

**City of Charlottesville
Board of Architectural Review
March 16, 2004**

Minutes

Present: Also Present:

Joan Fenton, Chair Ashley Cooper
Lynne Heetderks, Vice Chair
Preston Coiner
Joe Atkins
Allison Ewing
Syd Knight
Cheri Lewis
Katie Swenson

Ms. Fenton convened the meeting at 5 p.m.

Matters from the public

Ms. Fenton called for matters from the public not on the agenda. There were none.

505 Ridge Street

Ms. Cooper gave the staff report. A preliminary discussion had been held February 17th. This is one of three remaining 1840's homes in this area. The application is for a partial demolition and rehabilitation of the house. The applicant is seeking historic tax credit; hence she will be following the guidelines for rehabilitation of the Secretary of the Interior. The applicant has taken great care in restoring the building to its historic exterior appearance. All elements of the house are being returned to an authentic state using materials compatible and appropriate to the Historic District. The proposed demolition of portions of the rear addition and the removal of a corrugated rear garage are acceptable because they are much later additions to the house and are not distinguishing elements in their poor condition. Removal of those portions would have a positive effect on the neighborhood. The proposed restoration returns the house to a state that is closer to its original form. Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

Ms. Fenton recognized the applicant who had nothing to add but was present to answer questions.

Ms. Fenton called for questions from the public regarding the demolition. There were none. She then called for questions from the Board. There being none, she called for comments from the public and then the Board. There were no comments.

Mr. Atkins moved to approve the partial demolitions, listed numbers 1 through 4, as submitted. Ms. Heetderks asked if he would like to reference for the sake of the record. Mr. Atkins

complied by stating: the removal of the full length shutters on the front facade; removal of the plywood flooring on the front porch, to be replaced; demolition of structurally unsound portions of the rear addition, according to the drawing on page 8; and removal of the corrugated shed in the rear yard. Ms. Heetderks seconded the motion. Ms. Heetderks suggested the motion be amended to say it was according to the demolition criteria set forth in Section 34-278. Mr. Atkins accepted the friendly amendment. Ms. Fenton called the question, which carried unanimously.

Ms. Fenton then asked Ms. Covington if she wished to speak to the Board regarding the proposed restoration. She did not. Ms. Fenton called for questions from the public.

Mr. Eugene Williams, of 620 Ridge Street, asked about the proposed materials for the front porch due to his concern that it be restored to its original size.

Ms. Andrea Rhodes, of 406 Oak Street, expressed concern about the guttering system, which had been an interior system and suggested it be replaced in the same manner.

Mr. Williams suggested that the Board members visit the site since it is hard to sit at a distance and see the structure.

Ms. Fenton called for questions from the Board.

Mr. Coiner sought clarification about whether the metal stairs and man-made siding had been in the original request. Ms. Lewis stated there had not been a materials list in the original proposal. He then asked if the applicant had considered what the Virginia Department of Historic Resources would say about metal stairs. Ms. Covington stated the VDHR usually go with the Secretary of Interior standards. Mr. Coiner did not feel it was an appropriate material.

Ms. Swenson noted the materials stated wood siding or alternate and sought clarification as to "alternate." Ms. Covington explained that it was a decision, which would be dictated by finances.

Ms. Fenton called for public comment.

Ms. Andrea Rhodes spoke in opposition of the proposal since the house would be carved up into an income property.

Ms. Fenton closed the public hearing and called for discussion from the Board.

Mr. Atkins asked if concerns about the gravel drive would be covered in the site plan review. Ms. Cooper stated it had been brought up before Jim Tolbert.

Mr. Coiner expressed excitement over the restoration of the building but he did have concerns about the metal rear stairs to such a point that he could not approve the application as submitted.

Ms. Lewis echoed Mr. Coiner's concerns about the metal stairs. She commented further that the Board did not have purview over zoning and use issues, which were concerns of the public.

