



CITY OF STAMFORD
HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
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P.O. Box 10152
STAMFORD, CT 06904 -2152

Draft Minutes of Historic Preservation Advisory Commission (HPAC)

Date: Regular Meeting held: November 18, 2014
Location: Stamford City Hall, 888 Washington Blvd. Stamford CT 06901
Land Use Bureau - 7th fl. conference Room
Present: Lynn Drobbin, Anne Goslin, Jill Smyth, David Woods, Barry Hersh, Elena Kalman (alternate), R. Shannonhouse (alternate), and Lynn Villency Cohen (alternate).

REGULAR MEETING

I Call to order (Meeting called to order 7:05)

II Introductions - sign in sheet

III Approval of minutes

The Commission voted to approve the minutes of the October meeting: (Moved by J. Smyth, seconded by L. Drobbin, and carried unanimously).

IV NEW BUSINESS

1. Brad Schide, Connecticut grants, CT Trust for Historic Preservation

B. Schide presented a grant program called the "Vibrant Community Initiative Grant". There are some features of the grant program that may be of interest to the HPAC. A handout outline of the program was provided. It contains some other communities that are currently using the grant.

- Gives communities a method of solving problems.
- It is "operations" money that is used for hiring a consultant to work with a community organization such as HPAC.
- The municipality will apply for the grant from the CT Trust.
- The grant awards are \$50,000. They usually give out 5 each year. Last year they had 25 applications.
 - They wait until they are told what funds will be available from the state - usually in June. Then they consider how many grants they can give out.
- The municipality and the local organization (such as HPAC) will issue a RFP for a consultant to manage the process under the grant.
- B. Schide will work with the consultant and the local organization throughout the process.
- The grants require architectural review as well as P&Z direction. Both should be on the steering committee for the grant.



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- The group should try to find a building or a change to a community, or revitalization that can be “transformative” - so the grant program has some visibility and a quantifiable success.
- Some other examples are streetscapes, infill, historic preservation, neighborhood preservation, zoning overlay or village district.
- The CT Trust hopes the steering committee can find a few properties that can be influential.
- The grant program can look at all zoning and specific zone districts.

B. Schide noted some examples where the programs are underway now.

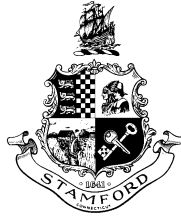
- The town of Westport wanted to complete village district zoning for the downtown working with the merchants association.
- The grant might be used to establish a new National Register district as has been the case in some communities.
- The important part of these programs is to get people involved by coordinating community meetings as have been done in Westport.
- Communities can identify the “issue that they want to solve”.
- Some programs discuss boundaries for a district or a change in zoning. Boundaries are a big issue and usually take a few meetings.
- It is important to hire a consultant that can speak in public, and lead community meetings.

B. Schide explained some of the administrative requirements

- The Applicant is the municipality and the steering committee - organized with a “local organization”. (HPAC)
- The consultant will work for a steering committee.
- The steering committee will need to manage public meetings and input into the process.
- The steering committee will coordinate with the planning department.
- It will be good to have a town planning department person on the steering committee.
- A final report in written form is required. This may also be “guidelines” for the action such as a zoning change or a historic designation.
- In July the CT Trust sends out notices and the response should be in a few weeks.
- Awards are usually made by August.
- The grant time frame is usually 6 months.
- It is possible to have another grant the following year if there are other issues to be resolved, or if the program that is underway can benefit from additional community contact.

There was no motion as more work needs to be done by the commission to identify how a grant can be used. HPAC will consider looking at the various districts in the town including those that are under pressure of development and greater risk to cultural assets. HPAC has time before next June to evaluate needs.

(The discussion was tabled until later meetings.)



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2. Lou Casolo, Sacred Heart property

Lou was not able to attend. The item is tabled until the December meeting.

3. Ferguson Library Request for Technical Assistance for façade renovations

B. Silver of Silver Petrucelli & Assoc., on behalf of the library, presented the restoration/ alteration plan for the Ferguson Library. The firm has completed an envelope study. There are maintenance and restoration needs throughout. The library is missing one of the historic columns at the front portico. The study confirmed that restoration and reconstruction of deteriorated facade sections is needed. Some of those are:

- The right side portico column needs to be replaced. The remaining three columns are in wood and need to be restored.
- The pediment details of the front portico need to be restored.
- The balustrade rails at the roof line need to be replaced/ restored.
- The frieze panel at top of the first story needs restoration.
- The marble steps need to be preserved and restored.
- Plaza work is needed and will be determined.

