

LIBERTY HISTORIC DISTRICT REVIEW COMMISSION
Meeting Summary
February 21, 2023
5:30 pm
Third Floor Conference Room

Roll Call: Linda Armstrong, John Carr, Kathy Chelton, Vern Drottz, Aimee Gray, Matt Grundy, Brett Rinker, Katie Schmidt

Present: Linda Armstrong, John Carr, Kathy Chelton, Vern Drottz, Aimee Gray, Matt Grundy, Brett Rinker, Katie Schmidt

Absent: None

Guest: Brandi Corbett

Applicant: Ken Personett, 462 E Kansas

Staff Present: Jeanine Thill, Community Development Manager and Katherine Sharp, Director of Planning & Development

Vice Chairman Carr called the meeting to order at 5:38 p.m.

Approval of Meeting Summary: February 7, 2023 HDRC Meeting Summary

A motion was made by Commissioner Gray to approve the February 7, 2023 meeting summary as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chelton. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Current Business

HDRC Case #23-003J (Amendment to 21-020J) Consideration of a change in material size of architectural features at 462 E Kansas, Jewell Historic District, a 353 Tax Abatement project.

- Chairman Grundy asked for Comments from the Commission or the Applicant. Mr. Personett addressed the Commission with the following:
- *I think you all know that this building had fallen into a state of disrepair after several decades of little to no maintenance, but you couldn't possibly know just how bad it was. Termites and water damage undermined the structural integrity as well as rotted out most of the structure's original elements. **Here is a section of what was a structural beam supporting the floor joists.** For sale and vacant for years, no one, present company included, was willing, capable, or dumb enough to try to salvage this house, except for me. I was literally the only thing standing between this house and demolition. Prior to this project, over the last 12 years I have restored sixteen historic buildings, with all but three in Liberty. Almost every one of those houses were uninhabited and uninhabitable, but none were in as bad condition as this one. I mention this so that you can better understand how I have been focused on how to save the building structurally*

from the wrecking ball and may have taken my eye off some of the important, but comparatively less significant, exterior details.

As a general rule, and some of you may relate to this, I do not like people looking over my shoulder criticizing my work and pointing out where I could have done better. I would prefer to not make mistakes, and when I do, correct them with no one being the wiser. There are exceptions to that, such as when I clearly missed something and redirection would save time, money, and even greater embarrassment. This would be such an occasion.

Communication with the framer was not as clear as I thought, and adherence to instructions, particularly to maintain certain historic details, were not adhered to as much as I would have liked. In her e-mail, Ms. Thill listed 5 items of concern of which the majority has been corrected:

- 1) Windows are picture framed – corrected.*
- 2) Outside corner caps should have 2x flat top – corrected*
- 3) Central banding missing on north side – corrected.*
- 4) East gable soffit removed – the soffit we removed does not appear to be original, had rotted, and has subsequently replaced.*
- 5) Gable returns have been changed from flat to pitched – corrected.*

It was also noted the window casings are larger than original on the east side and that the banding appears smaller.

Before I address the staff recommendations, let me first apologize for the framing mistakes made and corrected. And there were decisions regarding material replacement, specifically as it relates to trim, that I believed were a close enough match to fall under the definition of like in-kind. In hindsight, perhaps I should have reviewed those decisions with staff.

Now I would like to address the staff recommendations:

