

CITY OF YPSILANTI
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 27, 2007

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Jane Schmiedeke Chair 7:00 PM

Meeting Location: City Council Chambers

Commissioners Present: Jane Schmiedeke, Hank Prebys, Brenda Rigdon, Joe Schultz, Christian Overland, Ed Penet

Commissioners Absent: Ron Rupert

Staff Present: Richard Murphy, Planner I
 Courtney Miller, HDC Intern

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Penet moved to approve (Second: Rigdon)

Approval: Unanimous. Action carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS - None

PUBLIC HEARING - None

OLD BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS

4 N. Adams, Action Item

Applicant: Mamadou Fatou, husband of owner (present)

Discussion: Application is for the installation of new aluminum signs on a new business at this address. The signs will have a white background, a light green silhouette of the continent of Africa, and dark green vinyl lettering. One sign, 54"x48", will be installed on the west and one sign, 48"x48", on the north side of the

building. The signs are to be mounted in holes in the mortar resulting from the installation of previous signs. Mr. Fatou will be mounting the signs.

Motion: Rigdon (Second: Penet) moves approval for proposed work at 4 Adams Street: a pair of signs for a new business. One sign shall be 4'x4' and the other shall be 54" x 4'. The signs shall have a white background with dark green lettering and light green silhouette of the continent of Africa. The signs shall be aluminum with vinyl lettering and shall be installed in existing holes from a previous sign. The 54" sign shall be on the west facade, and the 4' sign shall be on the north (rear) facade.

The following Secretary of Interior Standards used in making this decision:
#9 – Contemporary designs shall be compatible and shall not destroy significant original material.

Approval: Unanimous. Action carried.

109 W. Michigan, Action Item

Applicant: Eric Williams, owner (present)
Brian Callaghan, architect (present)

Discussion: Application is for installation of a new rear exterior door for security reasons and with the purpose of widening the door. The door faces east, in an alley, and is not visible. The current door is small and widening it would allow the passage of delivery carts. The portion of the building where the door will be installed is masonry. The current door is wood with a small glass opening, and is in disrepair. Mr. Williams suggests that instead of the six panel door that is circled in the application picture, he would be willing to install a flat steel door. Commissioner Prebys asks if the door is used on a regular basis. Mr. Williams responds that the door is mainly used for shipping and receiving, so no glass would be necessary in the door. Masonry will be cut to accommodate larger door and frame would be anchored to the masonry. The new door will add about 6" to the existing opening.

Motion: Overland (Second: Prebys) moves approval of proposed work at 109 W. Michigan Avenue to include the installation of a new door to replace the existing wood door to increase the size of the opening. The new door shall be a flush metal door with no adornment. A peephole may be added. Item "F" on the Ceco Door Products data sheet provided with application (dated November 6) is cited.

Secretary of Interior Standards cited:
#3 – Do not imitate earlier styles, #9 – Contemporary designs shall be compatible and shall not destroy significant original material.

Approval: Unanimous. Action carried.

217 W. Michigan, Action Item

Applicant: Thomas J. Rumford, owner (not present)
Robert White, contractor (not present)

Discussion: Application is for the completion of structural reinforcement required by the Building Department for certificate of occupancy. Commissioner Schmiedeke recalled that this project was approved two years ago and no work was performed. Staff recalled a discussion regarding the removal of the deck and installation of a straight staircase from the door. Staff also cited an HDC approval from 2002 for construction of deck and staircase, including paint specifications for this address. Commissioner Prebys questions the vagueness in the wording on the application, and all commissioners agree that more information is needed. Staff will discuss this application with the Building Department.

Motion: Prebys (Second: Penet) moves to table the proposed work at 217 W. Michigan pending more complete information, including drawings clarifying what is meant by "necessary support and structural reinforcement".

Approval: Unanimous. Action carried.

206 N. Huron, Action Item

Applicant: Mike Manchester, appearing on behalf of applicant (present)
Blue Way, contractor (present)

Discussion: Application is for the replacement of the front door at 206 N. Huron. The existing door is in a state of disrepair and is to be replicated using the same variety of wood. The existing door has flat glass, which Mr. Manchester states would be replaced by beveled glass to match the inner door of the front entryway. The existing limestone threshold is a trip hazard due to its deteriorated state. Mr. Manchester states that he was told removing the existing threshold and replacing it would be impractical, as the effort to remove it might compromise the leaded glass sidelights. The proposed work on the threshold would include grinding the current limestone down smooth, slightly tapering toward the porch. A walnut threshold would be placed across the limestone threshold. The tile work in the entryway is also beginning to deteriorate, due to salt and elements. Commissioner Schultz inquires as to why Mr. Manchester is choosing to use walnut for the threshold. Mr. Manchester would like the threshold to match the door. The commission members suggest different types of wood that might be harder than walnut, and could be stained to match the door. Black walnut is mentioned for its water resistance. Mr. Manchester informs the commission that they will get in the habit of sealing it every year to ensure its longevity.

