

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
Minutes  
September 16, 2008  
***DRAFT***

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

Members Present: Jay Bonsignore, Chair; Bob Cinabro; Linda DeYoung; Nelson Nave; Bob Oudsema; James Tribu

Members Excused: Lisa Poole-Woldring, Vice Chair

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

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Bonsignore called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF ABSENCES**

Ms. Poole-Woldring advised city staff that she would not be in attendance at the September meeting.

**Mr. Nave, supported by Mr. Cinabro, moved approval of Ms. Poole-Woldring's absence from the September 16, 2008 Historic District Commission meeting.**

**AGENDA (September 16, 2008)**

Ms. Ferraro requested that 800 W. South St. and 725 Academy be moved to the end of the agenda. The representative for 725 Academy requested that Ms. Ferraro represent the property.

**Mr. Oudsema, supported by Ms. DeYoung, moved approval of the September 16, 2008 HDC agenda as amended. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**DISCLAIMER**

Ms. Ferraro read the disclaimer into the record.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**813 West South St. (Case #IHV 08-0003)**

Richard Emig was present to represent the property. The west side storm was removed without HDC approval.

Mr. Emig provided a handout showing where the door was initially and how the building appears today. The pictures also show 821 and 711 W. South St. Mr. Emig advised that South Street Properties was established in 1984 and that he has never received a violation notice until recently. During that 24-year period, numerous improvements have been made to the seven properties owned by South Street Properties. Most recently, historic approval has been obtained for improvements to 821 and 711 W. South St.

Mr. Emig advised that the current application pertains to the 1960's screen door which was removed from the west side of 813 W. South St. The door was removed because of a leakage problem reported by the downstairs tenant. Mr. Emig also provided a letter from the Britigans, the previous owners of 813 W. South St. The Britigans advised that the west entrance was an access door used for taking caskets through to the funeral home. Because the access door was not original to the house, Mr. Emig didn't realize he needed to request approval from the HDC for the proposed changes. The request today is for retroactive approval of the changes that were made to the west entrance.

Mr. Emig spoke with some of his neighbors regarding the changes at 813 W. South Street. Several of the neighbors signed a document stating that they support the changes that were made to the property.

Mr. Oudsema advised of the importance of staying focused on the issue at hand, and not allowing other issues to influence the decision on this matter. He stated that he looks at the change to the door as an improvement in the demeanor and presentation of the home.

Mr. Nave stated that he thought the discussion didn't have anything to do with the sign; that is a separate issue. He referred to a prior case in which a property owner on Eleanor replaced a door that was removed without an application. He commented that it didn't seem appropriate to require one property owner to return a door to its original state, while another property owner is not required to do so. The door is a feature that was on the side of the house. It may have been added later, but it appears to be an entrance at grade, which would have lead directly up or down to another level. The door is near grade and the foundation wall stops at the door. The siding comes down to the slab and covers up what used to be the door. Mr. Nave advised that he would be voting against the motion.

Mr. Oudsema commented that every situation is unique, and that he didn't remember the property on Eleanor St. There have been times when the HDC has voted to add doors, and there have been times when they voted to deny the addition of doors. Every case should be evaluated on its own unique merits.

Mr. Bonsignore mentioned that even if the door were replaced, there would still be siding close to grade. He inquired if Mr. Nave wanted the storm door to be reinstalled. Reinstallation of the storm door would not seem to be an improvement to the appearance of the house.

Mr. Nave advised that the door jamb should be recessed, the door should be put back in a similar position to where it was. The jambs and trim should also be reinstalled. Mr. Bonsignore questioned if Mr. Nave wanted the owner to restore what was removed or if he was asking that the owner install something completely different. Mr. Nave stated that the trim was there and the door was there, but it had been covered up on the inside. There was something there other than just the storm door.

Mr. Cinabro stated that he would be supporting Mr. Oudsema's motion. He commented that he is newest member of the HDC and that he is aware of some of the recent history regarding the changes to the house. He also expressed concern that this matter wasn't brought to the HDC sooner. Representations have been made to the HDC that the door was not original to this structure and there is documentation to support that. Mr. Cinabro commented that he visited the property and what he saw looked nice. He stated that requiring the door to be put back on would not add to the historic value of the property.

**Mr. Oudsema, supported by Mr. Cinabro, moved to allow retroactive approval for the removal of the storm door and the door frame on the west side of 813 W. South St. on the first floor. The opening is to be covered over with siding similar to the remainder of the house, which is what has taken place. With a roll call vote, the motion carried by a majority vote.**

**161 E. Michigan Ave. (Case #: IHA 08-0327)**

Elizabeth Wright from Treystar was present to discuss the application. The application requests removal of the existing half round canopies on the front/south and rear/west entries, and replacement with suspended awnings.

Ms. Wright stated that at last month's HDC meeting Treystar was asked to submit more details about this project. The HDC also requested that the applicant consider widening the awning at the front of the building. Ms. Wright explained that the building is very narrow and the objective was to add a nice accent to the front of the building and provide protection for visitors, rather than draw attention to it with a wide awning. The applicants would like to use the awning design as submitted for the front/south entry overlooking W. Michigan Ave. and the rear/north entry overlooking Lot 9.

Mr. Bonsignore inquired about the information provided by Treystar that advises that the zoning code allows for the canopy to extend 1/3 of the distance from the face of the building to the curb, which is 18 feet. Therefore, 12 feet is the maximum dimension allowed. Mr. Bonsignore pointed out that one third of 18 is 6 not 12. Ms. Ferraro suggested that maybe the text was supposed to have stated "2/3" not "1/3." Ms. Wright advised that this appears to be a typographical error. The intention was to state that the applicants don't want the new awning to extend out as far as the previous one did.

