



City of Ann Arbor

301 E. Huron Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
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Meeting Minutes Historic District Commission

Thursday, February 9, 2012

7:00 PM

City Hall, 301 E. Huron Street, 2nd Flr.

A CALL TO ORDER

Chair McCauley called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

Chair McCauley read a Resolution of Appreciation and Commemoration from the Commission, thanking Commissioner Glusac for her six years of dedicated service on the Historic District Commission.

B ROLL CALL

Thacher called the roll.

Present: 5 - Kristina A. Glusac, Robert White, Patrick McCauley, Thomas Stulberg, and Benjamin L. Bushkuhl

Absent: 2 - Ellen Ramsburgh, and John Beeson

C APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Agenda was unanimously approved as presented . On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

D HEARINGS

D-1 [12-0177](#) HDC12-008; 314 South Main Street - New Commercial Entry Awning - MSHD

PUBLIC HEARING:
Thacher gave the staff report.

BACKGROUND:
This storefront occupies the southern end of the building containing 312 to 316 S. Main Street. It was built in 1941 and was originally occupied by Sears Roebuck & Co. In January 1996, the Historic District Commission approved plans for the remodeling of the facade.

LOCATION:
The two-story building is located on the west side of South Main Street in the middle of the block, between West Liberty and West William Streets.

APPLICATION:
The applicant seeks HDC approval to install one new decorative canvas awning over the main entrance to provide some protection from the elements and to better identify the entrance to the building. The proposed awning is rectangular with an arched top, and the color is black. The profile is two feet two inches high, by nine feet five inches wide, by five feet deep.

APPLICABLE REGULATIONS:

From the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:

(2) The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

(9) New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

From the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings:

Storefronts

Not Recommended: Introducing a new design that is incompatible in size, scale, material, and color.

Using inappropriately scaled signs and logos or other types of signs that obscure, damage, or destroy remaining character-defining features of the historic building.

STAFF FINDINGS:

1. The four storefront entrances on this building are a modern design and do not contribute to the historic character of the building. The awning design proposed is non-traditional. Per the detail, the awnings would be appropriately mounted below the existing vertical sign and above the front entrance. The drawings indicate that the awning will be mounted to the non-historic part of the storefront façade.

2. Staff feels that the proposed awning is appropriate for this site and meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and guidelines.

REVIEW COMMITTEE:

McCauley and Stulberg visited the site as part of their review.

Stulberg reported that the proposed awning with signage was not out of character with the existing façade on the building and was simple and appropriate. He noted that the proposed awning was similar to the neighboring business awning belonging to 'The Ark'.

McCauley agreed with Stulberg.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:

Jay Mullich, 710 Green Road, owner and applicant was present to answer the Commission's questions. He said as a long time resident of Ann Arbor he was very cognizant of the need to maintain the rustic look of Ann Arbor and that they chose colors that would match with the surrounding businesses and a shape that would blend in well with the space. He said the awning was necessary for protecting their patrons from the elements as well as for signage.

Laura Wanke, 715 Pierce Ct, Tecumseh, MI, representative from Marygrove Awning was present to answer the Commission's questions.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION:

Glusac asked about the façade material, and if there were any concerns with not knowing where the attachments would hit behind it.

Thacher responded that it was a type of stucco, and there wouldn't be any way of finding out what is behind the stucco without removing large chips which would be damaging. She added that the building was built in 1941 she wasn't able to find any historical photos of the building showing what was on the building prior to the aluminum siding that came off about 10 years ago.

Glusac asked for clarification on the allowable signage.

Thacher explained that according to the City's sign ordinance, businesses were allowed to have a 4 inch band of signage identifying their business, which was in addition to their other allowable sign units.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Stulberg, seconded by White, that the Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for 314 South Main Street, a contributing structure in the Main Street Historic District, for the application to install a storefront awning. The work is generally compatible in exterior design, arrangement, texture, material and relationship to the rest of the building and the surrounding area and meets The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, in particular standards 2 and 9 and the guidelines for storefronts. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

D-2 [12-0178](#)

HDC12-007; 209 Buena Vista Avenue - Gable Dormer Addition to Back of House - OWSHD

PUBLIC HEARING:

Thacher gave the staff report.

