

Wilmington Design Review and Preservation Commission
Wednesday, June 19, 2019

Commission Members Present: William Krauss, Acting Chair, Stewart Baron, Sandra Dolan, Leo Lynch, and Peter Jennings

Absent: Peter von Glahn (travel) and Edie Menser (health)

Staff: Patricia Maley, John Kurth, Herb Inden, Planning
Rose Tassone diNardo, Law

Reading of rules of procedure

Administrative business

Acceptance of the minutes from previous meetings; moved by Peter Jennings;
seconded by Leo Lynch.

Sandy Dolan recused due to absence from the meeting; all others voted to accept.

New Business

Permit Referral DR-1618: 605 North Market Street. Request for a new sign on the upper floors for the relocated WHY Y offices. Market Street City Historic District. Resolution 16-19.

Presentation was made by Doug Goldberg of Tupp Signs who described the sign proposal as a 4' diameter round double projecting sign to be internally illuminated, positioned 54" off building.

William Krauss asked how the sign will be installed on the building. He was told it would be mounted on a pair of 4" x 4" tubes attached to the building with 8 anchors to be approved by the department of Licenses and Inspections. They plan to penetrate the wall and the original intention was through brick, which the commission stated was unacceptable, and that they would have to go through the mortar joints.

Commission comments

Leo Lynch noted that the drawings indicate that the supports will be through mortar, not brick.

Mr. Goldberg corrected himself and said they can make that effort if that is preferred – he was told that it was both preferred and a requirement.

Leo Lynch called out that there was no indication of weight. Mr. Goldberg pointed out where the info was in the application packet – it will be aluminum, approximately 45 pounds.

Peter Jennings called the application very straightforward, saying he recognized the WHY Y logo

There was no public comment.

Mr. Krauss read the resolution as prepared to “approve the application as submitted.” It was seconded by Peter Jennings and approved unanimously.

Permit Referral DR-1619: 808 & 810 West 9th Street. Renovations of both sides of design- twin properties within the row on the southern side of the block to create owner-occupied housing. Trinity Vicinity City Historic District. Resolution 17-19.

Permit Referral DR-1620: 812 West 9th Street. Renovations to subject property to create owner-occupied housing. Trinity Vicinity City Historic District. Resolution 18-19.

Permit Referral DR-1621: 820 West 9th Street. Renovations to subject property to create owner-occupied housing. Trinity Vicinity City Historic District. Resolution 19-19.

The three cases listed above all dealt with the “Bridge Project” – all on 9th Street – and the applicant presented all three cases together at the request of the Commission acting chairperson.

Dave Mengers and George Ludwig from Breckstone made the presentation using photo boards. Mr. Mengers gave a brief overview of all three, explaining that this was the first phase of multiphase project of land bank and NCRC (from Washington DC).

All properties had been vacant properties – the application proposes to renovate them into single family homes for Low to moderate 1sttime homebuyers.

They have designed with a contemporary interior lay out and a rehabbed exterior. One color scheme will use historic red for exterior paintable elements, others will vary the colors. They will restore porches – all porch posts are original, but steps will have to be new and new handrails and new balusters. Porch floorboards will be wood, rafters will mostly remain exposed, asphalt shingles will be new. Two front doors will be replaced; Perimeter frames and transom frames will remain intact, but new doors will be used that are appropriate to the age of the house.

The following discussion points include both general project elements, as well as addressing address specific elements. All of these were mentioned in the applicant submission documents.

- New windows will be pocket windows (red color frames).

- Trim on 3rd floor will be restored.
- They will restore matching pieces.
- Mansard roof slates will be cleaned, and matching replacements used as needed.
- New asphalt of 812 roof at top.
- Metal capping at party walls.
- Some demo on rear of 808 West 9th Street is necessary.
- They will replace with some synthetic slate, and windows will be replaced as in front, and doors as in front
- Some brick construction will be necessary after the current addition is removed
- 812 – use different color scheme – bluish grey color; Similar -porch restore; Front façade – replace door, windows replaced in same manner as 808
- Back - restore and change addition
- Slate restored on back bay
- Product used on side elevation will be Hardie plank
- Restore to 1912
- 820 w 9th St is in the best condition of the 4; Lived in by same family for many years. They plan to preserve porch, replace roof. Current Porch is enclosed in concrete block with stucco finish – they will maintain but clean. Existing porch posts and rails will be restored. Asphalt shingles on high roof. First floor shutters will be removed so the house will look like the others being restored. Pale green will be the dominant color. Colors will be made from Benjamin Moore Historic color selection palette.

