

COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

May 22, 2014

Members Present

Susan Stilwell
Sarah Latham
Robert Weir
Richard Morris
Michael Nicholas

Members Absent

Robin Crews

Staff

Renee Burton
Scott Holtry
Christy Taylor
Clarke Whitfield
Jeannise Galloway

Chairman Stilwell called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

ITEMS FOR PUBLIC HEARING

1. *Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness, PLCAR201400086, filed by Oadie Keen, Jr. to complete the following at 903 Green Street:*
 - *Remove pipe railings on front porch and replace them with wooden hand rails and spindles. Spindles will match existing in design, but will be narrower and newel posts will match those on porch.*
 - *Install new columns on porch*

Open the Public Hearing.

Present on behalf of the request was Ms. Kamala McGee and Mr. Oadie Keen.

Mrs. Latham stated I still have the same question that I had last month. Right now the hand rails do not touch the stairs at all. This would require widening the front steps. This request did not specifically address widening the front staircase.

Mr. Keen stated she has a picture that she had taken down the street. The one we will do will look like this picture she has.

Ms. McGee showed the Commissioners pictures and there was discussion about the rails, steps, and proposed fourth column would be constructed.

There was discussion about the existing three columns and their current condition. The necessity of a fourth column was discussed.

Mr. Nicholas stated I don't believe it is our function to micromanage the specific project of every applicant that comes before us. Our job is to see what the applicant is trying to do and determine if it meets the guidelines that have been handed down from City Council. That is a yes or no question. If there is something that is specifically against a

specific Code we can put a condition on it to meet that specific Code. We cannot put a condition on it because we think it ought to be this way. When evaluating this application it is a straightforward do they meet the Design Guidelines that are handed down by City Council. Whether we think it is aesthetically pleasing or not or good design work or not is, in my opinion, irrelevant if it conforms with the guidelines.

There was discussion about the guidelines that govern CAR and the administrative process of approval.

Close the Public Hearing.

Mr. Nicholas made a motion to approve the request as submitted. Mr. Weir seconded the motion. The motion was denied by a 2-3 vote.

Mrs. Latham made a motion to approve the removal of pipe railings (part 1) and deny the installation of new columns (part 2). Mr. Morris seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote.

2. Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness, PLCAR20140000121, filed by Erik and Val-Rae Christensen to complete the following at 134 Sutherlin Avenue:

- *Remove rear detached garage and replace it with a concrete pad*
- *Install conventional gutters on front and sides of home to match those present on the rear of the home*

Open the Public Hearing.

Present on behalf of the request was Ms. Val Rae Christensen.

Mrs. Stilwell asked it is not original to the house?

Ms. Christensen responded it is not.

Mrs. Latham stated if I am looking at this correctly, this is the section you want to remove and the servant's quarters will remain. You will put a concrete pad here.

Ms. Christensen stated yes, something like Elaine Dayes.

Mr. Morris asked so right now it is just a demolition?

Ms. Christensen responded yes.

Mr. Morris asked do you have any idea when that was built?

Ms. Christensen responded Elaine said she thought it was in the 30's. My guess is the 50's.

Mrs. Latham stated it is definitely rotted and fallen down.

Mr. Nicholas asked what is wrong with the hidden gutters?

Ms. Christensen responded they have long ago failed. The water comes straight down onto the window seal on the first floor. It has actually rotted the window seal and is now coming inside the wall.

Mr. Morris asked what are these gutters on the rear of the house?

Ms. Christensen responded they are half round. I want to take them down too and replace them with regular gutters.

Mrs. Stilwell asked are they half round?

Ms. Christensen responded they are.

Mr. Nicholas stated your application now is to put up gutters that match the ones on the rear of the house.

Ms. Christensen stated that wasn't my intent.

Mrs. Burton stated she can alter that if needed. That was my interpretation from our conversation.

Mr. Nicholas asked what are you asking for?

Ms. Christensen responded I want to put up traditional, conventional gutters on that one 12' section.

Mrs. Latham asked on the front?

Ms. Christensen responded I brought pictures.

