

Christina Davis, vice chair, called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, July 23, 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, 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: May 21, 2015 – Special Meeting.**

**MOTION:** (Allen/Silas) I move we approve the minutes from the May 21 Special Meeting.  
**DISCUSSION:** None.  
**ACTION:** APPROVED (Unanimous)

**CONSENT AGENDA**

None.

Because the applicant was not present for the Design Review case, the commission moved to the Workshop portion of the meeting.

**WORKSHOPS**

170 West Washington Street – City of Hagerstown – Demolition of Small Shed.

Tim Young of the City of Hagerstown Department of Parks and Engineering stated that the City is in the process of rehabbing the former Mid-Town Motel at the corner of West Washington and North Prospect Streets. In the course of the renovations they discovered the small wooden addition on the back corner is separating from the building and is not repairable. The addition is not a contributing element to the structure. There is one full-size window, two doors, and a basement level window. The addition was used as a bathroom but it could have been a closet at one time. Mr. Bockmiller added that the addition is not very visible from public ways.

Commission members did not have any concerns with the removal of this addition. Mr. Young stated that any remaining plaster from the removal of the addition would be cleaned up and removed.

Mr. Young brought commission members up to date on the chimney on the North Prospect Street side of the building. It has been determined that this decorative chimney is not stable—it moves when pushed. Mr. Young asked for guidance from the commission on bracing it. A structural engineer was consulted and the engineer suggested lowering the chimney to the height of the mansard section of the roof. Commission and staff were not in favor with removing most of the chimney since it is a character-defining feature that is important to the architectural style of this building.

The roof is currently being replaced with slate. Mr. Bockmiller noted that the time to address the chimney issue is now during the roof replacement. Mr. Young said the City’s contractor told him that once the City decides how to proceed, it would be best to stabilize the chimney before the roof is replaced, although strapping could be done later. There was a question about what it would cost to rebuild the top six feet of the chimney. Scott Bowen of MSB Architects indicated that if it is rebuilt it might not be certifiable by the structural engineer because of the corbeling.

After discussion, the general inclination of the HDC was to repoint or rebuild the chimney. Mr. Bockmiller speculated that the brick is a hard brick rather than the soft brick and it is just a mortar issue. The HDC was also agreeable to stabilizing the chimney with strapping. Total removal of the chimney is not an option.

66West Washington Street – Delta Building – Demolition of Building.

Scott Bowen, architect, and Merle Saville, engineer, were present.

Mr. Bockmiller stated that this building has serious property maintenance and structural issues. The City of Hagerstown has been leaning on the owner of the property to fix these issues. The entire west rear sidewall on the ell has collapsed, and the owner probably will not be able to obtain funding to make repairs. The owner would like to tear the building down and replace it with a new one. Mr. Bowen’s firm presented Options A and C to staff for its review. According to staff, Option C appears to be too modern, but Option A has potential.

With regard to Option A, Mr. Bockmiller pointed out that the Building Inspector may allow windows on the property line but not many and there are other examples of this in the Historic District. A site plan would be required which would need to include the parking lot in the rear of the property. Given the heights of buildings in the downtown, staff asked the owner’s representatives if the owner would consider a three-story building rather than two-and-a-half stories. Mr. Bowen indicated that the owner may be willing to consider a taller building.

Mr. Bowen told the commission that the building has continued to deteriorate and distributed photographs of the existing conditions. If the HDC finds it acceptable to demolish the building, consideration must be given to what would replace it. Option A is more historic, but he believed that the more modern Option C would be easier to rent as a mixed-use building. At this point,

Mr. Bowen was just asking for feedback. The intent is to come back to the commission with additional sketches. Option C is a blend of the redbrick building on the west side and the Art Deco style of the former CVS building on the east side. Mr. Bockmiller noted that Option A, with its traditional materials and traditional patterns, is more consistent with the Design Guidelines.

Mr. Bockmiller explained the process for demolition of significant buildings such as this one (it is an A resource). The applicant will need to demonstrate that they will be spending more money than it is worth to fix it up. Mr. Bowen noted that there are no other sloped-roof buildings in downtown so this building is an oddity. Ms. Allen observed that if this oddity is a representation of what was in the Downtown in the 1820s, then it is significant. Mr. Saville pointed out that the existing storefront is not original. The existing floor joists were removed to bring the floor down to sidewalk level at some point in the building's history. Commission members asked whether there was anything in the building worth keeping. Mr. Bockmiller noted that the shutters on the back appear to be part of the historic fabric.

