



Living with History

MINUTES

CITY OF MILWAUKEE

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

Monday, August 17, 2009, 3:00 PM

Room 301A, Milwaukee City Hall

Matt Jarosz, Chair
Sandra McSweeney, Vice Chair
Sandy Ackerman, Pat Balon, Ald. Robert Bauman,
Randy Bryant, Ann Pieper Eisenbrown

1. ROLL CALL

Vice Chair Sandra McSweeney called the meeting to order at 3:00 P.M.
Commissioners Present: Sandy Ackerman, Pat Balon, Ald. Robert Bauman, Randy Bryant, Ann Pieper Eisenbrown
Commissioners Excused: Matt Jarosz
Staff Present: Carlen Hatala, Vanessa Koster

2. MINUTES

Approval of the July 20, 2009 Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes

THE MOTION: Pat Balon moved and Sandy Ackerman seconded a motion to approve the minutes from the July 20, 2009 meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

None

4. PUBLIC HEARING

None

5. OLD BUSINESS

Certificate of Appropriateness for the relocation of the masonry gatehouse/guardhouse that once stood at the top of the reservoir at Kilbourn/Reservoir Park, 626 E. North Avenue and 701 E. Garfield (Kilbourn/Reservoir Park Historic District) (6th and 3rd Ald. Districts)

Staff Carlen Hatala summarized the proposal for setting the building down on a concrete slab and cleaning the brick. The building is a contributing feature to the historic district.

Water Department commissioner Carrie Lewis and Ald. Nic Kovac were recognized. Ms. Lewis explained that they had been unable to come up with a new use for the gatehouse. There had been discussions with neighbors, surveys and other persons. The building was a target for graffiti when it stood at the top of the reservoir. Although officials were tempted to get rid of the building, the residents were evenly divided between keeping and getting rid of the building so it was decided to keep the building. Since the park has been redeveloped, there is a lot of activity and the neighborhood is keeping an eye on it.

In answer to questions by the commissioners Ms. Lewis indicated that the building has no lighting, the park closes at 10 PM and that lights along all the paths are turned off at that time. The baseball diamond needs refurbishing and maybe after that is done there will be landscaping at the gatehouse. A location closer to the street where the gatehouse would be more visible wasn't planned for as they had assumed the building would be demolished.

There are no security cameras on the building. Commissioners suggested that a motion detector light be installed and Carrie Lewis said they would consider it.

Resident Christine Prevetti was recognized. She had concerns that the building was a magnet for graffiti and drug dealing. She wanted better maintenance at the park. She suggested that the building could be a soccer warming house or have some use.

Ald. Bauman suggested moving the building to a DPW storage site until another location could be found or it could be sold to the public. Staff indicated that the building was a contributing feature of the historic district and should remain with the park. It was the original building associated with the reservoir.

Carrie Lewis said that given the wishes of the neighbors, they would see how things worked out and try this for two years. If there were continued problems, the Water Department would come back to the commission for permission to demolish the building.

THE MOTION: Pat Balon moved and Sandy Ackerman seconded a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness as per staff report. The motion carried unanimously.

Certificate of Appropriateness for replacement windows at 2600-2602 E. Bradford Avenue (North Point North Historic District) (3rd Ald. District)

Staff Carlen Hatala gave a summary of the project.

Commissioners concluded that one-over-one sash windows flanking the center picture window were more appropriate for the duplex and matched the rest of the windows on the house unlike the single paned casements the owner suggested.

THE MOTION: Randy Bryant moved and Ann Pieper Eisenbrown seconded a motion to approve one-over-one sash windows flanking the center picture window, that they be all wood construction, and that the low-e glass be clear and non-tinted. The motion carried unanimously.

Modification to previously issued Certificate of Appropriateness for retaining wall at 1701 N. Humboldt Avenue. New materials proposed. (Coin Appliances) (Brady Street Historic District) (3rd Ald. District)

Staff Carlen Hatala summarized the project. The owner wanted to change the materials to Keystone block and lengthen the retaining wall.

Architect Russ LaFrambois and the owner Eric Levendusky were recognized. Mr. LaFrambois indicated that Paul Jakubovich had issued a staff COA for a new retaining wall to be constructed of poured concrete walls, stamped with a stone pattern, that would be topped by a wood fence. The owner and architect since found out from engineers (Giles) that this would require sheet pilings and a foundation. This could impact the garage at the adjacent property. It already has cracks in its wall. They had explored a number of pre-cast options and techniques. The Keystone product would not require a foundation, just a concrete pad. Geofabric would be laid down into the sloping earth and this would stabilize the earth. Mr. LaFrambois said this product had been used in other applications such as at

the lakefront with the Mandel Lake Bluff Apartments (now condos). He said the block wall there was nearly vertical.

Mr. Levendusky showed photos of a retaining wall around a parking pad at a building on the south side of Brady Street. It was built of interlocking blocks. Staff reported that the work had been done without a COA.

Commissioners discussed the ability of the Keystone product to stand up without a foundation. They suggested that the retaining wall could be moved in away from the slope a bit more in order to install the necessary pilings without damage to the neighbor's garage. Mr. LaFrambois said it would take space away from the parking lot. The commissioners also discussed the merits of its appearance, color and how appropriate it was for historic districts and how publically visible this site was. The commission had not approved this product before because of its uniform, manmade, suburban appearance and that they had to be consistent in their decisions.

