



Historic Preservation Commission Minutes

Meeting – April 18, 2019

The Historic Preservation Commission met on Thursday, April 18, 2019 at 6pm at the City Council Chambers, 305 Gay Street.

Commissioners Attendance:

Present: George Vojtech, Chairman, Commissioners Ron Berman, Sharon Smith and Herschel Johnson, Janice Olshesky (Alternate, present from 7pm)

Absent: Susan Morgan, Vice Chair

Liaison: Commissioner Steve Rideout, present

Other Representatives Attending:

Herve Hamon, Planning and Zoning, Planner I and Historic Preservation

Chairman George Vojtech called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He began the meeting by conducting a roll call, issuing a welcome, and swearing in the people planning to testify.

Approval of Modified Agenda

Modification of the Agenda:

- Addition of an informal discussion about HPC 2019-049; Fence appropriateness at 121 Willis

Approval of Minutes

Review of March 21 & April 3, 2019 HPC Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Berman made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted, Comm. Johnson seconded; all approved unanimously.

Old Business:

HPC 2019-038 114 Choptank Avenue – Garden Shed (demolition of existing and replacement)

This application was tabled from its final resolution at the March 21 HPC meeting.

Commissioners were assigned tasks, with results to be presented at the April 18 meeting.

- Comm. Berman conducted a research on the dating and history of the shed: even though the existing shed only appears on the 1918 Sanborn maps, and was labelled “auto house”, there is a strong possibility it predates 1918, and was transported from a different location.

City of Cambridge, Maryland – 2019 HPC Minutes
April 18, 2019

- Comm. Smith contacted the Maryland Historical Trust (Donna Maxwell) and found grants available through the National Trust of Historic Preservation; however, the grants require an owner's match up to half of a maximum \$25,000 restoration grant.
- Chairman Vojtech coordinated the cost estimates effort.
 - He found that a bid was given in 2008 for the reconstruction of the shed, and amounted \$18,000
 - He obtained 2 current bids from local contractors, which both amounted to around \$25,000 each, to repair, restore and rebuild the shed as required to make it safe.
- Chairman Vojtech also expressed that there was interest from alternate Janice Olshesky to volunteer dismantling and removing the shed from its current location and have it preserved off-site until a suitable location was found. Although Chairman Vojtech was only told just prior the meeting, and this was not officially confirmed nor negotiated financially since alternate Olshesky only arrived at 7pm (after this case was being heard), the applicant was given the impression this solution was on the table.
- Staff presented a budget recap of the 3 main options presented above:
 - \$25,000 for a full price restoration and reconstruction of the shed
 - \$12,500 for a match participation in the case of MHT grant funding
 - \$6,000 total for demolition (\$2,500) and a new shed construction (\$3,500)

The applicant, Ms. Love explained she would examine the options.

Chairman Vojtech made a motion to record the options presented, and for the owner to make a decision on which direction would be taken (and communicated to staff). Comm. Smith seconded that motion. All approve unanimously.

Note: Ms. Love subsequently (on April 19, 2019) informed staff she was interested in having Ms. Olshesky dismantle and transport the shed, while she would take care of purchasing the new shed proposed (and HPC approved) in her application.

HPC 2019-041 810 Locust Street – Façade Renovation / Revision of 03-21-2019 HPC Decision

The Historic preservation Commission met on April 3rd for a Special Meeting. The decision from March 21, 2019 was reversed to allow the applicant to use 6-over-6 windows. Photographic and historic research demonstrated the use of such window pattern on the house in 1976, and a similar window was found in the outbuilding, as corroborating evidence. The use of 6-over-6 windows, and the restoration of a window instead of a secondary entrance door at the ground level, Locust Street main façade, was approved at the April 3rd special meeting.

Consent agenda:

HPC 2019-048 200-202 Belvedere Avenue - Chimney & Gutters Renovation

Upon presentation of this Consent Agenda case, Chairman Vojtech requested that the applicant answer some questions, which made this application a full HPC review.

The description of the approved work is as follows:

- Installation of K-profile gutters throughout, to replace existing, in-kind
- Repointing of the top 4 rows of bricks at the main chimney
- Installation of a double flue (extension of existing), with either no lid, one lid for each flue, or a double wide lid
- Installation of protective screens in all cases
- Installation of a metal cap at the top of the last row of bricks

Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve HPC 2019-048 as specified above. Chairman Vojtech seconded the motion. All approve unanimously.

Informal Discussion:

HPC 2019-049 121 Willis Street – Fence Appropriateness

The applicant, Mr. Howard, filed an application for a fence proposal on March 15.

There was miscommunication from staff about the timeline requirement to propose alternate solutions for the fence.

Mr. Howard provided alternate designs to staff on April 17 and was asking for an informal discussion to confirm his intent and direction.

General consensus is reached amongst Commissioners that the current fence design will most likely find approbation at the next HPC meeting.

New Business:

HPC 2019-042/042a 201 High Street – Foundations & Façade Renovations

This is an application to rebuild the front stoop, handrail and balusters, front portico & columns as the result of raising / rebuilding the perimeter foundation wall. A new front entrance double door is proposed to replace the 2 existing separate doors.

