

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Minutes
December 19, 2006
DRAFT

City Commission Chambers
2nd 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; Bill Snyder; James Tribu

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

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Poole-Woldring had not yet arrived. Mr. Decker called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

AGENDA (December 19, 2007)

Ms. Ferraro advised that she would like to withdraw 618 W. Lovell from the agenda. The owner has not received any written bids from the contractors he consulted. Accordingly, he would like to postpone this matter until the next HDC meeting.

Mr. Oudsema, supported by Ms. DeYoung, moved approval of the December 19, 2007 HDC agenda as amended. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

DISCLAIMER

Ms. Ferraro read the disclaimer into the record.

OLD BUSINESS

443 Stuart (Case #: IHA 06-0100)

Jay Bonsignore was present to discuss the application. The application requests removal of the chimney above the roof on the south side of the house on the front.

Mr. Bonsignore is requesting that the chimney be 3 or 4 feet. Ms. Ferraro stated that she had spoken with Bob Petrick, the Building Official. Mr. Petrick advised that lowering

the chimney should not be a problem as long as it's capped. Ms. Ferraro mentioned that the fancy brickwork is below the roofline. Mr. Bonsignore confirmed that the brickwork above the roofline is all original but much more weathered than the rest of the chimney. He hopes to salvage enough of the old bricks from the tall chimney to repair to repair the shortened chimney. Mr. Bonsignore stated that he intends to recreate a similar cap on the chimney with the corbelled courses.

(7:12 p.m. – Ms. Poole-Woldring and Mr. Nave arrived.)

Mr. Snyder confirmed that copper would be appropriate to use to cap the chimney.

Mr. Oudsema inquired as to why the applicant wants to decrease the height of the chimney. Mr. Bonsignore advised that the chimney hasn't been used in many years. It is deteriorated and hard to maintain because of its height. He advised that he was not sure if the chimney is the original height. Ms. Ferraro added that taking the chimney down to the requested height would eliminate most of the deterioration.

Mr. Tribu stressed that the chimney is to be lowered, not removed. He inquired if future owners could still use the chimney. Mr. Bonsignore stated that a whole new fireplace would have to be built in order for someone to use the chimney. He commented that the chimney has deteriorated due to wind, rain and snow blowing across the roof and pitting the surface of the brick. Below that area, the brick is in relatively good shape.

Mr. Oudsema inquired if the chimney could just be repointed. Mr. Bonsignore advised that repointing the chimney would not cure the problem since the brick is deteriorated and spalling on the back side. The bricks would have to be replaced.

Mr. Tribu expressed concern about how the chimney will look when it is shortened. It is a big attribute to the historic value of the house. Mr. Snyder suggested fixing the chimney. However, he commented that many of the chimneys have been increased in height to meet modern codes. Accordingly, that section of the chimney may not be original; the upper portion does not match the artistry of the lower portion. Lowering the height of the chimney by 3 or 4 feet seems to be a more reasonable compromise than removing the entire chimney. Mr. Bonsignore commented that the reduction would be above the high side of the chimney rather than the low side so the chimney will still be in proportion to the rest of the house.

Mr. Oudsema commented that the chimney is 3 to 4 feet higher than where it hits the roof on the upper (north) side. Mr. Bonsignore stated that the chimney is currently about 9 1/2 feet high. Discussion followed with regard to the possibility of putting a copper cap over the concrete cap. Mr. Snyder mentioned that someone could restore the chimney if they chose to at a later date.

Mr. Bonsignore stated that there were two coal-burning fireplaces in the house. There is a closet where one of the fireplaces used to be. The other chimney has been walled over

but it was not removed. The other fireplace is in a bedroom. Discussion followed with regard to the possibility of having a gas log fireplace and utilizing the existing chimney. Mr. Bonsignore advised that a 4-foot high vent would be adequate for a gas fireplace. He added that the fireplaces were built to burn coal. The chimneys would have to be rebuilt to burn wood since they are not deep enough for that use. The current chimneys could be utilized with a gas log fireplace.

Mr. Snyder, supported by Mr. Oudsema, moved approval of the request for reduction in overall height of the front, south side chimney at 443 Stuart. The height reduction is to be such that it leaves a minimum of 3.5 feet above the cricket on the north side of the chimney. The bricks used for repairs, and for the corbel around the top of the chimney, are to be salvaged from the portion of the chimney that's removed. All work to standards.

Mr. Oudsema inquired as to the height of the second chimney in the back. Mr. Bonsignore stated that it is closer to the peak. He advised that he still uses that chimney for a wood-burning stove. No one can get to the other chimney to clean it. It's only one flue and you can't see it from the street.

Mr. Oudsema stated that he would be inclined to support the request if the height allows for gas venting. Ms. Ferraro stated that she would check on the requirements for the gas venting.

Mr. Oudsema amended the motion to state that the chimney height is to be either 3 ½ feet above the roof line or the minimum height required to support a fully vented gas log fireplace, whichever is greater. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

530 W. Cedar (Case #: IHA 06-0211)

Anne Wendt was present to discuss the application. The application requests the addition of a new window on the north side of the house, second floor.

