



City of Madison

City of Madison
Madison, WI 53703
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Meeting Minutes - Approved LANDMARKS COMMISSION

Monday, November 10, 2008

4:45 PM

215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Room LL-130 (Madison Municipal Building)

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Present: 6 -

Erica Fox Gehrig; Brenda K. Konkel; Daniel J. Stephans; Robin M. Taylor;
Michael J. Rosenblum and Christina Slattery

Excused: 1 -

Stuart Levitan

Guests: Michelle Martin, Michael Bridgeman, John Martens, Ledell Zellers, Mark Schmidt, Navin Jarugumilli, David Kaul, Bryan Fraser, Joe Alexander, Adam Winkler, Amy Hasselman, Molly Gilson

APPROVAL OF October 15, 2008 MINUTES

A motion was made by Gehrig, seconded by Rosenblum, to Approve the Minutes for the October 15, 2008 Landmarks Commission meeting. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

PUBLIC HEARING AND CONSIDERATION OF ISSUANCE OF CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

1. [12525](#) 2114 Van Hise Avenue, University Heights Historic District - preliminary consideration of issuance of Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of greenhouse and construction of new garage

Contact: Molly Gilson, owner

Ms. Gilson noted that the house she has recently purchased has no driveway or garage. She said that the greenhouse has rotting wood and in its current condition is an eyesore. The proposed garage will be a two-car garage. She has no use for the greenhouse.

Mr. Stephans noted that the greenhouse is a very specialized use that may not be worth fixing up if it will no longer be used. Ms. Gilson added that it is not energy

efficient and in the worst month can cost \$700-\$800 to heat. Mr. Rosenblum noted that the pictures Ms. Gilson submitted show that it is clearly in deteriorated condition and he said that it was built many years after the house. Mr. Stephans noted that the design of the proposed garage complements the house. None of the commissioners expressed concerns at this point about the project.

CONSIDERATION OF ISSUANCE OF CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

2. [12526](#) 1144 Jenifer Street, Third Lake Ridge Historic District - Consideration of issuance of Certificate of Appropriateness for moving building onto this site

Contact: Mark Schmidt, Architect

Mr. Schmidt noted that the owner is rehabilitating some four-units in the vicinity of the house on its current site. He proposes to build underground parking with residential units above on the site of the house. The owner also happens to own an empty property on Spaight Street on which a building burned down a few decades ago. He said that the house was recently rehabilitated and is too nice to just demolish. He noted that, although the house was built about 20 years after the houses on Spaight Street, it blends well with the neighboring buildings in its proposed site. He said that they intend to demolish the porch and then rebuild it on the new site. They will build a basement with an exposure similar to those next door. The new foundation will be of concrete block in a shape and texture to look like stone. The new lot is a similar width to the existing lot. The owner is thinking about building a garage behind the house, but hasn't firmed up his plans yet, so they are seeking preliminary approval for the idea at this point.

Ms. Gehrig told him that saving the energy embodied in the old house was an excellent plan. Mr. Schmidt said that they have been before the Marquette Neighborhood and have received positive feedback. Mr. Stephans said that he encourages the owner to go forward with his plans. He said that he believed the in-fill would be appropriate. No commissioners expressed objections to the idea.

3. [12527](#) Phi Gamma Delta Fraternity, 16 Langdon Street, Designated Landmark and Mansion Hill Historic District - consideration of issuance of Certificate of Appropriateness

A motion was made by Gehrig, seconded by Taylor, to Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed work. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

Ms. Hasselman passed out photographs of the current fraternity. She said that since the fraternity is undertaking a major rehabilitation, they are required to provide accessibility. So they are proposing an elevator tower similar in design to the existing stair tower. She said the new tower would be set back from the current walls in deference to the original design of the building. They would also change a hip-roofed dormer in that location to a gable roof to provide room for the hall in front of the elevator. They plan to match materials as closely as possible and add detailing similar to the detailing on the chimney and stair tower. They are also replacing windows which will match windows replaced in 1986 and restoring all windows that have leaded glass. They also will be in-filling the arches in the lower level rear porch to make the area more usable. Right now it is used as storage. Skylights will be added to the roof, which

will not be visible from the ground.

Ms. Gehrig began the Landmarks Commission's discussion by saying that she was sorry to see the back porch enclosed, but she understood the reasoning for it. Mr. Stephans noted that most of the back porches in the area are not well used. He urged the architect to consider simplifying the detail on the new work to differentiate the new from the old.