Proposed scope of work:

- Construction of a new foundation at all perimeter walls of the house and under the center, to restore proper structural integrity. The foundation height will be 3 feet above grade.
- To access foundation wall and perform construction, removal of existing front stairs, brick stoop, columns, handrails and balusters
- Once foundation is completed:
 - Re-building of front stoop with wood stairs and ipe wood flooring; removal of bricks
 - Re-use of original portico wood columns (if practicable), or substitution with appropriate antique salvaged wood columns (to be purchased)
 - Construction of new handrails and balusters, using salvaged elements
 - Re-connection of existing portico roof (unchanged / shored-up)

Action approved:

- HPC 2019-042a - Foundation:
Case is approved as submitted, with Belgian handmade modular bricks or equivalent used for foundation walls reconstruction and replacement.

- HPC 2019-042 - Front Door (Partial approval)
Case is approved as submitted, with door illustrated and design of transom + side lights as presented in the April 18 staff report.
- HPC 2019-042 (remainder of partial application) - Front stoop, porch, balusters, portico, lattice
This part of the application is deferred until foundation height and finish floor elevation are determined, and additional details about the elements are provided. It has been tabled either until May 16, 2019 if information is received by May 3, or to a further HPC meeting if additional time is needed.

Motion was made by Chairman George Vojtech to approve the portion of HPC 2019-042/42a regarding the foundation walls and the front door, and table the rest of the application (front stoop, porch floor, balusters, portico and lattice until further documentation is provided. It was seconded by Commissioner Smith. All approved unanimously.

HPC 2019-043 601 Church Street – Demolition & Renovation of Graveyard Wall

This is an application to demolish the deteriorated sections of the rear side of the graveyard brick wall enclosure; and rebuild an enclosure either with brick walls, or a combination of brick piers and metal fence sections.

Proposed Scope of work:

- Replace 2 sections of deteriorated brick walls on both sides of the rear gate entrance (49 and 45 feet long respectively).
- 3 options are to be discussed once the 2 sections mentioned above have been demolished:
 - Option 1: replace the 2 sections with a 4-foot-high metal fence; keeping the end piers of the wall, and the 2 brick piers holding the gate
 - Option 2: replace the 2 sections with an alternating treatment of brick piers and metal fence infill; spacing between brick piers (proportion to match the original piers: 22" wide by 50" tall) would be 12 feet apart, metal fence to be 4 foot high
 - Option 3: rebuild a continuous brick wall with details and proportions to match the original (costlier solution)

For all options above, the bricks will be either re-used and salvaged from the demolition if quantity allows, or substituted with Belden Brick Modular Rosewood

Approved action:

Installation of a brick wall to replace the deteriorated sections of wall located in the back Northwest corner of the graveyard; 2 options are approved to be constructed, option to be chosen is contingent on financing

- option #2, alternating piers of dimensions and locations similar to the existing, and metal fence sections (per illustration presented) in between
- option #3, full rebuild of brick wall (matching all existing dimensions) using a combination of salvaged bricks, and/or Modular Rosewood from Belden Brick
- In both cases, mortar to match existing and be appropriate for bonding strength

Commissioner Berman made a motion to approve either option #2 or #3; it was seconded by Comm. Smith. All approved unanimously.

HPC 2019-044 424 Race Street – Mural

This is an application to install a mural celebrating Harriet Tubman on a blank cinderblock wall; the wall is in the rear of the Harriet Tubman building, and is visible from Cannery way and the back parking lot.

The description of the approved work is as follows:

- Installation of a mural celebrating Harriett Tubman on the blank South wall of the back of 424 Race Street
- Repainting of the East wall facing the parking area (colors and patterns by applicant)

Chairman George Vojtech made a motion to approve the application as submitted, it was seconded by Comm. Berman, all approved unanimously.

HPC 2019-045 325 West End Avenue – Rear Yard Deck

This is an application to build a 20'x20' pressure treated deck at ground level in the back yard of the property.

Proposed Scope of work:

- Build a 20'x20' pressure treated wood deck, at grade;
 - o Deck boards to be 5 ½" by 1 ¼"
 - o Concrete piers spaced every 4 feet
 - o Framing with 2x8 pressure treated wood

Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve the application as submitted, with the condition that the deck would be built no higher than 15" off the ground, it was seconded by Chairman George Vojtech, all approved unanimously.

HPC 2019-046 312 Belvedere Avenue – Porch Renovations & Fencing

This is an application to repair and renovate the front porch and install a garden fence along the front yard.

