

HISTORIC AREA COMMISSION
New Castle Town Hall
2nd and Delaware Streets
October 13, 2016

Present: Sally Monigle, Chairperson
Lynn Briggs
Bill Hentkowski
Jean Norvell
Mike Quaranta

Also Present: Leila Hamroun, Consulting Member

The meeting was convened at 6:30 p.m. Roll call followed.

OLD APPLICATION

M. Chaump, 155 E. 2nd Street

Addition/alteration per drawings submitted. Continued from June 2016.

Discussion: *(Revised plans distributed at meeting.)* Dave Dalby, architect for the applicants, presented final plans and elevations. They continue to work on construction documents and structural details. Mr. Dalby said they received approval for the overall design concept at the last meeting. The revised plans, sections and elevations submitted tonight represent the architectural documentation of those plans. Materials being proposed include true divided light wood windows, and a manufactured recycled wood product for siding rather than a cedar product. All existing windows will be replaced with insulated glass, all-wood windows. They are seeking approval of the plans so they can move forward with construction documents, get prices for bidding and begin construction.

Mr. Dalby summarized project plans: demolition on first floor, existing rear porch, existing side porch and infilling with a large dining room, enlarging the kitchen and family room, replacing windows on the front and replacing all the siding. Gutting the second floor, adding a walk-in closet to the existing bedroom, enlarge bathroom suite, add two new bedrooms with closets and a deck over the family room and install railing all around. Third floor-enlarge and modify existing attic. Convert attic space to a walk-in closet. The roof line will not change. Add a new master bedroom with dormers and a walk out deck over the second floor. This submission is similar to a previous submission.

Ms. Hamroun commented that HAC is comfortable with wood window replacements and materials to be used. She notes the elevation show there remains a concern with the mass of the addition. The original square footage is about 1,644 sq. ft. The new square footage is about 3,230 sq. ft. The existing square footage is doubled. She appreciates the efforts made by the applicant and architect regarding the choice of materials, but maintains the scale is not appropriate for its location and the building, and does not comply with the guidelines. Ms. Hamroun's recommendation to reject the proposed addition remains unchanged. In her professional opinion, the scale of the project adversely impacts the integrity of the historic building.

Mr. Quaranta said the HAC voted on concept plans, not construction plans, submitted last month. Ms. Hamroun noted that her understanding is when the permit drawings are ready

for final approval; the project would be discussed for approval. She added that this submission would be a conceptual approval upon review of the final permitted drawings. Mr. Dalby indicated they do not anticipate any changes to their current plans. Mr. Quaranta noted we need to wait for construction plans. Mr. Chaump was instructed to provide construction documents to Jeff Bergstrom, Building Inspector, who will review the plans and ultimately provide the building permits.

Ms. Hamroun said the final determination of the HAC is to vote on the building permit application, which will include the construction documents.

Action: No action necessary.

NEW APPLICATIONS

Project Controls Pro Services, 28 West 4th Street

Reconstruct front exterior brick wall, remove & replace front porch, remove/replace rear mud room, drainage work, relocate utility connections, reframe dormer, etc.

Discussion: *(Pictures provided.)* The applicant presented. Ms. Hamroun complimented him on the clarity of the submission. He said he plans to remove the porch from the front. The former owner of the house did a homeowner's inspection that indicated warping in the front brick walls. The applicant employed a structural engineer to do an examination. The engineer recommended 12 star bolts that would halt movement. A mason said the applicant could remove the front masonry façade wall and rebuild it for the same cost. The drawings presented show the removal and reconstruction of the front façade. He plans on replacing vinyl windows and putting in Marvin wood, tilt-back windows.

Mr. Quaranta asked the applicant if there is a way to keep the front intact and stop movement, and ensure it is structurally safe for the same cost, would that be something he would consider. The applicant prefers replacing the front masonry wall rather than using star bolts.

Ms. Hamroun said the described conditions are not unusual for a building of this age and type of construction. Proposing star bolts has been done, typically on an elevation. Stabilizing is the appropriate treatment, removing the front elevation to rebuild is not appropriate. The value of the existing masonry wall is its historic fabric and using the appropriate treatment would extend its life span. By removing the elevation you also potentially create a snowball effect of issues, i.e., rebuilding dormer, impact on adjacent building fabric (floor framing, flooring, etc.). Unless absolutely warranted, such an extensive intervention is not good for the overall stability of the structure. She strongly discourages such an invasive remedy. The structural engineer has indicated there is a way to address the bowing and stabilization of the front brick wall, and that is what the applicant should seek to do, while retaining as much of the existing fabric.

