

**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**

**Minutes**

**August 15, 2006**

***DRAFT***

City Commission Chambers  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, City Hall  
241 W. South Street  
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

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

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

Guests: David Anderson, City Commissioner

**CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Poole-Woldring called the meeting to order at 5:07 p.m.

**AGENDA (August 15, 2006)**

Ms. Ferraro requested that 230-232 S. Kalamazoo Mall be removed from the agenda. The applicants are reworking the plan and they are hoping to be ready for the next HDC meeting. Ms. Ferraro requested that 823 Oak also be postponed in order to allow more time to obtain more information; the owner didn't contact Ms. Ferraro to allow her to do an interior inspection. She made it clear to the people at Sir Home Improvement that without being able to look at the windows up close, the HDC would have to postpone this matter. Ms. Ferraro had an excellent response from Sir Home Improvement with regard to this address; they were helpful and she requested that information be made part of the record.

Mr. Snyder commented that the HDC doesn't allow vinyl clad or vinyl windows. He suggested proceeding with the application since the HDC would have to rule accordingly. Ms. Ferraro advised that a denial wouldn't stop them from proceeding with the application. Someone in the Code Administration Department advised Sir Home Improvement that 823 Oak is not in the historic district. However, the installer realized that the house is in the district. Ms. Ferraro provided a list of historic properties to city staff in order to help prevent such an incident from occurring again. Sir Home Improvement is willing to buy the windows back from the owner. Mr. Decker commented that he couldn't see any rot on the outside of the windows. Ms. Poole-Woldring suggested having a discussion about this application at the end of the agenda. Mr. Snyder requested that a discussion about violations be added to the end of the agenda.

**Ms. Snyder, supported by Ms. Poole-Woldring, moved to have a discussion regarding 823 Oak at the end of the agenda and remove 230-232 S. Kalamazoo Mall from the agenda. Also, a status of violations is to be added to the end of the agenda for discussion. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**DISCLAIMER**

Ms. Ferraro read the disclaimer into the record.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**730 W. Kalamazoo Ave. (Case #: IHA 06-00018)**

No one was present to represent the property.

The following violation options have been proposed for the east side basement windows:  
Option 1: metal-framed screens to match those on the rest of the house.  
Option 2: wood-framed screens.  
Also, reset and finish frames and install screen on front/south original window.

**733 Axtell (Case #: IHA 06-0092)**

No one was present to represent the property.

The application requests: 1. Replacement of the fire damaged windows and siding. 2. Replacement of the front and rear attic windows with vents.

Ms. Ferraro stated that a site visit was convened at this address and the report is part of the packet provided to the HDC. Messrs. Snyder, Nave and Decker attended the site visit, and the report is part of the packet provided to the commissioners. The HDC needs to review the recommendation of the site visit committee and vote to either confirm or reject the findings of the committee.

Mr. Snyder provided a brief review of the site visit report. The site visit committee stood by what was discussed at the last HDC meeting.

**Mr. Snyder, supported by Mr. Oudsema, moved to approve the recommendations of the site visit committee as documented, with the replacement of the kitchen window with a pair of opening French windows (casement windows). All work to standards. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**723 Eleanor (Case #: IHV: 06-0006)**

No one was present to represent the property. The application requests installation of a door on the east side of the house to provide basement egress for tenants.

Mark Dunham, 717 Eleanor, was present to make a statement against the work proposed for this address. He understood that Rod O'Brien wanted to install a door to allow the tenants access to the breaker box in the basement to meet the requirements of the rental housing code. There are other options, but this is the easiest and quickest option. Mr. Dunham advised that he contacted Ms. Ferraro in March or April when the door was installed. Mr. O'Brien asked for retroactive approval based on replacement of a door that was already there, but had been sided over earlier with the approval of the HDC. Mr. Dunham advised that he's lived at 717 Eleanor since 1985. He recalled that the historic district was expanded in 1983 to include this street. Since 1985, there has been no door in that location and there's no indication of a door ever being there according to the Sanborn maps.

Mr. Snyder inquired if a building permit had been pulled for this project. Ms. Ferraro advised that she hadn't looked at the building permits. She has been reviewing the records to find out what the previous commission had ruled. Even if the door was added before the property became part of the district in 1983, the owner would still need approval before making changes. Ms. Ferraro advised that she is still reviewing the records.