**Mr. Nave moved to deny the application for 161 E. Michigan. The awning is not historic, it's modern; it's not fabric, it's steel; it's not temporary, it's part of the building. It is a modern attachment rather than an awning. It is a piece of modern architecture that sticks out of the front of the building. It shouldn't have lights.**

**The motion died for lack of support.**

Mr. Nave stated that he used the word "historical" in his description at last month's meeting, but it does not appear in the minutes. The minutes should state that the awning is not historical in nature and that is the main point. This is a historic building being reviewed by the Historic District. He inquired if the previous canopy was approved by the HDC. Mr. Nave advised that Architect Gordy Rodgers provided the design for a previous remodel to the building. He inquired if the building had a canopy at that time. Ms. Ferraro stated that her electronic records go back to 1999 and some paper files to which she has immediate access go back a couple years earlier. Older records would be stored at the city's records center. The subject property has been part of the historic district since 1983. Ms. Ferraro stated that she thought the previous awning was approved in the mid-1990's. Mr. Nave advised that the previous awning was a half-round, fabric awning which didn't go through the glass, and it was not permanently attached to the building. There was a similar canopy in the back of the building and there is a canopy on the inside of the building. It was a steel rod frame with a fabric awning. The awning was changed many times in the past. The proposed awning is part of the building, and it looks like a modern marquee sticking out from the building. Mr. Nave referred to the Columbia Hotel building and the fabric awning at that location, which was approved by the HDC. The proposed awning is a permanent wood and steel structure with lights, which the HDC has never approved before.

Ms. Wright advised that the proposed awning is not permanent; it can be removed from the building. Mr. Nave commented that it could be removed from the building, but with substantial effort. Ms. Wright stated that part of the motive with this design was to incorporate a historic element from the building interior and bring it to the exterior. The applicant is viewing the awning as a unique feature and detail that compliments what is already on the inside of the building. Mr. Nave stated that it is a modern detail rather than a historic detail.

Mr. Oudsema agreed that the proposed awning is more of a modern, contemporary design. A positive aspect to such a feature would be that it will not be mistaken for an original detail of the building. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) might be more agreeable with that, as opposed to something that was made to look like an original feature. Mr. Oudsema referred to a project he worked on in the past, and advised that he was criticized by people the state level when he attempted to add details that looked original. He mentioned that many different entities have occupied this space and the awning will be taken down one day. It is clearly not meant to be there 50 years from now.

Mr. Nave suggested that if the awning were all the way to the top of the glass and as wide as the opening or just below the top of the glass, and still hung by the steel struts or rods, it would look somewhat like the old marquees. There's one on the mall that was replicated, and there are two at Rose Street Market that were replicated. The proposed awning doesn't resemble those marquees because it doesn't extend clear across the opening and it is too low; it is only 8 feet high. The Rose Street Market marquee has two skylights, which allow light in. The one on the mall is plain. The mall is not in the historic district but the Rose Street Market is on the National Historic Register.

**Mr. Oudsema, supported by Mr. Cinabro, moved approval of the removal of the existing half round canopies on the front/south and rear/west entrance of 161 E. Michigan Ave. The canopies are to be replaced per the drawings provided by Treystar. With a roll call vote, the motion failed with a tie vote.**

**Ayes: DeYoung, Oudsema, Cinabro**  
**Nays: Nave, Bonsignore, Tribu**

Mr. Tribu advised that it is difficult to make a decision on this issue because it seems to be a matter of taste. Ms. Ferraro suggested reviewing the standards as a basis for the decision. She referred to the Secretary of Interior's Standards and Guidelines. Standard #9, states that additions should be clearly differentiated from the original structure and removable, and they shouldn't alter the character of the building. New additions, exterior alterations or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The proposed awnings conform to this guideline. Changes shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment. Mr. Nave stated that the awnings do not conform to that portion of the standards.

Mr. Tribu inquired if there was any evidence showing what was there. Ms. Ferraro stated that none of photos she has show any evidence of awnings on the building, front or back. It is also appropriate to consider how much of an impact the proposed changes would have on the surrounding buildings. There is no clear deciding factor for this application. The HDC must only consider relevant details on the outside of the building.

Mr. Oudsema commented that the lights under the awning would probably be helpful to call attention to the outside of the building and they would be welcoming. It could also be argued that the lights could provide additional safety especially during the winter months. At some point in time this property will likely change hands or the use of it will change substantially. When that happens, the new occupant may remove the awnings. Mr. Oudsema stated that he agreed with Mr. Nave regarding the use of the different materials, which could be considered more permanent. However, permanence doesn't relate to the use of materials in this instance. It is an aesthetic look that the owner wants. Another owner will want something different.

Mr. Cinabro commented that Standard #9 presents some questions as to the compatibility of the proposed canopy with the massing, size and scale of the architectural features of the building. He also referred to the language stating, "...to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment." An argument could be made either way. When considering the property, the size of the building, where it is located, and what the applicant is trying to do, the proposed awnings are not shocking or offensive. However, it would be preferable for the awnings to be

more appropriate with the massing and size of the building. Mr. Cinabro stated that he would support the motion but it is a close call.

Ms. Ferraro stated that the tie vote signifies no action rather than a denial. Mr. Bonsignore confirmed that a minimum of four votes would be needed for the motion to pass. Ms. Ferraro suggested that another motion might lead to a different outcome.