Proposed Scope of work:

- 1- Repairs:
 - Porch railing and balusters to be repaired and/or replaced with in-kind matching wood railing and balusters
 - Porch roof to be repaired with matching shingles;
 - Fascia trim at top of columns to be repaired at water damage with either wood matching profile or PVC trim board closely matching;
 - Deteriorated cedar shakes to be replaced with similar as necessary

City of Cambridge, Maryland – 2019 HPC Minutes
April 18, 2019

- Porch flooring boards: replace in-kind with wood decking at deteriorated locations
- Porch ceiling to be repaired in-kind
- Front steps (currently Trex) to be replaced by 1 ½”x 11” pressure treated pine deck stair treads

2- New Construction:

- Installation of a 42” tall white picket fence (French Gothic) along the whole front of the house front yard, from side property line to side property line

Approved action:

Proceed with the repairs listed below, once contractor or applicant provide all product specifications to staff:

- porch roof; with roof shingles matching the existing
- porch floor; with wood boards matching the existing
- porch ceiling; repair/replace ceiling with in-kind wood
- railing spindles/square balusters; reproduce matching wood balusters, to replace missing ones, in-kind
- cedar shakes; replace damaged shakes with in-kind cedar shakes, where necessary

Note:

For all the work above, once the specifications or construction details for each product have been submitted to the city for review, applicant will be approved to start installation immediately. If necessary or helpful, a site visit with Chairman Vojtech and staff can be set up to go over these requirements and meet with the contractor in charge of the job.

For the scope of work below, further documentation is required prior to approval:

- Fascia board at front porch
- Picket fence: provide site plan showing the location of the fence, the location of gates etc...
- Front steps; need dimensions and number of steps, method of support (new stringer?)

The 3 items above will be revisited at the May 16 HPC meeting and require documentation to be filed by May 3rd at the latest.

Chairman George Vojtech made a motion to approve all the repairs listed and specified above and defer the review of the part of the application requiring further documentation to the next HPC meeting. Comm. Smith seconded the motion. All approved unanimously.

HPC 2019-047 400 Race Street – Façade Renovations

This is an application to continue the renovations of the façade. Certificates of Appropriateness specifying some of the work currently still undertaken were issued on July 31 and September 17, 2015. The scope of work being currently completed is consistent with the original CoAs which were expired. This is a renewal of the application under the same terms, to bring the project to completion.

Scope of work:

- Non-historic doors and windows have been removed
- Street facing doors have been replaced by custom built raised panel mahogany doors and transoms with insulated glass
- 2 rear façade doors will be replaced with 6-panel fiberglass doors (see illustration/specs below), to match existing stairway door on Gay Street
- Portion of rear façade plywood wall to be replaced by HardiPlank siding (7” reveal)
- Panels below Race Street windows, and above secondary entrance doors to be finished with tinted stucco
- Soffit at main entrance door to be 3” mahogany bead board

Commissioner Berman made a motion to approve the completion of the work as submitted. It was seconded by Comm. Johnson. All approved unanimously.

Administrative Reviews:

AA 2019-034 202 Glenburn Avenue – in-kind Roof Replacement

AA 2019-035 702 Water Street – in kind Roof Replacement

AA 2019-036 310 Glenburn Avenue – Front Stoop Brick Repointing

AA 2019-037 302 Gay Street – Roof Upgrade

AA 2019-038 5 Choptank Avenue – Porch Floor Repairs

AA 2019-039 202 Belvedere Avenue – Roof Upgrade

AA 2019-040 315 Willis Street – Façade Repairs

All Administrative Review cases are approved as submitted.

Post Meeting Discussion:

Staff read the statement made by Chairman George Vojtech and adopted at the April 3, 2019 special meeting. The statement reads:

I intend to establish a policy for debates during HPC discussions in order to stop comments from the commissioners which might sway a discussion without being based on defensible facts. In the past, on occasion, commissioners have made statements that a particular feature is required to be retained or is a requirement for a building under discussion. For example, if there was a discussion related to metal roofing, a commissioner might state that this type of building always had a metal roof and never a different type of roof. Such a pointed comment might sway the other commissioners and an application for architectural shingles might end up being denied.

If a commissioner after having studied the application prior to the meeting feels strongly that metal roofing is the absolutely correct replacement material, they can either state that it is their strong opinion that metal roofing should be used which will be an appropriate comment. If they state that metal roofing absolutely must be used, then they must bring written evidence to the meeting that supports their statement. During the discussion they can share the evidence with the other commissioners so that the evidence can be commented on. If an absolute statement is made without any defensible written backup, I will as the current chairman, stop the discussion and query the commissioner about the statement. If written evidence is not available, I will state to the other commissioners and the public that this is only an opinion of a commissioner and should be treated as their opinion, not a fact.

City of Cambridge, Maryland – 2019 HPC Minutes
April 18, 2019

Knowledgeable opinions and open discussion should form the basis for a healthy HPC debate. However it has to be understood that opinions presented are only opinions and the other commissioners need to know which comments are indeed fact and which are opinions.

Alternate Olshesky contended that Commissioners should be allowed to draw on their individual knowledge and experience, and not be obligated to show documentation to provide proof of judgmental statements or presentation of opinion as facts. Chairman Vojtech expressed that he intends to continue enforcing the need for support documents when a Commissioner is presenting his or her opinion as a fact.

Chairman Vojtech asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion by Comm. Berman to adjourn the meeting was seconded by Commissioner Johnson and carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Herve Hamon
Planning & Zoning
Planner I & Historic Preservation

Signature: George L Vojtech Date: 16-MAY-19 HPC Chairman