



MINUTES

**City of Ypsilanti
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Meeting held in person and by Zoom at City Hall Council Chambers**

**Tuesday, June 14, 2022 (approved June 28, 2022)
7:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Meeting Called to Order 7:05 pm

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

Commissioners Present:

Alex Pettit – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti
Delrhea Byrge—Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti
James Ratzlaff – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti
Stefan Szumko - Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti
Jeff Muir – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti
Jimmy Huffman – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti (arrived a few minutes late)

Commissioners Absent: James Chesnut – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti, excused

Staff Present: Ellen Thackery, Preservation Planner

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Approval: Roll call vote. Unanimous. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS—none

PUBLIC HEARING—none

BUSINESS SESSION

PRESENTATION: New Infill Construction: Urban Design Characteristics, J. Michael Kirk, AIA LEED AP BD+C, recently retired principal from Neumann Smith

- When reviewing new proposed infill construction, don't consider style; instead, look at urban design characteristics
- These include height (be sure to define height and where on the building height should be measured from), line of setbacks, façade composition, rhythm/pedestrian experience, materials

and details. For height, usually within 1 story of the heights nearby, but might allow middle of building to be taller.

- Answered questions about approving new designs for new infill neighborhood. Encouraged a set of design guidelines at the outset of a new project so that the builder has some flexibility to build what's needed and to be market sensitive while also being sensitive to the neighborhood. Restated the idea of reviewing new designs focusing on objective aspects of urban design characteristics instead of looking at aesthetic style. Instead of saying that a new proposed design mimics too closely a style (Craftsman, for example) or it mimics it but adds too many details, say instead that the rhythm of the proposed exposed rafter tails is not compatible with the other houses on the street, for example.
- Commissioner Muir had to leave after the presentation but we still had quorum.

OLD BUSINESS

210 Oak

**Removal and replacement of 19 windows and replace with Andersen Fibrex windows.*

**Removal and replacement of front entry door, removal of storm door without replacing.* [Amended application for work from a postponed application May 24.]

Staff Report: House contributes to the National Register and local historic districts. Briefly recapped last conversation and new findings. New findings include that the house was located on an 1868 map and the rear "addition" was present by then. Staff was able to determine some of the evolution of window technology.

Applicant: Andersen's permit coordinator Brett Mahaffey attended the meeting in person. Brett provided an overview of the proposal. 19 windows are proposed to be replaced. The two windows that are the most historic would remain. Ideally, they would replace the one historic one on the east side as well, but applicant acknowledges that that one is also historic like the front one. There is a variety of window types in the house, and all would be replaced in the same configurations as they are now (one-over-ones would remain one-over-ones). Windows would be white on the exterior. The proposed windows are inserts.

Discussion: Commissioners discussed that, after the last meeting, commissioners sought more information about the conditions of the existing windows. Commissioner stated that when it comes to the historic windows, there is some simple maintenance you can do without replacing the windows. Applicant stated that the homeowner had done some maintenance, filling in some wood and repainting the windows, a couple years ago and so the condition is hard to see. To try to trace the evolution of the windows and building, the applicant investigated the house looking at foundation, trim, and doorways to try to determine the house's evolution. Commissioner stated that these are two separate issues, however—there's which windows are original and have acquired significance on their own, *and* there's the condition of the materials, which is separate from that.

Applicant explained that based on their investigation, it looks like the storm cellar doors were added and the basement was likely dug after the house was built. You could see in the storm cellar that the crawl space window had been cemented over and you could see where original windows were and where the doorway was cut through and a door added. You could see how the foundation was cut stone all around except in the back rear section where it was a later addition with a concrete block foundation. Applicant explained that in every part of this house

and even in the same room, you'd have different types of trim and different types of windows. They are doing inserts here instead of full-frame replacements in part because they do not want to work with the asbestos siding and if you remove frames, you need to retrim around windows etc and get into that siding.

Applicant stated that the other kind of investigation/comparison he did was with other Italianates on the same street. There is one nearby with a side addition and another one that may have a rear addition down the street. In looking at the neighboring Italianates that still have all of their historic trim, their windows are very vertically oriented and symmetrical—one above the other—and the doors have very narrow sidelights, which this one does not. Asbestos siding first became available in about 1905. So there was likely a whole Colonial Revival update happening at one time—the Italianate brackets are removed, the front door (and storm) and front and side windows are updated, and maybe other windows too, to lose their mid-19th-century feel and get updated for the new (20th) century. Commissioner notes that it's very likely that if you were to pull the asbestos siding off, the story of the house's changes would become very clear by the evidence left behind there. Even though the c. 1900 front window is likely not original to the house, it has acquired significance in its own right since it has now been there over 100 years.

