



MINUTES

City of Ypsilanti HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION In-person Meeting

Tuesday, April 25, 2023 (approved May 23, 2023)
7:00 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chairperson Pettit Welcomed and thanked everyone for attending.
Meeting called to order at 7:05 pm

Commissioners Present: Alex Pettit – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti
James Chesnut - Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti
James Ratzlaff - Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti
Stefan Szumko – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti

Commissioners Absent: Delrhea Byrge – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti

Staff Present: Ellen Thackery, Preservation Planner

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Szumko (second: Ratzlaff) moved to approve the agenda.

Voice Vote - Ayes: Four
Nays: None
Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS—none

PUBLIC HEARING—none

OLD BUSINESS—none

NEW BUSINESS

627 N River

**Fascia, new concrete porch, white k-style gutters, windows*

Applicant: Doug Geidner, homeowner - present

Discussion: Staff Report: Staff has received and approved administratively an application for a new asphalt roof, to remove asphalt siding, repair wood siding/piece in new as needed, paint siding, and

repoint the chimney in spots. This application for commission review is for white k-style gutters, wood fascia as close to current profile as possible, new windows, window trim, and a new concrete porch.

Applicant stated that he has taken a hard look at the windows and really studied them and finds that they are in bad condition because they were not maintained over the years. He finds that they are very inefficient and he thinks it will be difficult to find a carpenter to repair them.

Pettit suggested that the commission pick up the aspects of the application that are not window-related first; suggested that the conversation begin with the gutters.

Gutters and fascia: It appears that the short length currently left on the house is a K-style gutter. Owner stated that the remaining pieces of k-style gutter are around the yard. Discussed how to install gutters, whether or not the fascia is a character-defining feature on the house, whether or not it makes sense to try to hang the gutters lower than would be typical to show the fascia. Applicant wants to try to keep the fascia, piece in new matching cedar as needed, and make gutters work on this style of fascia. Discussion about priority being that gutters work and that the water reaches downspouts that lead water away from the foundation. Conversation that the fascia profile/detail is important and will be visible in the gables, and will try to be replicated all around the house. Ultimately, though, to have good functioning gutters, the fascia detail might end up being covered where there are gutters and just visible in the gables.

Applicant asked about gutter guards—commission agreed that those would be fine; they are hard to see anyway.

Porch: Porches currently are just concrete slabs in front off entry doors. They are letting water into basement and against foundation. Applicant would like to pull the porches off, flash properly, and put some kind of porches back on; currently proposing to put concrete slab porches back in the size and shape that are currently there. Ultimately, however, applicant would like to build a porch close to the historic porch. He's hoping that when the asphalt siding comes off, there may be witness marks of the original porch. Staff shared an image of the 1927 Sanborn map that Barry LaRue had found and shared with staff. Staff will look at other Sanborn maps as well to see if they are at all informative, and staff will try to find old photos of this house to see if there is documentary evidence of the porch that was here. If no documentary evidence can be found, however, and if there are no marks on this house that can tell us what existed before, the size and shape of the historic porch is known, but not the details. The way forward at that point is a porch design that looks compatible but will not create a false sense of history. Applicant proposes pulling off siding, pulling off concrete porches, doing the necessary repairs, and then coming back to the staff and commission to communicate what he's found about the porch. The concrete porches are being proposed now. The commission indicated that they are comfortable with the proposal of replacing the porch like for like in materials and design but bringing the porch up to the height of the front doors. If he wants to amend the application to go with a more historically accurate porch, he'll come back to the commission.

Windows: Provided in the pictures are a wide variety of conditions. Commission's main charge is to preserve historic material whenever possible. Commission can see that some conditions are bad. But the commission can't necessarily see that every single window needs to be replaced.

Applicant can see that the existing windows are not energy efficient. Commissioner stated that appropriate maintenance paired with good storm windows can be as efficient as a new window.

Commissioner states that he doesn't have enough information here to approve the window replacements. Commission will need a detailed report showing which windows are in the worst condition, what the issues are with each window, and good documentation/photos of each. Applicant asked whether the City could provide a list of window repair people who could provide a conditions assessment/report. Staff will send the resources we have on window repair, with the understanding that the City doesn't recommend anyone. We just have a list of craftspeople who do this kind of work.

Commissioner clarified whether these proposed replacements are full frame, new construction, or inserts. Full window, completely filling rough opening. Commission is concerned with glass reduction, as the fact sheet about windows states.

Discussion about procedure. Applicant wishes to remove the proposed window replacement from this application, but go forward with the other work he proposed here. Commission agreed that the applicant can amend his application verbally, commission accepts the amended application, and then the commission moves on the amended application.

Applicant stated that he wishes to remove all window details from this application so he can get a window repairperson out for an assessment.