Motion: Rigdon (Second: Prebys) moves approval for the proposed work at 206 N. Huron to include the replication of the existing front door with the addition of a beveled glass panel and new brass hardware. The repair of the existing limestone threshold shall be accomplished by smoothing the surface and adding a new walnut threshold to remove the trip hazard. Black walnut is an acceptable material for this threshold. The door and threshold shall be stained to match the new door and sealed. A photograph of the existing door, dated November 2007, was cited.

The following Secretary of the Interior Standards were used in making this decision:
#5 – Preserve distinctive features, and #9 – Contemporary designs shall be compatible and shall not destroy significant original material.

Approval: Unanimous. Action carried.

44 E. Cross, Action Item

Applicant: Jennifer Bunting, owner (not present)

Discussion: The application is for the attachment of a 40"x12" aluminum sign reading "Spa Burjon" to the existing awning. The proposed sign is similar to many that already exist in the Historic District.

Motion: Rigdon (Second: Overland) moves to approve the proposed work at 44 E. Cross to include the installation of a sign reading "Spa Burjon" 40 inches wide by 12 inches high onto the valance of the existing awning. The height of the sign shall not exceed the height of the valance.

The following Secretary of the Interior Standards were used in making this decision:
10 – New work shall be removable.

Approval: Unanimous. Action carried.

Riverside Park , Action Item

Applicant: Richard Murphy, representing the City of Ypsilanti (present)

Discussion: The application is for the installation of pedestrian light fixtures at 20 locations along the walking path in Riverside Park. The work has already been completed without an application to the HDC. Commissioner Prebys inquires about the material of which the globes are made. Commissioner Penet states his opinion that the lights which are 16' in height, appear too tall. Commissioner Schmiedeke suggests that the height will be beneficial in deterring vandalism of the globes. Staff states that the lights had been purchased by the City with a grant through DNR in 2005. Commissioner Schmiedeke states that had the application come before the Historic District Commission before the grant was applied for, a letter of support from the HDC could have been attached to the grant application. Commissioners state concerns that the commission and the city should be working together and Commissioner Overland states that the City needs to be beyond reproach in its own transactions. He also states that 16' is too high, and for those that are concerned about preserving a Frederick Law Olmstead park, these lights are not appropriate. Commissioners Schmiedeke and Schultz will draft a letter to the city regarding the concerns of the commission. Staff will return with more information about the lights and their installation.

Motion: Prebys (Second: Rigdon) moves approval of the application for Riverside Park for the installation of light fixtures at 20 locations.

Secretary of the Interior Standards cited: #10 – New work shall be removable.

Approval: Schmiedeke, Schultz, and Prebys approved. Penet, Overland, and Rigdon opposed. Motion fails.

STUDY ITEMS

211-217 Arcade

Applicant: Keith Clark, owner (present)

Discussion: Mr. Clark is the property co-owner with his daughter at 213 Arcade. The Historic District Commission had recently denied Mr. Clark's application for the installation of new doors, installed without HDC approval or a permit, on the front and rear of his building, due to the inappropriate design of the doors. He has been in contact with the condo association, which would also be interested in changing the remaining doors. He has come to seek the advice of the Commission as to what doors could be installed, while still maintaining a secure building. His main concern with the previous doors is security, and the ability of an intruder to break the glass (which was in the original door), reach in and unlock the door. Commissioner Penet asks if the glass in the previous door was double glass, which is stronger glass. Mr. Clark suggests that if there has to be glass in the door, it could possibly be up higher, so the door knob would not be accessible to an intruder. Commissioner Prebys suggests that a steel frame is useful in preventing break-ins, as he could not approve a door without glass in this residential building. He suggests a door with glass for the front and doors without windows on the rear. Commissioner Rigdon suggests a door from the Fingerle lumber catalog with windows located near the top of the door. Commissioner Rigdon suggests using the existing steel frame and replacing only the door. All agree that the existing six-panel doors are not appropriate – but it is possible that a flush door would be appropriate on the back of the building. The door being recommended by the commission is similar to Fingerle model 7662. The conclusion is that there must be some glass in the front doors. Mr. Clark asks about the color of the doors, and is advised that the existing green is an appropriate color. The rear doors may be flush with a peephole, or match the front doors. Mr. Clark will speak with other residents, come to a consensus, and bring the information to Richard Murphy. At that time, staff may administratively approve the chosen doors if compliant with tonight's agreement.