Mr. Quaranta asked if other ways exist to accomplish stabilization and use different star bolts. Ms. Hamroun said there are different bolts used in historic buildings. They are almost a natural part of the masonry; they are part of what the structure needs at some point. Removing anything significant about the structure takes away anything of significance of what is on the streetscape.

Ms. Hamroun suggested removal as a last resort. Removal is inappropriate as per the guidelines. If the applicant wants to seek another opinion, she offered to provide contact information for other structural engineers who work in the City. A mason could open up the porch walls and see how bad the problem might be before making a final decision. Ms. Hamroun is open to speaking with the applicant's structural engineer onsite.

Commissioners are fine with all other aspects of what is being proposed.

Ms. Hamroun recommends revisiting treatment of the front façade. There is no indication of any imminent danger.

The applicant also plans on removing the area he calls the "mud room" and replace with a wall and wood siding; removing exterior pipe containing plumbing ventilation and replace with an interior vent; cables tied to the exterior structure will be moved to the back of the building; the dormer will be removed and rebuilt to the same specifications; vinyl windows to be replaced with wood windows. Yard drainage – drainage from a neighbor's yard and the applicant's yard drains down one alley. Mr. Bergstrom suggested putting in a yard drain out to the street with a pipe coming up under the alley into a yard drain to bypass the brick. There is a concrete tank outside the back door that is deteriorating. The applicant will remove the tank. He plans on putting security bars on the basement (dirt) windows. The front steps need to be changed to go out to the side, as shown on the plan. Ms. Hamroun recommends approving all of the work included in the application except for the treatment of the masonry façade and associated roof/dormer work.

Action: Mr. Quaranta made a motion to approve the application as submitted with the exception of the scope of work at the front masonry elevation. Mr. Hentkowski seconded the motion.

Disposition: Motion approved.

L. Emerick, 40 West 4th Street

Replace wood siding on front & rear dormers. Paint to match existing house trim.

Discussion: Ms. Hamroun said from the street the front dormer does not appear to be in bad condition. Hardy plank on the back is fine, but the appropriate material on the front would be wood. Ms. Emerick said she appeared before the HAC six years ago with wood rotting and asked to replace with cedar planks on the side and white pine on the front. Two to three years ago she had her roof replaced and roofers indicated the wood was rotted on the dormers.

Ms. Hamroun recommends using wood on the front noting the dormer is close to the street. Using hardy plank on the back is fine. A northern white pine or eastern white pine should give more durability at reasonable costs. She wonders why the cedar is rotted in a short amount of time. Cedar should last 25-30 years. Ms. Hamroun suggested having the contractor check the roofing of the dormer and/or the drip edges on the roof to remedy any existing problem.

Action: Mr. Quaranta made a motion to approve the application as submitted reflecting that it is HAC's opinion that hardy plank is acceptable for the rear elevation, and a suitable wood, like cedar, is suitable for the front of the house. Mr. Hentkowski seconded the motion.

L. Emerick, 40 West 4th Street (Contd.)

Disposition: Motion approved.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Hamroun announced the City of New Castle has been recognized as a Certified Local Government by the Delaware Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service. Certification is based on the work done on the revised historic guidelines, stewardship of the HAC and the City for the local historic district. Certification opens up opportunities for small grants that could potentially be used for graphic information, sketches and 3D documentation in the new guidelines document. Monies could also be used to work on the City's website interaction. Grants are based on population size and are matching grants. Ms. Hamroun estimates grants are about \$2,000-\$3,000.

Mr. Quaranta thanked Ms. Monigle and his fellow commissioners for their assistance during his tenure with the HAC. David Baldini will join the group in November. He is the Planning Commission's representative on the Commission.

Approval of Minutes – Minutes of the 7/14/16 meeting will be addressed at the November 2016 meeting.

9/8/16 Minutes -- Ms. Hamroun read aloud clarifying comments pertaining to the application for 155 East 2nd Street. Commissioners had no questions or comments.

Mr. Quaranta made a motion to approve Ms. Hamroun's comments as submitted. Ms. Norvell seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Mr. Quaranta made a motion to approve the minutes of the 9/8/16 meeting as revised. Ms. Norvell seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Adjournment -- There being no further business to address, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Debbie Turner
Stenographer