



Historic Preservation Commission Minutes

Meeting – March 21, 2019
&
Special Meeting – April 3, 2019

1- Meeting – March 21, 2019

The Historic Preservation Commission met on Thursday, March 21, 2019 at the City Council Chambers, 305 Gay Street.

Commissioners Attendance:

Present: George Vojtech, Chairman; Susan Morgan, Vice Chair, Commissioners Ron Berman, Sharon Smith and Janice Olshesky (Alternate)

Absent: Commissioner Herschel Johnson

Liaison: Commissioner Steve Rideout, absent

Other Representatives Attending:

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

Chairman George Vojtech called the meeting to order at 7:00 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:

- Discussion about the Demolition by Neglect current process

Approval of Minutes

Review of February 21, 2019 HPC Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Berman makes a motion to approve the minutes as submitted, Comm. Smith seconds; all approve unanimously.

New Business:

HPC 2019-038 309 Oakley Street – Garden Shed

This is an application to build a garden shed in the back yard.

Proposed / approved scope of work:

- Shed footprint will be about 16' x 16', including a porch created by a roof overhang of 6' along the 16-foot length, facing the center of the back yard. Walls are 7' high, roof pitch is 8/12, making a gable-end height to roof peak of 12'.
- Shed is pre-fabricated by "Lapp Structures". Style of shed similar to photo "Lapp-Quaker.jpg" and photo "Lapp-Porch.jpg" with double doors positioned on the right side of front.
- Shed construction is Engineered wood siding, pressure-treated wood foundation timbers, studs, rafters and joists, asphalt shingle roof.

A question by Alternate Olshesky clarifies that the doors will indeed be wood, but without any cross pattern / barn-like design.

Comm. Smith makes a motion to approve the shed as submitted, it is seconded by Chairman Vojtech. All approve unanimously.

HPC 2019-039 114 Choptank Avenue – Garden Shed Demolition and Replacement

This is an application to build a garden shed in the backyard, after demolition of the severely deteriorated existing shed.

Chairman Vojtech, Vice Chair Morgan, and HPC staff Herve Hamon conducted a visit of the shed on March 1, 2019 and confirmed the severe level of deterioration, termite damage and lack of structural integrity, especially as relating to the main framing posts and lower sill plates in contact with the ground.

The applicant is currently concerned and afraid to enter the shed.

The shed does have a proportion and appeal making it a significant character defining feature for the Historic District and is visible from Choptank Avenue.

A discussion occurs as to the exact age and origin of the shed.

Commissioner Berman explains the history of the properties along Choptank Avenue, and the succession of ownership at this address since the late 1890s. Although there are indications the shed may be older, it only starts to appear on the Sanborn maps of 1918.

Alternate Olshesky remarks that the 4x4 construction, with tenon and mortise assembly joints denotes the historic significance of the structure and has contributed to the longevity of the building.

Although the proposed new replacement shed would be in line with the aesthetic requirements of the Historic District Design Guidelines and provide the appropriate and necessary garden storage the applicant is no longer feeling safe to have in the current shed, the Commission asks that the demolition of the existing structure be tabled until the April HPC meeting.

The following course of action, to be completed prior to the April 18 HPC meeting, is determined:

- The applicant is asked to provide cost estimates for the restoration of the existing shed, to be compared to the cost of demolition and new construction, with the help of Chairman Vojtech, who will coordinate carpenter's visit to confirm the quotes
- Commissioner Berman will explore further the history of the shed, and date of construction
- Alternate Olshesky will draw and document the shed in order to have a record on archive
- Commissioners Smith and Morgan will contact the Maryland Historical Trust to explore the possibilities of getting a restoration grant for the shed

Chairman Vojtech makes a motion to table HPC 2019-039 until April 18, 2019, with the action specified above and the agreement from the Commission that if the restoration of the shed proves unfeasible for structural or financial reasons, the restoration and preservation of the existing shed would be off the table, and only the proposed replacement shed will be presented and discussed. Comm. Smith seconds; all approve unanimously.

HPC 2019-040 106 Willis Street – Garden Shed Renovation

This is an application to re-clad the garden shed in the backyard, currently in corrugated metal, same volume to be finished with vinyl siding matching the house.

The applicant proposes to use all materials similar to the main house:

- 5" vinyl siding, profile, dimension and color similar to main house
- Vinyl corner and edge trim throughout to match main house
- Doors to be installed at each end elevations, 2-panel /36" wide / pre-hung metal doors
- Optional: if window installation is decided, vinyl window to match main house

Motion is made by Chairman Vojtech to approve the application as specified above; it is seconded by Comm. Berman. All approve unanimously.

HPC 2019-041 810 Locust Street – Façade renovations – Window Replacements

This is an application to replace the windows and exterior siding on a house that suffered a fire.

