bricks match. Once the stripping is done, it will reveal if only a few or many of the bricks don't match and that will determine whether or not the area will be painted. The applicants would prefer to not paint the brick. Mr. Nave stated that no sandblasting, hard water blasting or chemicals are to be used in the stripping process.

Discussion followed with regard to the existing openings. Mr. Snyder stated that the HDC needs to know what currently exists and what is being changed. There is concern

that some of the windows are being moved on the rear facade. The HDC needs more details, for instance are the windows true divided lites or wooden muntins, and are the muntins on the new windows located on the inside or outside? The concrete block door is to be trimmed out with wood. A better photo of the rear façade should also be provided.

Mr. Nave mentioned that some of the original detail above the columns on the storefront is covered with a box, which should be removed in order to investigate what is underneath. The HDC needs to see a floor plan of the project. The storefront doors and transom windows look fine. Ms. Ferraro stated that between the columns there are two doors, which can be completely open in good weather and the doors will open in. The Dragon Inn will remain as is. Mr. Nave advised that he thought the divider was not appropriate and should be taken out.

Ms. Poole-Woldring advised that this matter would be postponed pending further information. Ms. Ferraro will send a letter to the applicants advising what information is needed.

820 W. Lovell

Ms. Ferraro advised that she had written a letter regarding this property. The letter has been sent to the City Attorney's office for review before it is forwarded to the property owner.

Mr. Snyder expressed concern that the violations at this property have been allowed to remain for an extended period of time. Ms. Ferraro stated that after the owners were stopped from installing a new door and removing the transom, they restored everything but there is still an issue with the inappropriate storm door. Mr. Snyder advised that the issue with the storm door is a separate violation; other changes were made earlier. He indicated that some of the changes made at this address are a violation of city ordinances, and that he would pursue this matter with supervisors in the Community Planning and Development Department and the City Manager's Office.

Mr. Decker inquired about the issue with the glass blocks at the house at 730 West Kalamazoo Avenue. Ms. Ferraro advised that she and the applicant were both present at the hearing in Lansing. The judge advised that he wanted an informal discussion before he opened the formal hearing. The judge indicated to Mr. Swift that the Preservation Review Board would probably uphold the HDC's decision. This matter had been calendared for 90 days. Ms. Ferraro stated that she sent a letter to Mr. Swift advising him of the details of this case but she has not heard from him.

Ms. Ferraro stated that there are a couple of possibilities for remedying this situation. For instance, if the glass block is set deep enough, and it is, wooden screens can be added over the top of the glass block and a sill could be added. The frame of the window hasn't changed. The second possibility is to assist Mr. Swift with applying for the tax credit. When Mr. Swift receives his tax refund he could proceed with restoration of the

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windows. Mr. Oudsema inquired if the resolution would be to have Mr. Swift submit a proposal to the HDC for their review. Ms. Ferraro responded in the affirmative and advised that if there is no conclusion by the HDC, the appeal process could continue at the state level.

Mr. Snyder inquired as to the finding of fact. Ms. Ferraro advised that the finding of fact was the judge's statement on the matter. Mr. Snyder referred to the portion of the finding of fact that mentioned putting screens over the glass blocks. He inquired if this statement was intended to imply that adding the screens was an acceptable remedy. Ms. Ferraro advised that if the suggestion of adding the screens over the glass block would have to be reviewed and approved by the HDC before it would be considered an acceptable remedy.

Discussion followed with regard to existing violations and how they could be corrected. Mr. Snyder suggested fines should be imposed if violations are not corrected within a reasonable time frame. Mr. Oudsema added that the HDC relies on voluntary compliance with rules and there is no guarantee that the goals will be met.

Mr. Nave stated that while he was in a meeting with Jeff Chamberlain and another gentleman, he mentioned that some applicants have not complied with what the HDC has requested. Mr. Nave was advised that there are ways to enforce the required changes and they are willing to assist. Mr. Oudsema questioned the validity of using city staff time to deal with this problem since the city's resources are already limited. Mr. Nave stated that he was told applicants who don't comply can be taken to court. Discussion continued with regard to problem cases and possible options for dealing with them. Ms. Ferraro commented that she has requested support from the City Attorney's office. It was mentioned that the wall at 530 W. South was a candidate for further action, and Mr. Snyder reminded the commissioners that time constraints were provided for the changes requested at that property.

Mr. Nave mentioned that a new roof had been built over the exterior patio at Dr. Hosner's property at 611 West South; it is visible from Oak St. That change was not in the sketches provided by the applicant. Ms. Ferraro added that the HDC had not approved the change. Mr. Nave requested that Mr. Ferraro put a stop work order on the project.

Mr. Nave reported the following problems: there are missing spindles at 715 W. Walnut and 712 W. Walnut; the stair rails are missing at 711 & 708 W. Walnut. Ms. Ferraro advised that the stairs predate the historic district. Mr. Nave advised that there is a new, inappropriate guardrail at 525 Oak St., and someone is re-roofing the garage at 523 Oak Street.

Mr. Arthur Bates arrived at 6:30 p.m. to discuss the project on the Kalamazoo Mall. He advised that he thought the HDC meeting started at 7:00 p.m. and he apologized for arriving late. Ms. Ferraro advised that the HDC had already discussed the project and that she would be sending Mr. Bates a letter explaining the details of the discussion.

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Mr. Bates stated that the alley is private and Greenleaf Trust will make it a pedestrian alley to accommodate their projects for Miller-Canfield on West South and the YWCA Building and the new DeVisser Building.. He stated that he would talk with the architect on the Greenleaf project about the garage doors. He added that he just wanted to clarify a few things at tonight’s meeting and then return with further details. Ms. Ferraro advised that the next HDC meeting is scheduled for August 15th, and Mr. Bates stated that he would return at that time to make a presentation.

Mr. Poole-Woldring requested a status on 530 W. South Street, and Ms. Ferraro advised that she would follow up on that request.

Minutes (June 20, 2006)

Mr. Snyder requested the following changes: page 3, under 431 W. Vine, 5th paragraph, 1st sentence should say, “.....install front door trim that is similar to the windows.” Page 6, 1st paragraph should read, “.....expressed concern about an aggregate stone wall in that location in the first place.” Page 7, paragraph 4, should read, “..... had been bricked in during the 1970’s.”

Mr. Oudsema, supported by Mr. Nave, moved approval of the June 20, 2006 HDC minutes as amended. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Ferraro stated that she met with the owners of 431 W. Vine. They will keep the figure 8 trim and replicate it. She advised that she had not yet met with the owners of 1201 S. Westnedge.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Snyder, supported by Mr. Oudsema, moved to adjourn the July 18, 2006 meeting of the Historic District Commission. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Submitted by: _____ Dated: _____
(Recording Secretary)

Reviewed by: _____ Dated: _____
(Staff Liaison)

Approved by: _____ Dated: _____
(HDC Chair)