

HISTORIC AREA COMMISSION
Special Meeting
1 Municipal Drive
August 29, 2024

Present: Tera Hayward-Olivas, Chairperson
Cynthia Batty, Planning Commission Liaison
Lisa Doak
Michael Westman

Absent: Kevin Wade

Also Present: Leila Hamroun, City Architect
Jeff Bergstrom, City Building Official

Ms. Hayward-Olivas convened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. Roll call followed and a quorum to conduct business was declared.

New Applications

150 East 4th Street – Karen Whalen

An application was made to remove the front porch and frame and install new wood steps leading to the front door in a similar style to neighbors' houses. The applicant stated that the front porch is rotted and falling apart.

The applicant was not present. Ms. Hayward-Olivas explained the purpose of the request. Ms. Hamroun did a site visit and determined that the damage to the front porch is minimal and could be repaired in-kind. Ms. Hayward-Olivas stated that per the Guidelines and Standards, the removal and demolition of a porch that is a character-defining feature is not appropriate. Ms. Doak stated that she inspected the site and concurred that with the exception of a few boards and some trim work that might need to be replaced she concurred with Ms. Hamroun's assessment. She added that even if the porch was in disrepair, it should be replaced; and the design the applicant is proposing is not appropriate. Ms. Hayward-Olivas noted that she also inspected the site and she also concurred with Ms. Hamroun's assessment.

In response to a question from Ms. Batty, Ms. Doak noted that Ms. Hamroun's comments indicate the building was constructed in the late 1880's.

Mr. Westman opined that the porch appears to be an outlier on the street. Ms. Batty concurred; however, she added that the porch is aesthetically pleasing and adds to the appearance of the street. Ms. Hayward-Olivas said that it is unknown if there were originally porches on neighboring houses that were subsequently removed. Ms. Doak also noted that era of construction would usually have a porch and opined that it is possible the other houses had porches that were removed. Mr. Bergstrom noted that it does not appear there is any scarring on brickwork on the front of the other houses, and opined that the subject porch is an addition to the original construction.

A motion to approve the application of 150 East 4th Street as presented was made by Ms. Batty. The motion was seconded by Mr. Westman. The motion was unanimously opposed and the motion failed.

42 West 4th Street – Bernadette and Stephan Flaim

An application was submitted to frame a new pergola over the backyard patio. Ms. Flaim explained the purpose of the request and the design of the proposed pergola. The pergola would extend approximately 8' into the back yard, would be the width of the house (approximately 17'), and would be equal-distance from the top of the slider and the bottom of the second floor windows (approximately 9').

In response to a question from Ms. Batty, Ms. Flaim stated that a screened porch is not being considered at this time.

Ms. Hayward-Olivas opined that the proposed pergola would be visible from the public right-of-way; and added that the design is fine for the period of the building. Ms. Doak opined that with something that is not visible from the public right-of-way that has the appropriate materials there is more leeway with period appropriateness in the rear of the house. She added that in the early Edwardian era people would be picnicking and using gazebos.

Mr. Bergstrom opined that it is a well thought-out project.

A motion to approve the application for 42 West 4th Street for a new pergola in the back of the house as presented was made by Ms. Doak, seconded by Ms. Batty and unanimously carried.

300 Delaware Street – Benjamin Ryan

An application was submitted to install a door on an existing garage. Mr. Ryan explained the need for the new garage door, the type of door being proposed, and that the material being proposed is classic steel with wood grain impression in medium oak plank. Mr. Ryan stated that the Delaware Division of Historic Cultural Affairs did approve the project with steel doors. He added that the garage is set back and is not visible from Delaware Street. In response to questions from Ms. Batty, Mr. Ryan stated that they are not planning on doing any work on the driveway or adding decorative hardware at this time; however, they would not be opposed to adding hardware.

Mr. Bergstrom stated that it is an unheated structure and understood Mr. Ryan's desire to install a non-wood door. He added that the garage is not close to the streetscape and because of the construction and location of the garage a wooden door will be exceptionally subject to moisture.

Ms. Doak opined that technically it could be a non-contributing building; however there are still restrictions regarding materials in the Standards and Guidelines. Ms. Hayward-Olivas opined that the garage is an accessory to a contributing building. Ms. Batty stated that as long as the door appears to be wood, she would be agreeable to it being metal. Ms. Hayward-Olivas noted that hardware would give the appearance of a carriage house door.

