

COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

October 13, 2017

Members Present

Susan Stilwell
Sean Davis
Michael Nicholas
Robert Weir

Members Absent

Robin Crews
Robert Stowe
Jeffrey Bond

Staff

Ken Gillie
Lisa Jones

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm

ITEMS FOR PUBLIC HEARING

1. Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness, PLCAR20170000222, filed by Jefferson B. Corbett to remove two (2) chimneys below the roof line at 864 Pine Street.

Mr. Nicholas opened the Public Hearing

Mr. Jefferson B. Corbett stated I purchased the home at 864 Pine Street and particular property has two chimneys. The chimneys are taking in water and over period of time has caused water inside the chimney cavity and house cavity too. What I would like to do is remove the chimney below the roof line and repair the roof. We have a contractor standing by to take care of matters and that's about it.

Mrs. Stilwell stated are both chimneys I can see that one chimney has the quoins and the decorative on it? Does the back chimney have it also?

Mr. Corbett stated yes ma'am.

Mrs. Stilwell you can't see it by riding by I think if I climb on something then I will be able to see it.

Mr. Corbett stated if you position yourself in one particular area then you can see both chimneys.

Mrs. Stillwell stated I have been involved in historic properties for about 40 years and really chimneys do not leak. When mortar is missing they leak and when flashing is broken apart or moved back that causes leaks but chimneys truly don't leak.

Mr. Corbett stated maybe you miss what I'm saying the whole area around it has basically decayed.

Mrs. Stillwell stated it sounds like your flashing has gone bad. The flashing is the thing that goes first. When people have roof leaks about 9 out of 10 times it ends up being a flashing problem. I sold historic real estate for 37 years and I'm pretty good about knowing this kind of stuff.

Mr. Corbett stated what has happened the water has come in over a period of time and now the mortar joints are very weak. Also you could just take the bricks off with your hand cause the joints are so weak.

Mrs. Stillwell stated have you had a brick mason not a jack leg but a real brick mason look at repairing the mortar.

Mr. Corbett stated to repair the mortar we would have to go all the way down probably in the chimney cavity about 30 feet and rebuild it up.

Mrs. Stillwell stated I doubt you would have to go that deep.

Mr. Davis stated are you saying that it can not be repointed?

Mr. Corbett stated no it could not be because it is so brittle and it is coming apart.

Mrs. Stillwell stated that chimneys can be rebuilt. I lived in a stone house and I had to have a lot of the chimney work done there and then all around where the flashing had leaked when I bought this house. I had to have the flashing taken back and rebuilt wood structure around it because it had been allowed to leak the owner had lived on the first floor and two floors above it she never went up there and water never got down to the first floor.

Mr. Corbett stated that is an option too. I'm just simply saying what we prefer to do. We are not going to use those particular chimneys as a ventilation or anything of that type so therefore they are standing there about ready to fall down and for the fact of safety and also that they are leaking around it would be so simple to remove them.

Mr. Davis stated was this house bought from the City?

Mr. Corbett stated it was.

Mr. Davis stated one of the projects that the City was doing is purchasing those buildings and stabilizing the outside of the building as best as possible. Correct me if I am wrong here so people could come in and restore the inside of the homes and rock with them. I can't take down my chimneys since I know they are integral part of how my house looks and so it seems to me that they should be taking in consideration for if you were planning on doing something on the inside it may have to shift because if you are buying this house from the city the whole point was to go and further restore the homes and save the value of what the home use to be.

Mr. Corbett stated the only problem with that is when we bought the home from the city and he was told that the roof had already been inspected and it did not leak. Now at the particular time that we went in there back in January and February there were no leaks but it leaks now. When you go there and do a digital inspection close up you can see the roof line is the problem the water has decayed.

Mr. Davis stated I believe you. I think apparently a lot of what makes that house are also the chimneys. I'm going to have to have my house repointed because the old lime mortar is being removed. It seems like if you were buying a house to help restore it that this is one of the things that you would be looking at and understand that this is a complication that is coming up and you would have to tackle it. I mean I can understand removing it to rebuild it but to remove it and get rid of it you are taking what is historical part of what that house is.

Mr. Corbett stated when we purchased the home from the city the intent that the exterior of the home had already been done. From just the visual inspection the exterior of the home had been done but the exterior of the home does include the roof and that wasn't the case and we are finding a lot of things have not been done but the problem with the water coming in.

Mr. Davis stated I understand.

Mrs. Stillwell stated I would like to read to you from the architectural inventory 1971 the expert Russell Wright. He he kind of wrote a bible about the houses in the Old West End. This brick two story Italianate dwelling 3 bay facade it utilizes the bracked cornice and full length porch for depth in a relatively flat facade. The most important thing he said is the presence of the brick quoins which is unusual brick work on the chimney and on the corners is unusual in the Danville architectural inventory. I talked to one of our local architectural historian Gary Grant and he said that no other chimney exist in Danville of that style.

