

Historic Preservation Commission

April 16, 2019 Meeting Minutes

A. Call to Order

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

B. Roll Call

Present: Chair Pamela Sue Anderson, Vice-Chair Sharon Whitaker, Commissioner Patti Jordan, Commissioner Richard Parson, Commissioner Tina Steiner, and Commissioner Andrew Wolfe

Absent: Commissioner Shirley Marquardt

Staff present: Principal Planner Joelle Jordan and Planning Tech Kerstin Harding

C. Citizen Communication

There were no citizens wishing to speak at this meeting.

D. Approval of Minutes

D.1 Consider approval of the minutes of the February 19, 2019 Historic Preservation Commission meeting.

Motion: by Vice-Chair Whitaker and Second by Commissioner Jordan to approve the minutes of the February 19, 2019 HPC meeting as submitted.

Vote: Aye: Chair Anderson, Vice-Chair Whitaker, Commissioner Jordan, Commissioner Parson, Commissioner Steiner, and Commissioner Wolfe. Nay: none. The vote was 6-0.

E. Certificate of Appropriateness

Because the applicants for Items E.2 and E.3 were present and the applicants for Item E.1 was not, Chairman Anderson requested discussion of these items first.

E.2 Consider an action regarding a Certificate of Appropriateness application for relocating the house at 106 N. Mays Street to 803 E. Liberty Avenue.

Planning Tech Kerstin Harding gave a short background on the properties at 106 N. Mays and 803 E. Liberty. The Folk Victorian house at 106 N. Mays had been built ca. 1905 and had served as Round Rock's telephone exchange until the local operators were replaced by dial service in 1951. The City plans to redevelop the block and the owner would like to relocate the building to save it from demolition. The owner has a receiving site in mind at 803 E. Liberty, which is a large lot with another historic house that was built ca. 1915 in an Exotic Revival style. It also has a large garage that was built in the 1990s.

She noted that the request meets the criteria for a CofA for relocation described in the Zoning and Development Code Part III Section 10-56 (b): there is an imminent threat of demolition, reasonable alternatives to relocation have been considered, the relocation site is within the city limits (8 blocks away), the relocation site is appropriate for the structure size and type (the relocated structure will not require variances from setbacks or other zoning requirements, and the existing house is of a similar age and size); and the receiving site already has H (historic overlay) zoning and would not need to be rezoned after the relocation. Staff recommended approval of the CofA, and also suggested that the HPC include a condition to allow administrative review of any modifications that become necessary during the relocation process.

Motion: by Commissioner Jordan and Second by Vice-Chair Whitaker to approve the CofA for relocating the Telephone Exchange Building from 106 N. Mays to 803 E. Liberty, and to delegate review authority to staff for any appropriateness issues that may arise during relocation.

Vote: Aye: Chair Anderson, Vice-Chair Whitaker, Commissioner Jordan, Commissioner Parson, Commissioner Steiner, and Commissioner Wolfe. Nay: none. The vote was 6-0.

E.3 Consider an action regarding a Certificate of Appropriateness application for alterations to multiple structures at 803 E. Liberty Avenue.

Ms. Harding explained that after the Telephone Exchange building is moved, all three buildings (the Telephone Exchange, existing house, and garage) will have the address 803 E. Liberty, so proposed alterations will be considered under one CofA. The proposed alterations are to change the roof material of

the Telephone Exchange building, add accessibility ramps to the Telephone Exchange and the existing house, and a garage addition/conversion.

Roof: The roof of the Telephone Exchange building will have to be temporarily removed for vertical clearance during relocation, and the owner would like to replace it with a standing-seam metal roof instead of the current cedar shake roof. The owner prefers the appearance of the shake roof but wants to use metal for maintenance reasons. Ms. Harding noted that all photos of the building show a shake roof, except for one photo from 1938 that depicts a smooth roof that was probably (but not certainly) metal, so there is a historical precedent for a metal roof on this building.

Staff recommended approval of the proposed metal roof (Image II standing seam in Pearl Gray), but also recommended considering synthetic roof shakes that would meet the owner's maintenance requirements, with staff approval of the final material/color selection.

Accessibility ramps: Ms. Harding noted that accessibility ramps may be reviewed by staff, but in this case they have been brought to the HPC as part of the larger rehabilitation plan. She showed the site plan with the locations of the proposed ramps, noting that they fit the City's historic design guidelines recommendation that such ramps should be located to the side or back of the structure where they have the least impact on the primary façade. In an email Mr. Spencer had described the materials as pressure treated wood with painted 2x2 balusters and possibly a painted metal handrail, but Ms. Harding was not certain how final those choices were.

Staff recommended approval of the ramps as presented.

