

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Minutes
November 18, 2008

City Commission Chambers
2nd 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 5:05 p.m.

AGENDA (November 18, 2008)

There were no changes to the agenda.

Mr. Oudsema, supported by Mr. Tribu, moved approval of the November 18, 2008 HDC agenda as submitted. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None

DISCLAIMER

Ms. Ferraro had not yet arrived at the meeting and Mr. Oudsema read the disclaimer into the record. Ms. Ferraro arrived at approximately 5:10 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

1201 S. Westnedge (Case #: IHV 08-0022)

Phil Britain, an associate of Joe Fabian (owner), was present to represent the property. The application requests infill for garage doors to resemble traditional wooden garage doors. The space inside has been converted to office space.

Mr. Britain advised that he would like to redo some work that was done on the carriage house behind 1201 S. Westnedge. The changes would be visible to the parking area behind the house. Cedar walls and two picture windows that did not meet historic district requirements were installed. The applicant would like to install Pine or Oak doors that will simulate garage doors and maintain the carriage house appearance. The applicants are looking for a historic door to install at the south entrance; the goal is to make this entrance handicap accessible. The applicants already have the materials for the carriage house doors.

Mr. Bonsignore referred to the pictures provided and inquired as to which option the applicants are requesting. Mr. Britain advised that the preferred option would be the two, single garage doors at the bottom of the page. It might be too difficult to simulate four doors in that location because of the size of the opening.

Mr. Nave inquired if the applicant already has the material for the simulated doors, and Mr. Britain responded in the affirmative. He stated that the cedar will be removed and the simulated garage doors will be placed in that location. Mr. Fabian is storing the materials at another location.

Mr. Oudsema inquired as to when the garage doors were removed from the structure, and why they were removed. Ms. Ferraro advised that the non-original garage doors were removed about four months ago. Ms. Ferraro stated that the applicant would like to have office space in that location. He wants to remodel the space so that it is barrier-free and suits the needs of the tenant. Failure of the applicant to seek HDC approval prior to removing the doors has resulted in a violation.

Mr. Oudsema inquired if there is a picture of the original doors. Ms. Ferraro stated that she doesn't have a clear picture of the doors. Mr. Britain advised that the original doors may be disassembled. They were non-original, overhead doors, which were hooked up to a garage door opener.

Mr. Nave referred to the porch on the back of the front structure (east side). He commented that there are several kinds of windows in that addition. There are fake grills (muntins) in some of the windows, while other windows have no grills. Mr. Nave inquired as to what was approved for that project. Ms. Ferraro stated that she would have to review her records to verify the details of what was approved.

Mr. Nave suggested that the overhead door relate to the hayloft door above the "man" door on the south end of the building. Mr. Britain advised that area would be scraped and painted. Mr. Nave suggested making the garage doors look like the sketch of the "hatch" door. It should be trimmed with the same brick molding. Weather stripping should be added around the opening, and the trim should match the trim on the south side door. He suggested that bead board could be added as infill or it could be flat like the door.

Mr. Oudsema advised that he had no problem with the suggested remedy in item #2 as long as the scale of the windows is similar to what is being shown. Whether the space becomes an office or living space, there should be some outside light. Unfortunately, these windows will provide a minimum amount of outside light, but the drawing in item #2 is in keeping with how the door would have looked.

Mr. Britain advised that he drew that sketch (sketch 2 at the bottom of the page). He stated that the sketch should be amended to show that there may only be two windows in that location rather than three. They should be proportionally the same size. Ms. Ferraro advised that the windows should be about 12" to 14" high.

Mr. Oudsema advised against having two long, linear windows because that would not be appropriate for this application. Three smaller windows would be more appropriate. Mr. Britain stated that he already had approval from the owner for the three windows on each side as depicted, and that he would probably proceed with that option.

