

Michael Gehr, chair, called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 25, 2015, 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, and S. Silas. S. Bockmiller, Development Planner/Zoning Administrator and D. Calhoun, Secretary, were present on behalf of the Planning and Code Administration Division.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

There were no minutes ready for approval.

CONSENT AGENDA

Case No. HDC 2015-02 for 170 West Washington Street was taken off the Consent Agenda and moved to the Workshop portion of the meeting. There were no questions or concerns raised by the audience or the commission on any of the remaining cases.

**20 West Washington Street – Michael Fitzgerald – Alterations and Façade Grant,
Case No. HDC 2015-18.**

**43-53 West Washington Street – City of Hagerstown – Replace Gutter,
Case No. HDC 2015-20.**

MOTION: (Crumrine/Silas) Mr. Chairman, I have reviewed the materials submitted in Cases HDC 2015-18 and HDC 2015-20 and grant application, their associated staff reports and recommendations and I have reviewed the properties in question. The staff reports recommend approval of these applications as consistent with the applicable standards adopted by this 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 Cases HDC 2015-18 and HDC 2015-20.

DISCUSSION: None.

ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

DESIGN REVIEW

**49-53 South Po25-27 West Franklin Street – Facelift Remodeling, Inc. (for the owner) –
Repair Rear Deck, Case No. HDC 2015-21.**

The applicant, Richard Brunner of Facelift Remodeling, Inc., Hagerstown, Maryland, was present on behalf of the owner.

Staff Report: This building is a “B” resource in the Downtown Local Historic District. Applicant has been hired by the owner to repair the rear deck, including bringing the railings up to code (height of and distance between pickets). Repairs will be made with pressure-treated lumber. The tops and the bottoms of the pickets must be covered to simulate a traditional railing system. Wood will be painted or stained once it has seasoned. Staff noted that this porch, although on the back of the building, is visible from University Park. Staff recommended approval, subject to clarification on how the porch railings will be designed. Mr. Bockmiller added that the enclosed lean-to areas will be removed. This application is in response to notices from the City.

Applicant/Commission Discussion: Mr. Brunner stated that he was informed when he submitted the application that the tops and bottoms would need to be covered. That will not be a problem. Mr. Bockmiller changed the staff’s recommendation to approval. Mr. Brunner said the railing up the stairs are only 24-inches high and those are being brought up to code as well. Mr. Gehr stated that the handrails and upper rails will need to meet code (36 inches and 42 inches respectively). Mr. Bockmiller asked if any of the vertical posts or support features are being replaced. Mr. Brunner said at this point they just need to add some metal to help strengthen the posts—they are currently leaning a bit. It is also possible that some of the deck boards will need to be replaced. Mr. Bockmiller stated that as long as the deck boards are replaced in-kind that work would not need to be approved by the HDC.

MOTION: (Crumrine/Silas) Mr. Chairman, I have inspected the project plans and the property in question and if constructed in accordance with these plans, and using or replacing in-kind or with like materials the project is compatible with the character of the districts for the reason that the railing will be replaced and not exposed and 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 to the applicant for Case No. HDC 2015-21.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Allen wanted to make sure it was clear in the motion that the tops and the bottoms of the pickets will be covered with a strip of wood.

Mr. Crumrine and Mr. Silas agreed to the amendment to the motion.

ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

WORKSHOP

1019 Oak Hill Avenue – Robert Miller – Demolish and Rebuild Rear Garage.

Mr. Miller was not present.

170 West Washington Street – Tim Young/City of Hagerstown – Windows (Revision).

Tim Young of the City's Department of Parks and Engineering was in attendance.

Mr. Bockmiller said this item was added to the agenda today after a site visit this morning. As a result of the site visit there were several items that deviated from the original approval. First, there is a balcony over the front porch. The decking on the balcony has rotted. Since the decking is not visible from a public way due to its location on the building, staff gave them the go-ahead to replace it. However, on the balcony there is a full-length window that extends to the floor of the balcony. This window was originally the access to the porch. Mr. Bockmiller asked for the commission's comments on whether the window could be bricked in up to a point or whether a new, tall window needs to go back in. Staff was inclined to recommend that the window should be replaced with another similar full-length window which would permit the porch to be used by the new owner or a tenant.