Mr. Bockmiller discussed the Design Guidelines for new construction, and recommended against replacing the Delta Building with a new one-story building. Ms. Davis observed that three-story buildings are more marketable. Anything taller than three stories kicks in building code issues. Staff noted concerns with potential storefront configurations that would extend above the CVS storefront. Any large bands of glass would need to be broken up somehow. Mr. Bockmiller noted that the City's preference for downtown is mixed-use buildings, but there is no prohibition against a strictly residential building. Mr. Bowen stated that there is a tenant interested in most of the first floor for commercial use.

Mr. Bockmiller suggested that Mr. Bowen schedule a meeting with staff prior to submission of revised drawings. Mr. Bowen asked for feedback on whether the commission would be supportive of demolishing this property. Staff said it depends on whether they can meet the numbers for demolition and whether financing will be available for the project. The City's main concern is that the building comes down and nothing goes back in its place. Guarantees would need to be in place for a rebuild. There needs to be more discussion about the structural integrity of the front façade and whether only the rear ell needs to be taken down. The Historic District Commission will need to review the loan information for the actual application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition. The City does not want to see a gravel lot or a parking lot in the place of this building.

Commission members and staff discussed this property as a whole. The rear of the property is somewhat visible from West Franklin Street although at a distance. The lot is approximately 200 feet deep; the owner plans to keep parking for the site in the back so the entire site would not be built out. Mr. Bockmiller stated that landscape islands and parking space striping may be desirable in the rear parking area.

## **DESIGN REVIEW**

**115-117 South Potomac Street – Tirumuru L. Prasad Reddy – Alteration,  
Case No. HDC 2015-23.**

The applicant did not appear; however, Mr. Bockmiller presented the case noting that it is a priority for completion with the City.

Staff Report: This is a “B” resource in the Downtown Local Historic District. Applicant proposes to remove the existing vinyl siding on the front façade exposing the original brick wall. Brick will be repointed and repainted as necessary. The wood around the newly exposed windows will be repaired. The plan is to replace these windows in the future. Historic photos of this building were passed around which showed a parapet. This parapet was removed many years ago, but Jonathan Kerns in the City’s Community Development office would like to see the parapet go back on at a later time. Mr. Bockmiller pointed out onion finials on the building in the historic photographs and suggested it might be desirable to put this element back in the future as well. Mortar must be consistent with the existing mortar and the brick should only be painted if the exposed brick is painted.

Applicant/Commission Discussion: Ms. Wertman noted that if there is any damage to the wood trim on the bay windows that will need to be repaired and painted as well.

**MOTION:** (Wertman/Crumrine) Madam Chairman, I have inspected the project plans and the property in question and if constructed in accordance with these plans, HDC 2015-23, then the project will be compatible with the character of the district but after the vinyl is removed the brick wall needs to be repointed and repaired as needed and also the wood trim that is on the façade underneath it so anything that’s found is original needs to be repaired and repainted as needed and the project will be 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 2015-23.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. Davis recommended that the motion be amended to note that if the newly exposed brick is painted it should be repainted. Ms. Wertman amended her motion to state that if anything needs to be repainted and/or repaired on the windows and the wood trim that it be done. Mr. Crumrine agreed to the amendment to the motion.

**ACTION:** APPROVED (Unanimous)

**NEW BUSINESS**

- Staff met with the Mayor and Council again concerning the pending text amendments. The Mayor and Council agreed to tack on the Design Guidelines amendments and were amenable to the demolition amendments.
- Demolition by Neglect. Related to the first bullet, Ms. Davis was eager to shore up the demolition by neglect language, in particular with regard to the fire house on North Potomac Street. Mr. Bockmiller promised to look at the Design Guidelines with respect to demolition by neglect and to also begin pursuing the owners of the fire house to get renovations on that building moving. Mr. Bockmiller said demolition by neglect is more nuts and bolts rather than gingerbread. The City has property maintenance codes and the demolition by neglect language. Mr. Bockmiller suggested that a member of the Code Compliance Office make a presentation to the commission on code compliance.
- Staff is discussing with City officials restoration of the building next to the County Office Building on West Washington Street to what it looked like during the Civil War.

**OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Mr. Crumrine stated he will not be attending the August 13 meeting—he is getting married.
- Mr. Bockmiller informed the commission that Samantha Taylor will not be available for HDC meetings through September due to work conflicts.

**ADJOURN**

It was moved and seconded that the meeting adjourn (5:47 p.m.).

8/27/2015  
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Approved

  
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Debra C. Calhoun – Secretary