Garage conversion/addition: Ms. Harding noted that the existing garage had been built as a work space in the 1990s and the proposal was to convert the ground floor to office space and add a second-floor apartment. The only building footprint change would be the addition of an exterior stair to the apartment. The plans specified horizontal fiber cement siding and composition shingle roofing. She noted that the HPC has previously allowed smooth, horizontal, lapped fiber cement siding on non-historic parts of historic properties. Although the windows and doors were depicted they were not specified, and staff assumed they were placeholders for illustration purposes.

She noted that it would be the only two-story structure on the site, but that it was at the very back of the property, abutting the alley. She noted that the height of the structure was not marked, and that there is a 25-ft. height limit for accessory structures in the MU-L district. Lowering the roof pitch might help, since the depicted pitch is 12:12 and the zoning district only requires a minimum of 4:12.

Staff recommended approval of the overall concept of the garage conversion/addition, noting that many of the materials had not been specified and the roof shape might need to be changed to meet the zoning ordinance. The composition shingle and the fiber cement siding should be approved so long as the siding is smooth and true lapped siding, without a dropped profile. Colors, window and door selections would have to be approved by staff once selected.

Mr. Spencer took the podium to answer questions. The proposed siding would be true lapped siding, not lap-and-gap, and is the narrowest exposure that Hardie makes. The 12:12 roof slope was used to match the slope of the existing garage roof, part of which would be retained. The high horizontal sliding windows were used for privacy on the alley side of the first floor, and all the windows would have wide aluminum frames. He said that the ground-floor entrance door was a glass and metal commercial door, but they could use something more residential if the HPC preferred it.

Commissioner Jordan asked whether vinyl or aluminum windows were allowed, and Principal Planner Joelle Jordan answered that in the past the HPC has not allowed either; in this case the Commission could set parameters for what would be acceptable and allow for approval of final selections by staff. Ms. Harding asked Mr. Spencer if they'd considered fiberglass or composite windows, and he replied that composites are not sufficiently durable. He was asked how firm the selection of ramp materials was, and he replied that the intent was to repeat those on the back porch of the existing historic house.

Motion: by Commissioner Parson and Second by Vice-Chair Whitaker to accept staff recommendation and allow staff to make adjustments going forward as necessary.

Chair Anderson asked if there was discussion. Principal Planner Jordan noted that the staff recommendation hadn't spoken to parameters for staff review of the window and door selections. Commissioner Jordan said based on the staff recommendation they could be confident that the staff would make a decision that they would approve too.

Vote: Aye: Chair Anderson, Vice-Chair Whitaker, Commissioner Jordan, Commissioner Parson, Commissioner Steiner, and Commissioner Wolfe. Nay: none. The vote was 6-0.

E.1 Consider an action regarding a Certificate of Appropriateness application for 109 E. Main Street.

Ms. Harding gave a brief history of the building at 109 E. Main Street. Built in 1884 it is one of an early group of stone commercial buildings in downtown Round Rock. This group use traditional commercial building techniques that did not make use of large display windows or steel parts. Instead these buildings have a row of arched openings over paired of doors and transom windows. In a ca. 1910 photo of the building, when it was a grocery, the doors do not show because they are open, but the lower edge of a transom is visible. Currently the openings each have a single door flanked by side panels, and a plywood panel in the arch above the door instead of a transom window.

Staff believes that the original doors and transom were quite similar to those at 112 E. Main, which has semicircular arches with transom windows and paired doors that may be original. The applicant proposes to leave the arch panel in place and replace each door and side panels with a set of paired doors that are modified versions of Buffelen #501, with an additional muntin and a clear or stained finish. One set would have a push-button opener to meet accessibility requirements.

Ms. Harding presented the staff analysis, referring to the Secretary’s *Standards for Rehabilitation* guidance that when a building part that is important to the historic character of the building is missing and there is not adequate documentation to create a duplicate, the preferred approach is to design a new feature that is compatible with the historic character of the building but clearly differentiated from the authentic historic feature.

Applied to this case, the character-defining feature of the doorway would be its historical proportions: a semicircular transom over paired doors. To achieve the historical proportion the existing arch panel would have to be reduced to a semicircle, and the doors would be taller than proposed. Whether or not to require that other details (such as finish or millwork profiles) imitate historical examples is a matter of where the HPC believes these details fall between “compatible with historic character” to “clearly differentiated from authentic historic features.”

Commissioner Jordan asked whether the HPC could require the installation of a new transom over the doors. Principal Planner Jordan answered that the Commission cannot increase the scope of the project, but in this case the doors won’t be the correct height unless the arch panel is shortened. Vice-chair Whitaker asked what the correct door dimensions would be, and Ms. Harding replied that one would have to measure the dimensions of a semicircle at the top of the arch and measure from there, allowing for the framing around the door.