Mr. Nave commented that the first option looks like a pair of doors. The second option looks like a pair of overhead doors. He suggested using the first option. Mr. Oudsema suggested that having two windows on each side (total of four windows) would be more appropriate in scale if the first option were used.

Mr. Nave advised that he was uncertain about the scale of the details being presented. Mr. Tribu suggested that the applicant submit a more detailed drawing regarding the size of the moldings to see how they relate to the existing building. He stated that he had concerns about approving the project without the appropriate details. Mr. Britain advised that the measurements for the two openings on the garage walls were submitted at an earlier meeting, but he didn't bring those measurements with him.

Mr. Tribu, supported by Mr. Oudsema, moved approval in concept for the proposed garage doors at 1201 S. Westnedge, with details to be worked out with the Historic Preservation Coordinator. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Bonsignore commented that, given the age of the building (1923), there might have been a single door in this location. He stated that he would like to see the windows match or at least mimic the original windows in the house.

In response to Ms. Ferraro's question, Mr. Britain advised that there are two windows in the back of the garage, but they are boarded up. The windows in the garage doors are the only source of natural light coming into the office space. The windows in the back could be opened up to provide additional light.

Mr. Bonsignore inquired if the motion referred only to the west-facing garage doors or if it also referred to the service door on the side. Ms. Ferraro suggested making a separate motion for the side door.

Mr. Tribu commented that the opening for the side door is already there. He inquired if the original door was gone. Ms. Ferraro advised that there is currently a glass, commercial door in that location, but it is covered with OSB. Mr. Tribu inquired if the jamb needs to be replaced. Mr. Britain advised that the jamb was built with the intention of a non-historic door being installed in that location, but the applicant hasn't purchased the door yet. There were a couple of doors in the garage that he was considering using. However, one of them didn't meet the requirements for handicap-accessibility (36" wide), and the other door didn't fit. The applicant is hoping to find a door at the Heritage Company to install in that location. The prospective renter is handicapped so the door opening needs to be handicap-accessible.

Mr. Tribu inquired as to the width of the door. Mr. Britain was uncertain as to the measurements. Ms. Ferraro advised that the size of the opening is already the correct dimension.

Mr. Nave, supported by Mr. Cinabro, moved approval of a four panel or six panel, wood, exterior door with a barrier-free threshold and brick mold to match the house.

A brief conversation followed with regard to the type of door to be installed.

The motion was amended to state that the door would be reviewed and approved by the Historic Preservation Coordinator before it is installed. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

437 W. Vine (Case #: IHV 08-0019)

No one was present to represent the property.

800 W. South (Case #: IHA 08-0380)

No one was present to represent the property.

131 S. Prairie (Case #: IHA 08-0483)

Bob DeHaan, DeHaan Remodeling, was present on behalf of the owners, Dave & Laura Van Zoest, to represent the property. The application requests installation of a skylight on the roof above the second floor north window (directly over the front entry).

Mr. DeHaan advised that the applicant would like to install a skylight to allow more light into the bathroom, which is being remodeled. The bathroom window is above the front entrance and the applicants would like to install the skylight and it centered over that window. The applicants are proposing to install a 30" x 38" Velux skylight. It would be bronze in color and would be located approximately four feet up from the roof edge.

Mr. Nave inquired if the first window on the north side is also in the bathroom. Mr. DeHaan confirmed that statement to be correct. There are two, big windows in the bathroom. Mr. Nave mentioned that the 30" skylight would be bigger than the rafter spacing. Mr. DeHaan responded in the affirmative and advised that it would be reframed.

Mr. Nave, supported by Ms. DeYoung, moved to deny the application for a skylight at 131 S. Prairie. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Nave advised that the HDC would not typically approve a skylight in the front of a house due to its visibility in that location.

Mr. Oudsema commented that the window over the door facing the front opens into the bathroom. The window on the north side also opens into the bathroom. Accordingly, he inquired as to the purpose of the skylight. Mr. DeHaan stated that the owner wants the skylight for privacy, natural light and ventilation. Mr. Oudsema inquired if one of the windows would be eliminated. Mr. DeHaan advised that the owner is considering covering the window to the north. It could be closed with birch plywood, painted gray. Ms. Ferraro advised that the window would not be eliminated, but it would no longer function as a window.