Mr. Nicholas asked will the gutters match the house?

Ms. Christensen responded I don't know what that means. It is an 1897 house. there is no such thing as a 1897 gutter.

Mr. Nicholas stated I have an 1892 house and when we put up gutters we had to make sure that the color matched.

Ms. Christensen stated we haven't painted it yet. This is the plan of the house according to the tax map. This is the only section that is visible. There is a section on the back.

Mr. Nicholas asked are you asking for the conventional to be temporary so that you can replace or repair the internal?

Ms. Christensen responded that was my initial request, yes. I would like to have them repaired, but I am not sure that it can be at this point. You can see that the metal is just hanging off. I don't know what it would take. I am sure that there is somebody that can do it, but I have yet to find them. I don't know what it would cost, but right now I need the water to quit coming into my house.

Mr. Nicholas stated I don't think you are going to get any push back from a one year fix. I think we need more information on the permanent gutters.

Mrs. Latham stated we might want you to get an estimate on repairing the internal gutters.

Mr. Whitfield stated I think you are going to have to take it as it is.

Mr. Nicholas asked what gutters do you want to put up there?

Mrs. Latham asked what would be your permanent fix?

Ms. Christensen responded if they can be fixed, right now I am just nervous because I am watching my curtain wall disintegrate. If they can be fixed and fixed permanently, I don't have a problem doing that.

Mr. Morris stated I don't know if a temporary gutter is going to solve that problem because in order to put a temporary gutter there your water has to get to it. It is probably not going to get to it.

Ms. Christensen stated I will probably have to put on some type of roofing.

Mr. Nicholas stated I am looking for details about the type of gutter, size, and color.

Ms. Christensen stated I don't know. I didn't realize I needed to do that kind of research.

There was discussion about how internal gutters work and to repair them.

Ms. Christensen asked what is it that you want from me at this point? Do I resubmit? Do I explain to you here and now what it is that I want? What kind of research are you requiring of me?

Mr. Morris asked are you only asking for this one little section?

Ms. Christensen responded it is a 12' section. It is the only section that is visible.

Mr. Morris asked what other portions of the house has gutters?

Ms. Christensen responded just the back.

Mr. Nicholas stated that makes a difference for me. Your request is for that one 12' section. You're not asking to replace all of the gutters. I don't have a problem with it. There is a difference between replacing a 12' section because water is coming in and redoing all of the gutters. Eventually, I anticipate a request to redo all of the gutters.

Ms. Christensen stated yes, I have to do something. I have a section on the other side of the house where water is coming in a little bit, but that part is not visible.

There was discussion about replacing like with like.

Close the Public Hearing.

Mr. Nicholas made a motion to approve the request as submitted. Mrs. Latham seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote.

3. *Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness, PLCAR20140000122, filed by Mount Vernon United Methodist Church at 107 W Main Street to install a new entry door from the playground.*

Open the Public Hearing.

Present on behalf of the request was Ms. Beth Bauman.

Mrs. Latham stated you are simply removing a window and placing a door there to match the door that you already have.

Ms. Bauman stated exactly.

Close the Public Hearing.

Mrs. Latham made a motion to approve the request as submitted. Mr. Weir seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote.

APPROVAL OF THE MINTUES

Mrs. Latham made a motion to approve the April 24, 2014 minutes. Mr. Morris seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs. Burton reminded the Commissioners of the Monument/Berryman Master Plan public meeting being held and the cases for next month's meeting.

There was discussion about potential applicants for CAR.

Mr. Whitfield introduced Ms. Jeannise Galloway, Assistant City Attorney.

Allison Platt was present to discuss potential modifications to the Design Guidelines.

Ms. Platt stated my charge is to redo the guidelines that works for you and is clear for the people applying to the Commission. The first thing I would like to discuss is having guidelines for historic buildings, non-contributing buildings, and new buildings if that happens.

