



City of Plymouth

Historic District Commission Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 4, 2020 - 7:00 p.m.
City Hall Commission Chambers

City of Plymouth
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Plymouth, Michigan 48170

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1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Polin called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Linda Filipczak, Jeremy Borys, Linda May, John Townsend, Stan Cole, Colleen Polin

ABSENT: Joshua Mrozowski

Also present was Community Development Director John Buzuvis and City Commission Liaison Suzi Deal.

2. CITIZEN COMMENTS

None.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Comm. Borys and seconded by Comm. Filipczak to approve the meeting minutes from February 5, 2020, as amended.

MOTION APPROVED 6-0

4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

A motion was made by Comm. Cole and seconded by Comm. Filipczak to approve the agenda as amended.

MOTION APPROVED 6-0

5. OLD BUSINESS

a) H19-10: Rear Porch at 260 S. Union

Joe Phillips, applicant, presented his case. He explained that the proposed changes are from the fascia line to the concrete slab including 5 columns, three areas of balusters, and newel posts. He explained the rear porch is not a character defining feature, nor is it original and much of the building has been covered with non-traditional materials including vinyl, aluminum, and fiberglass. Mr. Phillips explained there is no connection between this porch and the front porch, which does have original wooden elements, and to require wood on the rear porch would not be appropriate. Mr. Phillips referenced Secretary of Interior Standards number 9 and explained that there is no historic material in that area at all and that the existing material will be replaced, not destroyed. He showed material samples for the columns and explained the material that would be used for the molding.

Citizen Comments

None.

Board Discussion

Chair Polin asked about the trex system and if it offers a composite post.

Mr. Phillips responded that he did not believe they did because the columns are structural and added that in all honesty he hadn't looked into the availability of composite columns.

Comm. Cole asked if the wood columns are deteriorated beyond repair.

Mr. Phillips responded that the base was deteriorated, but that the intent was to replace the wood columns with material that did not require maintenance.

Comm. Cole explained that the porch and its materials are not original but that the rear porch is a character defining feature and is visible to the public. He stated there is not much wood left and he didn't want to see the historic character diluted further. He was not in support of changing the columns to the proposed material.

Chair Polin explained that mixing materials was generally not suggested or supported by the Michigan Historic Preservation Network. She asked if this approval would include the handrails, because that was approved at the previous meeting.

Mr. Buzuvis read the approval motion made at the previous meeting to clarify.

Comm. Borys wanted to see photographic evidence and finalized drawings to feel confident in the previous approval motion. He asked if the rear porch was as important as the front porch.

Comm. Townsend stated the porch is very visible, it is not like a typical residential rear porch.

Comm. Borys explained that he viewed two options, the first is that the rear porch is not as significant as the front porch and as such can be treated different. The second is that the rear porch is as significant as the front porch and should be held to the letter of the Secretary of Interior Standards. He believed that the manufacturer would group together components of the railing system, and that if the column wasn't part of the railing system then it must be considered differently.

Mr. Phillips explained that the rear porch was far from a character defining feature of the house. He believed that it was not as important as the front porch.

Comm. Borys asked if Mr. Phillips had presented new evidence to change the approval motion from the previous month's meeting to include approval for the column to be composite material.

Mr. Phillips clarified that the complete information presented to the Board for consideration is using a non-wood material for the columns. He requested that material be approved.

Comm. Townsend was opposed to the vinyl columns.

Comm. May was opposed to composite columns because wood was an available option.

The Board discussed a clarifying motion.

A motion was made by Comm. Cole, supported by Comm. Townsend, to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for H19-10, 260 S. Union, to replace the rear porch railing system. The finding of facts is that the project meets Secretary of the Interior Standards numbers 1, 2, 6, and 9 and City Ordinance number 4. The approval has the following conditions: all components of the railing system, newel posts, and columns shall be composite materials – no vinyl, plastic, or fiberglass materials are allowed.

MOTION APPROVED 6-0

b) H19-06: Exterior modification at 587 W. Ann Arbor Trail

Chair Polin recused herself from this agenda item.

The Board discussed and clarified the previous motion. They determined the items listed in the motion were not approved.

Dan Schneider, preservation architect, presented his case. He explained the proposed changes to the windows including color and the ceiling mounted, recessed lighting. He explained the desire to have the dark color sash based on the historical photos contained in the submittal. Mr. Schneider explained there has been both dark and light-colored sashes on the windows. He explained they believed the dark color sash was more historically appropriate.

Citizen Comments

None.

Board Discussion

Comm. Cole asked if any windows are original.

Mr. Schneider explained it was hard to tell. He explained they think some are original because of the style and condition. He confirmed that they believed the windows on the front are original but are unsure after doing a paint scraping which resulted in no underlying paint color.

Comm. Cole referred to the historic photo that advertised the building opening which showed white windows. He stated that if the windows are original, they should be restored, not replaced, and are to be replaced, then they should be replaced with wood.

