

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION
CITY OF SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA
Lower Level – Room 41, City Hall/Court House, 15 West Kellogg Boulevard
June 27, 2013

Present: Richard Dana, Robert Ferguson, Matt Hill, Michael Justin, Richard Laffin, Diane Trout-Oertel, Renee Hutter Barnes, David Riehle, Matt Mazanec, David Wagner
Absent: Steve Trimble (excused)
Staff Present: Christine Boulware, Amy Spong

I. Public Hearing/Permit Review

A. 536 Holly Avenue, Hill Historic District, by Josh Columb, Veritcal Grain Builders LLC, for a building permit to demolish the one-stall garage and construct a 2.5 stall garage with a covered patio (1059 s.f.) at the rear of the property. **File #13-026** (Boulware, 266-6715)

Staff read the report recommending conditional approval of the proposal to demolish the one-stall garage and construct a 2.5 stall garage with a covered patio.

Staff presented several images of the property.

Commissioner Mazanec inquired as to the opinion of staff of the condition of the one-stall garage. Ms. Boulware noted several areas of concern in regard to the condition of the exterior of the garage.

Commissioner Wagner inquired as to the opinion of staff in regard to the adverse effects of demolition; Ms. Boulware cited the findings made on the staff report. Ms. Spong clarified the staff recommendation to approve demolition, but to encourage re-use. Staff discussed the specific site conditions that may justify the demolition of the one-stall garage.

Commissioner Trout-Oertel suggested that all reasons for not denying demolition be clearly stated.

Commissioner Wagner noted that the findings suggest denial for demolition, and that it is inconsistent with the recommendation. He discussed a previous denial of demolition and called for consistency. Ms. Boulware discussed the differences of the projects and noted the differences in the proposed new garage. Commissioner Wagner noted the differences in the discussions that had been had regarding the loss of historic fabric and suggested the existing building be further examined.

Commissioner Riehle noted the double lot on the Sanborn map and inquired as to the demolition of the neighboring property; Ms. Boulware clarified that the property Commissioner Riehle referenced is not the address in question and noted the location of 536 Holly Avenue on the map.

Ms. Spong requested clarification of Commissioner Wagner's statement that the staff findings do not support the staff recommendation; Commissioner Wagner confirmed. Ms. Spong suggested that a motion include the clarification of the findings.

Commissioner Ferguson required clarification of the requirement of a variance; Ms. Boulware clarified that the variance was required for the proposed structure that exceeds 1,000 square feet.

Chair Laffin requested confirmation on the size of the existing garage; it was confirmed that the existing garage is 12-feet x 25-feet.

Commissioner Hutter-Barnes referenced the Sanborn map and noted the historic adjacent vacant lot and inquired as to the necessity for review if the owner is to relocate the existing garage; Ms. Boulware confirmed that moving the garage would require staff review.

Connie Cook, Owner of the property, was present to speak. Chair Laffin inquired as to an opinion of Ms. Cook in regard to the relocation of the garage to another location on the property. Ms. Cook expressed a desire to demolish the structure or donate to another entity.

Chair Laffin inquired as to the opinion of the contractor in regard to the feasibility of building an addition on to the existing garage. Ms. Cook stated he shared a view of re-locating the garage off of the property.

Chair Laffin inquired as to the pursuance of a variance for the garage that is over 1,000 square feet; Ms. Cook confirmed they had received a variance. Chair Laffin discussed the use of the square footage within the proposed structure; Ms. Cook discussed their intended use of the space. Chair Laffin inquired as to if these are functions that cannot be performed with the existing structure; Ms. Cook confirmed that they are.

Commissioner Dana inquired as to the timeline of the design of the proposed garage in relation to damage on the existing garage; Ms. Cook expressed that the damage expedited the design process.

Commissioner Trout-Oertel discussed the level of damage existing on the garage and encouraged rehabilitation or relocation.

Ms. Cook inquired as to the marginalization of her rights as a homeowner in regard to the Commission requiring the owner to retain the existing garage.

Commissioner Wagner discussed the importance of maintaining the garage within the context of the property and neighborhood. Ms. Spong discussed the categorization of structures within the district and stated that the garage is categorized as contributing. She discussed the possibilities of incorporating the existing garage in the proposed design.

Chair Laffin noted that the relative size of the proposed garage to the main residence and requested that Ms. Cook discuss the design details of the main residence and proposed garage; Ms. Cook discussed several elements.

Chair Laffin noted the rake boards on the residence and inquired as to if this element had been considered; Ms. Cook responded that she was unsure. Chair Laffin noted several other details and commended Ms. Cook on the future intention to restore the siding on the main residence.