Proposal is for replacement of 19 windows, leaving the two windows with the smaller upper sash and bigger lower sash since they appear to be oldest and have wavy glass. All the other windows are a variety of different materials and types of operation. Commissioner tried to draw a distinction that the windows in the original square part of the house would have likely been the most original, but those are gone now and replaced by windows of various types. Staff added that part of the reason everyone may be struggling with the window chronology on this house is that we are thinking in terms of an addition on the rear, but that addition on the rear of the house has been there since at least 1868 when it appears on an 1868 map. So if it was added, it was added early on in the house's history. And all of the windows are in all of the rooms—many rooms have every type of window. Commissioner states that it's important to remember that these wood windows were meant to be repaired and are simple components that can be repaired. And if the basic maintenance is done, weatherstripping can also be added that, along with storms, greatly improves energy efficiency. Our drive is to preserve historic materials, and old-growth lumber is fantastic. Commissioner notes that homeowner had been in contact with Amy Swift and had worked on her windows, and reached out to two windows contractors but commissioner thinks it's worth noting that there is a limited capacity in our area for window restoration work.

Commission discussed that it would be helpful if a window restoration professional provided a conditions assessment with an estimate.

Are there elements the commission agrees need to be preserved? Elements we're comfortable with replacing? Do we need more information?

Looking at the door, commission seems to agree that the entry door has deteriorated beyond repair and that the security of the door is important. Commissioner notes that the storm door goes with the Colonial Revival updates and has become a character-defining feature, but applicant notes that the storm door cannot be reinstalled over the new entry door. Once the new frame is in place and the door is squared up, it can't go back on.

Procedural discussion. Straw poll for door—consensus around door. Clarifying windows. Understanding numbering system. One commissioner wanted to give front façade some extra scrutiny, but those windows on the front are mixed—some are zinc liners there but those are likely the most recent replacements. There are cases on this house where two windows that are slightly different (different operations, slightly different dimensions) are mullied together, and if one changes out, won't it even be more obvious than if they both were changed out? And there's one window that has divided lights on the upper sash with zinc track, but no other windows are like that. We strive to save historic materials that contribute to the character of the property, but perhaps not all of these do.

Discussed that where the bedroom is on the east side of the addition, over the cinderblock foundation, that had been a porch that was enclosed after 1868, but perhaps the windows that had looked out onto the porch were reused when the porch was enclosed, because they're string-operated.

Storm windows would be removed on the replacement windows.

Motion: Szumko moved (Huffman seconded) to approve the application and issue a certificate of appropriateness for the work at 210 Oak Street as proposed June 7, 2022 to replace 19 windows with Fibrex double-hung windows with the condition that both the front window and the east-side window with smaller upper sashes on the first floor be preserved and restored. The proposed work meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation 4 and 6.

In addition, move to issue a notice to proceed for the replacement of the front entry door at 210 Oak Street with a steel Provia Legacy steel entry door as outlined on the application, because the historic door has been kicked in in the past and this new steel door meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation #6 and will be more secure for the residents. The removal of the storm door is approved as well.

Approval: Roll call. Unanimous. Motion carried.

Relevant Secretary of the Interior's Standards:
4, 6

NEW BUSINESS

6-12 S Washington

**Rebuilding of canopy that had been removed.*

Staff Report: The National Register nomination from 1988 describes 6-12 S Washington as a "2-story Commercial Brick commercial block. Lower story redone in metal panels. More recent vertical boarding below second-story windows." The 1988 nomination actually did not consider this building contributing to the district at the time, but the Ypsilanti Historic District Commission has since found that the building at 6 S. Washington is significant under the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) guidelines criteria A and C. Staff explained that the canopy had been removed a few years ago and the City has requested an application to rebuild the canopy since 2016. Staff asked whether the projection toward the southern end of the building would be rebuilt or the rounded effect the canopy had toward the northern end would be rebuilt.

Applicant: Propertyowner Andrew Epstein and architect Lis Knibbe attended the meeting in person. Lis provided an overview of the proposal. After being part of the team that rehabilitated the Knapp's building in Lansing several years ago, Lis knows that you cannot get these enameled steel panels anymore, but you can replicate them. She proposes using aluminum composite material panels in the same dimension as the original in white matte that will be painted in the appropriate beige and then sponged to replicate the texture of the enameled steel panels. The caulk seams between the panels will be visible as they were in the "before" pictures. The canopy will be striped and will project a uniform 12" out from the building.

Discussion: There will be no extra projection and no rounding because those are the places that invite water and where you get structural failure. The seams will not be visible on the canopy as they were before because the metal strips will be overlapped for longevity/waterproofing. The 12" uniform projection seemed right to Lis because you don't need to give it extra support or cantilever it at that point. They'd simply add wood framing to the front of the building to form the canopy. The main entrance door is recessed anyway. Commissioner commented that it won't be an exact replica, but that is not necessary for its success in his opinion.