Mr. Nave commented that, if the door is approved, it needs to match the trim on the west side of the house, which appears to be original. The trim should be 1 x 6 on top with a drip cap. There should also be another guardrail on the right side of the stair and a handrail. Ms. Ferraro advised there only needs to be one rail because stairs are less than 44" wide. The stairs need to comply with historic district standards. Mr. Snyder mentioned that Mr. O'Brien also installed steps that are in violation.

After a brief discussion, the decision was made to table this discussion until the end of the agenda or until the applicant appeared at the meeting.

**910 West Main (Case #: IHA 06-0115)**

John Coakley, Bernath Coakley Assoc. and Rob Moore, the Facilities Manager for the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints were present to discuss the request to install a permanent, barrier-free ramp on the north edge of the entry steps.

The church purchased the building about a year and eight months ago. Many improvements have been made, including working on the landscaping and the exterior of the building. A new rostrum and pulpit have been constructed to match the motif on the interior of the building, and a new unisex, barrier-free restroom has been added. There was a wood, barrier-free ramp on the front, but it took up a lot of space and it has been removed. The applicants want to install a new ramp on the north edge of the steps, which would be less obvious than the previous ramp. The exposed vertical faces of the ramp will be painted white to match the building. On each side of the ramp there will be minimal railings, which will also be painted white.

Mr. Snyder inquired as to the materials of construction. The applicants advised that the foundation wall will be constructed of reinforced concrete, and the actual ramp surface is concrete. They will be changing the grade behind the ramp to accommodate the changes, and a small yard drain will be added. The steps are made of concrete; under the steps is an interior room. According to the original building drawings, there is a structural portion of concrete under the stairs, a waterproof membrane over that, then the concrete stairs were poured over that. The exterior steps will need repair and eventually they will need to be replaced because there are a few leaks through the membrane. Where the concrete ends on the ramp, the applicants are proposing to build part of the ramp from aluminum. It will span from the end of the upper portion of the concrete ramp over to the stairs. The ramp can be removed to allow for maintenance of the stairs. A white, galvanized steel rail will be installed; everything on the building is white so it should blend in.

Mr. Decker inquired if landscaping would be added in front of the ramp. The applicants advised that the contractor is waiting for the ramp to be built before adding landscaping. Shrubs will eventually conceal most of the ramp.

Mr. Nave mentioned that there had been a discussion about putting a design in the panels of the ramp. The applicants stated that they had decided not to proceed with the design because it would distract from the building. The prior design reflected the interior design of the building but nothing matched the motif on the exterior of the building. Mr. Snyder commented that it looks simpler and less obtrusive.

Mr. Oudsema inquired if the applicants had considered running the ramp further along the northern wall. The applicants advised that they need to get from the parking area to the ramp. Also, the window wells in the basement under the primary windows are in the way. Mr. Oudsema suggested extending the northern wall and moving one of the handicap parking spaces; the ramp would be less visible that way. The applicants

advised that with the current proposal, they are not touching the north elevation of the building. Accordingly, the basement wall and window wells are still accessible if repairs need to be made. There is concern that if the ramp is constructed in that location, its close proximity to the building could cause damage. The ramp extends out about 10 feet from the building.

Mr. Nave mentioned that the concrete is showing on the wall. The applicants advised that they will paint the exposed area to match the building. The aluminum will also be painted. The walking surface will be exposed concrete, which is the same as the steps that are there.

Mr. Oudsema commented that, if this was a private residence, the HDC would be asking that the ramp to be constructed in a way so it can be removed. He inquired as to the rules for a public structure. Ms. Ferraro stated that the applicants are advised to not permanently alter any of the original structure. The aluminum bridge from the front steps to the new ramp allows the applicants to meet that criterion. Mr. Oudsema inquired if the applicants could make a request for a permanent structure, and Ms. Ferraro advised that they couldn't if it were a rental, but they could if the structure were owner occupied. Each case must be considered separately. If it is a residence, city staff would request that the ramp go on the back of the building. The need for a rail is minimized because the ramp is low to the ground.