Ms. Ewing asked if the applicant would be amenable to changing the exterior stair to wood to get approval. Ms. Covington stated the building was in terrible shape and having read the Guidelines governing the BAR noted that "owners must keep their historic properties in decent shape"; this property had not been kept in decent shape. Ms. Covington further stated she would prefer not to move an inch in regard to the materials in the back of the building, which were not part of the historic structure and were not visible from the street.

Mr. Atkins felt the concrete masonry units with stucco would be an inappropriate choice; a metal stair could be a perfectly appropriate choice.

Ms. Lewis agreed with the staff report that the applicant is taking a lot of care and doing the right things in restoring the property.

Mr. Knight moved to approve the application as submitted with the provision that the applicant submits further information on materials and detailing of the proposed rear addition and stairs at a later date. Ms. Lewis seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

109 Second Street

Ms. Fenton asked if any Board member had any concerns or questions regarding the previously seen proposal. Ms. Cooper had nothing to add to the staff report, which had been part of the members' packets.

Ms. Lewis disclosed that the applicant is a landlord for a business in which she has an interest.

Ms. Fenton disclosed that the applicant is a landlord of hers.

Mr. Coiner disclosed that the applicant is a friend and neighbor; however, it would not affect his decision.

Ms. Swenson moved that the application be approved as submitted, to add a canopy and to relocate the front window and reinstall the glass block below the window. Mr. Atkins seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

411 - 417 East High Street

Ms. Cooper stated the application was for changes to the parking garage of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court. This has been before the Board several times; the BAR voted 7-1 to approve the application regarding the addition and new parking garage including the partial encapsulation of the former Elks Club facade. Approval had been given with a need for further details. Staff recommends approval of the changes to the parking garage. It remains compatible with the character of the Historic District and meets the Standards and Guidelines for new construction. Although the revised courtyard design is disappointing, the BAR must decide if it still meets the guidelines. Staff noted that there might be another solution that would permit the original design to be accomplished in phases rather than scrapped entirely. Staff strongly recommends that two oak trees be planted in front of the courthouse.

The applicant stated that due to Code, a wood screen could not be placed in front of the garage; instead a brown colored metal would be used. Parking had been split into two levels to avoid a costly regrading. The courtyard had been redesigned and simplified due to cost measures. The applicant was looking at ways to shift the costs of the project in order to put money where it counts.

Ms. Fenton called for questions and comments from the public.

Mr. Jim Summers, owner of 415 Park Street, asked if there would be curbing on the backside of the Park Street properties to restrict the adjoining properties' access to the alleyway. The applicant explained there would be curbing, but it would be easy to access according to the wishes of the owners. He also stated the alley would be two lanes with no parking in the alley.

Ms. Fenton called for questions and comments from the Board.

Ms. Swenson expressed concern about the trees on the site plan. The applicant stated the intention had always been to have trees on the High Street side. Ms. Swenson supported the idea of doing the parking more efficiently. She was concerned about the spaces, which were close to the historic facade of the jail. She felt a simplified courtyard could be lovely. She encouraged a certain level of tree be in every base drawing.

Ms. Lewis thanked the designers for the seats in the front of the court. She agreed with Ms. Swenson that more trees were needed.

Ms. Ewing lamented the fact that the whole complex was a parking lot.

Ms. Fenton expressed a desire that, if money needed to be saved, it be saved in the parking lot. The applicant stated as much as could be cut from there had been already.

Ms. Heetderks also expressed concern about the proximity of parking spaces to a neighboring house in the first choice and with the parking spaces in front of the historic jail in the second choice. She asked that three spaces be dropped from either plan.

Mr. Knight stated he had reservations about approving anything as vague as depicted in the site plan. He would prefer more specificity of materials. He was troubled that so much of the project was devoted to parking. Mr. Knight would prefer to see a much more explanatory and complete site plan.

