



MINUTES

City of Ypsilanti HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Meeting held in person at City Hall Council Chambers and virtually by Zoom

Tuesday, April 26, 2022 [Approved 5/10/22]
7:00 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Meeting Called to Order 7:04 pm

Chair Alex Pettit welcomed everyone, told public when and how they would have an opportunity to address commission

Commissioners Present:

James Ratzlaff – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti
Stefan Szumko - Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti
Jeff Muir – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti
Alex Pettit – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti
James Chesnut – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti

Commissioners Absent: none

Commissioners recently appointed: Jimmy Huffman – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti, sworn in 4/26/22, attending but abstaining from tonight's votes
Delrhea Byrge—Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti, will take the oath after May 6, 2022

Staff Present: Ellen Thackery, Preservation Planner

AMENDMENT TO AGENDA

Staff requested introduction of newest commissioner Jimmy Huffman. Agenda item added under "Updates from Staff." New study item requested that is not on the current agenda: 305 E Forest. Added as a study item to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Chesnut (second: Szumko) moved to approve the agenda as amended.

Approval: Roll call vote. Unanimous. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS—none

OLD BUSINESS

208 N Hamilton

**Window Replacement (retroactive)*

Commissioner Muir recused himself from this discussion and vote.

Staff Report: Staff indicated that this agenda item had been rescheduled from the last two meetings because a recusal left the commission without a quorum on this issue. House is a Queen Anne with its original porch detailing and massing but covered with non-historic siding. A side porch toward the rear of the house appears on the 1927 Sanborn map. That side porch was enclosed at some point and windows were added. In 2014, the windows were double-hung. At some point, slider windows were installed on this enclosed porch, and the City noticed and requested an application. Applicant submitted an application and explained that these windows had been installed on an emergency basis and so they were to submit an application for the proper permits within 48 hours. They did not, but the application is before the commission now. Application is for Marvin aluminum-clad wood windows in stone white.

Applicant: Colleen Kennedy for Beal: Nothing really to add--supply chains are very difficult and products are very expensive right now.

Discussion: This is a secondary façade, not really visible from the street. Façade here is a filled-in porch and so the only historic materials here are the c. 1920s porch columns and brick piers, and the windows don't impact those. Commission acknowledged that there aren't many slider windows in that neighborhood, but this is a secondary façade. Proposed window is an aluminum-clad wood window.

Motion: Szumko moved (seconded by Ratzlaff) to approve the application for the replacement of two non-historic windows at 208 N Hamilton as proposed with Marvin Ultimate glider windows in stone white because the proposal meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, specifically Standards 3 and 10.

Relevant Secretary of the Interior's Standards:
#3, #10

Approval: Roll call, unanimous. Motion carried.

211 N Washington

**Re-roofing and new gutters and downspouts*

Commissioner Muir recused himself from this discussion and vote.

Staff Report: This original building was a large Colonial Revival house with a hipped roof and dormers, and then the house received a new roofline with a full third story and large additions, and then eventually new windows and a modern façade. The building in its modern form might be considered contributing to the district

with more research—enough time has passed that it may be that these modernist changes have acquired significance in their own right. The proposal is for a new EPDM adhered roof system and new metal copings, flashings, gutters, and downspouts, with all metal in hunter green.

Applicant: Applicant Colleen Kennedy was on hand to answer questions. No change in the building's appearance.

Discussion: The roof is a flat roof, unseen from the street, and a new roof and working gutters and full-length downspouts to move water from the building is important for the longevity of the building.

Motion: Ratzlaff (seconded by Szumko) moved to approve the work as proposed in the application received March 24, 2022 and issue a certificate of appropriateness for reroofing the entire building with an EPDM adhered roof system, and installing new metal copings, flashing, gutters, and downspouts all in hunter green. Relevant Secretary of the Interior's Standards are Standards 5 and 9.

NEW BUSINESS

421 N Adams

**Skylight*

Staff Report: House contributes to the National Register and local historic districts and has changed very little since its 1981 file photo. Proposed work is for a skylight to be installed on the north slope of the roof toward the rear of the house.

Applicant: Andrew Rodriguez, homeowner – present. Clarified that because the house is so close to its next-door neighbor (they used to be one house and they still share a foundation), the skylight will not really be visible from the sidewalk or the alley.

Discussion: Commission discussed how a skylight is reviewed—is it a window? Is it like a solar panel? That could be argued, but skylights are not as reversible as solar panels. Staff offered that she relied on the Guidelines that accompany the Secretary of the Interior's Standards that specifically put skylights in the same category as roof alterations, with dormer windows and vents. The Guidelines state that these alterations should not diminish the historic character of the house/resource.