Ms. Wendt stated that she is remodeling her bathroom and expanding it into what used to be a porch, which is now closed in. The door onto the porch is not weather tight and needs to be made into an exterior solid wall rather than a door. Also, Ms. Wendt would like to install a single pane, fixed window to that area. The window measures 40 x 25 in the jamb. It will be installed horizontally. The current opening is about 5 feet across. The applicant advised that the horizontal 40 x 25 window is salvaged from a house of similar age. The area around the window would be filled in with solid clapboard. Ms. Wendt advised that the door hasn't worked during the time she's occupied the house.

Mr. Snyder stated that he thought the window to be installed had a muntin to match the others; it appears to match in the sketch. This house has a beautiful frieze board at the top.

The other windows are up against that frieze board. The drawing indicates that the window will not be installed against the frieze board. Ms. Wendt advised that the drawing was not reflective of her intentions; the intention is to install the window against the frieze board. Ms. Ferraro stated that Ms. Wendt's goal is to have light and privacy in the remodeled bathroom. She intends to replace the siding after the window is installed.

Mr. Oudsema, supported by Mr. Snyder, moved approval of the addition of the new window on the north side of 530 W. Cedar, per the applicant's sketch, provided the window is placed against the friezeboard like the other windows on the second floor. The spacing around the window is to be appropriately trimmed and the siding is to be toothed in. All work to standards.

Mr. Snyder suggested checking at the Heritage Company for windows with muntins to match. Ms. Wendt inquired if stained glass or pebble glass would be an option, and Mr. Snyder responded in the affirmative. Ms. Ferraro suggested that if stained glass were used, it should be mounted inside a piece of regular glass so the applicant can take the stained glass with her if she ever sells the house. Mr. Nave suggested installing a storm window on the outside of the new window to hold in the heat. It was also suggested that pebble glass (obscuring glass) or glue chip glass would be good options because they will provide privacy but still let in the light.

Mr. Snyder amended the motion to state that the applicant is to have the option of substituting an obscuring glass framed window, pending approval by the Historic Preservation Coordinator. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

608 Oak (Case #: IHA 06-0211)

The applicant was not present. The application requests replacement of basement windows with glass block.

Ms. Ferraro stated that she received a call from Mr. Palus regarding a break-in at this address on November 19, 2006. There is no latch on the window; someone just pushed it in. The window was not damaged. The applicant is planning on installing security lights. Ms. Ferraro provided contact information for the two neighbors to the north so they can discuss putting up a fence. Ms. Ferraro advised the applicant that the HDC is generally not in favor of glass block.

Mr. Oudsema, supported by Mr. Decker, moved to postpone the decision regarding the glass block requested for the windows at 608 Oak, pending further information from the applicant. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Snyder expressed concern regarding the request for installation of glass block. Ms. Ferraro stated that she could encourage the applicant to repair the windows. Mr. Snyder suggested installing gutters on the house to prevent the water from pouring down the sides of the house. The water is creating a channel and pushing dirt near the house. Mr.

Tribu mentioned that the window in question is on a gable end; installation of the gutters wouldn't provide much help in that area. Ms. Ferraro advised that the applicant already has window wells by the two north side windows.

MINUTES (November 21, 2006)

Mr. Snyder requested that the case numbers be corrected for 618 W. Lovell and 443 Stuart. Ms. Ferraro advised that the correct number for the Lovell address is 0195. The correct number for the Stuart address is 0200. Mr. Snyder referred to page 4, under 414 Davis, the first sentence should say, "Mr. Snyder presented a photo of an inappropriate rear door installation at 414 Davis."

Mr. Snyder, supported by Mr. Nave, moved approval of the November 21, 2006 HDC minutes as amended. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Snyder requested an update regarding the storm door at 820 W. Lovell. Ms. Ferraro stated that she hadn't heard anything from the property owners. It's been three weeks since she sent the letter to advise them of the situation with the door. Mr. Oudsema advised that he would be willing to speak with the property owners about this situation.

Mr. Snyder requested an update regarding 414 Davis. Ms. Ferraro advised that she sent a violation letter to the owners after the last meeting, but there has been no response yet. The photos were helpful. She commented that the City Attorney recently ruled that the HPC has to have permission to go on private property, and an application is considered to be implied permission. Accordingly, pictures of violations must often be taken from a neighboring property.

Ms. Ferraro stated that the Old House Expo is scheduled on January 20th at the Kalamazoo County Fairgrounds. There are two free workshops scheduled: lead-safe work practices and a window rehab workshop given by Jim Turner, who is the guest of honor at the expo. The window workshop will take place the day before the expo. Free tickets to the expo will be provided to the members of the HDC.

Ms. Ferraro advised that she received an apology from Jack's Wholesale Windows after they were discovered installing unapproved windows in a house in the historic district. Jack's Wholesale Windows removed the unapproved windows and reinstalled the original windows.

AJOURNMENT

Mr. Oudsema, supported by Mr. Nave, moved to adjourn the December 19, 2006 Historic District Commission meeting. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Submitted by: _____
(Recording Secretary)

Dated: _____

Reviewed by: _____
(Staff Liaison)

Dated: _____

Approved by: _____
(HDC Chair)

Dated: _____