Motion: Commissioner Rigdon (Second: Penet) moves to allow administrative approval for door replacement at 211-217 Arcade provided the applicant provides appropriate cut sheets for doors that are in compliance with the requests of the commission.

311 W. Forest

Discussion: Contractor had discussed with staff that the property owners are interested in possibly removing the retaining wall along the front sidewalk and alley side of the property. Staff suggested that they apply to the HDC as a study item for guidance in this project. The current retaining wall is unsightly and in a state of deterioration. The owners would like to re-grade the front lawn so that there is no need for a retaining wall. Commissioner Penet suggests terracing the front yard, as it is a significant slope. Commissioner Rigdon states that it is not realistic to consider re-grading the lawn in the space that exists between the house and the sidewalk. Commissioner Schmiedeke asks staff to mention to the property owners the inappropriateness and lack of code compliance of the current front stair railing.

306 W. Cross

Applicant: Doug Wilson, owner (present)

Discussion: Six windows on the building were recently replaced without an application to the Historic District Commission or a permit. Mr. Wilson states that the original windows were aluminum frame, inefficient and cloudy in appearance. He states that the business had extra money at the end of their fiscal year, which was used for new windows. The company owned by Mr. Wilson and his wife at 306 W. Cross is called "Maggie's Organics". The previous windows were the same size as the new vinyl windows and in the same locations. Both the previous and current windows were sliders and are identical, except for the material (aluminum to vinyl). Commissioner Prebys informs Mr. Wilson that vinyl windows are not approved by the commission in the Historic District because of the deterioration that is caused by the ultraviolet rays. Commissioner Rigdon states that this building lacks architectural significance and that, therefore, this work would be acceptable to her if applied for. The Commission notes that consideration of vinyl windows for this structure can be considered because of the lack of significance of former windows and character of building. The trim needs to be painted (not the windows themselves) the same color as the siding. Applicant will submit an application for these windows and appear at the next commission meeting. Mr. Wilson asked for and received more information about the Historic District Commission and its purpose.

OTHER BUSINESS

Administrative Approvals

6 S. Washington - reroofing

Motion: Prebys (Second: Penet) moves to accept this administrative approval.

Approval: Unanimous. Action carried

Property Monitoring

- **307 N. Hamilton** – The owner informed staff that she would be out of town for tonight’s meeting and was asked to attend the next meeting on Dec 11. She had constructed a porch after the building inspector required it, but had not gotten HDC approval, so a stop work order was issued - nothing has done since that time. She stated that the house didn’t have a porch on it before, and she didn’t have the financial means to build something to the porch fact sheet standards. The owner is willing to remove the porch that has been built and simply have steps down from the front door. She also suggested painting, which staff informed her would not improve the situation. She is interested in suggestions. A citation has not been issued, pending the owner’s appearance before the commission.
- **Auto Museum** - No new information, no site plan received.
- **218 Ferris** – On the court schedule for November 20, however the case was not called at that date. No progress.
- **310 S. Washington** – No progress.
- **309 Maple** – No progress.
- **210 Arcade** – An application was submitted without a fee. Staff will notify the owner that the fee needs to be paid in order for progress to be made.
- **631 N. River** – The daughter of the owner met with a building official and has begun seeking bids for demolition of the house. She was given a copy of the HDC application and information on demolition by Charles Boulard (Building Official).
- **115 N. Hamilton** – Reroofing without application to HDC. Staff sent letter and notified the building official.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS – None

HOUSEKEEPING BUSINESS

Ave Maria Properties on West Forest - Staff informs the commission that there is a purchase agreement in place. The prospective buyer is Skip Carrier, who runs a company that takes school pictures. They are expanding and looking for property in a college town to be close to a supply of interns. They find this old elementary school to be appropriate to be used as administrative offices for their business. Mr. Carrier is aware that the building is within the boundaries of the Historic District. The reason for the delay in closing is that the property needs to be rezoned and an amendment needs to be added to the master plan.

Approval of the minutes from November 13, 2007 meeting.

Motion: Prebys (Second: Penet) moves to approve the minutes of November 13, 2007 with the removal of the extra word 'contractor' in the property monitoring section (218 Ferris).

Approval: Unanimous. Motion carries.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Prebys (Second: Penet) moves to adjourn the meeting.

Approval: Unanimous. Motion Carries.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:30 PM