



MINUTES

**City of Ypsilanti
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Meeting held in person at Ypsilanti City Hall, Council Chambers**

**Tuesday, November 22, 2022, approved 12/13/22
7:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair called meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present:

Alex Pettit – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti
James Chesnut – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti
Stefan Szumko - Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti
James Ratzlaff – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti
Delrhea Byrge—Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti

Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Present: Ellen Thackery, Preservation Planner

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Ratzlaff (second: Byrge) moved to approve the revised agenda. (Revised agenda moved the study item up to the first item on the agenda and the commission plans to talk about both applications for 411 N Huron at once.)

Approval: Roll call vote. Unanimous. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS--none

PUBLIC HEARING—none

STUDY ITEM—311 E Forest

Staff reminded commission that this is the second time this homeowner has been to the commission with this study item. House is noncontributing and existing windows are vinyl. Homeowner is interested in removing the center window on the rear of the house and replacing it with a sliding glass door. This door being discussed is a

wood door with a Fibrex composite cladding. Because the house is noncontributing and this proposed work is on the rear, because this is a wood door clad in a composite that the commission has approved before, and because the window that would be removed does not contribute historic material to the house and does not introduce a proportionality problem, this proposed product looks to the commission like it would meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. When it is time for the actual application, the commission will want to understand what the sliding door will open onto (deck? steps?), but, for now, in concept, commission believes they could approve these doors in this expanded window opening.

OLD BUSINESS

411 N Huron

**Gutter amendment*

Applicant: Hannah McCready, applicant, present.

Staff Report: Staff reminded commission that this application is for an Italianate house that contributes to the district. The commission had approved copper half-rounds and applicant is amending that application to painted aluminum half-rounds, with brackets mounted directly to the fascia board to protect the decorative bracketed cornice.

Discussion: Some of the decorative elements like the fascia brackets and the connector cover will be painted gold; all other metal components will be painted Dark Bronze to match the roof.

Motion: Ratzlaff (second: Szumko) moved to approve the amended application submitted for 411 N Huron November 10, 2022 and issue a certificate of appropriateness for the installation of 6" seamless half-round aluminum gutters in Dark Bronze color and 4" smooth downspouts in Dark Bronze color on parts of the house supplied in the supplemental documents. Gutters to be mounted to the fascia using aluminum cast fascia brackets. The work meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, specifically Standards 2 and 9.

Approval: Roll call vote. Unanimous. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

411 N Huron

**Removal of nonhistoric sheet metal shed*

Applicant: Hannah McCready, applicant, present.

Staff Report: Typically, when applicants apply to demolish, remove, or move a structure in the historic district, a two-part process is required, and a public hearing is required. However, by the commission's rules, in cases where the commission unanimously agrees that the structure in question "is of such minimal historic or architectural significance that its demolition or moving would clearly be compatible with the purposes of the Historic District Ordinance and that its demolition or removal would have no adverse impact on the adjacent area or upon the Historic District as a whole," the commission may approve the application for demolition. In this case, staff did not believe the outbuilding is contributing and staff believed that the removal of the nonhistoric shed would not

affect the property's historic materials, or spatial relationships on the property or within the district.

Discussion: Commission agreed unanimously.

Motion: Szumko (Ratzlaff seconded) moved to approve the application submitted for 411 N Huron November 10, 2022 and issue a certificate of appropriateness for the removal and disposal of a nonhistoric, non-contributing sheet metal shed because the work meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standard for Rehabilitation 9. The removal of the shed will not destroy historic materials, features, or spatial relationships that characterize this property.

Approval: Roll call vote. Unanimous. Motion carried.

412 Oak

**replacement of front door and storm door*

Applicant: Not present

Staff Report: This building is in the local historic district but not on the National Register. It is a noncontributing building. The house was aluminum sided and many of the windows were replaced with new wood windows in the early 2000s. The proposed work is to replace the entry door and storm door; neither are original to the house.

Discussion: These are replacements for replacements. Looks like material commission has approved before, but a commissioner noticed that the proposal is for a simulated wood finish on the entry door. If texture is not exaggerated, might be okay. Commissioner wondered if possibly there's a longer-term plan the homeowner has in mind. Commissioner mentioned that if this door had been proposed for the new construction approved on N Park, commission would likely not have approved it because it has a fake wood grain. Does a smooth door come in colors other than white? Would they have to paint a smooth door? A couple questions for staff to clarify. If the applicant wants to paint the smooth fiberglass door a color other than white, that isn't really in the commission's purview (the commission doesn't regulate color choices).