Mr. Nicholas stated I think the point that is trying to be made here is we are not being unsympathetic to the water damage and that you want to fix the house as any home owner is going to want to do. What steps if any are you taking in preserving or make

sure the unique architectural features of the house will not be destroyed through the action that you propose?

Mr. Corbett stated we were unaware of the requirements based on what we had to do to renovate the home from the exterior. We were told that when we walked in the problem was we needed to gut the whole house which we have done so they this was a new problem that we consider upon purchase the roof would not leak and the chimney would not bring in water.

Mr. Nicholas stated when you purchased the house were you made aware that you were purchasing the house in the Old West End.

Mr. Corbett stated oh absolutely.

Mr. Nicholas stated so you were aware of any outside modifications would be subject to the guidelines?

Mr. Corbett stated we were aware that outside modifications would be but also aware that the stipulations had already been completed.

Mr. Nicholas stated so you were not expecting this to come up?

Mr. Corbett stated no.

Mr. Nicholas is it possible for you to move the chimneys. Do what you need to do and put the chimneys back.

Mr. Corbett stated absolutely. It is very possible I mean but just getting someone to do that but I was looking at cost savings and things of that particular nature. I understand your point and your point is concerning the architectural nature of this particular chimney which I totally was unaware of but never the less, we were trying to do is save money and save cost here because we have gutted the whole house and the entire home has to be totally redone and every penny counts.

Mr. Nicholas stated what would the cost be?

Mr. Corbett stated the cost for the entire home?

Mr. Nichols stated no if we were to approve your request subject to you putting the chimneys back once the work on the roof was completed. What is the cost difference between doing that versus what you are asking us to do? How much more money

Would you have to spend?

Mr. Corbett stated probably \$3500.00.

Mr. Nicholas stated any additional questions. Continuing with this public hearing does any member of the public wish to speak on this application?

Mr. Steven Wilson 918 Main street and last meeting I handed out pictures of the chimneys and I didn't bring any extra ones because they were not on the applications today so for one thing on a general rule in the past you have rejected applications because they didn't describe what was going on or what the plan was if I hadn't spent several hours researching this myself my first impression is shared by Susan that flashing was invented for this purpose. I promised Jefferson that I would do this for half of his estimate and he wouldn't have to take the chimney off either and I have the number I will read into the record that John Holt for actually can fix this problem and I'm thinking more like \$300.00. Getting to his point that I think is interesting there is a RFP number which was closed in June 30, 2016 RFP-14-15-168 from the City of Danville for the work to be done at 864 Pine Street. This is the actual the description of the work and here is ordinance 2015-8-8 and I don't know what this is but at the bottom it has a city budget of \$21,000 in the grant. There was actually a grant from the Department of Historical Resources of the State of Virginia to do this work which I will read from RFP but it was matching funds from the city.

Mr. Nicholas stated in what year?

Mr. Wilson stated so for one thing if this organization approves this then I already contacted the Department of Historic Resources and they are going to have to meet us all at the city council meeting and go over all of this stuff because this whole process would be dysfunctional from the committee level on because there is a section in there about harming the west end but here is what they should have done. This is the write up.

Mr. Nicholas stated what year?

Mr. Wilson stated this is address to Renee May 25, 2015, this is the description the project was given to Tune & Toler and he did all this work and it describes all the nice stuff they did on the outside tearing off the back and so forth roof chimneys and gutters, tearing off gutters and repairing the hidden gutters, downspouts that are missing, repair and repoint all the brick on front chimney (match existing), install new flashing around chimneys to make weather tight seal (match existing).

Mr. Nicholas stated is this specific to this house?

Mr. Wilson stated this is called write up for 864 Pine Street yes.

Mr. Nicholas stated okay.

Mr. Wilson stated I haven't got to the other part (g) install new flashing around chimneys to make weather tight seal (match existing). I will assume that was part of the Tune & Toler project and I don't know who manages it but I do know a state project matched by the city and therefore there are certain obligations and I don't know who takes care of these projects but both of these things are from Renee. So what I would say I'm sympathetic finding efficiencies in work that is done but I think everyone should be warned that old houses have surprises that come up especially if you buy from someone who might have misrepresented something and so frankly even \$3000 would not be a major disaster in a rehab of such a fine house and now because this house was specified in what we called Hill Studio Report it's a long write up of the renovation of it and believe it or not it's on the city website Hill Studio write up and they have a table and they estimate the value of that house as pushing \$600,000 dollars. I presented my story and I think whatever happens with these chimneys removing them is going to hurt the personal value of the property to begin with but I think you guys don't care about that but if it hurts the West End as a whole I think that is what your mission is.

