

Christina Davis, vice chair, called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m. on Thursday, August 25, 2016, in the Conference Room, Fourth Floor, City Hall. A roster of the members of the commission and the technical posts they fill are on file and available upon request. Also present were commission members L. Allen, C. Crumrine, P. Reed, S. Silas, and M. Wertman. P. Nigh was present on behalf of the Mayor and City Council. S. Bockmiller and D. Calhoun, Secretary, were present on behalf of the Planning and Code Administration Department.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – August 17, 2016 – Special Meeting:

MOTION: (Crumrine/Silas) So moved (for approval).
DISCUSSION: None.
ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

CONSENT AGENDA

None.

DESIGN REVIEW

**86-98 West Washington Street – Ares Investment Group, LLC – Windows,
Case No. HDC 2016-28.**

Ash Azadi, Ares Investment LLC, 12803 Oak Hill Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland, was present on behalf of the applicant.

Staff Report: This building is an “A” resource in the Downtown Local Historic District. Applicant proposes to replace 172 windows with aluminum Pella casement windows. Windows will have exterior muntins which will replicate the pattern of each window being replaced. Staff recommended approval, subject to determining that using casement windows is necessary to meet Fire Code egress requirements. The Patterson Hotel project was an educational “proving grounds” regarding the use of casement windows as “faux double-hung windows,” especially with casements and double-hung windows being installed side by side. If the commission approves the use of casements, specific attention should be paid to ensure that the horizontal muntin is sufficiently thick to approximate both the bottom of a top sash and the top of a bottom sash. While generally effective in the Patterson case, in retrospect, these would have benefitted by having the horizontal muntins being wider and bulkier than the ones used, which would help approximate the double-hung window. Staff recommended against the use of tinted glass.

Mr. Bockmiller noted that this is a complex building. Based on past practice when windows are not visible from public ways, the commission does not hold them to the same standards of windows that are visible from public ways. The Hamilton Hotel is a U-shaped building and only three of the facades are visible from public ways (West Washington Street, Jonathan Street, and the upper floor on the north side). Since the workshop at the last meeting, the applicant has decided to use the aluminum product instead of the PVC material discussed.

Staff noted that one of the details that could have been handled better with the Patterson project would have been to use a wider middle muntin to better simulate a meeting rail on a double-hung window. The horizontal muntin should be at least as wide as the side frame of the sash and add 50%, with a narrower muntin running vertically. The Patterson is a B resource; the Hamilton is an A resource and has a prominent location; therefore, more attention should be paid to the details on these windows. Another concern is that some of the windows on the West Washington Street and Jonathan Street sides originally had balconies. Hinged wood panels were inserted below the windows to allow them to serve as doors to the balconies. Staff recommended that the panels be retained but fixed in place. The muntin pattern would be two-over-two in these instances. Staff also recommended that the casement windows have flat tops where there are decorative wood features—the decorative wood features should be retained. If the original windows have an arched top, then the new casement windows should have an arched top as well. Hopper windows on the upper floors need to be hopper windows with a muntin arrangement to copy the existing. Also, the glass on the casement windows should be clear rather than tinted. Tinted glass will affect the appearance of the building. Mr. Azadi stated that the window sashes will be white.

Applicant/Commission Discussion: Mr. Azadi stated that the old windows are not energy efficient. All new windows will have grids to replicate the patterns on the original windows. In response to a question as to why they are using casement windows, Mr. Azadi said the manufacturer does not make double-hung windows in the sizes required. Also, pricing was a consideration since they must replace 172 windows.

Dr. Reed asked if the applicant had considered storm windows for the street facades. The building has so many windows and she believed the casement windows will affect the appearance of the building, even with increasing the width of the meeting rail, it will still read flat. She asked if it would be possible to extend the simulated meeting rail out more than the vertical piece. There was also concern by the commission at the workshop about the stability of large casement windows. Mr. Azadi stated that the window manufacturer could provide more documentation on that. Dr. Reed asked if the arched windows on the stair tower will also be casement windows. Mr. Azadi stated that aesthetically you should not notice any difference. The arched tops will remain.

Mr. Crumrine asked about the window on the first floor that has been closed in. Mr. Azadi stated that this window is in a utility room. They were not planning to open it up. Dr. Reed observed that the window still reads as a window. Mr. Bockmiller suggested this window be replaced with heavily tinted black glass.

MOTION: (Crumrine/Silas) Ms. Chairperson, I have inspected the project plans and the property in question, and if constructed in accordance with these plans the project is compatible with the character of the district for the reasons that the materials and architectural detailing are generally in harmony with the Architectural Design Guidelines for the Downtown Historic District and the character of the adjoining properties. Therefore, I move that the HDC grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the applicant for Case No. HDC 2016-28.

DISCUSSION: At this point, commission members discussed the details of the approval, including: selected aluminum casement windows finished in white; decorative wood piece across the top shall be preserved; casements will be flat topped with wood strip preserved; first floor utility room window will have heavily tinted black glass; walk-out windows shall retain their knee-level doors and be fixed in place; all windows shall replicate the grille patterns currently in the historic windows, including the stairwell windows; simulated meeting rail should be 1½ times as wide as the width of the sash; the depth of the meeting rail should be deeper (¼-inch to ½-inch more) so it projects out somewhat; all glass will be untinted; applicant has the option to use one-over-one windows on the interior court yard windows and along the alley; applicant has the option to keep the original windows that have been refurbished on the Washington and Jonathan Street facades and install white storm windows instead of replacing them with casement windows (if storm windows are used, a model will need to be approved by the HDC). It was noted that most of the windows will comply with minimum egress requirements. In the event of their applying for tax credits, in terms of meeting Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) standards, the MHT does allow storm windows and the casement windows will likely disqualify the project for tax credits. Mr. Azadi amended his application as noted above. Mr. Crumrine and Mr. Silas agreed to the amendment to their motion.

ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

WORKSHOP

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OLD BUSINESS

- Mr. Bockmiller has a point of contact for the Fire House property on North Potomac Street.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Ms. Davis indicated that she may not be able to make the meeting on September 8.

ADJOURN

It was moved and seconded that the meeting adjourn (5:12 p.m.).

9/22/2016

Approved



Debra C. Calhoun – Secretary