Further discussion followed with regard to the design of the ramp. Mr. Nave stated that it's replacing a bigger, more obtrusive ramp on the front. Mr. Oudsema mentioned that if this design is acceptable for a public building, then the HDC should be prepared to do the same for a private building. Ms. Ferraro stated that such a ramp could be approved for a residence. The objective is to make the ramp more sympathetic to the original building. Mr. Nave advised that this type of building requires a ramp per the ADA code. Ms. Ferraro commented that a masonry ramp makes sense for a masonry church, but not a house constructed of wood.

Mr. Oudsema mentioned that 225 W. Walnut was a burned out building that he put back together and rented to Eckert Wordell. A permanent, barrier-free ramp was installed. It was constructed of earth and concrete and not only was it approved, but the project also was eligible for tax credits. The back part of the building was not masonry. Mr. Nave advised that houses do not require barrier-free ramps unless they are rentals.

**Mr. Oudsema, supported by Mr. Decker, moved approval of the proposed barrier-free ramp at 910 West Main. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**714 S. Park (Case #: IHA 06-0117)**

No one was present to represent the property. The application requests replacement of the paneled, non-original (but old) guardrails with turned spindle rails. Old spindle paint shadows are visible on the existing paneled rails.

Joe Hosner was present to discuss the application. The application requests the addition of a roof over the north half of the patio with posts to match the front porch. A stop work order was issued on 8-7-06.

**Mr. Oudsema, supported by Mr. Decker, moved approval of the application as presented for 611 W. South. With a roll call vote, the motion was defeated.**

**Ayes: Oudsema, Decker**

**Nays: Nave, DeYoung, Snyder, Poole-Woldring, Tribu**

Mr. Snyder inquired as to why a structure is there without a building permit. The applicants advised that there have been many changes. The roofers want to finish in two weeks. Mr. Snyder inquired if the applicants called Ms. Ferraro to inform her of the changes. The applicants stated that they didn't call Ms. Ferraro because the addition is just an extension of the patio. Mr. Snyder stressed to the applicants the importance of contacting the city to obtain a building permit. The applicants advised that the patio will not be enclosed. Mr. Snyder stated that any exterior change requires contact with the Historic Preservation Coordinator, and she will either approve the project or put it on the HDC agenda.

Mr. Snyder mentioned that the HDC guidelines require that there be a differentiation between a new addition and one that is old. He commented that the applicant's addition juts out so that it can be seen from the front. The policy of the HDC is to require that it be set back so the front façade of the house doesn't show the change. The applicants advised that the new structure doesn't jut past the structure of the house if you look at it from the front of the house because the bay window on the west side masks it. The photo provided to the HDC may have been taken from a different angle and, therefore, may be deceptive. The patio sticks out because of the need for structural support in that area. Also, there is a cistern under the patio in that location. The applicant advised that when he got approval for the patio, that was the dimension to extend beyond the house, and that's what is being used as the base for the structure of the roof.

Mr. Snyder stated that he would need to see other photos since there may be extenuating circumstances. The applicant provided a photo but it was the same one already provided to the HDC.

Mr. Nave inquired if the applicants extended the structure two feet past the house because the column on the southwest corner now sits on top of the patio seat as opposed to inside the patio. The applicants responded in the affirmative and added that, without extending beyond the limestone seat, it would look odd. Without the column in that location, the patio seat would appear to be isolated rather than incorporated into the plan.

Mr. Nave commented that it would have been helpful to have the plan earlier to see it altogether, including the column and the seat. The applicants stated that they originally

wanted to take the roof without a column there, but they were advised that moving the column might cause structural problems in the future. Mr. Nave referred to the wall that sticks out and suggested having another column instead of a wall. Instead of having a blank wall to look at, the area would be open and you would just see the column from the front of the house. The column would provide the support that is needed in that location. The applicants advised that the back patio was designed to mirror the look of the front porch. Accordingly, there is a wall and a half column by the seat.

Mr. Tribu inquired if the applicants designed the structure with the help of the contractor, but not an architect. The applicants responded in the affirmative. The applicants advised that a column could be added to the back, but there would be about three inches of empty space, which might be more distracting. At the request of Mr. Snyder, the applicants approached the dais to provide an explanation of what was shown in the picture. The applicants advised that they could use a 6-inch, half column if it looks appropriate in that location or they could use siding, depending on which option is preferred by the HDC. There is a half column on the front of the house by the limestone seats.