Mr. Ferrantino explained there are 26 windows on the second floor and maybe eight of them are wood. He asked if they are okay with allowing replacement windows – wood for wood or can they replace with clad?

Comm. Cole stated he believed clad, but not vinyl, replacement windows would be permissible. He stated that he preferred white based on the historic photo contained in the submission.

Mr. Schneider confirmed the replacement windows would be aluminum or aluminum clad, not vinyl. He explained they are requesting all dark window frames to unify the building.

Comm. Cole gave examples of buildings which have contrasting windows colors between floors.

Comm. Townsend stated there are lots of white windows in review of historical photos.

Comm. Borys agreed with Comm. Cole and the photographic evidence provided. He wanted all window not including the storefront to be white, but for them to be able to be replaced with clad windows.

Mr. Schneider explained they intend to retain the tile and doors. He explained if they are beyond repair and must replace them, they will return to the HDC.

Mr. Abanatha explained the lighting plan which includes the three front canopies on the front/storefront width, the over stair light, and the entry door. He explained the doors and overhangs are proposed to be black. He disagreed with the Board's desire to have white windows.

Comm. Cole discussed the previously approved canopies. He clarified that the awnings didn't have to be a specific color. He was not in favor of the proposed second floor awnings.

Mr. Ferrantino clarified the windows are not original windows and did not believe they should be white.

Comm. Borys explained that the window being original or not did not have any bearing on the color of the replacement windows.

Mr. Abanatha wanted the flexibility to choose between white or black windows.

Susan Friedlander, attorney, explained the difference between rehabilitation and preservation and clarified that Michigan is a rehabilitation state. She explained that they want to keep the building in productive use, and it would be arbitrary to require white window sashes in a rehabilitation. She asked the Board to consider if having another color besides white would be less historic and if it would do a disservice to the historical nature. She explained that style is more important than color to historic nature.

City Comm. Deal asked if a lighter color would be acceptable, instead of white.

Comm. Townsend was in favor of a light color, since that's what the historical photo shows.

Comm. Cole read from the Secretary of Interior Standard related to the windows. He explained that white windows do not make the building unusable.

Comm. Townsend reiterated that there's a case for window replacement and they won't require them to save non-original windows. He restated that there is ample evidence of a light-colored window. He did not believe that the light color would impact the value or attractiveness or the historical characteristics of the building.

Mr. Ferrantino felt that the color was subjective and asked for clarification if the new windows would have to be light.

Comm. Filipczak asked if there was a standard for what part of the building new windows should be matched to.

Mr. Schneider explained that the new windows are a modification and should be differentiated from the other windows.

Comm. Cole didn't believe mullions were an appropriate addition to the window. He stated that the windows are a replacement, not restoration of originals with original color, and there is evidence of light and dark windows. He was considering allowing a color that was not light and because they're replacement.

Comm. Filipczak agreed with Comm. Cole's classification and consideration of replacement window standards. Comm. Cole read the replacement windows guidelines and it does not recommend replacement windows that do not match.

Comm. Filipczak and Comm. Cole discussed what "match" meant – the whole, the integrity of the building, or the color.

The Board considered the years and window sash colors of photos provided in the submission. They discussed the standards and how they support the color choice.

Comm. Townsend clarified the desired characteristics of the replacement windows would be aluminum clad wood windows that are double hung within existing openings with no mullions.

Comm. Cole explained the ceiling-hung light, not recessed, with black housing. He explained there is no photographic evidence for the second story canopies. He wanted the doors and tile to be restored or for the applicant to come back.

Ms. Friedlander believed that second floor canopies were compatible for a 1920s era building.

Comm. Cole did not want to establish a false sense of history with the installation of canopies.

A motion was made by Comm. Townsend, supported by Comm. Filipczak, to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for H19-06, 587 W. Ann Arbor Trail, for exterior modification. The finding of facts is that the project meets Secretary of the Interior Standards numbers 2, 5, 6, and 7 and City Ordinance numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4. The approval has the multiple conditions. Signage, signage lighting, and MET system shall be presented to the HDC for final approval. Tile on the front of the building, the center door, and the two storefront doors shall be restored, and if restoration is not possible, then changes shall be presented to the HDC for final approval. Logos on west building wall shall be preserved. Second floor canopies are not allowed. Work can continue for the two storefronts, doors, and tiles. All replacement windows shall match existing openings and be of aluminum clad wood double hung with no mullions except where new windows will be where there are wall openings into the first floor. Windows shall be a color compatible with building and other windows.

Lighting as presented is approved.

MOTION APPROVED 5-0

Chair Polin rejoined the Board.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a) 2020 Goals

The Board was directed to send goal ideas to City Comm. Liaison Suzi Deal for her compilation and their future discussion.

7. COMMISSION COMMENTS

None.

8. REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

None.

9. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Comm. May, supported by Comm. Filipczak, to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 PM.