Ms. Wright stated that Treystar has another project on the HDC agenda, and she is concerned about the 23% vacancy rate in the building next door. Under the circumstances, somebody may decide to not proceed. She stated that she thought the proposed awnings would be a reasonable improvement to the building. The intent was to take a unique industrial element from the interior of the building, and use it on the outside of the building. She expressed concern about the process being so complicated. Cloth awnings were considered, but it is the preference of the applicant to not put back up what was already there. Ms. Wright stated that she felt the proposed awnings would be an improvement to the building.

Ms. Ferraro stated that some consideration should also be given to standard #10: "New additions and adjacent or related construction should be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment will be unimpaired."

Ms. Wright advised that the applicants don't want to do anything that would permanently scar the building. The awning was not designed to remain in place for the next 50 years.

Mr. Nave advised that standard #9 states, "New work shall be differentiated from old, but shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale and architectural features." The width of the opening pertains to the massing, size and scale of the building. He referred to the center group of windows on the first floor. The top of that window opening is where an awning, canopy or marquee would be. The opening is very high, but the proposed awning is low and in the middle of the glass; it makes no sense historically. Mr. Oudsema commented that if the awning were raised it would afford less shelter for the people under it.

**Mr. Nave, supported by Mr. Tribu, moved that the application for 161 E. Michigan Avenue be denied based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines #9. The proposed awning is not compatible with the massing, size and scale and architectural features of the exterior of the building. It should protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment. With a roll call vote, the motion carried by a majority vote.**

**Ayes: Nave, DeYoung, Bonsignore, Tribu**  
**Nays: Oudsema, Cinabro**

Mr. Tribu inquired if Mr. Nave would consider the massing to be correct if the canopy were moved higher and made wider. Mr. Nave indicated that would be a possibility. Ms. Ferraro expressed concern that the canopy might appear to be floating in mid-air if it were moved to the height suggested by Mr. Nave. She advised that the State Theatre marquee, the Style Shop awning and the Rose Street Market marquee are approximately 8 to 9 feet off the ground. If the canopy at the subject property were raised to the top of the window, it would be almost 12 feet in the air and that would look odd.

Mr. Bonsignore commented that the steel I-beam construction makes the canopy look heavy compared to fabric awnings. Accordingly, installing the canopy at a higher location might be an advantage.

**161 E. Michigan Ave. (Case #: IHA 08-0327)**

The second part of the application for this property requests re-opening the bricked-up windows on the north side, first floor of the building.

Ms. Wright advised that there has been a change in tenants on the first floor of the building. This space was formerly occupied by the Food Dance Restaurant and, prior to that, the Oakley's kitchen was in the back of the building. Due to the reconfiguration of the space in front to accommodate the Wine Loft, the space at the rear of the building is no longer marketable as is. The applicant is proposing to reinstall the windows in the back of the building to make the space more marketable.

**Mr. Nave, supported by Ms. DeYoung, move to approve the application for reinstallation of the windows at the back of the building at 161 E. Michigan Ave. with the following conditions: 1. The mortar is to match the original mortar; 2. The aluminum window frames are to be dark bronze to match the rest of the windows in the building; 3. No tinted windows; 4. The brick corners are all to be toothed-in; 5. The stone sills are to match the original sills; 6. The two pieces of metal on the alley side are to be painted to match the dark bronze. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Wright confirmed that all five window openings on the rear of the building will be reopened and one window opening on the east side will be reopened. She advised that the existing service door at the back of the building will be converted to a window as shown on the drawing.

**520 Axtell (Case #: IHA 08-0362)**

There was no one present to discuss the application, and the HDC proceeded to the next agenda item.

**310 Elm (Case #: IHA 08-0375)**

Sylvia Steeg and her contractors were present to represent the property. The application requests retroactive approval of the replacement of five, second floor front/west windows.

Ms. Steeg advised that All Star was contracted to install the windows. Dan Tyler apologized for not obtaining a permit prior to replacing the windows. This was an oversight by one of the employees. Jeldwen wood sash replacement kits were used on the interior and exterior. This is not a clad product or an aluminum product. He provided brochures showing the Pine sashes that were used. The primed wood can be painted on the interior and exterior. Page 3 shows that the width, height and sill angle were taken into consideration when the sashes were replaced. The new sashes fit into the existing openings and nothing was altered. Mr. Tyler referred to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines, which state that it is preferred that the existing wood is repaired or replaced to match the existing wood members. In this case, the size of the styles and sashes was taken into consideration. The glass light and the muntin arrangement were not altered. The existing exterior windows, door casings, sills and caps were not altered from the original design or appearance, all in accordance with historic district standards. Mr. Tyler requested approval of the application based on these details.

Mr. Nave inquired about the wood showing around the sides beyond the trim. The owner noted that in the old photos bare storm windows were showing and they covered every window of the house. In the new photos, there are no screens up yet so you see the windows as they would look uncovered.

Mr. Tyler advised that the windows have full screens that mount on the outside stop, inside of the 5/4 casing. Those have not been installed yet because of the issue with the permit. There is also a new jamb liner.

Mr. Nave inquired if the jamb liner was visible from the outside. Mr. Tyler advised that the jamb liners might be visible but they can be painted. When a previous owner installed the existing storm windows, they were forced into position because they were not the correct size for the openings.

Mr. Nave inquired if it was the intent to install aluminum storms over the windows. Ms. Steeg advised that she thought wood storm windows would be installed. Mr. Tyler stated that these are insulated glass windows. The intention was to replace the windows so they would function more easily.