THE MOTION: Pat Balon moved and Sandy Ackerman seconded a motion to deny the request for a Certificate of appropriateness for the use of Keystone block for the retaining wall. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioners urged the applicant to keep exploring other options. Ald. Bauman said they would have the right to appeal the denial and go to the Common Council to plead economic hardship grounds. Mr. LaFrambois asked if the owner could replace the existing timbers in the retaining wall with new timbers and the commissioners answered yes.

6. NEW BUSINESS

Certificate of Appropriateness for removal and rebuilding of front terrace; repointing of brick and stone at house, garage and four chimneys and treatment of spalled stone at 2433 N. Wahl Avenue. (North Point North Historic District) (3rd Ald. District)

Staff Carlen Hatala reviewed the project. She indicated that before the meeting, the owner had contacted her to indicate that the work done might not be as extensive as first proposed.

Commissioners wanted drawings of the terrace before it was removed. They also wanted to make sure the mortar and details would be monitored by staff.

THE MOTION: Randy Bryant moved and Ann Pieper Eisenbrown seconded a motion to approve the project per staff report and add that landscaping should be returned to the front of the house and add that the slate cannot be removed from the house but be maintained. The motion carried unanimously.

Certificate of Appropriateness for repair and replacement of the cornice at 735 N. Water Street (First National/First Wisconsin National Bank Building) (4th Ald. District)

Staff Carlen Hatala summarized the project. The condition of the cornice and fear of its removal were the factors leading to the historic designation of the building.

Robert Forr from Spray-O-Bond was recognized. The company has worked on 466 jobs on historic buildings over the last 16 years. Terra cotta restoration was their specialty. Mr. Forr said he had been unaware of the COA process. He then presented detailed images of the cornice that documented its damage, removal and repair, including reproduction of some of the terra cotta elements.

In answer to questions by the commissioners, Mr. Forr indicated that the cause of the cornice failure was due to poor anchors, weak joints and flashings, inappropriate mortar, and inappropriate repairs. When asked about the difference between real terra cotta and substitutes like GFRC, a cement based material, he said he was finding a lot of failure around the country with the use of GFRC and when inserted between real terra cotta, it affects those pieces and is not compatible. It is cheaper but is a temporary fix for only 5 to 10 years.

Mr. Forr concluded by reporting that the nets were coming down and the project was near completion.

THE MOTION: Randy Bryant moved and Pat Balon seconded a motion to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the cornice repair and replacement at 735 N. Water Street. The motion carried unanimously.

Certificate of Appropriateness for recladding frame building with fiber cement board at 912-914 N. 28th Street. (Concordia Historic District) (4th Ald. District)

Staff Carlen Hatala reported that the work was in progress when it was called to the attention of historic preservation staff. The owner had not applied for a COA to change material on his building. The use of fiber cement material for cladding a historic building had not been allowed by the commission before and the commission had denied use of this product at the June meeting. The applicant had applied for a COA in 2000 for porch work and was aware he was in a historic district.

The owner was not present at the meeting. Ald. Bauman advocated for the applicant stating that this duplex was in a marginal location in the Concordia Historic District and adjacent to an alley in which there was a lot of crime. He said the building had been a mess when the owner purchased it and the owner was making improvements. He said the owner was doing the best he could and was working with DNS to correct citations and because of that had mistakenly thought that he did not need to contact historic preservation staff.

Commissioners agreed that the owner could not plead ignorance of the requirements. They also agreed that they could not make exceptions. They could not deny this product at one meeting and allow the next. Almost everyone coming before the commission pleads hardship. The commission cannot be arbitrary and capricious. They asked if there was a way to mitigate the hardship, for example, by using tax credits. Staff added that DNS orders typically have verbiage about seeing the historic preservation section if they are in a historic district before starting to correct violations.

Bruce Marn was recognized. He reported that he was an old friend of the owners and that his friend's heart was in the right place. The owner was doing all the work himself and had purchased enough material to complete the south and a part of the north elevations.

THE MOTION: Randy Bryant moved and Pat Balon seconded a motion to deny the use of fiber cement material for the exterior cladding. The commission asked that DNS allow more time for the repairs to be completed. The motion carried with Ald. Bauman in opposition.

Ald. Bauman indicated that the applicant could appeal and the Common Council could consider hardship.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

The public will be allowed to comment on any of the above-listed agenda items, as the items are discussed, at the call of the chair.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

A) Update on 2604 N. Lake Drive

Staff Carlen Hatala reported that there had been calls and e-mails to the office about the project. The COA was now posted on line. It is thought that the front will be repaired to original condition once the brick arrives at the job site.

B) Randy Bryant asked if staff knew about a raze order on a property on N. 13th Street. Staff was not aware. Gail Fitch, in the audience, had been following the status of the Italianate style house, but had no new information to share.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission is Monday, September 21, 2009 at 3:00 PM, Room 301-A of City Hall, 200 E. Wells

B. Statewide historic preservation conference, Wausau, Wisconsin October 9-10, 2009

10. ADJOURNMENT

THE MOTION: There being no further business, Sandy Ackerman moved and Pat Balon seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously and the meeting concluded at 5:10 P.M.