

## MINUTES

### HARRISBURG ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD REGULAR MEETING

January 5, 2009

THE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. CITY GOVERNMENT CENTER  
PUBLIC SAFETY AUDITORIUM, ROOM 213

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Kristen McKissick, Chair  
Michael Snyder, Vice Chair  
Art Emerick, Asst. Codes Administrator  
Bill Fontana

**STAFF PRESENT:** Candace H. Stowell, Deputy Director  
Craig D. Peiffer, Urban Planner

**OTHERS PRESENT:** See attached attendance signature sheet.

**CALL TO ORDER:** 6:00 P.M.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Mr. Fontana moved and Mr. Emerick seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the December, 2008 meeting as presented. The Board approved the motion by a vote of 4-0.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

##### **1 1101 North Second Street to replace a projecting sign at the Midtown Tavern**

Mr. Peiffer gave a synopsis of the case report, recommending approval with conditions.

The case was represented by Thomas Ntzanis and Sotirios Ntzanis.

Thomas Ntzanis provided documentation indicating that the replacement sign would be elliptical in shape and approximately the same width as the existing sign. Staff stated that the sign was a non-conforming use, and therefore, any deviation from the existing condition would require review from the Zoning Hearing Board. The HARB members stated they preferred the elliptical shape in lieu of the existing rectangular shape and suggested an approval of the proposed

design pending zoning compliance. Staff offered to meet with the applicant on the following day to review the process for seeking zoning review.

Thomas Ntzanis stated that the proposed sign would be painted to finish, with an aluminium edgeband and raised lettering. Sotirios Ntzanis provided a sample board of the proposed sign and lettering. The HARB members indicated their acceptance of the style and finish. Staff stated a prerequisite of approval is the submission of documentation that clearly specifies the dimensions and finish of the sign and lettering, and indicating such information is typically provided as a shop drawing. The applicant agreed to provide said documentation, to be submitted on the following business day.

Mr. Fontana asked if the applicant would consider Staff's recommendation to relocate the sign to the corner. Thomas Ntzanis stated that it would be confusing to the patrons, as the corner door was only used as an emergency exit. Sotirios Ntzanis added that he felt the sign would be more visible from Second Street in its current location.

Thomas Ntzanis asked if the HARB had any preference as to the sign material being either painted plywood or painted PVC. The HARB members indicated they did not have a preference, as the finished product would be painted and have similar characteristics to the existing wood sign.

Mr. Fontana moved and Mr. Emerick seconded the motion to approve the request with the conditions listed in the staff report, with the additional condition to permit an elliptical sign measuring 36" x 48" in lieu of the existing rectangular sign pending zoning compliance. The Board approved the motion by a vote of 4-0.

**2     300 North Second Street for an after-the-fact review, for window replacement at the Commerce Building**

Mr. Peiffer gave a synopsis of the case report, recommending approval with conditions.

The case was represented by Neal West, Vice President, Real Estate and Legal Counsel, Harristown Development Corporation and Bradley Jones, Vice President, Community Development, Harristown Development Corporation.

Mr. West stated that he and Mr. Jones were acting on behalf of the owner. He summarized the events that led to the meeting, citing the owner was unaware that his contractor had not pulled requisite building permits; was unaware that the building was in an historic district or was deemed significant; and assumed

that when the scaffolding permit was issued, it would have triggered any other review requirements.

Mr. West questioned the significance of the property, citing excerpts from the case report that the building is 1950's era in a predominantly 19<sup>th</sup> century district, and as a commercial office was considered an intrusion. Mr. West added that the window replacements were part of overall improvements, including new HVAC, cooling tower and asbestos removal valued at two million dollars. He concluded that these efforts would increase the lifespan of the building, while addressing the efficiency and amenities desired by prospective tenants.