- Rear sleeping porch - proposed to be enclosed with windows but keeping same framing. DHS or sliders.
- Replace shed roofs
- Replace vinyl siding with synthetic slate shingle to match what is going on rear mansard.
- Restore existing brick
- Add wrought iron hand rail for safety

Power point slides prepared by Planning were shown.

Commission comments

Stuart Baron noted it was terrific to have proposals that say “Restore “throughout. Illustrations seem to make a lot of sense –this will be an enhancement.

William Krauss complimented the application descriptions.

David Mengers noted that the architects have a Trinity Vicinity Neighborhood Association support letter for the project in hand.

Leo Lynch noted that he could follow the sequence through the application.

Sandra Dolan agreed with fellow commission members.

Public comment

Alvin Hughes – VP of TVNA, lives on 800 block of W 9th St. Stated that he had been communicating with Breckstone and Landbank people, and Christian (Wilhauer) and Ray S. of Land Bank. He noted that TVNA had written a letter recommending the project, and they support it wholly.

There were no other community comments.

Motion was made to approve by Mr. Krauss, seconded by Sandra Dolan and approved unanimously.

Permit Referral DR-1622: 226 West 9th Street, 836 – 844 North Tatnall Street, 11 Girard Street. Request for demolition of seven contiguous properties facing three streets to clear site for construction of a five-story apartment building with first floor retail. Project referred under the provisions of §48-36(D)(5) of the City Code. Resolution 20-19. WITHDRAWN BY APPLICANT

Presentation was made by Rob Snowberger who described the project, saying it had come about after several years. He has partnered with Rob Herrera. They own 226 West 9th Street since 2017 having purchased it from FDIC when Don McGinley went bankrupt. He discussed the others on the block he owns, saying to get 216 W 9th he had to buy all four buildings. He noted that they have applied for renovation credits from state for 216 W. 9th Street. They have no plans for changing other facades.

He continued describing that 224 W 9th Street is in decent shape, and a good candidate for rehab historically with tax credits, while 226 W. 9th Street was severely damaged in fire and water from fire-fighting. He assessed it as being beyond repair. He spoke further about gathering other properties to create their design.

He noted that he was required to buy the Tatnall Street properties to get the Bag and Baggage properties, but the smaller Tatnall Street properties were “Completely irrelevant in terms of what people want to use in these days.”

He said that he discussed the project with Planning, and that 224 and 228 West 9th Street could be historic rehabs, but he would have to demo 226 West 9th Street and all other listed in application to get the density he needed to make the project fiscally viable.

He further noted the economic proforma included in the application and used the power point slide to highlight the difference in scale.

He further opined about losing money, and how they cannot yet get a formal demo permit because they do not own the properties, and they will not buy the properties unless they have blessing to demo. They do own Bag and Baggage – but there is a “claw back provision.”

He noted that the letter from the State Historic Preservation Office was handed to him when he arrived tonight (it was only transmitted to Planning from the SHPO at 4:40 pm this afternoon, June 19, 2019, under 2 hours before the meeting). He stated he will contact Director Timothy Slavin and discuss the ramifications of the consideration in the letter.

They will pursue an approved Part 1 and 2 if they purchase the properties. He stated that he was asking for clarification on what they could do, and that they are not asking for demo permission from DRPC tonight.

Pat Maley explained the late arriving letter from the state and apologized to the applicant because the letter was not something that Planning had requested from the State, nor did they know it was coming in regards this case. Mr. Snowberger thanked Ms. Maley for that clarification.

Copy of letter is appended to these minutes.

Power point slides from planning were then presented showing the site and the buildings in question.