Mr. Cinabro inquired if the HDC has ever approved a skylight on the roof in the front of a house. Ms. Ferraro advised that she did not recall a skylight ever being approved for the front of a house in the historic district. However, some historic houses have skylights which were installed before the property was part of a historic district. Mr. Oudsema commented that there have been one or two occasions that skylights have been approved for the back of a house, but those were not visible from the street.

Mr. Tribu inquired if there is attic space where the applicants want to install the skylight or if the ceiling would be vaulted. Mr. DeHaan responded in the affirmative. Mr. Tribu inquired if the applicants had considered installing a tube-style skylight off the back of the house. Mr. DeHaan advised that might be an option if the skylight is not approved.

Mr. Nave referred to the gable window on the north side and suggested that it could possibly be incorporated as a source of light. Mr. DeHaan stated that the window to which Mr. Nave referred is in the attic. It might be possible to vault the ceiling in the bathroom and that window/light would be in the gable end. It would be partially in the bathroom and partially in the adjoining bedroom.

Mr. Bonsignore advised that he was hesitant to support the installation of the skylight because it would be too obvious in that location. He stated that he would be voting in favor of the motion.

Ms. Ferraro offered to meet with Mr. DeHaan and the owners to discuss possible alternatives.

Mr. Bonsignore suggested extending the shaft for a skylight from the back roof. Mr. DeHaan inquired if the HDC would allow a skylight in the back, and Ms. Ferraro confirmed that the HDC has approved skylights for rear elevations.

437 W. Vine (Case #: IHV 08-0019)

Ms. Ferraro advised that the owner of this property would not be present. However, she requested that the HDC consider the application and render a decision.

Mr. Oudsema, supported by Mr. Nave, moved denial of the retroactive approval of two, double-hung windows installed on the rear/south wall of the house and the two, small sliding vinyl windows on the east and west side of the rear wing on the second floor of 437 W. Vine. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Tribu inquired if the openings were altered, and Ms. Ferraro advised that the openings have been shortened. Mr. Nave mentioned that the two, double-hung windows on the back are not identical. They may have been purchased to fit the budget and the openings, but they do not match. Ms. Ferraro advised that the small windows fit into the existing openings, but the sliders were added. They may have originally been hopper windows or awning windows. Mr. Bonsignore observed that the trim is wider (7 inches) so the windows may be slightly different in size. Ms. Ferraro advised that the owners should install windows as close as possible to the windows in the rest of the house. There are two or three similar houses on the block that could be used as examples. The arched top windows would probably not be installed on the back of the house. Mr. Bonsignore stated that one of the windows on the side of the house is the same dimension as the windows that were removed.

Mr. Ferraro advised that she would work with the owners to resolve issues regarding the handrails.

Mr. Bonsignore inquired as to what would be done about the textured OSB siding in the back. Mr. Tribu mentioned that the siding in question is between the windows and it is rotting at the bottom.

800 W. South Street (Case #: IHA 08-0380)

The applicant was not present to represent the property. The application requests replacement of the horizontal siding on the rear/north wall of the garage with vertical T-111 style, board and batten.

Ms. Ferraro advised that the applicant was present at the October HDC meeting to request demolition of the garages. The applicants have decided to repair the garages, and Ms. Ferraro suggested using the same clapboard siding that is on the rest of the garage, which could be approved administratively. However, the applicant would like to use a different type of siding, which she described as plywood siding with vertical stripes (T-111). That type of siding would not match the siding on the remaining garages owned by

the adjacent property owner. The HDC has the option of denying this application or postponing it pending further information from the applicant.

