

**WATERLOO HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING – DECEMBER 14, 2004 – 4:30 P.M.
MOLLENHOFF CONFERENCE ROOM – 2ND FLOOR CITY HALL**

Chairperson Malecek called the regular meeting of the City of Waterloo Historic Preservation meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

Those in attendance were Ottesen, Malecek, McKean, Olsson, Reagle, Levi, Etheredge, and Maar. Applicants: Richard Griffie and George Skarlis with Community Buildings on behalf of the applicant were present at the meeting. Also in attendance was staff member Morgan Hoosman and Chris Western.

Approval of Minutes

It was noted that the minutes should be corrected to reflect that the meeting was called to order and adjourned by Chairperson Malecek.

A motion was made by McKean to approve the minutes of the November 23, 2004 regular meeting with revisions. Seconded by Maar, and passed unanimously.

Approval of Agenda

Hoosman with staff requested that the HRDP Grant be placed on the agenda under discussion items. Malecek requested that the Preservation Month activities also be placed under discussion items.

A motion was made by Olsson to approve the agenda with discussion items to also include HRDP Grant and Preservation Month activities. Seconded by Maar, and passed unanimously.

Reports

Silos and Smokestacks

There was no Silos and Smokestacks report.

Main Street

Ottesen gave the report noting that Design Review Committee had reviewed a sign on the YMCA building and the Canadian National Railroad building. Ottesen stated that there was also discussion of a roof replacement on the Union Planters building.

Grout Museum

There was no Grout Museum report.

Waterloo Historic Preservation Fund

Hoosman with staff stated that the money for the Fowler Building survey had not yet been used.

Agenda Items

Request by Community Builders Supply Co. on behalf of Richard Griffie for a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace existing wood lap siding with new vinyl siding at 935 Steely Street.

Malecek stated that the item was tabled from last month, and questioned if staff was able to gather information from paint contractors. Hoosman with staff stated that she had contacted several paint contractors, but had not received any information from any of them. Mr. Griffie stated that he did not feel that the house was worth the effort to paint due to the fact that the several boards were coming apart, nails were rusted, and wood was rotted. Levi questioned if the applicant had the windows replaced and when they were replaced. Mr. Griffie stated that he had the window replaced approximately four years ago. Levi questioned if there was a permit record of the window replacement or a Certificate of Appropriateness, which Hoosman stated there was no record of window replacement. Levi also questioned when the porch was enclosed, which the applicant stated that he had it enclosed in 2002. Levi questioned if there was record of the alteration to the porch, which Hoosman stated that there was not. Levi stated that the alterations to the home have already significantly changed the appearance, and could also have affected its eligibility for National Register status. Malecek stated that he was concerned with the level of scrutiny for the Certificate of Appropriateness, in particular to homes similar to the this house that are not unique in style. Malecek stated that he feared that holding homes to “museum-like” standards that is a risk of 1) frustrating Highland residents to the point that they neglect their homes 2) making it difficult to engage the community in history preservation. Malecek submitted photographs of two homes in Waterloo that were considered contributing to a district in the 1994 survey similar to 935 Steely Street. Malecek noted that a home on Prospect Blvd similar to Mr. Griffie’s home is process of an addition that is incompatible with the original structure. 3) frustrating qualified contractors to do work in historic neighborhoods. Malecek stated that there needs to be more reasonable standards, and he submitted photos of a house at 126 Graceline Blvd that was recently re-sided but in a manner to is historically sensitive. Mr. Skarlis questioned why the map of the Highland Historic District was drawn in the matter that it was, and noted that there are homes outside of the boundaries similar to Mr. Griffie’s home that are allowed to vinyl side without restriction. Levi stated that the boundaries are based on the original survey and the average historical significance of a block. Reagle questioned if Mr. Griffie was aware that his home was within the boundaries of the historic district when he bought it, which Mr. Griffie stated that he was not aware. Reagle also questioned if Mr. Griffie would agree to put a wider width siding on the house, which Mr. Griffie stated that he would agree to any width as long as he was able to re-side the house. Mr. Skarlis stated that the wider siding would not match the addition, and the existing siding is approximately 5 ½-inches which they would not be able to match. McKean questioned if the current condition of the siding has affected the frame of the house, which Mr. Griffie stated that is beginning to affect it on the rear. McKean questioned the contractor as to how close he could match the existing siding with new vinyl siding. Mr. Skarlis stated that next closest width would be a 5-inch and after that would be 8-inch. Mr. Skarlis stated that Mr. Griffie was attempting to improve

his house, and that if he wasn't allowed to put new siding on then it would most likely deteriorate further. McKean questioned how the condition of applicant's house compared to the surrounding houses. Mr. Skarlis stated that there are houses both in better and worse condition. McKean stated that the issue of permits is significant to the issue at hand because not only is a record of the work, but a record of the history of the house. Mr. Griffie stated that he thought that the person who replaced his windows took out a permit for the work. Reagle questioned if there was any penalties for not taking out a permit, which Levi stated that the permit fee is doubled in amount for the violation.

