

Draft Minutes

Historic Landmarks Commission

Town Hall, July 13, 2009

Agenda item 1: Call to order 7:08. HLC members present, Alice Chakmakian, Jay Hurley, Sue Nash (chair), John Shank, Hank Willard. Minutes: Michael Abshire.

Agenda item 2: Approval of May 11, 2009 minutes deferred until August session.

Agenda item 3: Visitors: Pam Berry, Gussie Mills, Catharine Wilson, Sandra Jenkins, Michael Theis, Harvey Heyser, Dow Benedict, Jim Auxer, Stuart Wallace, Andy Singletary, and Tom Martin.

Agenda item 4: Conflicts of Interest, H. Willard recused himself from voting on application 09-28 as he made the application for the Town.

Agenda item 5: Zoning Officer Report, three request for quotes (RFQ) for the historic survey are under review.

Agenda item 6: Applications:

09-23, Robert Proudman, 106 W. Washington Street, replace roof. Structure currently has standing seam metal on all of roof except for one section facing Washington Street. Applicant seeks to refinance house and the bank requires a complete re-roofing. Applicant seeks to replace all roofing using standing seam. HLC voted to deny recommending approval to Planning Commission until applicant provided a “slate expert’s” inspection that the slate was beyond repair; and, a written confirmation from the bank that refinancing will be denied the applicant unless the slate is replaced. Discussion focused on the small number of slate roofs remaining in Town. As it is decorative [or patterned] slate, members felt repairing the slate had not been explored sufficiently. Members expressed concern about impeding applicant’s ability to receive re-financing, but questioned if refinancing would be denied by the bank if the slate is repaired rather than replaced. J. Shank motioned that applicant get a “slate roof expert” to determine if it can be repaired and if so, how much; in addition, applicant needs to get a letter of

confirmation from his bank that refinancing will be denied if the slate is not replaced. H. Willard seconded. Unanimous to deny recommending approval to PC.

7/15/09 Zoning Officer note: Informed the applicant 7/14/09 of the situation. He informed me that a he sought a second opinion from another local roofer, who checked the materials this morning and reported to the applicant there is another 20 years left on all of the roof. Applicant withdrew application 09-23 for roof replacement.

09-28 Corporation of Shepherdstown, erect a six (6) foot by twelve (12) foot double-gate in front of electric transformer area adjoining the Smith property at 101 South King Street. H. Willard wrote, submitted, and presented the Town application for the gate. H. Willard stated the gate would be of the same construction as the fence; the only reason for the gate is to cover the utility transformers that were installed there as part of the Town's Underground Utilities Project and Streetscape. There is no hazard to the public with the transformers being uncovered, but the gate would shield modern and recently installed utility transformers. Rather than a fence, a gate is necessary so that Allegheny Power and Comcast have access to the transformer area. J. Hurley motioned to approve; J. Shank seconded. Excluding H. Willard who recused himself, voting was unanimous to recommend approval.

09-25, William Struna, 107 W. New Street, replace 32 windows in house. By mutual agreement, application is postponed until the August 2009 sessions of HLC and PC.

09-24, Andrew Singletary, replace Town Hall.

Stuart Wallace (member of the Town Hall Construction Committee and Shepherdstown Town Council) presented: *Project Background Information* (July 13, 2009), *Town Hall Options Considered 2007-2008*; architect Andy Singletary presented *Retaining the Existing Building, Historic Preservation, Exterior Materials Selections*. [All attached at end.]

H. Willard questioned the necessity of have the Police Department and Town Hall administration in one building. S. Wallace stated that Howard Mills had done a cost study and found that in a 10-year period, the additional cost of having the

Police Department located in a separate building ran into the “hundreds of thousands of dollars.”

In regard to historic preservation, A. Singletary said the [1988] historical survey considered the building “non-contributing.” S. Nash point out that the lacked the 50-year timeline, but by 1998 it had passed the 50-year mark. A. Singletary maintained the building was expediently built; he expressed appreciation for the block construction material and thought if the building were a gas station he would be inclined to save it; and Town Hall’s location is across from Shepherd University historic buildings McMurrin and Reynolds halls.

H. Willard expressed that he thought there were some wonderful elements in the new design, he was concerned about the glass canopy and how it fit into Shepherdstown. A. Singletary stated the new building should not look like an old building. Dow Benedict (member of THCC) pointed out that the glass protects anyone standing in front of the building without casting a shadow inside.

H. Willard motioned to recommend to the PC to allow the demolition of the current Town Hall building and allow construction of a new town hall as presented by the architect. S. Nash requested amending the motion to include that prior to demolition the current building be fully documented as per the Historic American Buildings Survey [outline attached, <http://www.nps.gov/history/hdp/standards/HABS/graphics/h-outfmt.PDF>]. H. Willard added the survey to his motion. J. Hurley seconded. Unanimous to recommend approval of demolition of the current structure and rebuild a new one with the stipulation that prior to demolition the current building by fully documented.