Ms. Steeg stated that this was a four-unit apartment but it is being converted into a single-family home. The upstairs will be used by the residents. The hope was to install the new windows and save on energy without changing the historic look of the exterior. The house has aluminum siding, which is not historic, so the applicant didn't realize there would be a problem with changing the windows. The contractors advised that they would pull the necessary permits and the applicant was relying on that information.

Mr. Bonsignore inquired as to what will be installed on the outside of the window. Mr. Tyler stated that a single, full screen will be mounted to the outside sash stock. Mr. Bonsignore expressed concern about someone being able to get out of the window. Mr. Tyler advised that clips hold the screens in place and the screens snap out at the sill for easy removal. Mr. Bonsignore inquired as to how the screens are mounted. The contractor noted that the screens come with pressure clips at the top where the screens slide in, and there are two clips with hooks that hook over the screen. There are no aluminum tracks. Mr. Bonsignore inquired if the screens are going into the new jamb. The contractor stated that no new exterior wood has been added. Everything on the outside and inside is pre-existing. The stops that are visible are on every window made during that time and every window made now. There are 3/4" stops that allow the lower, outside sash to go up and down. In order to install the screens, the inside stops are removed and the screen is mounted against the outside stops so the outside is not disrupted. Then the inside stops would be reinstalled and the sashes would be slipped in. You are looking at a piece of wood. The clips at the top may be metal.

Mr. Bonsignore inquired as to what holds the screen in place. Normally, there is a channel that it fits in. Mr. Oudsema advised that it appears the clips are fastened to the existing wood and the clips hold the screen in place at the top. The contractor stated that the clips are about 1 1/2" long and about 3/8" in depth. There are two pieces of wire over a pin that secures the bottom of the screens. The wood that Mr. Nave was looking at needs to be scraped and painted. The windows are not designed to have storm windows put on them.

Mr. Tribu inquired if there is a partition in the screen. The contractor stated that he thought it was a full screen (no mullion). Mr. Tyler added that they haven't seen the screens first hand yet because they have not been picked up from the supplier.

Mr. Nave advised that in the past, the HDC has allowed aluminum screen storms for energy efficiency because they can be removed if someone wants a more historic appearance. Wood storms and screens have also been allowed, but each of them had a cross bar in the middle that would correspond to the double-hung windows.

The contractor advised that the screens may have something in the middle for support, but it would be at the line where the two sashes come together, rather than up in the glass.

Mr. Nave advised that the main problem is that there was no application prior to the time work began. According to the picture, the windows that were removed appear to be in restorable condition. With the original aluminum storm windows, there would have been a similar "R" value as the new windows. The contractor stated that he thought the "R" value of the old windows would not be close. The sashes were falling apart and restoration would likely have required new sashes.

The contractor stated that he showed one of the rotten windows to Ms. Ferraro. The intention was to use some of the other existing windows to replace some of the ones that were crumbling.

Mr. Nave inquired if anyone had a problem with the look of the full screens. Ms. Ferraro advised that the full height screen usually have a frame that is less than 1". The single chunk of dark screening looks like a black rectangle, which loses the definition and you can't see the window anymore. About 99% of the time, the dividing line is on the inside of the screen rather than the outside. Accordingly, the new screens significantly alter the appearance of the windows, even more than the replacement windows, which are a pretty good match. With a traditional wood screen, the frames are 1 3/4" to 2", which is the same as the sash.

Mr. Oudsema inquired as to the cost of putting a double-hung aluminum screen back up, as opposed to a storm window. Mr. Tyler stated that it would cost approximately \$100 to \$150 per unit more. A good, custom-sized, paintable storm window with a triple-track would be about \$80.00. Ms. Ferraro mentioned that these windows are taller than average. Another possibility would be to install wood framed screens, which would allow use of the upper and lower sashes. They could be built to match with a 1 1/2" frame and a center mullion.

**Mr. Nave, supported by Ms. DeYoung, moved to allow retroactive approval of the replacement sashes at 310 Elm, with the requirement that the jamb liner be painted to match the trim. The proposed full screens are not approved. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Oudsema suggested that Ms. Ferraro could approve the aluminum storms or wood screens administratively. Mr. Bonsignore advised that he would prefer a full-sized screen, rather than the aluminum storms.

**908 Village (Case #: IHA 08-0378)**

No one was present to represent the property, and the HDC proceeded to the next agenda item.

**319 Elm (Case #: IHA 08-0381)**

Dan Sheffers with Van Dam and Krusinga was present to represent the property on behalf of David Anderson. The application requests the installation of a barrier free ramp leading to the rear door in the southwest corner of the house (visible off Ferris Court.)

Mr. Sheffers advised that Mr. Anderson provided pictures of several approved ramps to his Architect. They chose a deck and railing that were close in design to others that have been approved.

Ms. Ferraro advised that the proposed location of the ramp is the least visible area of the house. Mr. Nave inquired if the porch was extended over the steps to create a bigger landing. There appears to be an additional flat landing beyond the ramp. Mr. Oudsema stated that the application refers to treated wood built over existing concrete steps. Ms. Ferraro interpreted that to mean that the steps would not be removed; they would just continue to exist under the deck. Mr. Sheffers stated that the proposal includes replacement of one of the porches on the front.

Mr. Nave referred to the back porch and stated that the deck appears to be extended two feet beyond the bottom riser and newell post. He inquired as to what would happen to the old railing and newell post where the steps are currently. Ms. Ferraro advised that the post and railing are not historic. Part of the drawing is missing so the entire ramp is not visible in the picture. The ramp doubles back against itself.

Mr. Oudsema inquired as to why the ramp was being placed over the existing steps, when that could be used as part of the ramp. He inquired if the porch area is not big enough to meet the handicap qualifications. Ms. Nave commented that it appears the landing is bigger to resolve issues with handicap accessibility.