Levi stated that there could be possible ramifications for allowing synthetic materials such as vinyl because it might "water-down" the guidelines and it could appear as a contradiction to all of the homeowners that have come before Mr. Griffie who were denied COAs to vinyl side their homes. Levi stated that it ultimately comes down to the issue of preservation versus money, and he felt that if money was not a factor than there would not be an issue with synthetic materials. Levi noted that the property in question was on the periphery of the district, it is not a core structure, and has had significant alterations, but he had reservations about setting the precedent of allowing vinyl siding. McKean noted that each property should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and that there will be house appropriate for vinyl siding and others that may not be. Levi stated his concerns with allowing vinyl siding would negate the next property owner opportunity to restore the original materials. Reagle questioned if the vinyl siding was guaranteed for lifetime of the property owner. Mr. Skarlis stated that the siding is guaranteed for the lifetime of the building and transferable to next property owner. Maar stated that she felt that it is the duty of the Commission to look at each individual house on a case-by-case basis regardless of the possible opposition by other homeowners. Etheredge stated that she was concerned that if vinyl siding were allowed than the judgment of historical significance would be its age and a few vague details, and it would lose its original materials and character. Etheredge stated that she felt that as a Commission it was their duty to try to preserve and maintain as much original materials as possible. Etheredge also stated that if the Commission begins to allow houses to have vinyl siding and other synthetic materials than the district would become no more than a few houses. Malecek responded with the idea that the district will fall into neglect if people are unable to preserve because it is too costly. Maar stated that neglect to homes is clearly happening already.

McKean questioned how much of the original siding is salvageable. Mr. Skarlis stated that there are more concerns regarding the siding, including the paint problem. Mr. Skarlis stated that paint continues to chip and peel, and it will need to be repainted every 2-3 years. Levi stated that he disagreed with Mr. Skarlis's comment that the house would need to be repainted in 2-3 years, and that good paint contractors can guarantee workmanship for 10-15 years. Malecek stated that the paint problem on the house could be due to previous paint applied that is causing the problem, and unless the siding was stripped to bare wood than it would continue to have problems. Levi stated that this particular problem brings in the issue of financial hardship, and the Commission does not yet have a proper mechanism to address financial hardship. Levi stated that the Commission should attempt to obtain information from independent contractors in order

to make this decision without the revised ordinance in place. Reagle stated staff has attempted to obtain information from paint contractors with no response. Malecek questioned how feasible it is to preserve the original siding. Levi questioned what facts did the Commission have to base the decision of feasibility. Malecek noted that he did own a paint business while in college, and he personally would not guarantee his workmanship on a home such as Mr. Griffie's house with such extreme paint problems. Levi stated that he felt it was best to obtain the information from independent contractors before voting on the request, because Mr. Griffie would not be able to reapply for the same COA if denied. Levi stated that the Commission should take the time and effort to get the information to proactively help homeowners to maintain their homes.

It was moved by McKean to table the request in order to further research the financial ramifications of the decision. The motion was amended by Levi to hold a special meeting prior to January 10, 2004. The motion was seconded by Etheredge. Passed and carried unanimously.

Discussion Items

Ordinance Revision

Malecek stated the Commission should review the second draft of the ordinance revision from Chris Wendland, city attorney. Reagle stated the Commission should also look at the by-laws along with the ordinance. Olsson suggested that the Commission form a subcommittee to review the ordinance. Maar volunteered to chair a subcommittee, and Reagle, Olsson, and Allen agreed to sit on the subcommittee.

Board of Realtors Jan 5th update

McKean stated that he has had several discussions with local realtors in the past few months, and it appears that 80% of the realtors are unaware of historic preservation. McKean noted that it is good for the Commission to present to them more information on historic preservation. McKean stated that he has also gone to the local builders community for the same reason. McKean stated that the January 5th meeting would give them an overview of preservation.

Highland Historic District Survey

Malecek stated that the survey had approximately a 50% response, and he would summarize results by the next meeting.

Appointment of Highland District Commissions

Maar stated that she felt that the Commission needed more representation from Highland residents, and she would like to see a third to a half of the Commission comprised of Highland residents. Maar stated that there were several residents of Highland who applied for appointment to the Commission, and she was the only one selected. Etheredge noted that there are requirements to serve on Commission. Maar stated that she would like the item to be placed on as an agenda item on the next month's agenda.

Preservation Month Activities

Malecek encouraged the Commission to continue brainstorming ideas for activities for the month of May, and suggested that it be discussed more in-depth at future meetings.

HRDP Grant

Malecek stated that staff was working to apply for the grant, and the Commission would discuss it more at the next meeting.

Hearing no further discussion, to was moved by Etheredge, and seconded by Olsson to adjourn. Chairperson Malecek adjourned the meeting at 6:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Morgan Hoosman
Associate Planner
Staff to the Commission