Meeting adjourned, 9:05.

ATTACHMENTS:

Town Hall

Project Background Information – July 13, 2009

The impetus for the project, i.e., the development of a new Town Hall housing all administrative and police department functions is two-fold:

- The Town currently operates two separate facilities, a Town Hall and a Police Department office, that is inherently inefficient operationally in terms of additional costs and administrative efficiencies.
- The current Town Hall is inadequate on many levels to support the existing administrative functions and the addition of the current Police Department functions would not be possible. The inadequacies of the current building include lack of adequate rest room facilities for staff, lack of adequate meeting space for a variety of functions ranging from personnel matters between town officials and staff, meetings with citizens, committee meetings and public sessions, and lack of adequate insulation and heating / cooling systems that provide comfortable working conditions at affordable costs.

As a result, the Town Council voted to pursue the establishment of a new Town Hall housing all administrative and police functions.

The Town Council looked at a number of options for the establishment of a new Town Hall including the Train Station, the Entler Hotel, the Men's Club, a Private Residence within the corporation, and the existing Town Hall Site. The Town Council considered multiple factors including displacement of existing businesses, displacement of public and private functions, the cost of construction and operation, the ability to efficiently provide an adequate working environment, ability to provide a structure meeting current federal accessibility guidelines, and physical location within the community (see "Town Hall Options Considered 2007-2008"). As a result of this process, the Town Council voted to establish the new Town Hall at the site of the current Town Hall.

The next step was the evaluation of two basic options for establishing the new Town Hall; utilizing all or part of the existing building with addition(s) or demolishing the current building and constructing an all new building. The

evaluation of these two options was conducted under the direction of the Town Hall Construction Committee (THCC) and included review of work by the consultant Architect (see excerpt from narrative by Singletary Rueda Architects, PC re: “Retaining the Existing Building” and “Historic Preservation”) regarding:

- Development of a program for the building (approved by the Town Council per recommendation of the THCC)
- Comparison of the relative cost of construction and functional operation for the two basic options to support the desired program for the new Town Hall;
- Historic status of the existing structure;
- Aesthetic implications of each option; and
- input of interested parties per public meetings held regarding this project.

The results of this evaluation included the following findings by the THCC:

- The cost implications for construction and operation of the two options were not dramatically different although it was determined that the new construction option would be marginally less expensive due primarily to structural limitations of the existing Town Hall (to support a 2nd floor which would be necessary to attain the program space for the building).
- The functional implications for the two options were more profound. The new construction option afforded a more practical relationship between the police functions, the surrounding streets and alleys and the administrative functions and improved accessibility from the main street entrance.
- The existing structure is not considered to be a structure of “unusual importance” to the Town in terms of historic preservation as supported by the original historic survey of the town (which did not identify the building as a contributing structure) and subsequent studies of the building by independent architects and the current consulting Architect.
- The existing structure presents a number of challenges to provide additions that have a coherent aesthetic effect due to the relatively small size of the structure and the current detailing (e.g., the parapet on the front façade is difficult to work around).
- Input from interested parties re: preservation of the existing structure included tentative acceptance of the idea of providing some level of

recognition or acknowledgement of the old structure in the new structure versus having to actually preserve the whole structure. It was subsequently determined it would be possible to include certain material aspects of the existing building in the new construction.

As a result of this analysis and the overarching desire on the part of the THCC and the Town Council to provide a building that works as well as possible for all functions as well as the ability to preserve some visual attributes of the existing structure, the THCC recommended and the Town Council voted to proceed with a design based on demolishing the existing structure and building a new structure on the same site.

The Town Council and the THCC acknowledge that one of the problems facing the Town is the loss of historic structures over time due to a variety of reasons and do not take this decision lightly. However, the Town Council also has the responsibility to provide an optimal solution for the provision of administrative and police functions balancing cost, function, aesthetics and historic preservation and firmly believe this is the best path to follow.

Town Hall Options Considered 2007-2008

During the winter of 2007-2008, the Town Council considered five options. These options included the four listed below and the current Town Hall. The following indicates the deficiencies for each option that contributed to the Town Council decision to utilize the existing Town Hall building and/or site for development of a new combined Town Hall / Police Department facility.