- 1) **Frieze board under gable to match original size.** We installed the widest board available from Hardy, whose products this board approved. **Picture 1 – before, picture 2 – after.** The width is only a few inches less than the original and does not, in my opinion, detract from any historical significance.*
- 2) **The correct bed molding and cove molding be made to match the original.** The short story is that the crown molding used to replace the bed molding is the closest match available from my supplier and that the replacement cove molding does match the original. **Samples** It's been suggested that I could have had the bed molding custom made. I would respond that one of the Design Principles is that restoration be economically feasible. I would also like to add that the bed molding referred to was primarily used in the gables which are two and three stories up and not distinguishable from the road. **Picture 1 – before picture 2 – after** I would not consider this detail to be significant and that the crown molding is a suitable like-kind replacement.*
- 3) **Door and window casings to match the original.** First, the width of the existing window casings is not uniform. **Picture 3, picture 4** The new casings match original in every*

way except width and even then only in a few places. The trim should butt up to the window frame, which is proud to the siding. **Picture 5** Due to the house shifting, some window frames were flush with or recessed to the siding, so we had to overlay the trim over the window frame to get a proper seal and then compensated by using a slightly wider casing resulting in an extra inch of profile. **Picture 6** Using the smaller casing would result in one less inch of profile. I think we made the right call. On the front, we used the wider trim which we believe matched the original. **Picture 7**

- 4) **Gable eaves to match the original.** The issue with gable returns referred to in Ms. Thill's e-mail were corrected. Subsequently it was noted that the frieze board under the appears to be too long by a few inches, which I would consider a very minor deviation and not an actionable issue. **Picture 8 – before, picture 9 - after**

UDO section 30-72.2 states: "Alterations shall restore a structure's original elements, materials and appearance, if economically or physically feasible". With this house, practically none of the structure's original exterior elements were salvageable. In situations where replacement is necessary, the Historic District Design Guidelines recommend replacing with in-kind. In-kind is defined as "with something similar", which is much different that requiring the replacement materials be exactly the same as the original. The wording was deliberate and allows for a degree of flexibility. The idea that exact isn't a requirement is spelled out in the Historic District Design Publication: "The guidelines have been written to help preserve the historic integrity of the original architecture of the buildings in the historic district, while allowing for flexibility in meeting the practical needs of the residents and property owners. The guidelines allow for change when it is accomplished in a sensitive manner that maintains the property and the historic districts."

Additionally, at the risk of overselling my case, the guidelines state that "Design review decisions are based on the same set of principles for all properties in the historic district, but structures that possess a greater degree of integrity, originality, craftsmanship, and historic significance may have the principles more stringently applied than those with lesser significance." On the Missouri Office of Historic Preservation Architectural/Historic Inventory Survey Form, the structure is described as "undistinguished with plain wood moldings and modest decoration on second story porch posts." Based upon this description, I think it fair to say that this house would fall onto the side of less stringent application of design principles.

I request that the replacement of the architectural details of the home be considered like in-kind and approved by the commission. I am available for any questions.

There are 3 additional amendments that I am presenting today regarding the 3^d floor exterior door, second and third floor porch railing, and the porch decking.

- Mr. Personett said that section 30.72.2 states "...if economically or physically feasible". Like in-kind is defined as something similar. The idea that exact is not required, allowing for flexibility.

He added that in the Design Guidelines it says that structures have a different degree of significance. The description states that it is “undistinguished” as stated in the history.

He requested that the changes to the architectural details that were changed are considered like in kind.

- Vice Chairman Carr said he has issue with the difference of bed molding and crown molding. He thinks that they are important architectural details on the home. He added that on the gable, the size of the molding was 5 inches and now it is 3 5/8” inches. The cove molding came off of the transition between the soffit and the frieze board. You shouldn’t be restricted with what the supplier has.

The size of the frieze board is smaller. It is 1X10, it is less than 2 inches difference. Vice Chairman Carr said he does not have a problem with that. Using the front façade as the criteria, Vice Chairman Carr is good with that compromise. He would like to see the smaller profile be approached with a smaller bed molding as opposed to the crown molding. On the central frieze banding it is important to maintain those details because there are so few elaborate details on this home, the uniqueness in the few details are important. In the original application he pointed out that the crown molding and bed molding are not like in kind. He said the original cove molding was and the sample that Ken brought to the meeting was from another part of the house.

