

Michael Gehr, chair, called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 14, 2016, in the Council Chamber, Second 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, C. Davis, P. Reed, S. Silas and M. Wertman. S. Bockmiller, Development Planner/Zoning Administrator, and D. Calhoun, Secretary, were present on behalf of the Planning and Code Administration Division.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 10, 2015:

MOTION: (Davis/Silas) So moved (to adopt the minutes as submitted).
DISCUSSION: None.
ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

Commission members moved to add two of the Design Review cases to the consent agenda.

MOTION: (Davis/Wertman) I move that we move Cases HDC 2015-47 and HDC 2016-01 to the Consent Agenda.
DISCUSSION: None.
ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

CONSENT AGENDA

**40 South Potomac Street – TMG Studios/Tracy Carr for Don Bowman – Sign,
Case No. HDC 2015-47.**

**One West Franklin Street – WLR Property Management/Kim Ewing – Gate,
Case No. HDC 2016-01.**

There was no opposition from the public or from the commission.

MOTION: (Davis/Silas) Mr. Chairman, I have reviewed the materials submitted in Cases HDC 2015-47, 40 South Potomac Street, and HDC 2016-01, One West Franklin Street, and their associated staff reports and recommendations, and I have viewed the properties in question. The staff reports recommend approval of these applications as consistent with the applicable standards adopted by the Commission, and no one has appeared at this hearing with concerns about, issues with, or objections to these applications. Therefore, I move that this Commission adopt the staff evaluations and recommendations in these cases as its own and grant

Certificates of Appropriateness to the applicants for the previously mentioned cases.

DISCUSSION:

None.

ACTION:

APPROVED (Unanimous)

DESIGN REVIEW

The order of the design review cases was re-arranged so that 102 Broadway was considered before 30 East North Avenue.

102 Broadway – Allegany Wrecking/Joel Merrbaugh for Barbara Bristow – Demolish Garage, Case No. HDC 2015-46.

Joel Merrbaugh, Allegany Wrecking & Salvage, 16317 Broadfording Road, Hagerstown, Maryland, was present on behalf of the owner.

Staff Report: This is a “B” resource in the Potomac-Broadway Local Historic District. Applicant proposes to demolish the garage at the corner of North Locust Street and the alley to the rear. Garage will be removed down to the concrete slab; however, the applicant has not provided a plan for the site once the garage has been removed. The roof of the garage has deteriorated to the point where it has “twisted” on the top of the masonry walls; some of the brick has been knocked out. Staff recommended approval, with the requirement that the applicant return within 45 days (no later than February 28, 2016) with a plan for treating the remaining concrete pad so it looks like an actual parking pad and not a foundation remnant. It was staff’s understanding that the deterioration is due to a traffic accident.

Applicant/Commission Discussion: Mr. Merrbaugh offered to grade the site level with the concrete to finish the project. Mr. Gehr was concerned about parked vehicles on the pad taking a shortcut to the alley via the grass strip between the alley and the existing garage. Suggestions were made to lay gravel in the grass strip between the alley and the concrete pad or plant a row of shrubs between the alley and the concrete pad and the pad and the existing gravel lot to the east.

The commission had no concerns about demolition of the garage, as long as there is some type of landscape/shrub barrier between the pad and the alley and the existing gravel lot. Staff was directed to photodocument the garage prior to demolition.

MOTION:

(Wertman/Davis) Mr. Chairman, 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 provided that we document what the structure looks like now since it is going to be torn down and we suggest some sort of landscaping, shrubbery or maybe a fence be built along the alleyway to define the area where the former

garage was and now will be a slab so people do not shortcut through there. Once that is done, it will be generally in harmony with the Architectural Design Guidelines for the Residential Historic District and the character of the adjoining properties. Therefore, I move that the HDC grant a Certificate of Appropriateness to the applicant for Case No. HDC 2015-46.

DISCUSSION:

None

ACTION:

APPROVED (Unanimous)

30 East North Avenue – Andrew Escalet – Remove Front Porch, Case No. HDC 2015-45.

Andrew Escalet, 30 East North Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland, owner of the property, was present.

Staff Report: This is a “B” resource in the Potomac-Broadway Local Historic District. Applicant proposes to remove the front enclosed porch and add metal steps. Porch is not proposed to be replaced. There is nothing in the application proposing how the asbestos shingle façade would be treated in places where the porch is removed. Staff recommended denial. The front porch is a character-defining feature. The exterior walls of the porch are not historic and are of no value; staff had no objection to removing those. However, merely removing the porch and not reconstructing it is inconsistent with the Design Guidelines. Two of the historic porch posts remain within the porch enclosure and can be used as models for reconstructing the posts.

The interior of the porch collapsed due to the weight of materials that were stored on the porch. The City Building Inspector advised that the porch roof is stable and could be propped up while the porch is repaired. Just removing the porch is not acceptable, as is not treating the surfaces where the porch was being removed.

Applicant/Commission Discussion: Mr. Escalet claimed to be unprepared for the meeting citing just receiving notice of the meeting this afternoon. The commission’s secretary confirmed with the applicant that the address and email address provided on the application are correct and stated that Mr. Escalet was contacted by mail and email prior to the meeting.

Mr. Escalet claimed that from the time the picture in the packet was taken the porch roof has sunken dramatically. He would like to remove the porch because it is damaged and if nothing is done it will collapse. Mr. Escalet wants to repair the porch himself and the City will not let him do so. It is too expensive to hire a contractor to do the repairs. Removing the porch would be the least expensive way. The old siding is asbestos.