B. Silver recommends that everything below the roof eave line be restored to match original construction and that the items above that, (above direct eye view) , such as the balustrade, be constructed with more durable materials such as “Boral” - a composite of polymers and Ash.

The recommendations are:

- The entrance portico pediment be restored with authentic materials and matching details.
- Preserve the portico steps with original marble.
- Preserve everything a the lower “direct” eye view with authentic materials.
- Replace the missing front column with a replica in wood, matching the original.
- The upper-story items of the balustrade, the frieze and some details should be completed with composite material such as Boral.
- Details at pediment to be restored using plaster matching the original. .

The library could receive a grant of \$200. K from SHPO with the possibility of a match with the city for a total of \$400. K. The use of SHPO funds may be restricted to restoration with original construction methods and materials such as wood. The budget for the work is currently estimated at \$1.2 million for all the work the needs to be done.

- The Library thought the grant from SHPO may have restrictions on using “original” materials and methods.
- Use of the SHPO grant would require a preservation “Easement” on the building which may prohibit the use of composite, more durable, or sustainable materials.
- The Library may want to go back to SHPO for more grants and thus wants to be sure they are following restoration guidelines.



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There was discussion about the state guidelines and the use of “authentic materials” as follows.

- HNPP supports the use of authentic materials but believes that more durable or “composite” materials will be better suited where the potential of decay may cause more problems down the road.
- It is believed that there is some leniency with SHPO that may not require “replacement in kind” if a better material can achieve the same purpose.
- It is understood that the SHPO is “permissive” to some extent.
- The building is a part of a registered district. It is not individually listed. It is considered listed as part of the district.
- Considerable changes have been made to the building over time, including removal of the balustrade and replacement with “panels”. A modern addition was placed behind the historic façade.

A motion was made to issue a letter of support to the Ferguson Library to be used in support of the restoration with any presentations to SHPO. The letter will have the following points:

- HPAC understands that restoration work will be done in a historical manner to replace deteriorated features with the same detail, scale, proportion, material and color as the original.
- HPAC supports the recommendation that work at areas of the “high reaches” such as above the roof eave line, can be completed with more durable and sustainable materials, such as “composite” wood, as long as the detail, scale, proportion, and color are consistent with the original details.
- The HPAC will be involved with continued review of the renovation program and modifications to the building details, as they are developed.
- The HPAC will support applications to SHPO for grants and approvals of the restoration program including support of the use of composite, durable, and sustainable materials in the renovation, where appropriate.

The motion was moved by A. Goslin, seconded by J. Smyth, and carried unanimously.

3. RMS Main Street, design review

B. Hennessey, of Carmody, Torrance, Sandak & Hennessey LLP, as agent for RMS, developer of the Main Street property, presented the design for review by HPAC. The project has the following features.

- The project is 120 units in 40,000 sq. ft.
- The building occupies the corner of Washington Blvd. and Main St.
- The triangular park will be restored and Relay Place will be narrowed with street and sidewalk improvements.
- The façade is designed with traditional brick and an historic “industrial appearance”.
- The Nobu building is a contributing structure in a historic district. It is approved for demolition.

B. Hennessey requests that the HPAC review the project and provide their support to Planning & Zoning before the hearing on Monday, the 24th of November. There have been other



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preliminary reviews of the project at a prior HPAC meeting and in a special city agency review meeting.

- HPAC attended a preliminary meeting organized by the city
- HPAC did not place an objection on the demolition permit application.
- Demolition is permitted to start as of December, but may not start until January or February.

The Stamford Urban Redevelopment Commission (URC) made a few changes to the design, as the project is in the Mill River design review district. All of these corrections have been made to the plans and elevations as shown to the HPAC. Those changes were.

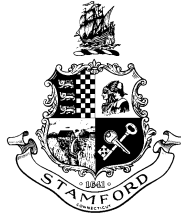
- More “articulation” at the base.
- Awnings be provided at all the retail spaces.
- The cornice line is heavier at the top.
- More traditional vertical railings at the balconies.
- Top rails are hidden at the roof terrace areas.