- The existing windows (except for the arched 3rd floor wood window) were vinyl and are proposed to be replaced by similar profile vinyl window (United 4800 Series). All sizes and profiles are specified in the application and staff report and approved with the division of light condition below.
 - Commissioner Smith and Alternate Olshesky ask that the pattern of 2-over-2 lights be restored on the street facing facade, as the 6-over-6 pattern on the damaged windows was not original to the house initial period of construction (circa 1900).
- The applicant agrees to this, and to re-use window #8, second floor right side front window which did not require replacement, on the side elevation in lieu of the damaged window #1 (2nd floor).
- The area of repairs of the vinyl wall siding will be rebuilt using the same product as the existing remaining siding (CertainTeed Carolina Bead - same height and profile)
- The house has been vacant for more than 90 days, is located in the NC-3 (neighborhood single family use district) and its use has reverted to single family per zoning regulation

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- The second entry door located on the street façade, next to the main entrance door, is not original to the façade design; it currently needs to be replaced as part of the renovations, and the Commission recommends replacing it with a window similar to the one located on the opposite side of the front door, as to restore the symmetry original to the historic character of the house. This replacement door to window is consistent with the zoning requirement of reverting the use of the house to single family and will restore the historical appropriateness of the facade.
- HPC staff will send a letter to the property owner about the single family zoning use requirement

Action approved:

- Replace damaged vinyl windows with United Series 4800 double hung vinyl windows, with 2 over 2 light pattern, as per scope proposed; with the condition of switching windows #1 (side elevation) and #8 (front elevation)
- Repair all damaged section of vinyl wall siding with exactly matching CertainTeed Carolina Beed
- Rebuild Gothic Style wood arch window on 3rd floor, to match original
- Restore / rebuild main entrance door with a 4 panel wood door and sidelights + transom, per archived documentation, similar to original
- Replace secondary entrance door by a window matching the window on the opposite side of entrance door, symmetrical

Motion is made by Commissioner Morgan to approve the application as specified above, it is seconded by Commissioner Smith. All approve unanimously.

Administrative Reviews:

AA 2019-032 302 West End Avenue – In kind Window Replacement

AA 2019-033 302 Willis Street – In kind Roof Replacement

All Administrative Review cases are approved as submitted.

Post Meeting Discussion:

Demolition by Neglect:

- HPC Staff Herve Hamon provides the members of the Commission the current definition, regulations and a proposed draft amendment to the proceedings for their review and input.
- Comm. Berman asks that renewed attention be dedicated to the numerous sheds of Cambridge, left in advanced stage of disrepair or deterioration (a survey and inventory of the city's sheds should be considered)

Chairman Vojtech asks for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion by Vice Chair Morgan to adjourn the meeting is seconded by Commissioner Smith and carried unanimously. The meeting adjourns at 9:30pm.

2- Special Meeting - April 3, 2019

The Historic Preservation Commission met on Wednesday April 3, 2019 at the City Council Chambers, 305 Gay Street, for a special meeting.

Commissioners Attendance:

Present: George Vojtech, Chairman; Susan Morgan, Vice Chair, Commissioners Ron Berman, Sharon Smith and Commissioner Herschel Johnson

Absent: Janice Olshesky (Alternate)

Liaison: Commissioner Steve Rideout, absent

Other Representatives Attending:

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

Chairman George Vojtech called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. He began the meeting by conducting a roll call and issuing a welcome.

The purpose of the meeting was to revisit the decision regarding HPC 2019-041 – 810 Locust Street. At the March 21 HPC meeting, the applicant, Mr. Collins / contractor, was asked to provide 2-over-2 windows when replacing the fire damaged windows, along Locust Street.

After the meeting, a research by Commissioner Berman led to an archive picture of the house in 1976, showing all windows to be 6-over-6 patterns. In addition, subsequent to a coordination meeting with the owners of the house (Jesus and Maria Rubio), an upper sash of an original wood window with 6-over-6 lights was found stored in the accessory building on the property, confirming the appropriateness of a 6-over-6 pattern.

Finally, in addition, Chairman Vojtech conducted an extensive study of other examples of Gothic Revival style homes similar to 810 Locust, in other towns, and concluded that the 6-over-6 pattern windows were often used, and therefore highly appropriate.

Commissioner Berman made a motion to reverse the recommendation from the HPC to have Mr. Collins install 2-over-2 windows along Locust Street, and instead install 6-over-6 vinyl windows of the same manufacture and profile (United). Chairman Vojtech seconded the motion, all approved unanimously.

Note: the significant cost saving realized by providing stock windows (6-over-6) allows the elimination of the obsolete second entrance door (the house is zoned for single family use only) within the fire damage remediation budget, and Mr. Collins has committed to reinstalling instead a window matching the others, and restoring the symmetry of the original façade documented on the 1976 archive picture.

Discussion item: proof of evidence when arguing stylistic appropriateness.

Chairman Vojtech introduced a text for all to read and comment at the April 18 HPC meeting. The text 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.

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.

Chairman Vojtech asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion by Vice Chair Morgan to adjourn the meeting was seconded by Commissioner Smith and carried unanimously. The meeting adjourns at 4pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Herve Hamon
Planning & Zoning
Planner I & Historic Preservation

Signature:  Date: 18-April-19 HPC Chairman