Motion: Szumko (seconded by Ratzlaff) moved to approve the application for the rebuilding of the distinctive Art Deco-style awning at 6-12 S Washington as proposed June 7, 2022 because the work as proposed meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation 4 and 6.

Approval: Roll call. Unanimous. Motion carried.

Relevant Secretary of the Interior's Standards:

4, 6

411 N Huron

**Replace existing gutters and downspouts with copper.*

Staff Report: Property contributes to the National Register and local historic districts. Metal roof was approved by commission a month or two ago; these gutters and downspouts are now before you. Staff could not administratively approve because it is a change of gutter/downspout material.

Applicant: Both homeowners present. Walked through application and showed how the new gutters will solve a lot of problems. There are places where gutters are not currently but they need to be installed. Homeowners researched materials and learned that galvalume gutters do not exist and that aluminum is so expensive right now that copper is comparable and longer lasting. Proposing 6" copper gutters and downspouts and using either bar or strap brackets, paying special attention to the brackets.

Discussion: Color should be fine. Dark bronze color roof, color will patinate and will likely blend in. Molding on fascia will be replicated and replaced in cedar where there is rot. About 15-20' of it. Got molding plates to cut the cedar.

Motion: Ratzlaff (seconded by Szumko) moved to approve the application submitted for 411 N Huron June 7, 2022 and issue a certificate of appropriateness for the repair of fascia boards as necessary in cedar and the same profile as existing, paint touch-up along fascia, the installation of copper bar brackets and roof strap brackets as appropriate, and the installation of copper 6" seamless half-round reverse bead gutters and downspouts. The work meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, specifically Standards 2 and 9.

Relevant Secretary of the Interior's Standards: 2 and 9

Approval: Roll call. Unanimous. Motion carried.

9 S Adams

** Remove the top 24"-28" of parapet wall along building's south side, rebuild parapet wall using salvaged and reclaimed bricks, repoint in this section, and repoint in scattered spots around the top 30" of the building.*

Staff: Because this application includes removing a couple rows of brick from across the front of the building and rebuilding that section of parapet, staff thought the application was no longer maintenance but is instead work and so brought the application to the commission. The application calls for removing a couple rows of brick across the front of the building, salvaging bricks as possible, replacing others as necessary, staining some mortar (St Mary's Type N), and repointing in these rows but also repointing in scattered spots around the top of the building.

Applicant: Applicant attended by Zoom.

Discussion: Commissioner clarified that the brick will come from the building itself and then also as necessary from Detroit Reclaim. The building is in the middle of the block between S Adams and S Washington, behind the library, so it's very hard to see. No powerwashing or sandblasting. Commissioner does not think the grinding out of the mortar is an issue. The bricks would just have to be replaced as necessary—they can break if you work on them with a hammer and chisel as well.

Motion: Huffman moved (seconded by Ratzlaff) to approve application for work at 9 S Adams submitted June 9, 2022 and issue a certificate of appropriateness for the work as proposed for the removal of the top 2-3 feet of bricks at the top of the parapet wall along the south side of the building, followed by reconstruction of that section of the wall using salvaged and new matching bricks and matching mortar, and repointing scattered areas (approximately 10-15%) of the bricks along the top of the walls around the building. As long as deteriorated mortar is removed carefully by hand when necessary with a hammer and chisel or carefully using a small pneumatic chisel, and without any harsh cleaning or sandblasting, and as long as power tools are only used on horizontal and not vertical joints and are carefully controlled, the proposed work meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation #2, and #5.

Relevant Secretary of the Interior's Standards: 2 and 5.

Approval: Roll call. Unanimous. Motion carried.

STUDY ITEMS—none

ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS

1. 314 S Washington—roof, like-for-like gutters, bathroom exhaust vent
2. 302 S Huron—painting
3. 421 N Adams—stain/paint fence
4. 114 S Huron—paint
5. 316 N Grove—reroof house, carriage house
6. 411 E Forest--reroof

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Property Monitoring

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

2. Updates from Staff

- b. Conflict of interest forms—please sign and return

3. Commissioner Comments

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

1. Energy Audits

- a. These are recommended by Preservation Brief #3 before undertaking any work in a historic resource.
- b. These homeowners' energy audit showed that their windows were not worth replacing. That was not where they were losing energy.
- c. They'd recommend pointing homeowners toward certified energy auditors before replacing their windows. (Certifiers include BPI and RESnet.) These homeowners used Evergreen Energy Savers. It showed them how to insulate etc and get the most bang for their buck. The money spent on replacing windows could likely be better spent on other items that would deliver better energy savings.
- d. Consider/ask whether financing for restoring/repairing windows exists. Does MISaves allow for window repair in their program? There may be unequal access to capital when it comes to repair work as opposed to replacement work.

HOUSEKEEPING BUSINESS

Approval of the Minutes of May 24, 2022

Motion: Ratzlaff (second: Szumko) moved to approve the minutes of May 24, 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 10:00 p.m.