Motion: Chesnut moved (Ratzlaff seconded) to approve application PHDC 22-0098 and allow staff to issue a certificate of appropriateness for 412 Oak Street ~~and issue a certificate of appropriateness~~ for the replacement of a non-historic front entry door using a fiberglass door with 6 lights and two lower panels and the replacement of a non-historic storm door with an aluminum storm door with a $\frac{3}{4}$ light and a single lower panel, under the conditions that the fiberglass door is the smooth option and not wood grained. The work is appropriate because it meets Secretary of the Interior's Standard for Rehabilitation #9 and will not harm the integrity of this house or the larger district. If the applicant wants to select the wood-grain option, the applicant will need to attend the historic district commission meeting December 13 to discuss with the commission.

Approval: Roll call vote. Unanimous. Motion carried.

319 N Huron

**Replacement doors*

Applicant: Laith Issa, applicant, present.

Staff Report: This building is the auto repair at the corner of Huron and Cross and is considered a noncontributing building. The two bathroom doors on the building's side were replaced and the doors into the office and into the garage (people door, not for cars) are the doors now currently under review. The proposed doors will look much like the new bathroom doors, except that the front doors will have glass inserts, similar to what they have now.

Discussion: The main entrance door will still have a transom but will be aluminum, and he is looking at a door that will match the original glass/metal ratio. Commissioner asked about the perception of the bathroom doors and how recessed they and the transoms appear. Old stamped steel had more dimension almost more like milled wood, and we were seeing the opposite side of it. Now that the doors will swing out, they appear closer to the surface of the building. Applicant is interested in treating the glass in the shop door to obscure the view of the shop equipment. Applicant and staff will work together with the city planner to determine what window tints/methods to obscure are allowed in the zoning ordinance for the glass in the shop door and also eventually the storefront windows.

Motion: Ratzlaff (second: Byrge) moved to approve Application PHDC 22-0103 and issue a certificate of appropriateness for the replacement of two original steel doors, their frames, and one transom and its frame at 319 N Huron with aluminum replacement materials as proposed because the building is noncontributing and the proposed work will not have a significant negative impact on the district. As a result, the proposed work meets Secretary of the Interior's Standard for Rehabilitation 9.

Approval: Roll call vote. Unanimous. Motion carried.

201 E Cross

** Replacing four windows (retroactive review)*

Applicant: Alex Berry-Santoro, attorney (P81545) and applicant Judy Weinburger both present.

Staff Report: This house is a contributing house to the district. Every case in the district is unique and the commission must apply the Standards and guidelines fairly and consistently. First is the question, does the building contribute? If it does, the commission is considering the effects of the proposed work on the historic materials as well as the effects of the proposed work on nearby properties and the district. If the building does not contribute, the commission is considering how the proposed work affects the district. In this case, the house is considered contributing. The work that is proposed here is to replace four wood, one-over-one windows with four vinyl one-over-ones. The work has been done, but when the commission reviews work retroactively, the commissioners still consider it as if it has not yet been done. There are two applications in the packet because staff received one application for three windows and then later received an application for four windows.

Staff notes that included in the meeting packet are some guidelines /a policy from the City of Grand Rapids. Staff will make clear in the minutes that the policy included in the packet is from the City of Grand Rapids.

Discussion: *(Two paper copies were distributed to each commissioner and those have been attached.)* Mr. Berry-Santoro stated that there are 29 windows on the home. The house is aluminum sided and he states that there were vinyl windows on the house when his client purchased the home. There are also aluminum windows—there are vinyl-covered windows, aluminum with different sashes, etc. The windows being reviewed here are the three in the front on the first floor. On the east side, there are many different building materials used—some windows have panes in the windows and some don't, some open outward, some open sliding upward. The reason we're here is that one of the tenants was complaining that they can't maintain a 60-degree house. Tenants can sue landlords. So the homeowner addressed the issue with new windows without proper review or permits. The homeowner has also provided cost estimates for replacing these windows with wood and aluminum-clad wood, and those costs range from \$15,300 to \$19,700. Mr. Berry-Santoro stated that they have also provided some income statements showing that the homeowner nets \$576/month on this house and pays \$18,000 in repair per year. Paying \$19,000 on replacement windows in addition to the \$18,000 in annual maintenance costs would mean the owner should just sell the home. He stated that he understands that the commission is charged with preserving historic materials and has Standards, but his contention is that much of the house's historic nature was destroyed before his client owned the property. He doesn't think that these replacement windows are too far visually from what was in place.