Mr. Nave inquired as to why the ramp was being installed. Mr. Sheffers stated that units #8 and #9 are both accessed from that porch. The hope is to have unit #8 fully ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) approved. Unit #9 will be substantially ADA approved to accommodate potential tenants. There are stairs leading to all of the other units. There are 11 units at this address. Ms. Ferraro stated that when there are over six units, at least one unit must be ADA compliant.

**Mr. Nave, supported by Mr. Oudsema, moved approval of the handicap ramp proposed for 319 Elm. If code requires something different, the applicant is to return to the HDC for approval. With a voice vote, the motion was approved by a majority vote.**

**Ayes: Nave, DeYoung, Oudsema, Cinabro, Tribu**  
**Abstain: Bonsignore**

Mr. Tribu inquired if any infill was needed or if the metal railing was sufficient. Discussion followed as to whether the porch was more than 30" high. Mr. Nave advised that the code requires 1 in 12 pitch. He recalled that there are requirements pertaining to the guardrail or the edge of the ramp. Ms. Ferraro advised that many of the details of this ramp are like the ramp on corner of Kalamazoo and Elm. There's no extra lip on that ramp, just the ramp and the rail. Mr. Nave suggested referring to the building code for the appropriate details. Ms. Ferraro advised that the HDC does have authority to approve what is presented as the preferred choice, which would have some influence with the ADA compliance code. She stated that the typical handrail would look too massive and heavy and the maintenance would be more difficult. The proposed rail would be simple and still provide what the tenants would need. The building official may require a lip along the edge to keep wheels from sliding off. The simple rail is similar to those found in historic photos.

Mr. Sheffers advised that the owner and the architect are open to alterations. They are trying to meet the requirements of the HDC and the building code.

**800 W. South (Case #: IHA 08-0377)**

Shelly Preston, Preston Co., LLC, was present to discuss the application. The application requests demolition of garages 1-6 and repair of the west wall of the garage of #7. The application also requests installation of a chain link fence with barbed wire and the addition of gravel for the parking surface.

Ms. Ferraro advised that the applicants actually want to demolish garages 1-7 and repair the wall of #8. Essentially, the garages behind the apartment building would be demolished and the garages behind the Greek revival to the east would remain.

Ms. Preston advised that she has owned the building for about a year. The garages in the back have not been maintained and there has been a lot of vandalism to the back of the garages by the parking lot on Academy St. The plan is to remove the garages in disrepair and use the area as green space with historically appropriate plantings. This would also improve the flow of traffic for the property to the west. A fence contractor suggested a chain link fence with barbed wire to eliminate pedestrian traffic and graffiti. The plantings would disguise the chain link fence, which could be easily repaired.

Mr. Nave advised that a similar application was submitted a couple of years ago by the former owner. Ms. Ferraro advised that the former owner pointed out that there is a problem in the winter with ice and snow draining into the garage. On June 22, 2005, the HDC requested a specific plan for the demolition and the fence to replace the barrier that the garages now represent between South Street and Academy St. Ms. Ferraro stated that she'd had a conversation with the prior owner about meeting to discuss the possibility of repairing the garages and utilizing the historic tax credit. Shortly thereafter, he decided to sell the property. The HDC never made a final decision on the plan because the final details were never presented.

Mr. Nave recalled that the prior owner was advised to re-grade the area in back to prevent continued drainage into the garage. Ms. Preston stated that behind the property is a patch of asphalt about the width of a car, that transitions into gravel and then the garages.

Mr. Nave requested more details about the buildings to be taken down. Ms. Ferraro advised that the garages with the hip roofs will not be taken down. Ms. Preston stated that the flat –roofed garages are numbers 1-6. Garage #7 is the one with the sloped roof. Ms. Preston wants to take down all of those garages and leave the one with the Mansard roof (#8). You can only see garage #8 from the driveway.

Mr. Tribu inquired if any of the garages have doors. Ms. Ferraro advised that a couple of the garages have partial doors. Ms. Preston stated that there have been multiple incidents of clothing and broken liquor bottles found in the garages, and people have removed pieces of the siding. Discussion continued with regard to the condition of the garage walls. It appears that there are more holes now than three years ago when the previous pictures were taken. Ms. Preston advised that she tried to stop the pedestrian traffic by placing a plywood barrier over the holes, but someone removed the plywood. Her goal is to improve the property by eliminating the garages and the problems they create.

Mr. Nave stated that he would never approve barbed wire, but an 8-foot tall fence would be acceptable in that location. He inquired if Ms. Preston had considered restoring the garages. She stated that she had considered it but is concerned that the vandalism will continue.

In response to Mr. Oudsema's question, Ms. Ferraro stated that a chain link fence would be allowed in the back of the property. Mr. Oudsema inquired if people have been using the garages as shelter. Ms. Preston indicated that the garages appear to be a pass-through from Academy Street.

**Mr. Oudsema, supported by Mr. Cinabro, moved approval of the demolition of garages 1-7 at 800 W. South St., with the installation of an 8-foot-high chain link fence at the back of the property. Under no circumstances is barbed wire to be used. With a roll call vote, the motion failed by a majority vote.**

**Ayes: Oudsema, Cinabro**

**Nays: Nave, DeYoung, Bonsignore, Tribu**

Mr. Nave stated that he would be voting against the motion. The garages are appropriate for the building, they are historical in nature, they are commercial in nature as is the apartment house on the property, and there is almost nothing wrong with the façade of the garages. If the garages were repaired, they would serve as a wall to stop people from passing through this area.