Mr. Snyder inquired how the applicants would put a half column on a corner that extends out two feet. The applicants advised that the half column would not be used on the area facing South St.; the half column would be used on the inside. Mr. Snyder inquired as to why the flat side of the column was facing South St. The applicants stated that as the column extends upward, there would be an air space between the house and column and that would be distracting. It looks cleaner to install the siding and add a five inch trim piece. Mr. Snyder expressed concern that the proposed changes might take on the appearance of an attached garage on the back of the house, because the changes are blank with no features. That would be much more distracting than opening it up and seeing the roof structure.

The applicants inquired if the open space referred to the horizontal area all the way up to the triangular section by the roof or if was the entire thin rectangular section that faces the roof. Mr. Snyder advised that he was referring to the rectangular section over the step. The applicant advised that he would be adding landscaping to help obstruct the view of the area in question.

Mr. Snyder inquired as to the plan for the decorative ornamentation around the patio area; this house is very ornate. The applicants advised that they will use siding with a dark brown corner piece like the other corners on the back. They will add a corbel and column to match the front columns, like the ones next to the fireplace area toward the south.

Mr. Snyder inquired if the applicants would be putting in a corner board and, if so, how would it wrap around by the rectangular section. The applicants stated that it will follow the bottom board and the corner board. There will be 18" of siding and 5" of corner board, which will wrap all the way around. The board above the window will continue all the way across. The water table board between the window and the foundation will also go all the way around and will stop at the limestone and the faux granite.

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Mr. Tribu inquired if there was a chimney added on the west side of the house. Ms. Ferraro advised that it was not. The applicant stated that the chimneys with old crumbling brick were resurfaced with granite similar to what is on the rest of the house.

Mr. Snyder inquired if the board above the window is 6" to 8" below the actual end of the roof. The applicants responded in the affirmative. Mr. Snyder inquired if the board above the window would continue around and run into the corner board. The applicant advised that the board above the window extends into the bay window and it may look better if it remains a little thicker, and then it will extend all the way to the edge of the roof. There's nothing that matches it on that side. The applicant suggested either increasing the width by two siding lengths, or just making the new addition wall brown all the way above that area.

Ms. Ferraro commented that the biggest issue appears to be the treatment of the short section of the wall that's visible from the street. Even though it is somewhat masked by the bay window, it is still visible from South Street. She stated that her notes say that section will be sided to match the rest of house. The band above the windows will continue onto the two-foot north wall, as will the water table line, which will wrap around and terminate at the limestone cap on the stone patio. The triangular section above the columns and under the roof will also be sided to match the rest of the house. Mr. Nave enquired as to what would be below the water table. The applicant advised that the stone that is already there will still be showing and will just continue on.

Mr. Snyder questioned if the triangular portion should be sided. He referred to a picture taken by Ms. Ferraro last summer, which shows that area had not been sided originally. The applicant suggested the possibility of using stucco to match the upper story. Ms. Ferraro commented that the reason for siding the addition is that it is a utility area. Mr. Snyder suggested using

Discussion followed with regard to stucco vs. siding. There is stucco on the second floor by the sunroom. Mr. Oudsema commented that stucco is more in keeping with the rest of the house. Ms. Ferraro agreed that stucco might be more appropriate. Mr. Oudsema advised that he was denied a tax credit at the state level because the changes he made were too much in keeping with the rest of the house.

Mr. Nave suggested a site visit to look at the house to come up with a solution to lessen the visual impact on the side the commission is concerned about. Mr. Oudsema inquired if everyone understood the impact of the work that had been done on this house. The contractor commented that the HDC members already had a chance to visit the property and that they are wasting time. Mr. Snyder advised that the commissioners are comparing notes; what's readily apparent to one person is not to another. Ms. Ferraro suggested a site visit the afternoon of August 16<sup>th</sup>. The applicants expressed further dissatisfaction with the situation. Mr. Tribu commented that the original application did not include the changes to the patio area. Ms. Poole-Woldring stated that there is a stop work order on this address, and the commissioners are trying to help resolve the situation.

Ms. DeYoung, Ms. Poole-Woldring and Mr. Nave advised that they would be available for the site visit.