Train Station Renovation

- Displacement of existing business (existing lease agreement)
- Displacement of community functions and events

- Functional considerations (program needs versus available usable space and configuration)
- “Remote” location

Entler Hotel Renovation

- Displacement of as many as 13 existing small businesses with no viable alternatives for relocation within or near the Town
- Displacement of community functions and events
- Functional considerations (program needs versus layout including ADA compliance)
- Costs to renovate including addressing deficiencies in the building structural conditions

Private Residence Acquisition and Renovation

- Displacement of existing residential / commercial land use
- Functional considerations (program needs versus layout including ADA compliance and availability of adequate parking in the immediate vicinity)
- Cost to acquire and renovate

Men’s Club Acquisition and Renovation

- Displacement of community functions and events
- Functional considerations (program needs versus layout including availability of adequate parking in the immediate vicinity)
- Cost to acquire and renovate

All of the preceding included assumption the Police Department would relocate to the existing Town Hall building (with undefined renovation costs) which would decrease but not completely eliminate the cost of operating two locations.

Retaining the Existing Building

There is a natural inclination for some to attempt to retain all or parts of the existing structure. An initial review of the structure by Architect David Kemnitzer is attached. Our findings are below:

1. Mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems are inefficient and inadequate for reuse within the new project. As the intent is to minimize energy costs and maintenance costs, retaining the current systems would not be acceptable. These systems will be required to be removed regardless of whether the building is retained.
2. As the proposed program requires two occupied levels on the site, the roof will need to be removed.
3. As per item 1, the existing windows and doors are inadequate for maintaining anticipated energy costs. While the exterior structural shell is in good condition, additional framing and insulation would need to be added to maintain anticipated energy costs. Additionally, the existing slab would preclude the use of hydronic floor heating systems.
4. The existing masonry shell is in good condition, reuse and the possible additional loading of a second floor would require structural study to establish acceptable load limits. This study would require the excavation of test pits to determine the depth and configuration of existing footings, and soil borings to establish design pressure of the soil. The soil boring information will be prepared regardless and is not additional work. Given the initial geotechnical report, it can be assumed that additional structure will be required to span over the existing building.
5. Retaining the existing footprint may impact the possible use of geothermal systems, as these systems require footprint to attain acceptable thermal conditioning.
6. Demolition and safe removal of debris will be an additional construction cost. The existing block may be recycled locally, for use as aggregate in highway repair.
7. The height of existing ground floor slab is approximately three feet above the existing sidewalk, which will complicate ADA compliant access to parts of the building and may necessitate a change in level in the first floor. If this floor is to be accommodated in the new design, an additional stop and a specific layout for the cab will be required for the elevator.
8. Retaining the existing structure, most specifically the front façade, would satisfy preservation and sustainability goals. This would require shoring methods for stabilization during construction.
9. The rear (west side) of the existing building is currently over the property line by approximately 9 inches.
10. An all new structure could take advantage of modern construction methods and reduce the customization of the planning and construction required to work around the existing conditions.

Some of the issues noted above have cost implications, in budget terms these are:

Items 1 and 2: Selective demolition (as opposed to general removal) \$4,000

Item 4: Test pits: \$2500, Additional structure, \$5,000

Item 6: General Demolition: (\$12,000)

Item 7: Elevator changes: \$8,000

Item 8: \$4,500

Generally, an all new structure would save construction dollars beyond what is identified above.

Nonetheless, the possibility of retaining the existing shell has been investigated, and a "Test Fit" prepared, indicating an addition to the side and above the current structure. The test fit plans and are attached.

Some comments:

1. No single function can be accommodated in the current foot print. Its foot-print must be extended. The elevator must be place so that it serves both the accessible entry, and the higher first floor of the existing building.
2. The entry to the existing structure extends deeply into the plan, making the Police station public areas larger than necessary, and isolating the office in the south east corner of the building from the remainder of the plan.
3. The existing structure is approximately four feet from the south property line, which presumably will not require a setback. Not being able to occupy this area impacts the layout and flexibility of the first floor police area.
4. The plan without the existing structure provides a suitable, large open area for the front office and squad room areas of the police function, providing a much better layout.

Attachments:

- Review of initial structure by David Kemnitzer, AIA
- Test Fit Floor Plans

Historic Preservation

The existing structure was built in 1948 and was considered "non contributing" at the time of the original historic inventory of 1978. The building is incorrectly noted a clapboard on the original survey, presumably due to its use of and unusual cement block pattern, which emulates the profile of wood clapboard siding. This is the most, if not only, notable aspect of the structure. This block is still available as a custom shape.

This form of construction is not unique to the construction of public buildings (or specifically Town Halls), nor was it developed in response to unique conditions of the site or of the buildings function.

The site is surrounded by contributing historic structures. The Historic Register abstracts for the existing and neighboring structures area enclosed.

Attachments:

- Original Lot Survey
 - National Register of Historic Places Inventory (NRHP) Nomination Form- for Corporation of Shepherdstown
 - Architectural Inventory Form- Reynolds Hall
 - Architectural Inventory Form-Lutheran Church
 - Architectural Inventory Form-Knutti Hall
 - Historic Properties Inventory Form- Existing Town Hall
 - Historic Properties Inventory Form- Men's Cub and other German Street Properties
 - Historic Analysis of Reynolds Hall
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