Mr. Tribu concurred with Mr. Nave's assessment. He added that, if the garages were repaired, they would be an asset for the renters.

Mr. Bonsignore stated that he was expecting the garages to be in much worse condition. They appear to be salvageable. He stated that he would be uncomfortable approving demolition of the garages.

**Mr. Nave, supported by Mr. Tribu, moved to deny the application for demolition of garages 1-7 at 800 W. South Street. With a roll call vote, the motion carried by a majority vote.**

**Ayes: Nave, DeYoung, Bonsignore, Tribu**

**Nays: Oudsema, Cinabro**

Ms. Ferraro advised Ms. Preston that she will not be allowed to proceed with the demolition. She could return to the HDC with a proposal for repairing the garages or demolishing the garages and rebuilding them. Ms. Ferraro advised the applicant of her right to appeal the decision.

Ms. Preston inquired if she would need permission to repair the garages. Ms. Ferraro stated that she could have a site visit to discuss options with Ms. Preston. Ms. Ferraro could approve the repairs administratively, as long as the repairs were made with like materials. Changes from the existing materials would need approval from the HDC. Repairs to the garages would be eligible for the historic tax credit.

Mr. Bonsignore suggested that if the garages are repaired, ¾" plywood could be installed under the siding to discourage vandalism.

Ms. Ferraro advised that a couple of oddly placed windows were added to the back of the garages during a previous remodel. She inquired if the HDC would be agreeable with eliminating those openings if the repairs are done. No one voiced any opposition to that suggestion. Ms. Ferraro commented that eliminating the windows might eliminate perceived weak spots in the structure and, hopefully, deter vandalism.

**725 Academy (Case #: IHA 08-0376)**

Ms. Ferraro agreed to represent this property on behalf of the owner, Wilthold Steinagel. The application requests replacement of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor east door over the bay with a window, or leaving the door and allowing the addition of a 42" code compliant rail.

A recent housing inspection brought this matter to Ms. Ferraro's attention. Ms. Ferraro referred to a photograph showing the window with boards over it. Another photo shows what used to be over the bay window. The deck is no longer needed and has been removed. The tenant stated that she rented an apartment with a deck and she wants the deck replaced. However, the owner doesn't want to replace the deck. If the HDC denies the request to replace the deck, Ms. Ferraro can provide that information in a letter for the applicant to show his tenant.

Mr. Nave advised that the stair guard railing on the front of the house doesn't meet code, nor does it meet historic district standards. Ms. Ferraro advised that the railings are being rebuilt. They will be replaced with a square spindled handrail to meet standards. The bay window roof has been repaired.

Ms. DeYoung inquired as to what year this house was added to the historic district. Ms. Ferraro stated that it became part of the historic district in the late 1980's or early 1990's. The deck was added prior to the time this property was designated as historic. The owner would like to leave the deck off, but he needs it to access the apartments. Mr. Tribu mentioned that the old rule required two accesses for each of the apartments. Ms. Ferraro stated that this apartment no longer needs the deck for access, and the owner would like to reinstall the window.

**Mr. Nave, supported by Mr. Cinabro, moved approval for replacement of the door on the east side, second floor of 725 Academy with a window that matches the original window. The sill should be at the same height as the adjacent window. The siding around the door is to be repaired to match the original siding. The light fixture above the door should be removed. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**Mr. Oudsema, supported by Mr. Tribu, moved to deny the application for replacement of the deck over the east bay window at 725 Academy, based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines numbers 6 and 9. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**908 Village (Case #: IHA 08-0378)**

Ms. Ferraro stated that the applicant, Charles Perkins, advised just prior to the HDC that he had a family emergency and he requested Ms. Ferraro to represent him at the meeting. The application requests installation of a standing seam, metal roof on the house at this address. The roof will be a dark color. If the metal roof is not approved, the applicant will likely install an asphalt roof. A large branch from a neighbor's tree fell on the house, making replacement of the roof a necessity.

Mr. Nave mentioned that there is a big difference in metal roofs. Ms. Ferraro advised that the applicant didn't provide a sample of the proposed metal roof. She referred to a house at the corner of Vine and Park where a metal roof was approved for the back wing of the house.

**Mr. Oudsema, supported by Mr. Nave, moved to defer action on the application for 908 Village to allow the applicant an opportunity to provide a sample or detailed illustrations of the proposed metal roofing material. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**627-629 S. Westnedge (Case #: IHV 08-0360)**

Bob Oudsema was present to discuss the application. The application requests approval for demolition of the house at the subject property prior to new construction.

Mr. Oudsema referred to the pictures of the subject property, which is located at the corner of South Westnedge and West Dutton. Mr. Oudsema advised that he just recently purchased this property. He also owns 615 S. Westnedge and he hopes to purchase 442 West Dutton. The current owner of 442 Dutton has invested a substantial amount of time and money in the property, which is now rented out, and the owner doesn't want to sell it. The property on the corner is currently configured as four apartments, but it only has parking spaces for three cars. Mr. Oudsema stated that he would like to have the house demolished and leave the property vacant at this point. This will provide an economic benefit because it will allow the city to review the tax status of this property, and the taxes should decrease by approximately \$4,000. If the building stands empty, it will be subject to vandalism. Removing the building will likely be a positive step toward attracting investors to the property. If the building is removed, there will be a better view of the property from Westnedge, and it will be easier to see how much land is available for development.