Mr. West specifically addressed the windows, stating the existing units were energy deficient, and there was a constant concern with their operation, awning type with no screens, allowing for items to accidentally fall out. He added that the renovation goals were to increase energy efficiency to a LEED Gold Standard. He referenced a letter provided by Enginuity, LLC, wherein it was stated that anything less than the specified window would drastically reduce the overall energy efficiency. He also referenced a sample window and stated that the tinting was an imperative component of energy efficiency. He concluded that the replacement window did not change the overall size and was simple in design, and therefore, indicative of the building style. He also added that 116 Pine Street, an adjacent International Style building has replacement windows that are fixed-in-place with a dark bronze tint.

Mr. West stated that the owner has no issue with other staff recommendations, including storing an example(s) of the original windows, and that he would continue to work with Staff and the HARB for future plans for the first floor commercial space, building entry and lobby. More specifically, he was looking for a compromise on the replacement windows, as they were all ordered and being stored off-site awaiting installation.

Mr. Jones stated that as managers of other large buildings in the downtown, and having an understanding of real estate investments, this property owner was making dramatic improvements and preserving what has been a long-time stagnant building.

Mr. Fontana asked staff to explain the condition of approval pertaining to the west facade. Mr. Peiffer replied that staff would accept the existing windows being relocated to the lower six floors of the west facade, as they would be mostly obscured from view.

Ms. McKissick stated that she has an issue with an after-the-fact approval when this process was a known factor when working within historic districts. She

added that the comparison of other adjacent international styles were examples of how changes in fenestration had radically changed their appearance, and resulted in a contemporary style. She inquired as to the trade-off for significant changes, and asked how this case report would differ when changes were proposed for the first floor. She clarified, asking the HARB Members to determine if there was value to mid-century buildings, i.e. do they deserve protection. She added that it appeared as though the applicant's position was to preserve their investment, having already purchased the windows.

Mr. Fontana asked the applicant's representatives if the concern with staff conditions was only in reference to window tint. Mr. West replied that it was of primary concern. He added that items such as the spandrel panels could be maintained as is, or replaced to match the aesthetics of the replacement windows. Mr. Peiffer addressed the issue of window tinting. He stated that LEED Certification was voluntary. He added that it is based upon a holistic approach to energy efficiency and evaluated on a point system. He indicated that if tinting were critical to the function of the windows, then the LEED evaluation sheet should be provided as part of the application. He asserted that tinting is primarily related to heat gain and glare and that there are a variety of solutions that provide a similar result, e.g. internal light shelves and integral blinds, which may also produce an additional point(s) toward certification. Mr. Fontana stated he was not concerned with the window tint and added that he didn't feel this structure was commonly viewed as historic. He also suggested that the existing spandrel panel should be maintained and that the HARB should consider the opportunity to discuss the first floor and corner sign. Mr. Peiffer replied that if the HARB were to approve the replacement windows as proposed, then staff would concur with the applicant's position that the smooth-face dark bronze spandrel panels were more appropriate than the existing corrugated aluminum.

Mr. Snyder inquired how the proposed changes in this application differed from the previous month's review of 201 North Front Street-Hickok House. Ms. McKissick replied that the Hickok House Proposal dramatically altered the structure essentially demolishing it, whereas this proposal does alter the fenestration, but maintains and improves leasable space in the downtown. Mr. Fontana noted that the HARB did not concern itself with previous changes to International Styles buildings, citing the property at 108-114 North Second Street. Ms. McKissick clarified that 300 North Second Street is indicative of the mid-century International Style, whereas the other buildings cited were more of vernacular interpretations. She elaborated by stating the windows were character defining features of the style, but that the question remains as to whether the HARB deems the style as worthy of review. Mr. Emerick replied that if the HARB were to consider all styles within an historic district, then the replacement windows were a significant change of character-defining features.