Mr. Gehr stated that the HDC does not want to see the front porch removed (inconsistent with the adopted guidelines); however, removing the porch enclosure would be beneficial. He advised Mr. Escalet that the porch walls would need to be removed so some type of supports could be temporarily installed to stabilize the porch roof.

Mr. Escalet said he wants a compromise on the details and what can be changed or removed. Mr. Gehr stated that one of the commission's requirements is a plan that shows how the porch will be rebuilt. If the commission approves a temporary demolition, Mr. Escalet would need to replace the posts based on the remaining original posts which could be used as a pattern. The HDC will not agree to a wholesale demolition of the porch.

Mr. Escalet requested permission to put posts up to support the roof so it does not collapse. After the roof has been stabilized, he can go from there. Ms. Allen asked what happened to the missing posts. Mr. Escalet stated that when the collapse happened, the posts gave in. He still has some of the posts. Mr. Bockmiller explained that the house has been gutted; most of the interior wall surfaces have been removed. According to the Building Inspector, one of the reasons the porch collapsed is because the plaster was being stored on the porch. Mr. Escalet disagreed with the City Building Inspector's assertion and stated there were some plaster bags on the porch from the upstairs floor. The porch floor was not up to code so it collapsed.

Mr. Escalet said he cannot get any grants to help to pay for the repairs. He just wants to put up some posts and could not understand why he is not allowed to do his own work on his own property. Mr. Bockmiller noted that this situation came to staff's attention because of building inspections. The front porch has been condemned. Mr. Escalet is responding to actions by Code Administration.

The Historic District Commission indicated that the maximum amount of time for temporary support posts would be 60 days. Mr. Escalet stated that he would need six months to a year. The applicant was informed that temporary approvals are not meant to be for months and months. Mr. Bockmiller pointed out that a building permit would be required for temporary support posts.

Mr. Escalet asked for permission from the HDC to purchase posts from Home Depot for a few dollars. Ms. Wertman asked the applicant why he did not repair the deteriorated porch sooner. If he was aware of the damage, why did Mr. Escalet let it go? Mr. Escalet stated that he is trying to rectify the situation at a minimum cost to him. At some point the porch will be nonexistent. Ms. Allen asked what happens if the porch falls down even with the temporary fix. Mr. Gehr stated that if the porch collapses on its own it will need to be rebuilt as a contributing porch.

Mr. Escalet stated that he is scheduled to go to court on February 2, 2016, for a citation from the City for not completing the repairs. Mr. Bockmiller noted that this house was identified by the Mayor and Council as a contributing resource to the district when the Potomac-Broadway Local Historic District was established.

Dr. Reed asked what would happen if the applicant withdrew his application to demolish the porch. Mr. Gehr stated that just removing the front porch would not be acceptable. Options available to the applicant would be for the HDC to deny the application as submitted. If that happens, Mr. Escalet could not submit the exact same application (demolish porch, install metal stairs) for a year. (Ms. Wertman left the meeting.) Another option would be to withdraw the

application to give the applicant a chance to work things out with the City. The HDC will require that the porch be rebuilt. Mr. Bockmiller noted that if this case is withdrawn by the applicant, the Code Administration office will want something settled in a short period of time and back to the HDC.

Mr. Gehr wanted the record to reflect that the applicant withdrew his application at this point in time.

WORKSHOP

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OLD BUSINESS

Design Guidelines Review – Residential.

Commission members and staff began review of the Residential Design Guidelines at the last meeting. The only section remaining is the Appendices.

Appendix A – Glossary of Terms.

- Merge the Residential and Commercial Guidelines' glossaries.
- Determine whether there are inconsistencies between the Residential and Commercial glossaries.
- Mr. Crumrine reminded commission members and staff that if there are terms that need to be added, staff had requested that those be sent to Mr. Bockmiller for inclusion.

Appendix B – Façade Terms.

- Add a photograph of a residential building so there is an example of both a commercial and a residential building.

Appendix C – Oak Hill Historic District.

Appendix D – South Prospect Street Historic District.

Appendix E – Potomac-Broadway Historic District.

- Eliminate separate appendices for each district. All district street listings should be combined into one section; incorporate the Downtown District as well.
- Add a street listing for the Hagerstown National Register District.

Appendix F – Map of Districts.

- Combine Residential and Commercial Maps; keep a separate map for each district.
- Add a map showing the Hagerstown National Register District.
- There should be an explanation of the difference between the National Register District and the individual Local Historic Districts.
- Add a map that shows all the districts to provide “relationship” data. Staff will work with the Planner to determine the best way to show this information.

Appendix F [sic] – Design Review Process.

- Residential and Commercial appendices can be combined into one.
- Add a “purpose” statement about how the Historic District Commission is a useful informational and educational tool.
- Expand the “Demolition” explanation.

Commission members asked that information be added pertaining to:

- Available incentives (maybe more towards the front of the document).
- Add a map(s) showing locations of landmarks and cemeteries.
- Add Cemetery Preservation Advisory Board language to guidelines.
- Add a case study that shows an historic building along with a new building to demonstrate compatibility, such as a “before and after” of the Bowman Building on South Potomac Street.
- Add information about grants.

Mr. Bockmiller will compile a checklist of everything that needs to be changed. Before he begins the draft documents, he will provide the checklist to the HDC for review and approval. After the HDC approves the check list, he will begin the draft.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Ms. Allen noted that the chimney on the building at 170 West Washington Street appears smaller than it was. She felt it looks like it was reduced in size.

**Historic District Commission
MINUTES**


**January 14, 2016
City of Hagerstown, Maryland**

ADJOURN

It was moved and seconded that the meeting adjourn (5:35 p.m.).

2/11/2016

Approved



Debra C. Calhoun – Secretary