The HPAC had a few recommendations as noted:

- HPAC attended a preliminary meeting with the city and expressed a few items such as a request to be allowed to visit the buildings before demolition.
- There is a request that some of the special features of the buildings be saved.
- It is understood that RMS will not be able to store any salvaged artifacts. HPAC will need to coordinate that with the city for possible storage locations.
- Some features such as the cast stone swag panels on the first Washington Blvd. building should be saved. (it was noted that RMS may reuse some features in the new building but will oppose this being a condition of the zoning approval.
- The precast block elements at the alley side of the Nobu building should be saved or reused. (it was noted that RMS may reuse some features in the new building but will oppose this being a condition of the zoning approval)
- HPAC encourages the URC request to add detail at the base.
- HPAC members support the use of brick as shown and the industrial look.
- The recessed windows should be constructed to look like it has the “depth” and “scale” as shown on the elevations and renderings. (detail section was shown)
- The park landscaping should recognize its urban context with plantings (it was noted that Relay Place will have new “hard-scape” sidewalk areas and room for dining tables at the restaurants.

A motion was made to issue a letter to the Planning & Zoning in support of the RMS design plans - with the following notes.

- HPAC is in support of the development plan as presented.
- The HPAC supports the changes requested by the URC
- A walk through survey of the buildings and potential salvage of some existing building features will be assisted by RMS and will be coordinated with the city before demolition is started. (The location for storage of such materials was not resolved at this time.)
- RMS will agree to a zoning condition of the walk through and the salvage of some of the architectural features.



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(The motion was moved by D. Woods, seconded by L. Drobbin, and carried unanimously.)

V. Old Business

1. Sacred Heart Property

L. Drobbin reported that a demolition request was issued by the city for two cottages at the former Sacred Heart Academy property, now owned by the city. A demolition delay was filed by HNPP. The following was noted in discussion.

- The houses are two caretaker cottages. The north cottage was the gardeners cottage from the original McHarg estate; the south cottage was on land that was not part of the original estate. The dates are unknown at this time.
- A walk through, of the buildings was conducted by a member of HPAC and HNPP.
- Because the National Register nomination was prepared in 1979 (when National Park Service methodology was different) and therefore does not specifically state which buildings on the property are contributing to the National Register, HPAC requested a clarification of the contributing structures in the National Register listing by CT SHPO. SHPO responded that all of the structures on the property are included in the National Register listing. **Note that National Register listings are inclusive of all properties that are located on a tax lot.**
- The planning board hearing on the demolition request by the mayor was “postponed” for 30 days to allow for HPAC to prepare a report or issue recommendations.

B. Hersh noted that he believes that it is hard to reuse the 2 cottages and barn structures as they are not in good shape. He would like to see the entire plan for the Sacred Heart site from the Mayor’s office. He also questioned the time frame for the development of the property and if an architect has been hired - and if plans are in development. Commission discussion raised a few issues as noted below.

L Drobbin stated HPAC needs to issue a report/ a recommendation.

- HPAC did what the commission is charged to do... preserve the heritage of historic structures
- Among the options that could possibly be explored are:. 1. preserve the buildings, 2. relocate to a nearby site, 3. documentation, 4. reuse the structures. 5. Salvage items, 5. Offer for sale,

W. Haynes made the following comments:

- The City acted inappropriately in bypassing the HPAC, a commission that was appointed and started by the City itself to regulate historic properties
- The SHPO clarification does not dictate preservation, but may suggest that there may be alternatives to demolition. (o.e. moving the structures, adaptive reuse, or documentation)
- The houses are a part of the important history of the Strawberry Hill community.



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- The HPAC and the community should be called upon to assist the city with historic evaluations.
- HPAC needs to make recommendations to the city early in the process.

A motion was made for L. Drobbin to draft a letter to the mayor's office describing the SHPO findings in regards to the National Register listed properties on the site and issue recommendations for the disposition of the property. Note that HPAC will issue its findings and recommendations to the Planning Board, as appropriate, not directly to the Mayor.

- The letter will be sent to planning.

(The motion was moved by D. Woods, seconded by A. Goslin, and carried unanimously.)

2. Mill River bridge status

The commission did not discuss this item and it was tabled until the next December meeting.

3. Discussion of HPAC role & jurisdiction

The commission did not discuss this item and it was tabled until the next December meeting.

4. HPAC by-laws status

The commission did not discuss this item and it was tabled until the next December meeting.

5. Demolition delay ordinance status comments by HPAC

J. Smyth and D. Woods agreed to meet with Cynthia Reeder to review comments that have been gathered. That meeting will be a separate meeting in the next week and will report back to the commission at the next meeting.

Ms. L. Drobbin adjourned the meeting at 10:00 p.m.

Drafted by: David W. Woods AIA secretary – November 26, 2014
Stamford, Historic Preservation Advisory Commission

Meetings are normally on the second Tuesday of the month starting at 7:00 pm in the 7th floor conference room, number 7-C. The next meeting will be Tuesday December 9th