

CITY OF YPSILANTI
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MARCH 13, 2012

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Jane Schmiedeke Chair 7:00 PM

Meeting Location: 4th Floor Conference Room, City Hall

Commissioners Present: Jane Schmiedeke, Hank Prebys, Michael Condon, Jennifer
Henriksen, Alex Pettit, Anne Stevenson

Commissioners Absent: Ron Rupert

Staff Present: Connie Locker, HDC Assistant

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Prebys (Second: Stevenson) moves to approve the agenda as submitted.

Approval: Unanimous. Motion carries.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS - none

PUBLIC HEARING - none

OLD BUSINESS

301 W. Cross

Applicant: Jim Anderson, Huron Sign Co. representative (present)

Discussion: Application is for a new sign to be installed on the existing sign pole to
signify the opening of a new business. The commission had previously
tabled the application in order to receive additional information about the
sign from the property owner.

In response to questions from the commission regarding the opacity of the proposed sign, the applicant notes that the sign will not be entirely opaque; it will be muted to about 25 to 30% of the brightness of traditional Lexan. The applicant explains the sign will be much darker at night than a standard sign. The sign will also use the existing sign pole and will fit into the existing lightbox.

The commission notes that the HDC has never approved a fully lighted translucent sign in the historic district. Lighted signs have only been approved when just the letters are lit. The HDC notes that other options would be to either not light the sign at all or to attach a light to the existing pole to light the sign from the exterior.

Motion: Prebys (second: Stevenson) moves approval for the application for a new sign at 301 W. Cross. The sign will be installed on the existing sign pole and will include a face that is either not backlit or is lit from a front light utilizing indirect lighting. The design of the sign would be as presented in the submitted application materials dated March 13, 2012.

Secretary of Interior Standards cited:

#9 – Contemporary designs shall be compatible and shall not destroy significant original material.

Approval: Unanimous. Motion carries.

100 W. Michigan

Applicant: Rick Napier, contractor (present)

Discussion: Application is for the installation of windows in the existing solid metal sheeting on the façade. The applicant presents new drawings with a detailed depiction of where the existing windows are underneath the sheeting. The HDC had previously been concerned that if windows were cut into the existing window openings through the steel outer shell, they would look strange against the vertical striped colors of the steel. The applicant has identified the windows that fit into the stripes. Some of the window openings still have the original windows inside them, but the applicant notes that they will be removed and replaced with new custom fit Peachtree windows.

The HDC is concerned that the original windows will be discarded and notes the commission would prefer the steel siding to come down. Schmiedeke notes that if the original windows are still present, she must insist that the steel siding is removed and the original windows retained.

Citing the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation #4 ("Preserve significant changes acquired over time") Stevenson notes that the steel siding may have reached an age where it has achieved its own level of significance. She questions if the HDC should consider the steel siding historically significant to the building.

In cutting through the steel siding to open space for the windows, the bent metal siding will fasten to the frame of the window. The commission notes its concern that the brick surrounding the frame will be damaged. Pettit notes that the precise details of the method in which the metal will be attached to the frame should be explained to the HDC in order for the commission to determine how the process will affect the original structure underneath the siding. The commission also comments on the complicated nature of hemming and anchoring the steel.

Prebys voices concern about inflicting greater damage on the original structure but notes that compromises eventually will need to be made. He notes that approval of the application would put the building farther away from the goal of removing the steel façade.

Condon notes that the proposed window placement is visually jarring, explaining that the placement wouldn't be symmetrical when everything else

on the façade is symmetrical. Pettit notes that there are other examples of asymmetry in the historic district.

Motion: Pettit (second: Condon) moves approval to include the installation of six windows on the south façade of the building, to be located above the existing second story windows in their original locations. On the east elevation, seven windows shall be installed in the original window locations as noted on the submitted drawing dated 2/17/12 and 3/13/12. Sashes will be replaced as per submitted document number 02221201, Peachtree windows. The existing frames are to be preserved. Where existing metal façade is cut, extension jambs will be installed to attach to frame and metal siding.

Secretary of Interior Standards cited:

#5 – Preserve distinctive features.

#6 – Repair, don't replace. Replacements shall match original.

#9 – Contemporary designs shall be compatible and shall not destroy significant original material.

Discussion: Henriksen believes two of the windows need to be removed in order to preserve symmetry.

Motion: Pettit (second: Condon) moves to amend his original motion to include everything as mentioned except that on the east elevation, the northernmost band of dark gray would have two windows to match the others farther south of the elevation. The two windows within the adjacent light gray band would be eliminated.

Approval: Yay: 3. Nay: 3. Motion fails.

Discussion: Stevenson notes that the existing sashes, where present, should be retained and repaired. Pettit cites that in other cases, the HDC has approved full replacement. Henriksen notes that if the motion were amended, some windows would have insulated glass and some wouldn't, so the windows would potentially look different from each other. Condon notes that there are times when it is appropriate to repair the sash, but argues that the building is not a landmark and the energy efficiency gained in this "everyday use" building promotes a "usability element" of the building.

Motion: Pettit (second: Condon) offers the original motion with amendment again.

Approval: Yay: 4. Nay: 3. Motion carries.

NEW BUSINESS

400 N. River

Applicant: John and Mary Delcamp, representatives (present)

Discussion: Application is for a commemorative art project to be installed on the existing white backdrop on the Thompson Block. Photo used for the proposed mural would be one of a prior Civil War muster. The art would measure approximately forty feet long and would be temporary, possibly remaining at the site for up to 6 months. The mural would eventually be used at the

commemorative event for the upcoming installation of a historical marker on the site. It could eventually be taken down and sold off as necessary.

The applicants ask for approval of the project and for the related application fees to be waived, as nonprofit organizations are working on the project. The HDC notes that it has no authority in regard to fees and refers the applicants to the Building Department.

Motion: Henriksen (second: Prebys) moves approval of the public art installation at the Thompson Block, 400 N. River. The artwork shall be painted on plywood and attached to the current plywood façade along the storefront. The art will commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Civil War.

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

Approval: Unanimous. Motion carries.

STUDY ITEMS

Ypsilanti Water Tower

Applicant: Student at Eastern Michigan University (present)

Discussion: The student is familiar with a foundation that supports an orphanage in his home country. The foundation is currently fundraising to obtain enough money to build a second floor for the facility and to provide property to build a school for the children residing in the orphanage.

The student wonders if it would be possible to hang a banner from the Water Tower to advertise for this cause and encourage donations. The HDC notes that the Water Tower is operated by YCUA and directs him there to seek permission for the banner.

ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS - none

OTHER BUSINESS

Property Monitoring

16 N. Huron – New sign design was denied by the HDC. Property is to continue being monitored; an application for a different design is expected.

120 W. Michigan – New sign was approved by the HDC, but it was suggested that the sign not be installed until the property owner installed the planned sign board. Existing sign will not fit inside the planned sign board.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS - none

HOUSEKEEPING BUSINESS

Approval of the minutes of February 28, 2012

Motion: Prebys (second: Henriksen) moves to approve the minutes as submitted.

Approval: Unanimous. Motion carries.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Approval: Unanimous. Motion carries.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:45 p.m.