Mr. Nicholas stated I think it is clear from the requirements that we care about aesthetics, not building structure. The reason for that is, if it is not visible from a public right-of-way we don't have any jurisdiction. I can put in vinyl windows all day long as long as they are not visible from a public right-of-way. I view the reasoning behind the guidelines as to aesthetically preserve the look of the house, not necessarily the actual materials in the house. If someone could put in vinyl windows and have them look exactly like wood windows, I would like to have a guideline that would allow that. If you can aesthetically match the historic character of the house, or instead of like with like you replace like with new materials that looks the same I think the guidelines ought to allow that.

Mrs. Stilwell asked even on historic buildings?

Mr. Nicholas responded yes, because we don't care about the materials on the building because we have that public right-of-way. We only care about the aesthetics. If we actually care about the materials used in the structure of the house then there would be a requirement that any change whether publically visible or not would have to have wood and not vinyl. As long as we care about aesthetics then we should have the flexibility to make it aesthetically equivalent or appropriate. Let them use the cheaper, more efficient, new material.

Mr. Whitfield stated she might have a really good point about contributing verses non-contributing structures.

Mrs. Stilwell stated I think we should have both.

Ms. Platt stated I am a little surprised that it is only visible from public right-of-way for distinguished historic structures.

There was discussion about the consequences of the purview regarding public right-of-way visibility mandated by the State.

Mrs. Latham stated the two issues since I have been on the Board have been non-contributing structures and do they have the same set of standards. Right now they do. There are always new types of materials being invented that could in fact, be superior to the original materials. Right now we don't have leeway to do that. I agree with Michael. I think we do need to have that leeway. The other thing that I would like to see is infill in

the overlay district because as we continue to tear down structures there are zero guidelines for appropriate infill.

Ms. Platt stated we have the beginnings of those. They are mostly for commercial buildings in the River District but they can be adopted for residential use as well.

Mrs. Latham asked is there anything in State law that would prevent us from having this as a part of our guidelines?

Mrs. Burton responded no. Right now they are just in review anyway.

There was discussion about using Azek wood as fascia board as an acceptable material.

Mr. Nicholas stated I have no problem with that because we don't have jurisdiction over the materials on the house. It is aesthetics from a public right-of-way.

Ms. Platt stated you do have jurisdiction if your guidelines say they have to replace like with like.

Mr. Nicholas stated they don't say you have to. They say you can replace like with like. If you are not going to replace like with like then it has to follow the guidelines but only if visible from a public right-of-way.

There was discussion about several existing properties and the materials.

Mr. Morris asked doesn't the Secretary of the Interior's guidelines cover all of this? I am pretty sure they do. I am wondering why we don't follow those same guidelines. It will cover a lot of what we are discussing here.

Mrs. Latham stated those are national guidelines that are very strict.

There was discussion about the Secretary of the Interior's guidelines.

Mrs. Stilwell stated one of the issues that we deal with is roofing.

Mr. Nicholas stated if you make people replace a tin roof with a tin roof, you are never going to get somebody to buy a tin roof house.

Mrs. Latham stated we had this discussion one time a number of months ago about easing the roofing issue and making it easier for people to switch from tin to something like shingles. It could be the difference between buying the house and not buying the house.

Mrs. Stilwell stated we would like to hear what is happening on other Commission of Architectural Review Boards. We are all facing the same issues. How is it being dealt with?

Ms. Platt responded everyone is facing the same issues that I am aware of. The roof issue is a big one. I think we are at a watershed moment with organizations like this one in trying to save houses.

Mrs. Stilwell asked we will have a public hearing on the new guidelines correct?

Mrs. Burton responded absolutely. The current schedule is to have a public hearing with Planning Commission in November and with City Council in December.

Mr. Whitfield asked would you all like to have a public hearing before it goes to Planning Commission?

Mrs. Burton responded theirs will be in October. We will have all three. We will also have a community meeting.

Ms. Platt stated we had discussed earlier about taking the area that is essentially the Rental District and creating relaxed standards there for materials, but what I am hearing from you is that you wouldn't mind if the relaxed materials applied to the whole district.

Mr. Nicholas stated yes.

