

Wilmington Design Review and Preservation Commission
October 20, 2021, Regular Meeting
6:30 pm

Commission members present: Peter vonGlahn, Toren Williams, Jay Macklin, David Ross, Mike Freda

Staff Present: Pat Maley, John Kurth Herb Inden and Dorien Snyder of Planning; Law Department was not represented.

Administrative Business - Reading of procedure

New Business:

Permit Referral DR- 1702: 517 and 519 Shearman Street. Request by the Wilmington Neighborhood Conservancy Land Bank and Department of Real Estate and Housing to demolish vacant and dilapidated residential buildings to eliminate blight and transform the parcels into green space. Eastside National Register of Historic Places DOE District. Referred under §48-36(D)(5) of the City Code. Resolution 35-21.

Permit Referral DR- 1703: 816 and 818 Pine Street Request by the Wilmington Neighborhood Conservancy Land Bank and Department of Real Estate and Housing to demolish vacant and dilapidated residential buildings to eliminate blight and transform the parcels into green space. Eastside National Register of Historic Places DOE District. Referred under §48-36(D)(5) of the City Code. Resolution 36-21.

Permit Referral DR- 1704: 840 and 842 Spruce Street. Request by the Wilmington Neighborhood Conservancy Land Bank and Department of Real Estate and Housing to demolish vacant and dilapidated residential buildings to eliminate blight and transform the parcels into green space. Eastside National Register of Historic Places DOE District. Referred under §48-36(D)(5) of the City Code. Resolution 37-21.

The cases were represented by Ray Saccomandi and Natalie Di Costanza of the Wilmington Land Bank and Tom Ford of the Department of Real Estate and Housing. The three cases were grouped and considered together to expedite the meeting's progress.

Pat Maley of Planning made the opening presentation using Planning's slides of the three proposed demolitions, then turned the discussion over to Ray and Natalie for embellishment.

Ray illustrated specifics first on the Shearman Street properties (structurally unsound, and functionally obsolete) and then summarized the Pine Street and Spruce Street properties in the same fashion.

He noted all buildings will be removed, and green spaces created with wooden fencing.

Commission Questions -

Toren Williams – can we salvage the corbels and brackets that showed on one photo?

Ray – we can try

Toren – Try or do?

Ray - Do if it's possible

Pat Maley advised Toren that he could call the requirement out on the resolution as a performance condition.

Mike Freda – asked about the structures in relation to the integrity of the newly exposed party walls.

Ray stated that they (the Land Bank) will build the Code Required standard L & I brick wall on the removed side, and Toren did also note that it was a standard City requirement.

There were no other comments or questions from Commission.

There were no community comments or questions.

Chairperson Peter vonGlahn noted that the sense of the commission was that the three cases will pass as written.

For the sake of the listeners Chairperson vonGlahn noted that the first resolution will have all the details read aloud but that all following resolutions will not reiterate the boilerplate language; rather just the case specifics would be read into the meeting record.

Peter vonGlahn then read the DR-1702 resolution for 517 and 519 Shearman Street, and it was seconded by Mike Freda. The same methodology occurred for the other 2 demo resolutions for DR-1703 and DR- 1704. Hearing No abstentions and No Nays all three cases were deemed to have Unanimous approval.

Permit Referral DR-1705: 207 North Market Street. Request to install a halo-backlit channel letter sign for new business. Lower Market City Historic District. Resolution 38-21.

Lyniah Williams , Business owner , presented the case for DR – 1705 207 North Market Street – II Much sign channel lettering with halo light detail 16" x 40" wide. 4.75 Sq Ft.

She strongly requested the backlighting for safety and night shopping.

John Kurth presented remarks and slides for this case.

Toren Williams stated he liked the sign and how it matches the door and windows.

Jay Macklin, a neighbor of that street, said it will benefit the neighborhood.

Wilmington Design Review and Preservation Commission Minutes

Meeting of October 20, 2021

p.3

Ruby Dyer (Community on that case) chimed in that the lighting on the sign would help the ambiance/safety of the area.

Mike Freda has no objections.

Peter vonGlahn read Res 38-21 ; it was seconded by Jay Macklin. No abstentions or nays.

Approved as submitted.

Permit Referral DR- 1706: 1814 Gilpin Avenue. Request from new owner to renovate exterior of previous fire station (fenestration, cupola, elevator shaft, etc.) to accommodate new use. Forty Acres Neighborhood Conservation District. Resolution 39-21.

Case was presented by George Ludwig of Breckstone Architecture, using Planning's slides after Pat's brief intro presentation.

They propose to widen the street garage doors; reinsert transom; remove and replace 2nd floor windows with Loewen windows. The composite trim over that is to match the 1895 design – and they hope to find the “F.D.” letters from the original still in place, if not they will recreate from images of the time. The transom windows of 3rd floor will remain. The Bell Tower will be restored (demolished in 1953 by hurricane). The roof will be completely replaced. The hose drying shaft will be raised 10 feet to insert elevator shaft.

Toren Williams stated that as another architect, “I’m jealous of the project - Love it!”

Mike Freda asked if there were any additions or demolitions involved? NO

No footprint changes - No

Peter vonGlahn gave congratulations on something very well thought out.

George Ludwig said that all the feedback from the neighborhood has been positive.

Discussion about typo on the date of plan – clarification that drawings were from 2021 NOT 2012.

Toren Williams says he wants an invite when it is done (2022 completion expected).

All Commissioners like the project. There were no community comments.

Peer vonGlahn read the resolution with entire litany of work elements.

Last comment/question from Toren – about front doors – Hartford Green? Perhaps stained Spanish cedar (George Ludwig recounting the expert door maker's suggestions because of the use of the Spanish Cedar.

Permit Referral DR- 1707: “Brush with Kindness” (BWK) project. Request from Habitat for Humanity, the Department of Real Estate and Housing and the Department of Planning and Development for approval of a palette of acceptable exterior materials for use in expedited project rehabilitation of 91 owner occupied properties in an area that straddles the Saint Mary’s and East Side Historic Districts. St. Mary’s and East Side City Historic Districts. Resolution 40-21. Ruby Dyer, representing Habitat for Humanity was present.

Pat Maley narrated the slides of the project which was American Recovery Plan funded.

97 buildings were identified as eligible in the neighborhood because they were owner occupied.

Pat recounted her experience in the neighborhood as she studied and photographed the subject buildings, talking to people who warmed when she freely addressed their questions and shared info on the BWK project.

Images shared of the area on the Power Point included a 100’+/- tree which was called a “Thing of beauty in a stubborn place,” a phrase that was used to describe the neighborhood’s survival.

The Commission had an extended discussion after Pat Maley’s narration of the Power Point slides.

Major points included –

1. Expected push back from owners who had followed the original rules of required materials and now seem people “getting away with “ lesser requirements.
2. The fact that this is only for a very small subset of homes (97).
3. The fact that this is work done as a short term federally funded contract (end date June 2022 for grant pay out).

A copy of the “Palette” of choices provided to the commissioners to use in the project area will be added to the resolution and to these minutes.

Peter vonGlahn read the resolution as prepared. it was seconded by David Ross

And there was no abstentions or nays, indicating unanimous approval.

NEW INCENTIVES - ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATIONS

Pat – intro the issue of electric vehicles, but a full-blown discussion was delayed until November or December because of the lateness of the hour.

Peter –suggested that styles of these charging stations that are more appropriate for the districts, and further suggested that DRPC focus on long term or overnight charging stations.

Motion to adjourn was made by Jay Macklin, seconded by Toren Williams, and approved unanimously. 1 hr. 27 min 32 sec