Commissioner asked how the applicant got a building permit. Applicant confirmed that she didn't have a building permit. Commissioner asked whether the homeowner knows how old the windows are on the second floor. Homeowner has owned the home about three years and doesn't know how old those windows are. Staff stated that those second-floor windows appear on the 1980s survey photo and that staff considers them likely original. Commissioner conveyed that it is clear that this home has lost some historic materials over time, but it is important to note that some remain, like these second-floor windows, and so they become all that much more important to preserve. Commission encourages people to maintain historic wood windows so they can stay in service for a really long time. Replacement windows are just that—they're replacements and they themselves will need to be replaced before long. That is why the commission regulates what can go into a window opening when a window is replaced—there are two things: one is maintaining the appearance of character-defining features and the other is that the quality of what goes in maintains the house itself over the long term. A good quality window does not allow water in to damage the structure, for example. What the commission worries about is windows that don't have that longevity to them—that is why the commission requires that high-quality materials are used when replacements do indeed become necessary. In this case, the commission did not have the opportunity to evaluate the condition of these windows to understand whether they could have been repaired. Now the commission is trying to determine whether these replacements are suitable. Commission is considering whether the window configuration is appropriate (one-over-one), and the commission also looks very carefully at whether the glass area is maintained. The importance of keeping the glass area the same is conveyed on our public materials, like the fact sheets that are available on the website. Commission does not have measurements of the windows and the glass that were in place, but

commissioner stated that he believes some of the glass size was reduced, as compared to the windows on the first floor at the front of the house to the left (west).

Question about whether this was a full-frame replacement—the interior trim remained in place, so was likely not a full-frame replacement. Question about how the trim was treated—applicant confirmed that the trim was wrapped in aluminum. Applicant states that the older windows leak. Every tenant has to cover the windows with plastic, and that was the problem particularly here. Commissioner acknowledged that the homeowner was trying to address tenant concerns—the question for the commission is whether these particular windows selected are appropriate.

Applicant asked what is meant when it is said that this house is contributing to the district. Staff explained that at the time of the survey, this house was photographed and was deemed contributing by the historic district study committee and by the writers of the National Register nomination. Looking at a colonial revival house (sketch on page 59 of the meeting packet from a book about architectural styles), and comparing it to 201 E Cross, staff suggested that the house still has its original proportions, massing, roof overhangs, second-floor windows, and the dormers are in place, although they have been covered in aluminum and were at the time of the survey. So the architectural survey in the 1980s considers the house contributing and so the commission is charged with trying to preserve the house's historic materials from that point forward. Applicant asks about the dormers—these dormer windows seem unusual in that they are on the house but only are accessible to the attic, and the house has no attic access. The dormers do vent the attic. Commissioner also stated that the year of the house's construction may have also played a role in determining whether the house was contributing or not, and that in part is about the district's historic context and what was happening in Ypsilanti at the time.

Applicant stated that because of the old aluminum covering and that it has so many different windows on it, homeowner did not think the house had many historic features left, but now understands that the shape and symmetry of the house are important to identifying the style as Colonial Revival. Commissioner also stated that it is also very likely that some of the house's original materials are under that aluminum siding. Any materials that are behind that aluminum are also in the commission's charge to protect. Applicant states that there is not much insulation behind the siding, and staff will send a guide to safely insulating a historic building. Commissioner states that commission is also considering appropriateness of a replacement material—even if the feature in question is not historic, how appropriate is the material being proposed? Vinyl is not compatible and does not fit into the district.

Commissioner stated he's trying to focus on the criteria that the commission considers when an application for a new item comes before the commission—glass area and the massing of components of the window. It does look like the sill got built up a bit when the windows got replaced. Commission has approved composite windows also, because they seem to be stronger than vinyl and so can get closer to the appearance of wood than straight vinyl is able to do. Commissioner suggested that the applicant get a composite window estimate as well.

Staff can supply names of window restoration professionals for the upstairs windows because those are character-defining features of the house. Staff did reach out to a composite window supplier for a very quick estimate using the measurements provided on the other estimate, just as a ballpark, and he quoted a white painted wood interior and a Fibrex exterior at

\$3200/window. Staff realizes that the commission would need more detailed estimates to truly consider this, but staff had sought just a quick ballpark estimate for this conversation. Staff will provide the contact for the Fibrex windows that were used elsewhere in the district in a similar case where some windows were original and some were replacements over time on the house. Staff mentioned that Jeld-Wen might have a composite window product to offer also, and staff thought Jeld-Wen also offered a wood replacement window.

Commissioner restated that the windows are of a variety of configurations and materials, but that fact makes the ones on the front and the ones that are historic even more important.

Commissioner asks if the homeowner intends to update the windows on the left side of the house on the first floor for uniformity and homeowner stated that she is not sure. A primary façade (front of the house) gets special consideration and scrutiny because it is so visible. Commissioner stated that commission has never approved vinyl in a case like this on the primary façade when replacing wood windows.