- Chairman Grundy said he is comfortable with the window and door casings being uniform. He added that the difference in the molding at the gable likely can’t be seen from the ground.
- Mr. Personett commented that the molding, is up about 30-40 feet in the air and a lot of it was rotted out. Much of it was covered by the gutters. They are going back to the box gutters. The metal flashing was lapped over it and covered it up.
- Commissioner Gray asked if it was possible to have these details made in a Hardie product.
- Vice Chairman Carr said he doesn’t think so, adding that he has only had pieces made in wood.
- Commissioner Drottz commented that he has had some made through Schutte lumber. There are places that can fabricate this.
- Mr. Personett commented sometimes it is not practical to financially have things custom made.
- Chairman Grundy commented that it looks like a flat board at the gable returns.
- Vice- Chairman Carr said he has always tried to duplicate and emulate them on his projects.
- Mr. Personett said the framers were thinking it was secondary and they don’t think was original.

- Vice Chairman Carr said the way you can see the original profile is from the shadow lines on the siding after the removal of the trim. The siding application was corner to corner, window frame to corner, to door opening. The corner boards and casing overlapped it and it was all covered up.
- Commissioner Rinker asked if there is a similar bed molding available.
- Commissioner Drottz said you are not going to find anything that is made in that size but that the larger cove would be available.
- Chairman Grundy said he can't see it from thirty feet away and he can't see the difference from the pictures presented at the meeting.
- Commissioner Armstrong commented that she is struggling to see the enormity of the structure. She can appreciate what it is when it is finished. To an untrained eye, it is difficult to assess the value of the architectural features. If the alternative is a bulldozer, then she is grateful for Mr. Personett's willingness to take it on, even if it can't be done to the standard of what some people would like. She is struggling with the balance. She wishes there was more of a story to the house.
- Mr. Personett shared some of the history on the house. There was evidence of termites up to the attic. There is a picture showing this house in a photo taken and this is the only house in the photo. Corbin Mill and Whiteside Jewelry store families were owners of the home at some point.
- Commissioner Armstrong said it seems to have community value.
- Commissioner Rinker asked what it would cost to have bed molding made.
- Commissioner Drottz said it is going to be quite a bit more. Its very eclectic and a lot has been added onto. It is not like one that is really well preserved. He is glad to see it getting preserved.
- Mr. Personett said he has not priced it out.
- Chairman Grundy said he feels it is respectful of the original design.
- Commissioner Rinker is leaning that way too. His hesitation is are we setting a precedent for homes that are not as far gone.
- Commissioner Drottz said that in the future the Commission needs to be clear on the definition of "Like in kind".
- Vice Chairman Carr said eclectic adds to the uniqueness of the house. That was his criteria of accepting the original application.
- Commissioner Armstrong asked if there was one thing to prioritize, what would that be?

- Vice Chairman Carr said a 5-inch bed molding is a significant difference to a 3 5/8" inch crown. For him, not seeing it from the ground is not acceptable in his mind. He said he was able to salvage pieces from the North side of the home, adding that some of the pieces were broken he salvaged, likely from being tossed on the ground. He is willing to gift pieces to Mr. Personett. He has a one original full piece from the North side of the east gable, a 13 ft. piece that he is also willing to gift to Mr. Personett.
- Commissioner Armstrong asked if it made any sense to preserve one face of the house or just those that are street facing.
- Vice Chairman Carr said it makes sense to him if the elements are preserved on the street facing sides of the house. He added that Independence, MO would insist on details be restored on the street facing sides of the home, but on the other elevations there would be some compromise.
- Commissioner Gray asked Commissioners Drottz and Carr if it is common to have one piece of wood trim, even when the siding is cement board. They both agreed that is common.
- Vice Chairman Carr commented that he had suggested Miratec, which is an exterior MDF and that the beauty of the Miratec product is you can fabricate is as you would wood. It comes in a variety of sizes, 2" up to 16". It is a go-to product for him and he has had with great success. He added it has a 50-year warranty. He likes the James Hardie siding but the trim is difficult to work with and only has a 30-year warranty.
- Vice Chairman Carr said the elements on the gable are probably in good shape. The section of frieze board on the east side had alligatored paint on it and it came off very easily with a scrapper.
- Commissioner Armstrong commented that if anything is salvageable, architectural details could be prioritized to a front façade use, that would make it less concerned of the other elevations. The front is intact.
- Mr. Personett commented that he would prefer to not piece it together.
- Chairman Grundy likes the suggestion of street facing being a priority for salvaging the architectural details.
- Vice Chairman Carr said there may be a possibility of salvaging the bed molding on the west side, if it is carefully removed.