Mr. Atkins moved to approve the revisions to the garage, notably: stone base rather than complete stone facade -- stone base and brick; substitution of the metal horizontal slats for the wood; substitution of a steel mesh rail, described, for the tension cables and ask that a detail of that be submitted to staff for review; and also the removal of the mesh panels and having open sides as shown in the drawing. Ms. Lewis seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Fenton then asked about the landscaping courtyard plan.

Ms. Lewis stated that the Board must make decisions without taking into account the economic impact.

Ms. Fenton stated it was difficult not to approve the base bid; the power was more in the recommendation in how the motion was made.

Ms. Swenson stated the landscape renovation across the street was indicative of the value placed on the power of the landscape as a historic asset. She stated the landscape plan for the project is just as important as the columns on the front or at the facade or the garage treatment. She suggested their purview be just as diligent and require the same level of thought and detail as it would apply to any of the other elements.

Mr. Knight concurred with Ms. Lewis and Ms. Swenson; he thought it was vital that the same level of specificity and design care and thought and construction go into the site as into the buildings.

Mr. Atkins stated a simplified approach appealed to him. He did share some of the concerns about sharp slopes; some supplemental information might be appropriate.

Mr. Atkins moved to approve both site plans as submitted including certain aspects that were verbally described to supplement the drawings, those being: stone dust walks; brick walls with brick caps; that the grading at the ramps does not exceed five percent thereby not requiring hand rails; and that the request to eliminate three parking spaces in the southern most lot immediately adjacent to the southern face of the historic jail stand; that those spaces be eliminated to allow for that green space to continue in front of the historic jail wall; and that trees along High Street as shown in the previous plan, one tree at the entrance to the parking lot coming off of Fourth Street and then the series of eight trees shown in the previous plan for the courtyard would also be included. The applicant sought to clarify that the stone dust walks and the brick wall were part of the base but are not in the simplified plan. Mr. Atkins retracted his motion.

Ms. Swenson stated that it spoke to the concern the BAR had over the lack of calling out.

Mr. Atkins moved to approve the first site plan -- known by many names -- that the Board had seen before, recalling the images of previous presentations that include: a brick series of retaining walls, ramps, planting, and stone dust walks as described in this meeting; he further moved to approve in concept the simplified courtyard but request that at the next available occasion, which may be the 30th, more information about the back up scheme -- scheme number two that the Board had been looking at -- be presented including: the walls, walks, steps and plantings so that they Board could look at the whole thing in one cohesive package; he also added to eliminate the three parking spaces in the southernmost lot adjacent immediately to the historic jail's south face in the second most recent plan, back up plan. Mr. Coiner seconded the motion. Ms. Ewing asked if the three parking spaces could be flipped into a green space; upon learning that they could, she offered a friendly amendment that, on plan two, the three parking spots aligned with the south wall of the historic jail be flipped to align with the north wall of the existing historic jail. Mr. Atkins did not accept the amendment. He stated he would accept a strong recommendation fearing the grading wouldn't work and the project would be faced with

another potential snag. Mr. Knight stated his objections still held; he felt the complexity of the motion bore out some of the problems. Mr. Knight further stated they did not know what they were approving or being asked to comment upon. He stated that counting on verbal descriptions to augment what they saw in front of them was a very dangerous precedent. Mr. Knight felt it was too important and that more information was needed to consider it in a more positive manner. Mr. Atkins stated that based on the reaction, he had reconsidered and would accept the friendly amendment. Mr. Coiner accepted it as well. Ms. Lewis echoed Mr. Knight's comments and stated she needed to see more details on the courtyard. The motion failed, 3-5, with Ms. Swenson, Ms. Lewis, Mr. Knight, Ms. Heetderks, and Ms. Ewing voting against.

Ms. Lewis moved to approve Plan A with the details on concrete walls with brick cap, the paved stone dust, and the grading. Mr. Atkins seconded the motion. Mr. Atkins offered a friendly amendment to clarify that the approval includes verbal clarifications of the brick retaining walls, stone dust walks and the planting as shown. Ms. Lewis accepted the friendly amendment. The motion carried, 6-2, with Ms. Swenson and Mr. Knight voting against.