The HARB Members agreed that their charge was to review character-defining features and that energy efficiency and cost were not part of their purview. Ms. McKissick inquired at what percentage cost becomes excessive, thus permitting the HARB to consider the introduction of a new feature of reasonable value. Mr. Emerick stated that the HARB has provided much greater level of scrutiny for the homeowner, and Ms. McKissick replied that residential units are of a different scale, and therefore, a different value. Mr. Snyder inquired if the review should be taken from the standpoint of the "touch zone." Mr. Emerick replied that the touch zone was not relevant, as the building's scale allowed for it to be viewed in its entirety, unlike the typical two to three story residential application. Ms. McKissick added that it's the ability to view the building in its entirety that also has value.

Ms. McKissick indicated that if the HARB was not concerned with the replacement windows, then review of the ground floor is moot, as the decision would render International Style Buildings exempt from review. Mr. Fontana reiterated his position that he did not feel the replacement windows represented a significant change.

Mr. Fontana stated that the east side of Second Street is slowly being altered, as it is not within the historic district, and that this application may be approved by City Council when considering the investment value. He asked the HARB Members if by denying this application, they were also losing their ability of reasonable negotiation. Mr. Emerick replied the applicant was within their rights to pursue a City Council review, but that HARB is obligated to meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

In reference to the mullion configuration, Mr. Snyder stated that he felt appearance was more significant than function, acknowledging faux divided lite as an acceptable solution to truly divided lite. Ms. McKissick stated that her concern was with the configuration of multiple units arranged as a whole, and that once altered; the degree of alteration becomes irrelevant. Mr. Emerick recommended that HARB deny the alterations as not meeting the Secretary's Standards, and allow the applicant to appeal the decision to Council. The HARB Members concluded that this application did not preserve the historic character of the building.

Mr. Jones empathized with the HARB's position, but stated consideration should be given to economic development. He cited the importance of, and difficulty in attracting office tenants and private investment to the downtown, particularly in the current economic climate. Ms. McKissick concurred with Mr. Jones'

statement, but acknowledged that the review is after-the-fact, which eliminated an opportunity for dialogue on the design of the replacement windows

Mr. Emerick moved and Mr. Snyder seconded the motion to deny the request. The Board approved the motion by a vote of 4-0.

#### OTHER BUSINESS:

### 3 1519-25 North Front Street, Riverview Manor, project introduction for window replacement

Daniel Deitchman introduced himself as the owner of the subject property and stated that it is currently unoccupied and undergoing interior renovations. He advised that he has met once with City Staff to review the project scope. He noted that the purpose of a project introduction to HARB was to discuss the replacement of windows and gain feedback on the various options; he indicated that he would be back before HARB for a formal review as early as February.

Mr. Deitchman stated that the existing windows are original, painted steel, with fixed panes surrounding operable casement windows. He added that the glazing is truly divided, single pane, clear glass. He stated that there a significant amount of windows on the property, as it is a detached structure. He indicated that many of the units are deteriorated, with broken panes, inoperable casements and rusted steel; and therefore, are also energy deficient.

Mr. Deitchman indicated that he has investigated approximately twenty options for window replacements, and needed to ascertain what changes would be appropriate to help control costs, while also maintaining historic character. He indicated that he was looking for an option that was less costly than steel, but more in-keeping with the character than vinyl. He added that one complexity was to provide the thin window frames and mullions of steel when using a substitute material, and how to recreate the appearance of divided lite when using double paned glass. He stated that he would fabricate and install a replacement window for HARB review in advance of the formal application.

The HARB recommended that Staff review previous cases, such as the previously approved window replacement at the Grayco Apartments, and determine if the units on the upper floors could use substitute materials or modified window frames/mullions, as one possible option for HARB consideration.

4 Election of Officers

Mr. Fontana moved and Mr. Emerick seconded the motion to elect Kristen McKissick as Board Chair and Michael Snyder as Board Vice-Chair, for one year, with the option to succeed themselves, as per Article VIII of the HARB By-Laws, dated January 1986.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Mr. Emerick moved and Mr. Fontana seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion was adopted by unanimous vote and the meeting adjourned at 8:00 P.M.