The width of the molding is most important in Vice Chairman Carr's opinion and cove molding that is very close to the original is possible.

- Chairman Grundy said part of it is if the street facing is feasible. Blending it will be difficult. Armstrong commented it is already a patch work. The question is if one face has more of the original and the rest is a patch work, that could be a potential way of dealing with this. Authenticity on street facing sides of the home would be preferred. As the project progresses, they can see what can be salvaged and perhaps allow the rest to

be in-kind. Essentially, relocating the existing architectural features to the street facing elevations.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rinker to approve the door and window casings as they are, approve the frieze boards as they are, and recover the bed molding and apply it to the street facing sides and allow what has been submitted and previously applied to be used on the non-street facing sides. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Drottz. The motion passed, 5-1-1 with Commissioner Gray abstaining from the vote due to a potential conflict of interest. (Ms. Schmidt left the meeting prior to the vote)

- Mr. Personett said he would like to discuss a few other things that he would like approval for, changes since the original application; he would like to return the third floor to two double doors, increase the height of the second and third floor porch railings to 36 inches to meet code and use TPO on the decking of those two porches. Mr. Personett said that he and Ms. Thill spoke to Jeremy Adams, the building official, and he said because the railings are being replaced, they must meet code and be replaced at 36 inches.
- Commissioners Gray and Drottz said TPO is a great product. It can be walked on and not slick, on the second and third floor decking. It is not on the first floor.
- Commissioner Drottz asked if he was going to use that product on the gutters.
- Mr. Personett said they plan to use metal on the gutters.
- Vice Chairman Carr asked if he was planning on a gutter system on the fascia on the two floors of the porch on the front of the home. Mr. Personett said he didn't plan on it.

A motion was made by Commissioner Drottz to approve the original French doors to be installed and allow the rails to be raised to 36" to meet code and allow use of a TPO on the second and third-floor porch decking. The motion was seconded by Rinker. The motion passed 7-0-0.

HDRC Case#23-001J Consideration of an After the Fact ADA Ramp at 471 E Kansas, Jewell Historic District

- Ms. Thill reported that she contacted the State Historic Preservation Office for some direction on how to handle the temporary ramp. She said they agreed that a temporary COA would be appropriate.

A motion was made by Commissioner Armstrong to approve temporary ramp as long as it was medically necessary for the current owner. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Carr. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Other Business

Administrative Approvals since the February 7, 2023 meeting:

- 23-002J 439 Miller like in-kind window replacement on addition.

Miscellaneous matters from the Commission:

- Commissioner Armstrong reported that 111 N Water has a new business, Divine Arts Collective, that has tacked a sign to the front of the building, over the dormer windows. Staff will follow up.

- Vice Chairman Carr asked if there was any interest in a replacement Commissioner to fill Dail Hobb's vacant seat.
- Staff said she has not heard of any.
- Vice Chairman Carr said Eric Mason is probably not interested in serving on the Commission.
- Vice Chairman Carr reminded the Commission that it is important to have on site visits prior to meetings.
- Staff reminded them that they are to view properties from the sidewalk, unless they have permission to go on to the property.

Miscellaneous matters from Staff: None

The meeting adjourned at 7:02 pm.