Motion: Ratzlaff (second: Chesnut) moved to approve the application received April 13, 2022 and issue a certificate of appropriateness for the proposed work at 421 N Adams for the installation of a Velux skylight on the house's north side toward the rear. The proposed work meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, specifically Standards 2 and 9, because it will not remove or destroy original features or character and it is compatible.

Relevant Secretary of the Interior's Standards:

#2, #9

Approval: Roll call. Unanimous. Motion carried.

410 W Cross

**Reroof with matching clay tile, install new copper gutters for copper gutters, and copper downspouts for copper downspouts*

Staff Report: This is a historic church that contributes to both the National Register and local historic districts. All of the proposed materials are in-kind replacements. Historic clay roof tiles will be replaced with the same material and profile, and all copper gutters and downspouts will be replaced with copper of the same size and profile.

Applicant: John Recznik, Church Business Manager, attended by Zoom.

Discussion: All roof tiles will be removed, but as many tiles will be salvaged as possible. Copper will get a patina over time, but all of the copper is being replaced at once, the existing metals have not taken on a greenish patina anyway, and the patina just happens over time—it's a natural process and the new would catch up with the old in time anyway. Some commissioner discussion about the parapets—will that copper be removed and replaced? You can see those from the street and so that requires some extra attention. Be careful not to affect the brick in those locations. How will the area just behind the parapets will be protected from water intrusion where the copper roof butts up to the parapet? From looking at photos, it looks like there is step flashing so the bricks will not likely be affected. Reviewed materials list to ensure compatibility of materials in contact with one another. Applicant confirmed that the consulting firm they hired will be supervising the work and making sure that the conditions they specified are being met.

Motion: Szumko (seconded by Chesnut) moved to approve the application for work at 410 W Cross, submitted April 14, 2022, and issue a certificate of appropriateness for the roof tear-off and replacement as specified of the clay tile roof on the church and rectory using replacement clay tiles in the same size, material, and profile, and the replacement of copper gutters and downspouts with copper in the same size and shape as the historic materials. The work is appropriate because it meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, including Standards 2, 5, and 6.

Approval: Roll call. Unanimous. Motion carried.

*Relevant Secretary of the Interior's Standards:
#2, #5, and #6*

330 E Forest

**new patio with step, new drive, and approach*

Staff: House contributes to both the local and National Register Districts, proposed work will install a new colored concrete patio, a new standard-colored approach, and a colored driveway. The patio would be stamped concrete, and the drive and approach would be smooth concrete.

Applicant: Homeowner attended by Zoom.

Discussion: There have been occasions in the past where the commission has very strictly not wanted materials to be patterned like other materials, like an exaggerated wood grain on vinyl siding. Would the idea of a pattern stamped in concrete be similar to that? Patio is behind the house and will not touch the house or foundation. In the past, there have been commissioners who felt very strongly that materials shouldn't "try" to look like other materials. There isn't anything specific in the Standards that speaks to stamped concrete. This proposed patio is replacing a small existing plain concrete patio.

Motion: Chesnut moved (Szumko seconded) to approve the application received April 18, 2022 and issue a certificate of appropriateness for the work proposed at 330 E Forest to include a stamped and colored concrete patio behind the house with a stamped concrete step, a colored concrete smooth driveway, and a standard concrete approach because, as long as proper expansion joints keep the concrete from touching the historic house and its foundation, the proposed work meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, specifically Standard 9.

Approval: Roll call. Unanimous. Motion carried.

18 N Washington

**Retroactive window replacement and proposed half-round transom installment*

Staff Report: This commercial Italianate building contributes to both the National Register and the local historic districts. The owner replaced all of the wood second-story windows that filled the entire rounded window openings with rectangular vinyl windows and rounded wood boards on the primary façade without historic district commission approval or building permits. The retroactive application for the window replacement was reviewed and denied at the December 2021 meeting.

In March, applicant submitted an application to install half-round wood windows above the double-hung vinyl windows, in place of now-existing boards. The scope of work did not mention the vinyl double-hungs that had been installed, but the intention of the application was to install half-rounds in order to make the vinyl windows meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Because the scope of work did not mention the vinyl double-hungs, the application was denied because it was found to be incomplete.

The application is back before the Commission April 26 because the application has been amended so that it clearly requests approval for the half-round transom windows and the retroactive approval of the vinyl windows.

Applicant: Applicant Gary Turner attended the meeting in person.