REFERRAL FROM PLAN COMMISSION STAFF

4. [12382](#) 229 West Lakelawn Place, Langdon Street National Register Historic District - referral from Plan Commission staff re development of new apartment building

Contact: Thomas Miller, the Alexander Company

A motion was made by Rosenblum, seconded by Gehrig, to Defer this issue to the next Landmarks Commission meeting. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

Mr. Alexander showed the initial design for the new construction. He said that Acacia wants to reinvigorate the fraternity and save its building. He said that in order to make the project work, they need to erect a new building in the rear parking lot. Acacia will keep ownership of the new building. They are going to have a formal meeting with the neighborhood association soon. David Kaul showed photographs of the surrounding buildings. He noted that they had met with staff who had some recommendations. Staff wanted a more central entrance, but the developers prefer it to be at the southwest corner of the building so that it will also be able to serve as accessibility to a unit in the old fraternity house. The lowest level will be parking. There is no room for a ramp, so the parking has to be partly above ground. He showed the commission a design that is a revised version of the first design submitted. They made the windows in the first floor larger, reduced the amount of EIFS, made the design more symmetrical to reflect the rhythm in older buildings nearby and added a canopy around the front corner to make the front entrance more visible. He said that there is stucco in the neighborhood, so EIFS was not so out of place. He said the changes in materials helps to reduce the apparent mass of the building. He noted that windows will be set back from the masonry and showed other areas where there was room for some slight modulations of the surface.

Ms. Gehrig said that the revised design was an improvement. Ms. Zellers spoke next. She noted that she lives close to this building and thinks that it is just too big for the site; the design is overwhelmingly massive. She added that the quality of the materials does not match the quality in surrounding buildings. She said that the design of the new building should not reflect the worst of the neighboring buildings. She said that although the revised design was an improvement, it was not good enough to fit with its surroundings.

Ms. Konkel asked Mr. Kaul to explain more fully how they addressed compatibility with the surrounding historic district. Mr. Kaul noted that a modern building would fit in with the older neighborhood because there is a variety of materials and styles in the neighborhood. They want to create a building that appears to be of its own era, rather than a fake historic building. He added classical elements, such as the tower-like projections and the symmetry of the design. Ms. Gehrig asked why they had chosen

four stories rather than the three that is more common in the neighborhood. Mr. Alexander said that he honestly thinks it is not too massive for the area, noting that they followed the height of the ridge of the Acacia house in their design.

Ald. Konkel said that the building needs more room to breathe. Ms. Taylor said that the building was not interesting, adding that a step back of the fourth story might help its massing. Mr. Rosenblum said that the improvements were not enough to garner his support. Mr. Alexander said that they had expected they would need more time for reviewing the design and did not oppose deferral to the next meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

5. [08717](#) Buildings proposed for demolition

No proposed demolitions were presented.

DISCUSSION

6. [12534](#) Discussion of the problem of some owners undertaking work without a building permit or a Certificate of Appropriateness

Ledell Zellers noted that there are too many owners who are undertaking work without prior approval. She said that she is not sure why this is happening, but she suspects that it might be that owners think that it is easier to just do what they want to do and deal with subsequent issues if and when they arise. She said that maybe some owners do not know the requirements or simply do not care. She suggested that the Landmarks Commission send letters annually to owners in the historic districts to make them aware of the regulations they must follow. Ms. Rankin noted that she had promised Ms. Zellers that this would be done. Ms. Zellers also recommended sending such letters to new owners of buildings that have recently been sold. Mr. Rosenblum said that some neighborhood associations write to new owners. Ms. Zellers noted that there should be more issues sent to the City Attorney, and added that it is not sufficient to just refer issues there. She noted that the Ken's Bar issue ended in the courts with a \$600 wrist slap. She said that the penalties in the ordinances state that an owner can be fined up to \$200 a day, but the City Attorney ignores those penalties. She said that taking off dentils and chimneys and iron work is a significance issue because historic artifacts are being lost and the City Attorney needs to be aware of that. One idea raised was to have a minimum penalty per day in the ordinances rather than something that says "up to."

John Martens said that he agrees with Ms. Zellers' comments. He said that he believes there is a subculture of property owners who avoid getting permits, on the assumption that nothing substantive will be done after the fact. He noted a warehouse that was behind 802 Williamson Street was demolished and said the trusses inside the warehouse were beautiful and should not have been destroyed. He said that in effect the good players get penalized and the bad ones just consider fines as part of doing business.

Mr. Bridgeman said that he witnessed the Delta Gamma Sorority shutters being removed and said that there must be more education and more enforcement. He noted that there could be more of this brought up at neighborhood meetings, but the burden of doing this should not be on the volunteer preservationists - it should be the City's responsibility. He noted that many realtors don't know what being in an historic district

means and often don't know or don't convey to the buyers that a property they are working with is in an historic district.

Michelle Martin agreed with the previous speakers and said that we are rapidly losing our historic past and we should make it more expensive for people who do not do the right thing.

7. [07804](#) Secretary's Report

Ms. Rankin reported that the Common Council had passed the 2009 budget with a full-time preservation planner to begin work around April 1.

ADJOURNMENT