Mr. Oudsema advised that another option would be to invest money in the property as is. He is working on a budget for that option and estimates that it would cost approximately \$40,000 to make enough improvements so the building could be rented. If the building is rented, Mr. Oudsema is proposing to convert some of the adjoining land that he owns into a parking lot to attract tenants. Investing money in the existing building would not be the preferred option since he hopes to remove the building at some point to make room for another development. He is estimating that it would be at least three years before development would begin on this land, and that may be an issue with the HDC.

Ms. DeYoung inquired if there is a condemned sign on the front door of the house. Mr. Oudsema responded in the affirmative and advised that the house was condemned because of issues with the utilities, not because it is structurally unsound.

Ms. Ferraro commented that this is a humble, vernacular house built in the 1870's. Other than the wooden screen door on the back and some trim on the inside, there is very little historic detail remaining on this property. There have been substantial alterations throughout the building. Ms. Ferraro advised that she was not necessarily in favor of demolition, however, this house is not special or unique.

Mr. Nave concurred with Ms. Ferraro's comments about the house. He advised that he has great respect for Mr. Oudsema, but he expressed concern about allowing the property to be torn down without immediate plans for another development. This would pose a problem if another developer were to approach the HDC with a similar request.

Mr. Oudsema advised that he has considered various options but hasn't settled on a particular development at this point. One of the options would be to construct a building that would be three stories tall. The first floor would be parking (it would be cost prohibitive to have underground parking) and condominiums would be on the upper floors. Taller ceilings would make the height similar to the adjacent brownstone at the southeast corner of West Walnut and South Westnedge and a flat roof would fit in nicely. The building would be approximately 16,000 square feet on one floor, and there would be 10 to 11 apartment-style condominiums in that space. The common area would consist of a small entry with an elevator, two stairwells and hallways. With 18 to 22 condominiums, there would be enough area for parking on the ground level (46 parking spaces). The area to the far east would be green space with a garden and water features. Mr. Oudsema estimated that it would take approximately \$6,000,000 to construct the building. He would need a lender with approximately \$5,000,000 to invest in this project. A large number of condominiums would have to be sold in advance in order for this project to proceed.

Another option would be to have smaller buildings and construct them in phases. For example, three buildings could be constructed with 6 to 8 units in each building. This would reduce the risk by 2/3, but there would be more cost involved with the additional exterior finishes and the additional elevators. Mr. Oudsema advised that he would be spending time over the next six months traveling and looking at projects to get an idea of what could be done with the property. Each of the condos would be between 1,000 and 1,500 square feet.

Mr. Nave mentioned that any number of designs could be used. He commented that part of the proposed development could replace the house on the corner. Tearing down the building would be one of the worst things for a historic district. In this instance, the existing building anchors the corner. The United Way building across the street does not anchor the corner because there is parking in the front of the building, which is typically against historic district standards. Also, the HDC cannot show favoritism toward a commissioner by allowing this building to be torn down. Mr. Nave advised that he would like to see this project proceed at some point. A brownstone-type development might be appropriate for this location. It could be strips of two to four-story buildings; maybe two stories in front and four stories in back.

Mr. Oudsema stated that he has 166 feet of property on Westnedge Ave. The corner lot provides an additional 66 feet for a total of 232 feet of front footage on Westnedge Ave. The typical facility in Chicago is built on a 25 foot wide lot, which is a standard lot in Chicago. This would not necessarily be the appropriate dimensions for the project on Westnedge. Mr. Oudsema stated that his residence on Westnedge is built on a 65 foot wide lot, and the house is substantial in size. Another option for the subject property would be to build three houses similar in size to Mr. Oudsema's residence, but with 5 or 6 units per house.

Mr. Tribu inquired if Mr. Oudsema needed 442 West Dutton to complete the proposed project. Mr. Oudsema advised that he would like to have that property, but he was not sure if that building would be eliminated. The property on Dutton has more aesthetics on the outside than the property on the corner. Mr. Oudsema advised that he might try to repurchase the brownstone on the corner of Walnut and Westnedge and the two-story brick building at 437 W. Walnut and incorporate those parcels into a master plan. He is looking into building a four-story parking ramp in the area that is now a parking lot for the Brownstone.

Mr. Tribu inquired if Mr. Oudsema would need to obtain the property at 442 West Dutton before proceeding with the proposed project. Mr. Oudsema advised that the project could proceed without that property.

Mr. Ferraro advised that she is concerned about the appearance of conflict of interest. The ordinance calls for plans, zoning and financing to be in place before demolition is allowed, or the building must present an imminent danger or be standing in the way of a project that is of substantial benefit to the community. Ms. Ferraro stated that she has no problem with the house coming down, and the proposed plans would likely be an asset to the community and the Vine Neighborhood. However, it is important to not damage the reputation of the Historic District Commission by the appearance of conflict of interest. The HDC would have to be careful as to how this project was approved and with what conditions. This project must be viewed as if Mr. Oudsema were a total stranger approaching the HDC for approval.

Mr. Oudsema stated that he needed absolute assurance that he would be able to demolish 627-629 S. Westnedge if he presents a project that is acceptable. It may be a couple of years before the final details are in place. Mr. Nave commented that there may be different commissioners on the HDC by the time Mr. Oudsema is ready to move forward with this project. Mr. Oudsema advised that if demolition is not approved, the property will likely be put back on the market.

Mr. Bonsignore advised that he is against demolition of buildings. However, it is a possibility that he might be in favor of the demolition if there were a proposal for something else at this location to better serve the neighborhood and the city. At this point there is no definite plan, and Mr. Bonsignore advised that he would not vote for demolition of the building under the current circumstances, particularly if the lot were to sit vacant for a substantial amount of time.

Mr. Nave stated that he would support a project that looks good, makes sense and provides good urban design. Mr. Oudsema commented that the HDC would have the opportunity to approve or deny any new project that is presented for this site in the future.