Ms. Platt stated ok that is good. It makes it simpler. Let's talk about non-contributing buildings and potential new buildings. How do you feel about those? Non-contributing structures in most districts are basically left out. Sometimes they will have to come before the Commission for signs or parking issues but generally if it is a metal building with vinyl windows nobody seems to care if they replace the vinyl windows; however if the building goes away and is replaced by something else, my recommendation would be that you have fairly good standards for what can be put in its place. There is not really a lot of purpose in demanding that non-contributing buildings have wood windows if it never had wood windows.

There was discussion about a recent case involving vinyl replacement windows, other non-contributing buildings, and appropriate infill was discussed.

Mrs. Latham stated I think new construction needs to be harmonious in mass and scale. I don't think we need to freeze ourselves in time, but then again you don't want an igloo set between Victorian mansions. You want the harmony.

Ms. Platt stated that is very helpful. I think one of the things that the guidelines can do, which I have done in the past particularly for commercial buildings is you show a really

stupid example to show a new use that does not harmonize and a modern building that fits into the context and it is a matter of setback and scale.

Mrs. Stilwell stated setback is insanely important.

There was discussion about particular properties that have setback issues.

Ms. Platt asked what about materials for new buildings?

Mrs. Stilwell responded we don't have that much brick in the Old Westend.

Mr. Morris asked can't you just say materials compatible with the neighborhood?

Ms. Platt responded ok, is there anything else?

Mrs. Stilwell stated I think the setback, the windows, the roofline having gables; those are the kind of things that make a new house compatible.

Ms. Platt asked what about uses? What if a use changes? If you have a big house that changes from a residential structure to a home office or lawyer's office. You then have issues with signage, parking, and site issues. What are your feelings about that?

Mrs. Stilwell responded I am opposed to business use.

Mrs. Latham stated I liked your proposals in the Rental District. You talked about changing zoning to allow situations for owner/occupied with a business or the possibility of appropriate multi-family use.

Mr. Nicholas stated we are getting outside of our purview. That is a zoning issue.

Mrs. Latham stated well yeah, so I don't know. We had before us whether to allow a duplex in a single family home that was within our purview.

Mrs. Burton stated no. The only thing before you at that time was a request for a waiver for parking. The actual use going from a single family to a duplex is a zoning issue.

There was discussion about the impact of zoning issues.

Ms. Platt stated we are going to have site guidelines that will weigh heavily on that. If you have an office use for a home office and you have somebody working there besides you, or if you have several units where are those people going to park? Our standards will allow parking, but how they get access and how you deal with screening are issues that will have to be addressed.

Mrs. Stilwell stated that has to go to the Planning Commission. One of the things we worked on when I was on the Planning Commission was shared parking within 300 feet.

Main Street is full of church parking. They had to have an agreement for parking use, but that took the pressure off of having to tear down the house next door to put in a parking lot or paving the entire back yard. I think the shared parking works relatively well.

Mrs. Burton stated oh yes, we try to encourage shared parking.

There was discussion about parking allowance and availability.

There was discussion about the allowed home occupations permitted in the Zoning Code.

Ms. Platt asked for each Commissioner's contact information.

Mrs. Stilwell asked does your ARB allow Hardie board?

Ms. Platt responded yes it does.

Mrs. Stilwell stated I am excited.

Ms. Platt stated if you think of anything call me. By the way, we were thinking of taking the first chapter of the River District Guidelines that talks about administration. One thing that I would suggest that you go ahead and do is a two part approval. That would give you the opportunity, in a situation that is tricky, to say no it doesn't meet the guidelines but yes we approve it.

Mr. Nicholas asked would that allow for the opposite? Yes it meets the guidelines but no we don't approve it.

Ms. Platt responded if it meets the guidelines you have to approve it.

Mr. Nicholas stated if it meets the guidelines then there is no second vote.

Ms. Platt stated we always have a second vote. It is a formality but it is a good formality.

Mrs. Stilwell asked once we get these can we do a dog and pony show for the Association of Realtors?

Mrs. Burton responded absolutely. When we have our public meeting there will be postcards mailed to every resident of the Old Westend and key players of the area such as realtors and contractors.

Ms. Platt stated ok that was very helpful.

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Approved