Discussion: Commissioners discussed the background of this application. The historic windows were replaced at some point, but in the 1980s or 1990s, restoration efforts were made to replicate a full-height slender-framed and muntined wood window. It is those wood windows that had been made to meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards (they were similar to the historic windows in design and materials) that were removed to install the double-hung vinyl windows before the commission currently. Commissioners clarified that this proposal would have the vinyl double-hungs stay and then add to them a wood half-round transom in order to open up the full height of the window to glass. Commissioner acknowledged that opening the full height of the window

to glass would be a positive change, but it is the materiality of the vinyl double-hung windows that have been and remain an issue. Another commissioner agreed. Clarifying that this application is not just for the half-round transoms—it would seek to allow the vinyl double-hungs to remain and the half-round transom would help the double-hungs be more in compliance with the Standards. These windows were installed without a permit and the building is definitely a historic building.

The applicant stated that this vinyl window is a high-quality vinyl with a more slender, not chunky profile for vinyl windows. The window has been installed to manufacturer specifications and will not sag. With the wood rounded transoms above, the windows would now completely fill the arched opening again and would look like many of the rounded windows around the district. Applicant states that it will be hard to tell that the window is vinyl from the street.

A commissioner explained that one concern is the loss of glass surface when you go to vinyl.

Applicant understands that, and states that there are many windows around the district that have a mullion between a door or window and the transom window above. The applicant and the property owner like the mullion they're proposing between the double-hung vinyl and the rounded transom window.

Commissioner states that one issue is that because this application did not go through the correct process, the commission did not have the opportunity to weigh in on this proposal and it is not likely that the commission would have led the applicant to believe that these windows would have been approved.

Commissioner clarifies that the applicant could bring a new proposal back as a study item, or could bring a new proposal back to the commission. Commissioners confirm.

Scott Munzel, property owner's attorney, addressed the commission to state that (1) when you research the Italianate style, there really is no monolithic standard either with or without a mullion between the rounded portion and the more square or rectangular portions of the window, and so what is being proposed here as far as the half-moon window goes is well constructed and meets the Standards, so you should be able to approve those, and (2) there are many examples throughout the district of double-hung windows with the half-round transoms above that are very like what this applicant is proposing—Haab's, Spark East, etc. It's not known for sure that those windows were approved by the commission or that they were just installed without approval, but Mr. Munzel suggested that it's likely that at least some of them were approved, so the commission should be sure that they're being fair to all applicants.

Commissioner states that the commission considers materials when they make their decisions, and vinyl has historically been a material the commission does not approve. This is an ongoing issue—people simply replacing windows without getting the proper permits. Mr. Munzel stated that there are issues with wood windows and the commission should not be punitive because the applicant did not go through the correct process.

Commissioner asked if retroactively approving vinyl windows is something the commission has done. One commissioner stated that there was an instance where illegal windows were installed and the commission required that on the most prominent façade, the original window(s) were re-

installed. The commissioner can remember no time that the commission approved vinyl windows like this on a primary façade. Not that vinyl will never be approved, but it has not been approved. Applicant stated that, to that point, there comes a time in the development of alternative materials in which they become more widely accepted, like composite decking on porches or cementitious siding on houses. In this case, the screen is the same screen that would be on an aluminum-clad window and the screen is the most prominent thing you see from the street. Applicant acknowledged that you don't want to see vinyl on the primary façade but this is the situation we find ourselves in.

Commissioner stated that we find ourselves here because the legal process was not followed. Everyone is held to the same process and Standards. Commissioner stated that the wood transom windows meet the Standards, but the vinyl windows that were installed without a permit do not. Another commissioner stated that if these vinyl windows had been in existence and the half-round transoms were being proposed, it could be argued that the commission would likely approve the half-round wood windows because those meet the Standards. But as another commissioner pointed out, going from the full-height glass to a half-round wood window above a double-hung would likely be a different discussion. The windows that were here weren't vinyl windows—they were appropriate wood windows that had full glass to the arched opening for the building based on the historic windows and these have now been replaced with vinyl. The Commission can't approve half of an application—the application is for both the vinyl double-hung windows and the rounded transoms above.

A commissioner stated that it seems to keep coming back to the fact that there was a wood window there, and it was appropriate for the building, and it was removed. One option would be to vote now and see how that vote comes out and then that would help determine what happens next. If the application gets denied, the commission usually likes to give an applicant a way they can correct their application, and the way it seems to do that would be to submit an amended application that doesn't include vinyl windows. One commissioner stated that they appreciate the work the applicant put in to the application. Commissioner explained that there are no precedents in the historic district—everything is case by case because every house or situation is different. We apply the Secretary of the Interior's Standards as consistently and fairly as possible. Another commissioner stated that, to add to that, their reviews are not about being punitive—it's about trying to be fair to everyone, and there's a factsheet available to help property owners evaluate their options. Applicant stated that he thinks these vinyl windows do meet the Standards and that the commission should consider approving them.