Mr. Young stated that the rotted balcony decking will be replaced with a rubber roof. Concerning the window, there is evidence that the window slid up and down to allow access to the porch. He asked whether the commission would consider a door that would replicate the window. Mr. Gehr stated that per Code, the City may not allow access to the porch since the parapet is too short. He would be inclined to keep the window the same height as the front bay window and use an infill panel which would allow for better flashing. Mr. Gehr added that the width of porch appears to be three or four feet which is not really a usable space. It might be useful for building maintenance purposes. Mr. Young stated that there is another regular window on the other side of the porch that has brick at the base that appears to be original.

For lack of other documentation, Ms. Allen said she would be inclined to mirror the window on the opposite side of the porch. Mr. Bockmiller advised that the wide horizontal element needs to match across. Mr. Young said that they will use the same window manufacturer that was approved for the rest of the building and they will brick up the bottom to match the sill line.

The ornate chimney on the North Prospect Street side of the building is unstable. The architect is working on a design to strap it to the roof. Once the details on that are worked out, they will bring it back to the HDC for review. Mr. Bockmiller noted that this chimney is a character-defining feature. Mr. Gehr observed that repointing and the use of a brace might be the best method, rather than a strap.

Last, the door off the West Washington Street on the right side of the porch that leads to the basement is an interior door, rather than a door meant for use on the outside of a building. Mr. Young asked if this door could be filled in with plywood until the building is sold. The new owner may want to brick in the opening. In the meantime, the City's contractor will be painting the entire building. This door is too deteriorated to save. Mr. Bockmiller stated that framing in the door would be a temporary option and any motion would need to be specific that the framing is temporary for a certain period of time. Commission members agreed that the framing would need to be replaced 18 months from today. Mr. Young promised to work with the Planning Director on a color scheme. Framing would be painted to match the color scheme of the building.

In order to act on the items discussed, the commission reconvened the Design Review portion of the meeting

DESIGN REVIEW (Continued)

170 West Washington Street – City of Hagerstown – Windows and Basement Door (Revision), Case No. HDC 2015-02.

Staff entered the previous file into the record and the foregoing workshop discussion was substituted for the staff report.

There was no further discussion by the commission.

MOTION: (Silas/Crumrine) Mr. Chairman, I have inspected the project plans and the property in question and if constructed in accordance with the plans and the use of a one-over-one window with a brick infill up to the existing sill and sash lines and replacement of the LU-ON door with a temporary plywood cover for a period not to exceed 18 months the project is compatible with the character of the district for the previously mentioned reasons 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 2015-02.

DISCUSSION: Staff asked that the motion be modified to state that the new window will be the same manufacturer as the rest of the windows. Mr. Silas and Mr. Crumrine agreed to the amendment.

ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

WORKSHOP (Continued)

12810 Shank Farm Way – Norman Morin/BFM Architects – Porch Repairs.

Norman Morin, Bushey Feight Morin Architects, Hagerstown, Maryland, was present.

Mr. Bockmiller oriented the commission to this site which is the old stone house in the Stone House Square shopping center. The stone house was designated as a landmark which makes it subject to HDC review.

Mr. Morin stated that Olney Winery is hoping to move into this location. He wanted to discuss with the commission the condition of the porch boards. Since it was constructed almost on grade, there is a drainage problem and the boards are rotted. They would like the commission to allow them to use AZAK decking which simulates the exact proportions of the existing boards and would hold up to the elements and last without deteriorating over time. Mr. Bockmiller asked about foot traffic. The plan shows outdoor seating. The upper porch would not need to be changed. Mr. Morin pointed out that his firm, located on North Potomac Street in the Potomac-Broadway Local Historic District, received approval from the HDC for use of this material on their porch. Mr. Bockmiller noted that the BFM project was approved due to its distance from the road. He noted that a unique feature with this site is that the floor boards are very close to the ground.

Mr. Morin stated that in addition to the porch flooring, there is a missing balustrade on the second floor and since this area will be used by the public they need fall protection. Remaining balustrade is only 36 inches tall. The proposal is to remove the cap and use new 42-inch balusters, then replace the cap; and create a 42-inch balustrade for the piece that is missing. He did not believe the increase in height would be very noticeable. Public access to this area would be contingent upon approval by the Fire Marshal.

Mr. Bockmiller read the porch guidelines from the Design Guidelines: the original materials should be matched with regard to material, size, detail, and form, so wood would be recommended.

Mr. Gehr noted that the sample AZAK material provided by Mr. Morin matches what is existing on the first floor porch floor. Ms. Allen stated that the grade of the property is the key. Mr. Bockmiller stated that none of the porch contains original material. When the building was rehabbed, the porch was taken off and rebuilt. Mr. Morin noted that the grade may have been raised at that time to facilitate handicap accessibility.