Chair asked if there is other information commissioners may want in order to make a decision. Are sash packs/ conversion kits still available? Could those possibly work here and meet the criteria? In this case, there are already replacements installed. Inserts (as these are) reduce glass area. Next is material—vinyl is unacceptable across the board in the district. The commission would look at proportionality and design, and both of these are close to what was here, other than the glass reduction. Applicant asked whether the commission could conditionally approve these with the condition that the homeowner install something that would meet the Standards on the first floor on the opposite side. Staff explained that the commission has to address the situation before them. The commission can't trade this for that—the commission has to look at the proposal in front of them and determine if the proposal is appropriate or not. If it's appropriate, that's one position. If it's not that's a different position. Is this proposed work appropriate or no? Commissioner stated that this proposal is not appropriate. The city's fact sheets outline that. Commissioner stated that if a building permit was mistakenly issued, that might impact the commission's decision making. Another commissioner stated that had the work been inspected by the building department, the commission would at least know whether the installation will protect the building, but the commission doesn't have that currently. A vinyl window is not something the commission has approved, even for new construction in the district. Wood with aluminum cladding has been approved in the past for new construction.

Chair asked if the commission agrees that this proposed work is not appropriate, what might be appropriate? Commissioners stated that a wood or composite window would be acceptable, and they stated that if the applicant finds a different product in the marketplace, the commission would be happy to look at it. Marvin makes a fiberglass-clad window—there may be others. Marvin has levels of windows and price points, so it's possible a lower-priced option even from these manufacturers is available.

Commissioner stated that one necessity for an approval would be the proper fit for a proper installation. Commissioner asks would a small loss of glass be okay if the material were more appropriate than vinyl? The sill buildup looked most significant—maybe that could be addressed with a good insert and a good installation. To summarize, some options the commission would like to see are some more information about other brands, other more affordable product lines

within brands, and additional materials that interest the applicant, like a composite or something similar. Commissioners would want to see additional photos of the wood windows on the left side of the first floor on the front of the building and would want to understand that the new windows to replace these replacements will not reduce glass and will not greatly affect or build up the sill. Installation becomes very important. For the windows on the left (west) side of the first floor on the front of the house, commission requests that the applicant provide the measurements for the wood structural pieces of the window (both horizontal and vertical) and the measurements of the glass. Please also provide close-up photos of the sill and the trim details between windows on the left (west) on the front of the house on the first floor. There was some conversation about measuring the vinyl windows as well, but since they will need to be replaced, applicant and commissioners agreed that the windows on the first-floor left (west) side can be used as a baseline and those measurements can be used to select appropriate replacements for the right side, where the vinyls were installed.

Motion: Szumko (second: Chesnut) moved to postpone application PHDC 22-0025 for the replacement of four non-historic wood windows with vinyl windows at 201 E Cross for the applicant to provide the following information: additional material options and costs on those, further other potential material options to be considered, and the dimensions of the three windows and all of their components on the west side first floor so that new proposed windows for the east can match these dimensions as closely as possible . The commission must take action or staff must issue a procedural denial on this application by 60 calendar days from November 18, 2022.

Approval: Roll call vote. Unanimous. Motion carried.

Staff explained that the next meeting is December 13 in Council Chambers. If action is not able to be taken by 60 calendar days from November 18 (January 17, 2023), the commission issues a procedural denial and then the applicant would simply reapply. Note for the Minutes: Alternatively, both the commission and the applicant could agree to an extension in writing.

ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS

306 S Washington—*paint*

306 S Washington—*roof*

319 N Huron—*door replacements on bathrooms*

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Property Monitoring

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

2. Updates from Staff—

- Discussion of shed materials for the new neighborhood at 220 N Park. (*attached*)

3. Commissioner Comments—

- a. 306 S Washington—commissioner sought clarification on activity happening there. Staff explained that house painting and roof HDC administrative approvals were done, but staff is waiting for a new porch application.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS-none

HOUSEKEEPING BUSINESS

Approval of the Minutes of October 25, 2022

Motion: Chesnut (second: Ratzlaff) moved to approve the minutes of October 25, 2022, as submitted.

Approval: Roll call vote. Unanimous.
Motion carried.

Draft calendar of 2023 meetings

Motion: Chesnut moved (Byrge seconded) to approve the calendar for 2023 as presented.

Approval: Roll call vote. Unanimous.
Motion carried.

Commission noted that staff needs to check commission's bylaws in case we need to propose an amendment to the bylaws to make this kind of schedule (some months with one meeting, some months with two) permanent. Staff will check. Staff will also send around list of administrative approvals in case commission wants to give staff more administrative approvals.

ADJOURNMENT

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

MEETING ADJOURNED at 10:00 p.m.