Applicant stated that there aren't many wood window repair craftspeople around and also, that work is expensive, and the applicant restated that at some point, some materials that were considered in the past to not meet the Standards, like Azek, are often considered to meet the Standards now. One commissioner stated that this is worth drilling down a bit—why doesn't vinyl meet the Standards? Commission discussed why vinyl doesn't meet the Standards—it tends to need a thicker profile than wood windows do to do the same job—glass is lost and the look is different from the street. It doesn't interact with historic materials as wood does, because of its greater rate of expansion and contraction. And it's not a quality material—it doesn't wear well and it yellows, fades, and cracks over time. Some composite materials may be stronger and may come closer to wood in their profile and proportions than vinyl does. Some commissioners

mentioned that they would like to learn more about the new materials on the market, and they are looking to the upcoming statewide training to learn more.

These windows are on the front façade of a contributing building and went from wood to vinyl. Proper procedures were not followed, and the usual ways in which the commission would have been able to influence the decision toward windows that would have met the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation were short-circuited. Normally, first, there would have been an assessment regarding current conditions of existing wood windows. If they were beyond repair, then what kind of replacement would meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards? Commission knows what they would need to see in order to make a decision—they would see cut sheets, cross sections, profiles, and conditions assessments of existing windows. This discussion was not had in this case and the windows are gone. So the commission now needs to evaluate retroactively whether these windows meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. Vinyl has not shown itself to be a quality enough product to use in a historic district, and this application did not go through any of the steps needed for the commission to get to the point of being able to approve a replacement material.

Motion: Ratzlaff moved (seconded by Chesnut) to deny the application for the retroactive installation of Pella 250 vinyl double-hung windows at 18 N Washington as submitted April 19, 2022 because the proposed windows do not meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards, specifically Standards 2, 6, and 9. The proposed half-round transoms are also denied because the primary windows would need approval before these secondary windows could be approved or installed.

Approval: Roll call. Unanimous. Motion carried.

STUDY ITEMS

305 E Forest

**Would like to cover peeling cedar siding on house with siding and replace two separate garage doors with one overhead door.*

Commission discussed that the wood siding was restored and the fact that it’s peeling within about 5 years or so indicates to them perhaps a problem with the way the wood was prepped for painting. Much of a paint job is prep, and then some is about the quality of the paint used. A good paint job should last 8 years or more, and then, it can be touched up as needed and it’s not a major paint job down to the bare wood every time. Covering up the wood siding with more siding can seal moisture in, which isn’t good for a house, and the ways that the windows and doors and rooflines will be handled with applied siding can have a negative impact on the house too. Commission would want to see in more detail that the siding can not be repaired and then siding options can be considered.

Regarding the garage, the commission would again want to better understand the deterioration issues and what is causing them and whether the original material is no longer repairable. If that is the case, then options can be explored. Homeowner noted that the doors really don’t open well at all, and the header above the doors is

bowing—a new header is proposed. Homeowner did note that it is difficult to find garage doors that are not textured. Homeowner will consider submitting an application for the next meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS—none

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Property Monitoring

- a. Commissioners/Staff discussed property concerns and property issues under review.

2. Updates from Staff

- a. Update on potential new historic district commissioners: Two new members were appointed. Jimmy Huffman will be attending an orientation with staff at about 6 pm before the next HDC meeting 5/10. Staff will see if Delrhea Byrge, the other appointee, can attend then as well. Other commissioners are welcome as well.
- b. State historic Tax Credit Infoshop, Wednesday June 15, at the Freighthouse. Registration is open at <https://cityofypsilanti.com/263/Historic-District> .
- c. Staff working on lining up a training for commissioners about new infill, elements of design, and how to review.

3. Commissioner Comments

- a. **Meeting schedule:** back in December, commission agreed to meet twice a month in the construction season, and agreed to revisit this schedule in April. Does commission want to consider a change in that meeting-every-two-weeks rhythm? Consensus: defer a decision about changing that every-two-weeks schedule until there are new commissioners on board.
- b. **Vice chair:** currently don't have one and let's revisit this once new commissioners are on board.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS—none

HOUSEKEEPING BUSINESS

Approval of the Minutes of April 12, 2022

Motion: Szumko (second: Ratzlaff) moved to approve the minutes of April 12, 2022, as submitted.

Approval: Roll call. Unanimous
Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

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

MEETING ADJOURNED at 9:48 p.m.