Mr. Snyder questioned if the changes could be made to look consistent with the rest of the house. The applicant commented that he would not all of a sudden do something inconsistent with the neighborhood. Mr. Snyder advised the applicant that the HDC is grateful for the work being done on the house, but they need to make sure the job is being done correctly. Ms. DeYoung commented that plans for exterior changes are to be presented to the HDC and that she was not hearing that from the applicant. The applicant stated that he had presented almost everything to the HDC. The roofers have threatened bankruptcy and fall is coming, that's why the applicant proceeded with the roof. The applicant advised that the roof was approved two years ago.

**Mr. Nave, supported by Ms. DeYoung, moved to accept the existing patio roof with the following changes: the wall is to be trimmed and the siding is to match the house. The south side corner trim is to be installed vertically. The gable facing the west should be sided to match the east gable of the vestibule structure. The roof is to match the back vestibule roof. The gutters and trim are to match the back vestibule gutters. The stone from street seamed similar to stone foundation adjoining it. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Ferraro advised that she would lift the stop work order tomorrow and that the applicant could remove the sign. Mr. Snyder asked if the applicant was happy with the roofing material they had chosen. This material – metal shaped to look like split cedar shakes – was approved in part so the commission could see how it looked when it was applied and how it held up. The applicant replied that he was comfortable with the material itself, but that the flashing had been problematic and that material had been applied and removed several times to get a system that worked. The applicants left the meeting.

Mr. Tribu questioned why the applicants should be allowed to circumnavigate the system because they've spent a lot of money. Mr. Oudsema cautioned the commissioners against imposing their ideas of how to do things on the applicants. He stated that he lost \$50,000 in tax credits because someone didn't see things the same way he did. Sometimes both sides are correct. The point in this case is that the applicant proceeded with work for which he did not have approval, and he will not get his money back. The umbrage he provides to the HDC is huge, but disagreement can be a healthy thing.

**714 S. Park (Case #: IHA 06-0117)**

No one arrived to represent this application and discussion proceeded with regard to the details of the project.

Ms. Ferraro recommended to the owner that the rail, currently vertical 1" T&G be replaced with square or turned spindles spaced about 3" apart. There are shadows of the original spindles on the original top and bottom rails. Ms. Ferraro advised that the

applicant prefers turned spindles and that she would work that out with him. Mr. Oudsema inquired if the city would allow the rail to be that height on a rental property. Ms. Ferraro advised that the ordinance allows for variation in the height.

**Mr. Nave, supported by Ms. Snyder, moved approval of the application for 714 S. Park. The details of the handrails are to be worked out with the Historic Preservation Coordinator. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**723 Eleanor (Case #: IHV 06-0006)**

**Mr. Snyder, supported by Mr. Decker, moved to deny retroactive approval of the application for 723 Eleanor based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines #6. With a roll call vote, the motion carried by a majority vote.**

**Ayes: DeYoung, Snyder, Poole-Woldring, Oudsema, Tribu, Decker**

**Nays: Nave**

The application was denied.

Mr. Snyder commented that the work was done without a permit. The applicant removed siding and added something that was not original. There is a witness who states there was no door in that location originally.

**823 Oak St. (Case #: IHA 06-0116)**

**Mr. Snyder, supported by Ms. DeYoung, moved to postpone the decision on the application for 823 Oak until more information can be presented to the HDC. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**730 West Kalamazoo (Case #IHA 06-00018)**

Ms. Ferraro advised that she sent an application to the owner of this property but he didn't return the application to her. She hoped that this would encourage him to appear in front of the HDC to resolve this matter. Mr. Snyder requested that matters not be added to the agenda if there is no signed application.

**Minutes (July 18, 2006)**

The HDC did not receive the July minutes until the August meeting. Therefore, it was requested that approval of the July minutes be postponed until the September meeting to allow the commissioners time to review them.

**Status Report Regarding 820 W. Lovell**

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Ms. Ferraro advised that she is sending a new violation letter and re-citing the violation. This matter has been referred to the City Attorney's office for review, but there has been no response from that office.

Mr. Snyder expressed concern with regard to the lack of action on this matter. He stressed the need for a resolution to this situation. Mr. Oudsema urged Ms. Ferraro to send a violation letter to the owner of this property.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Recording Secretary)

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Staff Liaison)

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
(HDC Chair)

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_