BACKGROUND:

This one-and-a-half story, end gable bungalow features a deep front porch spanning the length of the western (front) façade, a gable dormer located in the center of the western façade, and knee brackets that are characteristic of the Craftsman style. It was first occupied in 1926 by Erwin J. Weimer, a merchant, and his wife Frieda, according to Polk City Directories.

In 2011 a staff approval was issued for replacing and expanding a wooden fence with a new wooden fence and section of cyclone fencing.

LOCATION:

The site is located on the west side of Buena Vista Avenue to the south of West Washington Street.

APPLICATION:

The applicant seeks HDC approval to add a gabled dormer that is fifteen feet one-and-a-half inches wide, with two casement windows in the east elevation of the dormer and two skylights, and clad in Hardie shingles to the rear (east) side of the house. The applicant also seeks approval to extend the existing brick chimney two feet above the ridgeline to meet code.

APPLICABLE REGULATIONS:

From the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:

(9) New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

(10) *New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property will be unimpaired.*

From the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (other SOI Guidelines may also apply):

New Additions

Recommended: Locating the attached exterior addition at the rear or on an inconspicuous side of a historic building; and limiting its size and scale in relationship to the historic building.

Designing additions to roofs such as residential, office, or storage spaces; elevator housing; decks and terraces; or dormers or skylights when required by the new use so that they are inconspicuous from the public right-of-way and do not damage or obscure character-defining features.

Not Recommended: Designing a new addition so that its size and scale in relation to the historic building are out of proportion, thus diminishing the historic character.

Radically changing a character-defining roof shape or damaging or destroying character-defining roofing material as a result of incompatible design or improper installation techniques.

Windows

Recommended: Designing and installing additional windows on rear or other non-character-defining elevations if required by the new use. New window openings may also be cut into exposed party walls. Such design should be compatible with the overall design of the building, but not duplicate the fenestration pattern and detailing of a character-defining elevation.

Not Recommended: Installing new windows, including frames, sash, and muntin configuration that are incompatible with the building's historic appearance or obscure, damage, or destroy character-defining features.

STAFF FINDINGS:

1. *The 15' wide dormer is proposed on the rear, inconspicuous side of the house. The pitch of the roof is similar to the street-facing dormer on the house, it is located at the same ridge height as the current roof, and its proportions are consistent and compatible with the rest of the house. It appears that the new dormer will not be visible from Buena Vista Avenue. The proposed dormer and casement windows are compatible in design with the existing house and its location on the least-character-defining elevation of the house is appropriate. The skylights are located on the new, non-character-defining roof and are not visible from Buena Vista Avenue.*

2. *The brick chimney is located near the rear of the house (see application attachments for photo), and is a very simple design. The two-foot extension, which will be added to meet code, will not alter the historic character of the house. Because the chimney is located in the rear of the house, less will be visible to a person on the street because of the viewing angle. The extension will use brick that is compatible with the existing brick. Staff believes that the extension will be inconspicuous.*

3. *The new construction is differentiated from the original construction, which has wood clapboard siding, by the use of Hardie shingles, a cement-fiber material, and the installation of two skylights. The two casement windows are larger and do not duplicate the muntin configurations of the character-defining windows.*

4. *Staff recommends approval of the proposed dormer addition and chimney extension. The proposed dormer is generally compatible in exterior design, arrangement, texture, material and relationship to the rest of the building and the surrounding area and meets The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, in particular standards 9 and 10, and the guidelines for new additions and windows.*

REVIEW COMMITTEE:

McCauley and Stulberg visited the site as part of their review.

McCauley said that he agreed with the staff report, adding that the dormer addition would help make the interior space more useable and have a minimal effect on the exterior of the house. He explained that during the site visit there had been some discussion with the petitioner of the possibility of a shed dormer.

Thacher explained that they had reviewed both styles of roofs but determined that they wouldn't be able to get the necessary headroom with a shed dormer and had therefore chosen the gable dormer.