The HDC did not have any concerns with the use of the AZAK replacement decking material. Mr. Bockmiller noted that the material presented to the commission is tongue-and-groove which would give an historic appearance.

Mr. Morin had questions about future signage for the property. Mr. Bockmiller stated that internally illuminated signs are not permitted. The former tenant, Starbucks, had several signs. In fact, the gooseneck light fixtures remain on the building and new signage would be consistent with the previous approval.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OLD BUSINESS

Window Lettering.

Staff revised the letter to the City Administrator which the HDC discussed at the last meeting, but wanted clarification from the commission on one of the issues regarding window clings. The owners of the salon across from City Hall recently removed half of their window cling which is 50% of the window, however, this is not the intent of the Design Guidelines for window lettering. Staff revised the proposed wording of the amendment and added something to the effect that only lettering or logos shall be solid or translucent.

Commission members suggested some changes to “smooth” out staff’s proposed language (see meeting file). After discussion, the second sentence in the first numbered section should read, “Only lettering and logos should stand alone as solid or translucent graphics within that 50% area and no background should be permitted.” Number 7 was revised to read, “Use of films on windows for purposes other than signage, such as a privacy screen reducing visibility into storefronts, *or as background to graphics* is strongly discouraged. A storefront with expansive areas of glass and transparency between the sidewalk and the business space is an important character-defining feature for commercial and mixed-use buildings in the Downtown district, *and keeping visibility into storefront spaces projects vibrancy and encourages use and patronage of the businesses in those spaces.*”

MOTION: (Crumrine/Allen) Mr. Chairman, I move to adopt the proposed changes to the Downtown Historic District Design Guidelines for window lettering signs as discussed.

DISCUSSION: The new language will be entered as an attachment to the minutes as Exhibit A.

ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

**Historic District Commission
MINUTES**

**June 25, 2015
City of Hagerstown, Maryland**

Staff-Approved Work.

This item was not discussed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Tomorrow night is the last Civil War Sesquicentennial event. The movie, *The Conspirator* will be shown at The Bridge of Life at 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURN

It was moved and seconded that the meeting adjourn (5:45 p.m.).

8/13/2015

Approved



Debra C. Calhoun – Secretary

Exhibit A

DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES PROPOSED PROVISIONS FOR WINDOW LETTERING SIGNS (companion document to pending Land Management Code amendments) Revised per HDC meeting of May 21, 2015

WINDOW GRAPHICS

“Window graphics” is the one area in which the purview of the Historic District Commission reaches into the interior of a building. Any sign applied to the outside of a window, the inside of the glass or within 12 inches of the interior of a window with the intention of being seen from the outside is subject to review and approval by the Commission. Also, any illuminated sign inside of the building located and displayed with the intention of being seen from the outside is subject to review, regardless of its distance from the window. Application of paint or film to a window in order to inhibit visibility into a business space is considered a sign for HDC review purposes.

The following guidelines shall be considered when reviewing “window graphics”:

1. Graphics (images and lettering) should not cover more than 50% of the surface of any individual window or contiguous block of windows.
2. If applied to the window, painting is preferred, but pre-manufactured lettering applied to the interior of the window is preferred to applying lettering to the exterior of the window.
3. Application of window graphics to the exterior of a window is discouraged.
4. Lettering should not exceed 8 inches in height, but may be larger when considering extra-tall windows and limited rows of text. The number of lettering styles in any one sign should not exceed two. Easy-to-read fonts are recommended, however very plain “block” lettering is discouraged.
5. The message should be limited to business or store name. Simple graphic images or logos associated with the business are acceptable. Points of communication (telephone or website and/or email address) should not occupy more than 1 square foot each for each form of contact.
6. Colors should be compatible with the architecture and color of the building when possible. “Neon” tones and high contrast color schemes are not recommended.
7. Use of films on windows for purposes other than signage, such as a privacy screen reducing visibility into storefronts, is strongly discouraged. A storefront with expansive areas of glass and transparency between the sidewalk and the business space is an important character defining feature for commercial and mixed-use buildings in the downtown district.
8. Etching of glass is permitted, provided the property owner co-sign the application for a certificate of appropriateness and understands that once the business leaves the unit, the Zoning Ordinance requires signs to be removed after 30 days and this may require replacement of the window glazing.