Mr. Nicholas stated question for the city. The work that was describe was that done?

Mr. Gillie stated I can not say yes or no. I was not the project manager at the time on that so I don't know. I would have to investigate it.

Mr. Nicholas stated who would have the answer to that question?

Mr. Gillie stated Ms. Burton was over seeing construction and then we have an inspector who would do the project management and I would have to get those folks to answer those questions.

Mr. Nicolas stated close the public hearing.

Mrs. Stillwell stated I have a real problem with using contractor that they used because I am aware of the defficiency in their concern for the work they do. This is a seriously important house historically and architecturally and as Russell Wright said in 1971, " the most unique idiom of architecturally in the Old West End" and from Gary Grant whose judgement I certainly value there are no other chimneys of this type in Danville. Even if they had ever existed from another house.

Mrs. Stilwell so I would like to move that based on the guidelines that the commission denies the request to remove the chimneys.

Mr. Nichols stated so you are saying that the request does not meet the guidelines.

Mrs. Stillwell stated does not meant the guidelines. Mr. Davis seconded the motion.

Mr. Nicholas stated the 2nd question is the more important one and that is will this have an adverse effect? I would like to know is did the city screw the pooch on this one. It is one of two things either the City did what it was suppose to do they fixed the house and everything was hunky dory this gentleman bought it and now the roof leaks and that happens all the time. The second option is the City was supposed to do it and didn't and they did a chivy job and gentleman bought the house and he bought a ticking time bomb of a leaking roof and that was supposed to be fixed and he is going to be the one to settle with it. That is something that I would like to know.

Mr. Davis stated it sounds like the report that was being read off after the fact and that Tune & Toler stated that they repaired the front chimney and flash the chimney also so that report was written to sound like that was what they had completed the bill of sales. If it wasn't written as a bill of sales but was written as an proposal was not met at all for the front at least but I don't know about the back. I don't think there was anything for the back chimney that was stated. So it does bring up the fact that report issued after the bill of sales on what they had completed and done so either they cheated the City or the contractor proposal and they didn't complete the bill of contract and so they are still outstanding on the contract.

Mrs. Stillwell stated but if that is the case you know Mr. Corbett has an issue with the City for failure to disclosure work that was supposedly done or not done. That does not change the fact that these chimneys are too valuable to allowed to be destroyed.

Mr. Davis stated I guess that brings up my point if the City did not perform due diligence with this contract is this something that we need to be talking about is this something that we need to deny right now and let that become a legal issue cause that is really falling off outside of our relm.

Mrs. Stillwell stated buyers are expected to have their own due diligence. I've never allowed a buyer to proceed with a contract without saying if you don't have a home inspection of every item I'm going to write in this contract that you acknowledge that you were warned to have it and you chose not to you have no recourse.

Mr. Weir stated not the function of this Commission that we have done what we can do now it is something between the owner and the City to find out why that either wasn't done or inadequately done.

Mr. Nicholas stated so the question before us is would this request have an adverse effect on the Old West End.

Mrs. Stillwell stated I will move that it will have a terrible adverse effect on this property and on the Old West End.

Mr. Nicholas stated you motion to deny this application.

Mrs. Stillwell stated my motion is to deny the application because of the suffice of this property. Mr. Weir seconded the motion.

The motion to hear the request was denied by a 4-0 vote.

2. Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness, PLCAR20170000224, filed by Powers Signs to add an awning sign over the entrance of the Advanced Wound Center at 142 South Main Street.

Mr. Nicholas opened the Public Hearing.

Mr. Tom Powers with Powers Signs. The hospital has asked that we build an awning it actually does not project past the brick structure it brightens up the entrance way it is an employee entrance but right now it looks like nothing for an employee. What they are asking to do is put the awning here and secondary remove the sign that is out here on the street. There are two signs one of them parking over near the Mount Vernon Church entrance that one would remain and this one they want to remove now. An organization that has 74 hospitals or whatever they got and the person I'm dealing with says they want to remove it that could change but that is what the plan is right now so when I say that I'm not 100% sure. Somebody might come back and say paint this.

Mr. Nicholas stated the staff agrees this meets the guidelines.

Mr. Nicholas Close the Public Hearing.

Mr. Weir I move that we approve the application as submitted and that it does meet the guidelines. Mr. Davis seconded the motion.

The motion to hear the request was approved by a 4-0 vote.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES.

Mrs. Stillwell made a motion to approve the minutes from the July 27, 2017 meeting. Mr. Weir seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 4:31 p.m.

Approved