Motion: Pettit moved (Chesnut seconded) to accept amended application PHDC-23-0028 to exclude any aspects related to windows as the applicant has indicated during the meeting tonight.

Voice Vote - Ayes: Four.
Nays: None.
Motion carried.

Motion: Chesnut (second: Ratzlaff) moved to approve application HDC-23-0028 and issue a certificate of appropriateness for the proposed work at 627 N River to include white k-style gutters, wood fascia as close to current profile as possible, and a new concrete porch in the same size and shape as the existing. The proposed work on the fascia meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation 6, the proposed concrete porch work meets Standard 9, and the proposed gutter replacement meets Standards 9 and 10.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards:

- #6- Historic material will be repaired before being replaced; replacements when necessary shall match original.
- #9- Contemporary designs shall be compatible and not destroy significant original material.
- #10- New work will be removable.

Voice Vote - Ayes: Four.
Nays: None.
Motion carried.

STUDY ITEMS- none

ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS

PHDC 23-0027 334 E Forest Ave, asphalt roof to asphalt roof

PHDC 23-0029 627 N River, asphalt roof to asphalt roof, remove asphalt siding and repair/replace as needed wood siding underneath, paint siding, scattered chimney repointing

PHDC 23-0030 309 E Forest, like-for-like roof on carport only

PHDC 23-0031 25 S Huron, flat EPDM roof to same EPDM roof + slate on decorative mansard roof commission already approved 4/11/23 for 27 S Huron (25 and 27 are attached but are technically two buildings/addresses in city's system)

PHDC 23-0032 216 S Washington, chain link fence for cedar privacy fence in backyard only

PHDC 23-0033 228 N Grove, tear off existing asphalt roof and install asphalt roof on house only (not on back porch or garage)

OTHER BUSINESS

- 1. Property Monitoring**—commissioner noticed that some maintenance work around the district is happening, just like for like items. Staff clarified that maintenance is not work. Work changes the appearance of the resource; maintenance is eliminating the effects of weathering. When items need to be removed in order to do work, staff and/or commission needs to know about it. But regular paint touch-up, like for like rotten board replacement—these kinds of repairs are considered maintenance because they won't change the appearance of the building.

- 2. Updates from Staff**

NAPC HDC training happened 4/13 and 4/20 and some commissioners attended. When we get access to the presentations, staff will share them around with all of the commissioners.

Staff has reserved Thursday evening, June 15, 7 pm for a virtual presentation on the state tax credit program. Commissioner suggested making it very clear on the promotional materials that this is for homeowner-occupied properties and the properties must contribute to the district.

Staff asked if as part of an administrative approval, a railing on the roof of a porch (like a balustrade on a balcony but it is decorative because the porch roof does not serve as an actual balcony) is removed for a new roof, must the balustrade be replaced? Commission replied that it depends. It depends on the house, whether or not the balustrade is a character-defining feature, and that application needs to come before the commission when there is a knock-on effect (like the removal of a railing) that needs to be resolved.

Staff also requested some feedback about commission operations and if commissioners had any suggestions as to how to make our operations run more smoothly.

- 3. Commissioner Comments**

The NAPC commissioner trainings from 4/13 and 4/20 were good, and the alternate materials talk and the new construction talk may be most useful. Thinks that commissioners could really use some technical analyses on both window rehabilitation and new materials. Did see a useful picture that showed fiber cement right down next to a stair tread and it showed how the built-up snow over time dissolved that siding. Manufacturers' specs themselves state that fiber cement siding cannot be where snow or water will stand.

Commissioner comments about commission operations: commission feels supported. If staff could provide some research on alternate materials, that would be really helpful. Staff recalled that James Chesnut had done some research on alternate materials—especially windows—and maybe we should dust that off and see if it needs to be updated or cleaned up. Timing of the packet on Friday seems to work well. Commission likes to have the packet on Friday when possible because having the weekend is nice. Consider how we could better prepare applicants for the meeting. Especially windows. Think about updating the sample window app to show a good window conditions inventory and remembering to point people to that sample. Helping applicants to understand how best to organize their application or breaking up their applications so the items that would be easiest to approve are together and the items that will be the most difficult, like window applications that will likely need more work/documentation/discussion, could be peeled off into a separate application whenever possible to help the applicant get the most work approved possible and help them be successful.

Upcoming History Walk, Washtenaw Wanderers, May 6, 10 am, register on AVA.org and find the event and search Ypsilanti or at Ypsi Real.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS—none

HOUSEKEEPING BUSINESS

Approval of the minutes of March 14, 2023

Motion: Ratzlaff (second: Szumko) moved to approve the minutes of April 11, 2023, as submitted.

Voice Vote - Ayes: Four
Nays: None
Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Pettit adjourned the meeting, citing the end of the agenda with no further items to discuss.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:45 p.m.

Full Minutes Prepared By: Ellen Thackery