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In response to a question from Ms. Batty, Mr. Ryan explained that the State did not discuss the material of the garage door with them.

During discussion, the most appropriate style of hardware was debated. Mr. Westman concurred that the garage sat back far enough from the public right-of-way. Ms. Doak stated that if the building is a contributing building visible from the public right-of-way, regardless of setback, alternative materials would not be appropriate; however, if it is a non-contributing building there is more leeway regarding materials.

The Commissioners spent considerable time reviewing the Standards and Guidelines in order to accurately determine whether the proposed material for the replacement garage door would be acceptable.

Rev. Christopher Keene stated that he was told that the garage was built in the 1960's. Ms. Doak also noted that the garage is not only set back from the road, but is separated by a wall from the main structure.

A motion was made by Ms. Batty to approve the application as presented with the addition of decorative hardware hinge and handle elements which is allowed because the building is set so far back from the street and is a non-contributing building.

Ms. Hayward-Olivas opined that the Commission could not definitively state that the garage is a non-contributing building. Ms. Doak opined that because the garage is behind a wall, it has the appearance of being on a separate piece of land.

Ms. Batty amended her motion to strike "non-contributing building".

A motion was made by Ms. Batty to approve the application as presented with the addition of decorative hardware hinge and handle elements a variance because the building is set so far back from the street.

After further discussion Ms. Hayward-Olivas asked Ms. Batty to restate her motion:

A motion was made by Ms. Batty to approve the application for 300 Delaware Street garage door as submitted with the addition of decorative hardware hinge and handle elements a variance because the building is set so far back from the street and the physical separation from the primary structure contributes to this decision. The motion was seconded by Mr. Westman.

In response to a question from Ms. Doak, Mr. Bergstrom stated that Hardie Plank is not a suitable material for a garage door.

Ms. Doak asked for the Commissioners' opinion of the dark stained wood grain steel. Ms. Batty noted that the patterns of the wood grain do not repeat. Ms. Doak noted that the Guidelines state that "if alternate material is to replicate wood, it must be painted upon installation and

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maintained as a painted feature, similar to existing painted wooden features.” Ms. Batty noted that new materials are being introduced all the time, and the Commission should be receptive to those newer materials. Ms. Hayward-Olivas stated that she is in favor of moving forward with the motion on the floor. Ms. Doak questioned whether “stain” could be considered “paint”. Mr. Ryan clarified that the door would not be stained, but would have a stain finish.

There being no further discussion, Ms. Hayward-Olivas called for a vote.

The motion on the floor was unanimously carried.

28 East 3rd Street – Michael Westman

As Commissioner Westman is an applicant and not able to deliberate on the application, Ms. Hayward-Olivas asked that he step down from the Commission table.

An application was submitted to construct a porch on the rear side of the house. Rev. Christopher Keene explained that they are proposing a screened-in porch to the rear of 28 East 3rd Street. There is currently a deck that has collapsed. The design is meant to appear that it has always been part of the house. Trim will be white. The roof will be a standing seam metal roof. The bannister on the stairs leading from the porch to the sidewalk will match the baluster around the roof. The porch will not be very visible from the street, but can be seen from the Dutch House Garden.

Ms. Doak noted that the application was updated to delete fiberglass columns and that the columns will be wood. Ms. Hayward-Olivas listed the materials and stated that they are all acceptable. She stated that the Trex decking will be inside the screened porch and therefore, is acceptable. The applicant opined that the steps going to the sidewalk will probably be Trex. Mr. Bergstrom noted that there are many decks in town with Trex steps that are partly visible from the street. Rev. Keene noted that there is a plank fence that shields the steps and they are not visible from the Dutch House Garden or the street. Ms. Doak said that the design with the amendment was noted on Ms. Hamroun’s spreadsheet. Ms. Hayward-Olivas added that it is a very thoughtful design.

A motion was made by Ms. Doak to approve the application for 28 East 3rd Street for a new screened-in porch on the back of the house as presented in terms of concept, design, and materials, with the change of material from fiberglass to wood columns. The motion was seconded by Ms. Batty and unanimously carried. Mr. Westman abstained from the vote.

There being no further business to discuss, Ms. Hayward-Olivas called for a motion to adjourn.

A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Batty and seconded by Mr. Westman. The motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen R. Weirich, City Stenographer