Stulberg reported that regarding the choice of material; there was a mix of materials throughout the neighborhood. He said that it helps set the addition off from the original structure.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:

Kate and Jerry Loewen, 209 Buena Vista Avenue, owners and applicants were present to answer the Commission's question.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION:

Glusac commented that she was glad to see that the proposed material on the addition was shingles siding instead of lapboard siding making it distinct from the base building. She said usually she isn't in favor of tying in a new roof ridge with an existing roof ridge, but given the low ceiling height in this situation, she felt it was appropriate. She also appreciated that the proposed dormer was minimal in width and a good design. She said she was in support of the project.

Bushkuhl asked if the existing windows on the house were replacement or original.

McCauley said that he believed that the ones on the front and side gable were sliders from the 60's and not original.

White stated that he supported the project.

A motion was made by Secretary Bushkuhl, seconded by White, that the Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for the application at 209 Buena Vista Avenue, a contributing property in the Old West Side Historic District, to add a 15' wide dormer on the rear elevation and extend the chimney, as proposed. The proposed work is compatible in exterior design, arrangement, texture, material and relationship to the rest of the house and the surrounding area and meets The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, in particular standards 9 and 10 and the guidelines for new additions and windows. On a

voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

E UNFINISHED BUSINESS

E-1 12-0179 Historic District Commission By-Laws Revisions

Thacher said she hoped the Commission had had an opportunity to review the previously presented Bylaws with the proposed revisions and asked that the Commission take action on them.

White commented that in Article 6, he would like to have the Secretary position remain and not be eliminated, in case the Chair and Vice Chair were not able to serve at a meeting.

McCauley said he didn't have an issue with not eliminating the position of Secretary and asked Thacher for clarification on the intention of the Secretary position.

Thacher said that the Secretary does things on an "As needed basis".

The Commission agreed to retain the position of Secretary for the HDC.

A motion was made by White, seconded by Vice Chair Stulberg, that the revised Historic District Commission Bylaws be Approved as Amended. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

F NEW BUSINESS

F-1 12-0180 Report on the Historic Street Exhibit Program

Louisa Piper gave a comprehensive report on the Ann Arbor Historic Street Exhibit Program and presented a documentary film. She mentioned that their website is aastreet.org.

Grace Shackman and Ray Detter also participated.

The Commission expressed their appreciation of the historic exhibits located around town, noting that they are a great way for visitors to get a history lesson about the town while passing through.

F-2 12-0181 Historic District Commission Annual Report to City Council

Thacher presented the Annual Report.

A motion was made by White, seconded by Chair McCauley, that the Historic District Commission Annual Report be Approved. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

G AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION-PUBLIC COMMENTARY - (3 Minutes per Speaker)

H APPROVAL OF MINUTES

H-1 12-0182 Historic District Commission Meeting Minutes of the January 12, 2012

A motion was made that the January 12, 2012 HDC Meeting Minutes be Approved by the Commission and forwarded to the City Council. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

I REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Glusac reported that there will be an Architectural Historian conference held in Detroit. She would forward more information to the Commission if they were interested.

J ASSIGNMENTS

J-1 Review Committee: Monday, March 5, at noon for the March 8, 2012 Regular Session

Stulberg and McCauley volunteered for the March Review Committee.

K REPORTS FROM STAFF

K-1 [12-0183](#) January 2012 Staff Activities

Thacher noted that there had been a renewed interest in the 415 W. Washington site. She reported that there is an informal citizen committee that is looking into possible uses for the site. She said they have focusing on the Allen Creek Greenway, since it runs underground of the site, as well as the possibility of using the building as a cultural art center or similar use.

Thacher told the Commission that she is in the process of setting up a meeting on site and that eventually the Commission will have to determine which buildings are contributing and which ones are not to the Old West Side Historic District. She offered to forward compiled historical data, from the site, to the Commission.

Received and Filed

L CONCERNS OF COMMISSIONERS

M COMMUNICATIONS

N ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was unanimously adjourned.

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- Video on Demand: Replay public meetings at your convenience online at www.a2gov.org/government/city_administration/communicationsoffice/ctn/Pages/VideoOnDemand.aspx
- Cable: Watch CTN Channel 16 public meeting programming via Comcast Cable channel 16.

The complete record of this meeting is available in video format at www.a2gov.org/ctn, on "The Meeting Place" page (<http://www.a2gov.org/livemeetings>), or is available for a nominal fee by contacting CTN at (734) 794-6150.