Ms. DeYoung concurred with Mr. Bonsignore and stressed the need for the HDC to see plans before providing approval for the project.

Mr. Tribu indicated that although he could not vote for demolition at this point, he might be in favor of it if an appropriate project were presented.

Mr. Cinabro concurred with the comments of the other commissioners and city staff. He stated that he would not be opposed to voting for demolition in the future if a good project were present. It would be premature to vote on the demolition at this point.

Mr. Oudsema stated that he just wanted to confirm that if an appropriate project were presented, it would be possible to demolish the house. Mr. Oudsema withdrew his application.

**520 Axtell (Case #: IHA 08-0362)**

The application requests demolition of a deteriorated garage originally constructed in 1925, with additions circa 1960. The applicant was not present.

Ms. Ferraro advised that the HDC could either approve or deny demolition or postpone review of the application until the next meeting.

Mr. Tribu stated that he spoke with the owner, who advised that he thought the application would likely be approved. Mr. Tribu suggested that the owner didn't understand the process. In the past, the owner received permission to demolish and rebuild several years ago, but he never proceeded. He then repaired the structure. The prior application included a proposal to rebuild, but the current application is only for demolition.

Mr. Bonsignore inquired if the current state of the building qualifies as demolition by neglect. Ms. Ferraro advised that the building is still fairly sound and will likely stay up for quite awhile. The condition of the garage came to light again when the house was recently cited for problems during a housing inspection. This is an extension of the original, single-car garage. The east bay was the original structure and multiple expansions have been added over the years. Three or four different types of siding and several types of building material were used for the additions. The garage is not original to the house, and there is very little original material remaining on the garage. Lee Larson, Building Inspector for the City of Kalamazoo, advised Ms. Ferraro that he thought the garage could be repaired. Ms. Ferraro advised that the owner is a contractor.

Mr. Tribu stated that the garage has been rebuilt so many times that there isn't much to save. The left side is sitting on dirt. It doesn't seem that this garage is worth saving.

Ms. DeYoung mentioned that the owner had been given permission to demolish and rebuild, but he didn't proceed. Ms. Ferraro advised the prior application stated that the garage would be rebuilt within a year after the demolition. The HDC can only deal with the request stated in the current application and cannot direct the applicant to do additional work not requested.

Discussion followed with regard to the possibility of having the applicant adhere to the terms of the motion regarding the original application. It was suggested that the applicant has requested only the demolition at this point because it would be more economical. Mr. Bonsignore advised that the applicant has been allowing the garage to rot. It is specifically against historic guidelines to allow a structure to rot to the point that it is in bad enough condition that demolition might be allowed. This process appears to have been deliberate since he already had permission to rebuild and he chose not to do it. Ms. Ferraro advised that some repairs were made to the garage.

**Mr. Cinabro, supported by Ms. DeYoung, moved to postpone the decision regarding 520 Axtell for one month, with a request that the applicant return with more information before further action is taken. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

#### **MINUTES (August 19, 2008)**

Mr. Bonsignore referred to page 2, second to last line, which should read "Scotch" bar not "Scottish" bar. Page 4, middle line of the motion, the applicant is to work with the Architect and the Historic Preservation Coordinator. Page 8, the second line of the motion should read, "all wood is to be primed with oil primer."

**The amended August 19, 2008 HDC minutes were approved by a majority vote, with five ayes and one abstention by Mr. Oudsema.**

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Ms. Ferraro advised that Ms. Poole-Woldring has missed three out of the last six meetings. She stated that she would approach Ms. Poole-Woldring regarding her plans to continue serving on the HDC.

Mr. Nave advised that Bill Snyder requested an update regarding 936 W. Lovell. Mr. Snyder advised that the rear steps, door and brick molding were not to historic standards. Ms. Ferraro stated that she would be meeting with the property manager Thursday to discuss the changes.

Mr. Nave requested an update regarding the wall at 530 W. South Street and the sign at 813 W. South Street. Ms. Ferraro advised that she is waiting for someone in the City Attorney's Office to either write a letter to the owners of 530 W. South St. or issue an appearance ticket. The sign at 813 W. South Street is also waiting for a ruling from the Attorney's office as to whether or not the HDC can request that the text not originally approved by the HDC be removed from the sign.

Mr. Nave mentioned that the owner didn't receive approval for the "open" sign displayed at 813 W. South St. Also, when the applicant originally approached the Zoning Board of Appeals he stated that the business would be conducted by appointment only. However, the business hours are now posted on the sign and that information was not approved by the HDC. Ms. Ferraro advised that the type of business would be a zoning issue. The sign listing all the tenants in the building was also reinstalled on the pillar, and that was done without permission.

Mr. Oudsema suggested that a different approach by a different board, such as the Zoning Board of Appeals, may be necessary to affect the desired changes. The HDC doesn't have the capacity to request the changes. Mr. Nave encouraged Ms. Ferraro to pursue the issues at 530 and 813 W. South Street. Ms. Ferraro advised that she has had regular contact with the City Attorney's office regarding these matters but is still awaiting a decision.

Mr. Bonsignore requested an update regarding the ramp on North Street. Ms. Ferraro advised that she hasn't had a chance to look at it yet. The ramp is attached to the house and a building permit would probably be required. Mr. Bonsignore stated that the HDC's advice regarding the ramp had been ignored. The HDC denied the application to build the ramp, and the applicant proceeded to build the ramp without permission.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The September 19, 2008 HDC meeting was adjourned by unanimous voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.

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

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

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

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

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

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