

**Historic Preservation Commission**  
**September 18, 2018 Meeting Minutes**

**A.     Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

**B.     Roll Call**

**Present:** Vice-Chair Sharon Whitaker, Commissioner Paul Emerson, and Commissioner Patti Jordan. Alternate Commissioner Richard Parson was in the audience.

**Absent:** Chairman Pamela Sue Anderson and Commissioner Blane Conklin.

**Staff present:** Principal Planner Joelle Jordan and Planning Technician Kerstin Harding.

**Also Present:** Round Rock Preservation President Shirley Marquardt and Certificate of Appropriateness applicant Robert Levin.

**C.     Citizen Communication**

Round Rock Preservation (RRP) President Shirley Marquardt reported. She gave an update on the current state of the Stagecoach Inn relocation project and thanked Vice-Chair Whitaker for making a presentation to a neighborhood group. She announced a completion of relocation celebration on October 20 and asked for volunteers for that event and for the Chalk Walk on October 5-6.

**D.     Approval of Minutes**

**D.1    Consider approval of the minutes of the August 21, 2018 Historic Preservation Commission meeting.**

**Motion:** by Commissioner Emerson and Second by Commissioner Jordan to approve the minutes of the August 21, 2018 HPC meeting as submitted.

**Vote:** Aye: Commissioner Emerson, Commissioner Jordan, and Vice-Chair Whitaker. Nay: none. The vote was 3-0.

**E.     Certificate of Appropriateness**

**E.1    Consider an action regarding a Certificate of Appropriateness application for alterations at 405 E. Main Street.**

Principal Planner Jordan gave a brief overview of the applicant’s request to remove a chimney that extended above the roof in the southwest part of the house. The chimney and fireplaces on the first and second floors had originally been on the house’s exterior but had been enclosed when two rooms were added in the 1960s, so currently only the top of the chimney extends to the building exterior. The underlying reason for removing the chimney was that the applicant needed to remove the first-floor fireplace to combine two rooms for a large event space.

Because the building is a Recorded Texas Historical Landmark, the Texas Historical Commission (THC) also reviewed the request. Its conclusion was that removing the chimney does not meet the Secretary of the Interior’s *Standards for Rehabilitation*, but it would allow removal since the chimney presented a hazard in its current condition.

The applicant had included a structural report from Kings E360 Engineering, concluding that the mortar is too soft to be stable. Staff pointed out that the firm website indicates no experience with historic structures and sent photos to US Heritage Group, which specializes in historic masonry repairs and condition assessment. A contact concluded that the photos did not show obvious evidence of instability such as cracking or mortar gaps, and that soft mortar is characteristic of the period. Staff also asked US Heritage Group whether it was feasible to build some other support for the second-floor fireplace and chimney, and the contact stated that it was not.

Staff concluded that the removal did not meet the Secretary’s Standards but recommended that the HPC consider the balance between appropriateness with larger preservation goals. The ballroom is necessary to function as an event space, and there is no feasible means of supporting the upper part of the chimney without the first-floor part. Neither the HPC nor the THC has appropriateness purview over the interior.

Owner Rob Levin took the podium and stressed the necessity of having a large ballroom and said this was the only feasible location. He said that the second-floor fireplace would remain, although the fire box would be removed.

Commissioner Jordan asked whether he planned to re-use the brick, and Mr. Levin said they would be re-using a lot of brick and have already saved 1500 bricks. Commissioner Emerson asked whether there was a way to reinforce the mortar or keep the chimney with less weight. Mr. Levin replied that there wasn't, and Ms. Jordan said that the masonry preservation firm that staff consulted had agreed. Vice-Chair Whitaker felt the HPC did not have enough information about alternatives to demolition, and Commissioner Emerson asked whether the case could be tabled until more Commissioners were present. Mr. Levin said that he couldn't accommodate a 30-day delay, and Ms. Jordan noted that if they choose to deny the request the Commission should state a reason for doing so.

**Motion:** by Commissioner Jordan to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness with the following conditions, because the HPC understands that there's no feasible means of supporting the chimney after the fireplace is removed, and the chimney is no longer a prominent feature of the house:

- Before a permit is issued the chimney must be documented to an extent necessary to rebuild it.
- This documentation must be filed with the City's preservation office.

There was no second. Commissioner Emerson asked Mr. Levin when they planned to remove the chimney and what other projects they planned for the property. Mr. Levin replied that he needed to remove the chimney fairly soon, and that he also planned to apply for CofAs for opening the enclosed porch and adding several sets of porch stairs.

Vice-Chair Whitaker moved to reconsider the previous motion, and Commissioner Emerson seconded it.

**Vote:** Aye: Commissioner Emerson, Commissioner Jordan, and Vice-Chair Whitaker. Nay: none. The vote was 3-0.

## **F. Planner Report**


### **F.1 Consider a presentation and discussion on the Historic Preservation Commission 2018 work session**

Ms. Jordan noted that the annual HPC work session on September 25. She reminded the Commissioners that they had received their work session packets early in August, before the work session date was delayed. She asked them to bring both that packet and the addendum distributed before the meeting. The work session location had also been changed to the Administration Training Room.

## **I. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
**Kerstin Harding**  
 Planning Technician