Ms. Fenton stated she had another meeting which she had to attend; she turned the meeting over to Ms. Heetderks and left the meeting at 6:59 p.m.

Preliminary Discussion

101, 105, 107, 111 East Main Street

Ms. Cooper gave a background report. The four buildings were contributing resources to the National Register District. Previous requests for demolition were received in 1988, 1997 and 2000. The BAR denied a request in 2000; in June of 2000 the BAR deferred the request to the City to hire an impartial engineering firm to look at the buildings. Upon receipt of that information, the request was again denied in August 2000. The decision was appealed to City Council in September 2000; Council denied the request to demolish except for 107 East Main Street and the two-story structure attached to and located behind 105 East Main Street and all of the building at 111 East Main Street except for its East Main Street facade. This demolition has expired.

Mr. Coiner stated there had been another request for demolition by the trustee handling the negotiations, which was denied by the BAR. It had been appealed but City Council upheld the Board's decision.

Mr. Keith Woodard agreed it was an historical portion of the Mall. The proposal was to retain the three story elements that face First Street and face the Mall and add a tower in the middle. The plan is to restore the historical fabric in accordance with the National Parks Service Tax Guidelines for rehabilitation. Everything has not been finalized depending on costs. The applicant sought feedback regarding what can be allowed to be demolished. He also sought feedback regarding the scale of the proposed tower being eight to ten stories.

Ms. Heetderks asked if the general feeling of the Board was that the previous decision made by City Council would hold which would allow the demolition of the facade of the concrete bunker-

like structure with the retention of the front facade of 111 and the retention of the 101, 105 front and side.

Mr. Knight sought clarification if the full depth of the three-story piece scheduled for demolition would be retained when it was replaced by the tower. Mr. Woodard stated the proposal was to keep the historical part of the building, which was the 40 feet from the Mall back.

Mr. Coiner asked if a set back would be used. The applicant stated there would be balconies on the residential unit that would be retained within the block and that there might be some mechanical stuff hidden. Mr. Coiner urged Mr. Woodard to read the guidelines carefully.

Mr. Atkins expressed concern about how the tower sits on or emerges from the four shared wall property buildings.

Ms. Heetderks expressed a preference for the lower of the two buildings.

Mr. Knight was troubled with a large building pulling back from the Mall.

Ms. Ewing stated she would like to see a number of massing schemes. She encouraged Mr. Woodward to hire an architect.

Proposed Mall Furniture and Lighting

Ms. Cooper stated this was a preliminary look at ideas that WRT had for new Mall furniture and lighting. Approval was not being sought. Mr. Tolbert was seeking feedback from the BAR.

Ms. Heetderks suggested that the Board members E-mail specific comments to Mr. Tolbert.

Historic Preservation Awards

The only award left to be decided was the award for Outstanding Preservation Achievement. Ms. Ewing nominated Gabe Silverman. Mr. Knight seconded the motion. The seven members present unanimously voted to approve his nomination.

Bylaws

Ms. Heetderks suggested deferring discussion of the bylaws until the April meeting when the Chair could be present.

Minutes

January 20, 2004

Ms. Heetderks noted that she had voted against the motion for the use of faux stucco on the house at 409 Ridge Street and that had not been listed.

Ms. Lewis moved to approve the minutes with revisions noted. Mr. Knight seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

February 17, 2004

Ms. Heetderks stated she would abstain since she had not been at that meeting.

Ms. Lewis asked that New Construction in a Historic District be added to the nominations on page 7.

Ms. Heetderks asked for a second for approval of the minutes. Mr. Coiner complied with her request. The motion carried unanimously with Ms. Heetderks and Mr. Atkins abstaining.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Ms. Ewing moved to adjourn. Mr. Atkins seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously whereupon the meeting stood adjourned at 7:38 p.m.