Motion: by Commissioner Jordan and Second by Vice-Chair Whitaker to approve a CofA for the applicant’s concept of using custom-sized Buffelen #501 doors as replacements, with the arch panel shortened, and the door dimensions modified to return the doors to their historical proportions in order to make a future restoration of the transom possible without replacing the doors a second time. Staff may approve the final specifications of the doors, finish, and door hardware. The cast ornamentation on the arch panel must also be removed and the glass on the doors may not be tinted or reflective.

Vote: Aye: Chair Anderson, Vice-Chair Whitaker, Commissioner Jordan, Commissioner Parson, Commissioner Steiner, and Commissioner Wolfe. Nay: none. The vote was 6-0.

F. Presentations

F.1 Consider a presentation regarding the 2019 partial tax exemption program for historically significant properties.

Principal Planner Jordan provided an annual training on the inspection process for the annual tax exemption for historic properties. The HPC aims to reduce the number of conditional inspection ratings (giving the applicant the opportunity to have the rating changed if certain conditions are met before the HPC recommendation is presented to the City Council), and staff have been working with owners to ensure that repairs are completed before the ratings are discussed at the May 21 HPC meeting.

F.2 Consider a presentation on the Local Legend selection process and additional appointment(s) to the Local Legend Selection Committee.

Principal Planner Jordan recounted that at the January meeting the HPC appointed 8 people to the 2019 Local Legend Selection Committee (LLSC), but left applications open in hopes of finding a ninth member and having an odd number of members. Since then three new applications had been received, and LLSC member Tina Steiner resigned when she was appointed to the HPC.

Motion: by Commissioner Jordan and Second by Commissioner Wolfe to appoint Julio Palacios and Laura McManus to the 2019 Local Legend Selection Committee.

Vote: Aye: Chair Anderson, Vice-Chair Whitaker, Commissioner Jordan, Commissioner Parson, Commissioner Steiner, and Commissioner Wolfe. Nay: none. The vote was 6-0.

Motion: by Commissioner Jordan and Second by Commissioner Parson to also appoint Ella Sauls Morrison to the 2019 Local Legend Selection Committee.

Vote: Aye: Chair Anderson, Vice-Chair Whitaker, Commissioner Jordan, Commissioner Parson, and Commissioner Wolfe. Nay: none. Abstained: Commissioner Steiner. The vote was 5-0.

LLSC Chair Jen Henderson took the podium and explained that she and several other members of the LLSC had prepared the draft guidelines provided in the HPC meeting packets because the same questions about the LLSC’s role seem to come up each year, and she felt it would be helpful to have clear written guidelines to refer back to. She asked that the HPC review the guidelines each year at its fall work session and refine them for the next year’s LLSC.

The draft guidelines included a description of the three basic categories of Local Legends, which had never officially been written down. She asked the HPC for their general comments on these categories. Another question was how long to keep/reconsider the nominations that weren’t selected that year. The draft guidelines suggested five years, but Ms. Henderson requested the HPC’s feedback.

Chair Anderson thanked Ms. Henderson for drafting the guidelines as a way to get everyone on the same page. She liked that the draft described the third as “or some other entity valuable to the city’s history” and she wanted to emphasize that the main focus should be some kind of historic significance. Also discussed:

- Over the last few years the honorees have tended to fall into one of three categories (someone whose contribution was in the recent past, someone who contributed in the more distant past, and a “wild card” which could be a building, institution, etc.), and the total number of honorees has been limited to three, but it was unclear whether those are general guidelines or if there is supposed to be one of each category each year.
- Organizing the award presentation is difficult when there are more than three honorees.
- If there is to be one honoree from each category each year, maybe the award for each category could have a different name.
- If there is to be one honoree from each category each year, and nominees for one category are weak in a particular year, would that force a weak nominee to be selected and would that weaken the honor of the award?
- Does an honoree have to meet all four criteria on the nomination form, or just at least one?
- There was general agreement that there should be more emphasis on the historical aspect of each category, and less emphasis on economic development (although “contribution to the founding or development of the city” is one of the four criteria referred to on the nomination form).
- What is the cutoff between the “recent past” and “more distant past” categories? 50 years was suggested.
- The issue of how long to reconsider unselected nominees has only become an issue recently, when the LLSC’s outreach efforts generated more nominations. There are more historic nominees now.

Ms. Henderson will discuss the HPC’s comments with the LLSC and will return a revised set of guidelines and/or comments for discussion at the May 21 HPC meeting. The nomination forms and other materials will not be changed until after the 2019 Legends are selected at the HPC work session in the fall.

G. Planner Report

G.1 Consider an update on Preservation Month activities in May.

Ms. Jordan announced a brief summary of events planned for National Preservation Month in May and asked the Commissioners to consider representing the HPC at some of them.

G. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kerstin Harding
Planning Technician