Commission comments

Bill Krauss – “When I reviewed this it is my feeling that it is an incomplete application – we need to know what is going in its place –massing scale – nothing close to that in the packet – and info that we need.”

He called for a subcommittee so there is guidance, and noted the SHPO’s letter’s last sentence –

“Demolition of these buildings would result in an adverse effect to the integrity of the district, as well to a significant portion of Wilmington’s historic and cultural landscape. Furthermore, demolition of these buildings could have ramifications to the District’s status on the National Register which in turn may affect the ability of other property owners to take advantage of historic preservation tax credits.”

For that reason, we should table the ap until such time as you can address this with Mr. Slavin and get a better sense from their concern

Stuart Baron said, "When we have been asked to look at buildings that are proposed for demolition – we have had engineering studies that speak to inability of the building to stand up - - that should be part of an application.

Mr. Snowberger stated that one of the purposes for approaching DRPC was to get guidance before spending money on such studies. He noted he had been before the commission to get demo for other things – and stated that the cost of an engineering study made the project fiscally infeasible.

He wanted to meet with a subcommittee, but he wants that before he pursues any of the costs. His rationale included if buildings are obsolete, then he can 't afford to spend the 40K to move the project forward.

He made oblique note that if he walks away, the buildings will rot, and 226 W 9th Street will probably be condemned by L & I. He further opined that the first-floor ceiling was already falling in, and that any expense is a waste of capital

Rose Tassone of Law asked, "Maybe I misunderstood – but does your corporation already own 226 W 9th Street?"

Mr. Snowberger answered, "Yes."

She then asked, "Do you own the Tatnall St properties?" and was told that he has them under Contract but with a "back-out" provision.

She then stated, "So you have not submitted a demo request?" and was told no.

William Krauss stated that he would suggest that the commission decline to fully address rather than table the case to give the applicant time to approach State Historic Preservation Officer Timothy Slavin, discuss, and then move forward.

Rose Tassone stated that the process would be cleaner if the applicant withdrew so there is no denial on the record. Her further concern if we look at this application is that DRPC is supposed to react to an APPLICATION, not a courtesy review. She further explained that the commission is authorized to produce a recommendation to Commissioner of L & I regarding an application.

Mr. Snowberger stated he appreciated the commissioners time and expressed a variety of thoughts relating to his development activities. He closed by saying that he wished to withdraw at this time and seek further guidance on the matter.

Peter Jennings offered a reflection that DRPC has had the experience where they have recommended a demo and then L & I overrule them.

After this discussion, a motion to adjourn was made by Peter Jennings, seconded by Leo Lynch and approved unanimously.

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Patricia A. Maley, AICP,
DRPC Coordinator and Senior Planner /
Design and Review Via Email:
pmaley@wilmingtonde.gov

RE: Wilmington Design Review and Preservation Commission:

Permit Referral DR-1622

Dear Ms. Maley:

Our office is offering comments pertaining to tonight's Wilmington Design Review and Preservation Commission (WDRPC) Agenda. Specifically, as listed on the agenda, under C. New Business:

5. Permit Referral DR-1622: 226 West 9th Street, 836 – 844 North Tatnall Street, 11 Girard Street. Request for demolition of seven contiguous properties facing three streets to clear site for construction of a five-story apartment building with first floor retail. **Project referred under the provisions of §48-36(D)(5) of the City Code. Resolution 20-19.**

These properties are located within, and all but 11 Girard Street are contributing to the National Register-listed West 9th Street Commercial Historic District (CRS #N14449 NRHP reference # 08001204). The District is listed in the National Register for meeting significance Criteria A and C. This district encapsulates properties historically associated with the commercial corridor; particularly specialty shops within a period of significance of 1908-1958.

Demolition of these buildings would result in an adverse effect to the integrity of the district, as well to a significant portion of Wilmington's historic and cultural landscape. Furthermore, demolition of these buildings could have ramifications to the District's status on the National Register which in turn may affect the ability of other property owners to take advantage of historic preservation tax credits.

Sincerely,

Timothy A. Slavin, Director
and State Historic Preservation Officer

C: Debra Campagnari Martin, Historic Preservation Planner City of Wilmington, Dept. of Planning and Development