Commissioner Wagner noted inconsistencies in the section drawing included in the packet. Ms. Cook noted that the drawings may be diagrammatic.

Chair Laffin noted the Department of Safety and Inspection may require more consistent drawings.

Chair Laffin inquired as to if the proposed garage will be insulated; Ms. Cook confirmed and discussed other mechanical considerations.

Ms. Cook inquired as to the process; Chair Laffin described the public hearing process.

No written testimony was received and Chair Laffin closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Riehle moved to adopt the staff recommendation with no additional requirements. Commissioner Dana seconded the motion with an amendment to revise the staff report.

Commissioner Wagner expressed concern of inconsistency of the Commission in regard to demolition of accessory structures. He discussed the considerations of the historic merits of the structure.

Commissioner Dana noted reasons for his support of the staff recommendation in regard to the age and design of the existing garage.

Commissioner Wagner inquired as to the period of construction for the previously reviewed structure at another property; Ms. Boulware confirmed the period of construction.

Commissioner Wagner inquired as to the construction year of the main residence of the current property; Commissioner Hutter-Barnes confirmed the construction year as 1886.

Commissioner Trout-Oertel stated that the later period of construction of the garage is not relevant as it is within the period of significance.

Ms. Spong noted the review process in relation to the design consistency of contributing garages to the main residences. Commissioner Wagner noted the previously reviewed garage may have been more consistent.

Ms. Spong noted the friendly amendment in regard to including the proposed construction in the findings. Commissioner Dana clarified his view of the findings. Chair Laffin clarified Commissioner Dana's intention to have the findings be consistent with the motion.

Commissioner Riehle stated that the guidelines are elastic and encouraged the Commission to consider this aspect separately with each review and noted each review is a specific circumstance.

Commissioner Wagner requested confirmation that staff does not believe the condition of the current garage warrants an addition; Staff confirmed and noted several specific site conditions.

Commissioner Wagner discussed possibilities to incorporate the existing structure into a design that addresses the site concerns.

Chair Laffin noted a precedent of a garage on an adjacent property.

The motion failed 4-5.

Commissioner Trout-Oertel moved to deny the application based on the findings in the staff report. Commissioner Ferguson seconded the motion.

Commissioner Riehle discussed an example of a garage alteration and noted the undue burden put upon the homeowner of the current property if the commissioner is to mandate certain conditions.

Commissioner Wagner expressed the need for caution when making decisions and discussed the previous decision made for demolition on the previous proposal.

Commissioner Trout-Oertel discussed possibilities of a new garage design that considers the existing garage.

Commissioner Justin suggested the possibility of mitigation in regard to decisions made regarding demolition of existing structures.

Commissioner Wagner expressed concern for the appropriateness of the design of the proposed garage in regard to historic aspects.

Ms. Spong responded to Commissioner Justin's comments and noted that mitigation is generally not a part of the review process and referred to Section 73 of the Legislative Code that allows for the Commission to require documentation when demolition has been approved.

Ms. Cook noted the comments made by Commissioner Wagner and suggested that the comments could be related to the current garage. Commissioner Wagner clarified his statements in regard to historic fabric, and not design.

Ms. Cook expressed concern for relocation and the addition of spatial clutter on the property and noted possible devaluation of the property. Commissioner

Wagner expressed sympathy and discussed ways to incorporate the existing structure without relocation. Ms. Cook expressed concern for the viability of the existing materials.

Chair Laffin stated a reminder that the public hearing has been closed and encouraged Ms. Cook to relay the discussion to her designer.

Commissioner Mazanec inquired as to whether Commissioner Trout-Oertel has concern for the complete denial of the application. Commissioner Trout-Oertel noted that other motions would be acceptable and discussed the possibility of a new application. Commissioner Ferguson expressed agreement with Commissioner Trout-Oertel.

Commissioner Hill stated concern for denial of the application in regard to further deterioration and the possibility of appeal.

Ms. Spong discussed possible motions, including a layover, and the established timeline required for review.

Commissioner Mazanec expressed agreement with Commissioner Hill's comments.

The motion failed 4-5.

Commissioner Hill motioned to layover the decision to the July 25th Public Hearing. Commissioner Dana seconded the motion.

Commissioner Hutter-Barnes requested interior photos be provided of the existing garage.

The motion passed 8-1 with opposition from Commissioner Riehle..

Chair Laffin stated that the applicant will work with staff to provide additional information regarding the existing condition of the garage and ways the structure could be incorporated in the design.

Ms. Cook requested confirmation that demolition is not an option; Chair Laffin did not confirm.