Mr. Nave suggested that the applicant make the repairs with the same type of siding that is already on the garage. Another possibility would be to take off all the siding and replace it with plywood and real battens. Ms. Ferraro advised that would be the wrong siding for a garage of that era, and it would be reason to deny the tax credit. Part of the original siding is still there and it would be preferable to use the same material. The garage was constructed within a year after the house was built. The original siding is not batten board, it is a horizontal material.

Ms. Ferraro advised that a denial would, essentially, allow the applicants 60 days to do nothing while they contemplate an appeal. If an appeal is filed, the work may be postponed another five or six months. If the application is postponed, that would delay the process a month or two to allow the applicants time to provide further information to the HDC. The owners were cited by the city's housing inspectors regarding the condition of the garage. Ms. Ferraro suggested postponing the application and making suggestions as to how the applicant should proceed. If the applicants decide to repair the garage with siding to match the original, Ms. Ferraro could approve that work administratively.

Mr. Nave, supported by Mr. Tribu, moved to postpone the decision on 800 W. South Street pending further information from the applicant. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

It was suggested that the applicants be advised that T-111 siding would not likely be approved for this application. Mr. Bonsignore suggested at the October meeting that the applicant put plywood underneath the clapboard siding to alleviate problems with vandalism. Hardiplank or a similar cement board siding might also be an option.

APPROVAL OF ABSENCES

After a brief discussion regarding Ms. Poole-Woldring's absence from recent HDC meetings, it was decided that city staff should send a letter to Ms. Poole-Woldring offering her the opportunity to resign so that the commission can proceed with filling the vacant seat.

Ms. Ferraro stated that Richard Emig and Erin Seaverson have submitted applications to serve on the HDC. A question was raised regarding the eligibility of an applicant if they own property with violations. Ms. Ferraro advised that anyone can apply to serve on the HDC. When there are multiple applicants, a subcommittee of the HDC could interview the applicants and report back to city staff and the rest of the board with their recommendations, or the applicants can attend the meeting and provide information about themselves and why they want to serve on the commission. The general consensus was that it would be preferable to have both applicants attend the meeting. Ms. Ferraro

advised that she would extend an invitation for both applicants to attend the December HDC meeting.

MINUTES (October 20, 2008)

Ms. DeYoung referred to page 3, paragraph 3, Mr. Perkins (capital “P”). Page 7, paragraph 4, line 2, “.....which would last a long time but it (not “is”) would.....” Page 10, last paragraph, “.....the process for securing.....” (not “secure”).

Mr. Oudsema, supported by Mr. Cinabro, moved approval of the October 20, 2008 HDC minutes as amended. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

(Mr. Oudsema left the meeting at 6 p.m.)

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Ferraro advised that the Dangerous Buildings Board (DBB) is now involved with the house at 1418 S. Westnedge. There has been a tarp on the roof for quite some time, and it is hoped that the situation will be resolved through the DBB process.

Ms. Ferraro provided a copy of a code of ethics from the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions. The code of ethics has been adopted by many preservation commissions nationwide as a standard of behavior for commissioners and staff who deal with historic districts. Ms. Ferraro requested feedback from the HDC regarding this document. If the HDC is interested in adopting the Code of Ethics, it can be placed on an upcoming agenda. Mr. Nave expressed concern with regard to potential negative feedback as a result of adopting a Code of Ethics.

Mr. Bonsignore inquired if Ms. Ferraro approved a fence for a house in the 500 block of Douglas, and she responded in the affirmative. That house will be the subject of the Great Unveiling in the spring and the asbestos siding will be stripped off. The Old House Network is organizing that project.

Ms. Ferraro requested that Mr. Bonsignore sign the letter for the Preserve America project.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Cinabro, supported by Ms. DeYoung, moved to adjourn the November 18, 2008 meeting of the Historic District Commission. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Submitted by: _____ Date: _____
Recording Secretary

Reviewed by: _____ Date: _____
Staff Liaison

Approved by: _____ Date: _____
HDC Chair