

**CITY OF SAINT PAUL**  
**HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF MEMORANDUM**

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**FILE:** HPC Guidelines Discussion – Windows

**DATE OF MEETING:** May 6, 2019

**STAFF REPORT:** George Gause

**Chapter 73-Heritage Preservation Commission: Sec. 73.06 ‘Review of Permits’**

*(c) All decisions of the heritage preservation commission with respect to this section shall be in accordance with the approved program for the preservation of each heritage preservation site.*

*(e) The heritage preservation commission, upon receipt of the application for permit and plans, shall determine if the work to be performed pursuant to the permit adversely affects the program for the preservation and architectural control of the heritage preservation site or district.*

*(i) Before approving any permit application required under paragraph (d) of this section to be approved by the heritage preservation commission, the commission shall make findings based on the program for the preservation and architectural control for the heritage preservation site in regard to the following:*

*(1) In the case of a proposed alteration or addition to an existing building, that such alteration or addition will not materially impair the architectural or historic value of the building and shall make written findings considering the existing structures and existing exterior appearance, building height, building width, depth or other dimensions, roof style, type of building materials, ornamentation, paving and setback.*

**A. DESCRIPTION:**

Currently, each historic district and site have separate guidelines (*Preservation Program for the Preservation and Architectural Control*). These guidelines have inconsistencies and omissions. During the Chapter 73 update meeting in May 2018 and in the listening sessions this fall the guidelines were stated as a concern. We received comments such as:

*Guidelines are not clear with unrealistic expectations which hurt residents.*

*More flexibility on window replacement-consider energy efficiency.*

*Consider modern materials and building options, including energy efficiency.*

*More dynamic and creative new construction.*

*Work that cannot be seen should be allowed.*

*Take into consideration costs.*

**B. PURPOSE:**

This is the initial discussions of a much larger process which will include outreach to residents, architects, contractors, elected officials and others, formation of a steering committee with different representatives from different user groups and a series of public meeting to discuss what will come forward for a vote.

This year we will set aside time to discuss topic areas in the guidelines each month.

Commissioners should focus their deliberations on three areas:

1. Providing simple clear language
2. What changes should we consider
3. Issues with past applications

**C. OUTCOME GOAL:**

The long-term goal for this process is to establish a new Legislative Code Chapter 74 that addresses issues that have been brought up by residents of the heritage districts:

- Equitable for all residents
- Sustainability opportunities
- Easy to understand
- Simple to use

#### **D. May TOPIC-Windows**

Windows were the number three concern over all the listening sessions (number one concern of Historic Hill).

At the Historic Hill listening session a survey was submitted which stated: *"We need relief for windows-repair only 'kicks the can' down the road."* Staff heard several similar concerns from residents throughout the listening sessions.

The guidelines clearly allow window replacement. The question for the Commission is at what level can a window no longer be repaired? The terms 'functional reason' and 'repaired if possible' are found in the window sections of all of the current guidelines, but no further guidance or definition is offered. These terms, which suggest a condition repair/replacement scale, need to be defined. What would be a 'functional reason' to replace a window? How do we define 'repaired if possible'?

*At what point does a repair become a reconstruction or replacement? Is the HPC requiring hand-built replacement windows through the current window repair policy?* These questions also suggest the need for an integrity scale for repairs. The question of how we address Building Code egress requirements also needs discussion.

#### **E. SELECT EXISTING GUIDELINES**

*Windows are important design elements and establish the visual rhythm, balance and general character of the facade. Any alteration, including removal of moldings or changes in window size or type, can have a significant effect on the appearance of the building as well as on the surrounding streetscape.*

*It is desirable to retain original windows and doors, but they may need replacement for functional reasons. Replacement is clearly acceptable for functional reasons if new materials closely match original materials.*

*Different materials may be acceptable on a case-by-case basis.*

*Window panes should be two-way glass, no reflective glass is permitted.*

*Missing or irreparable windows should be replaced with windows that match the original in material, size, proportion and configuration.*

*Replacement sash should not alter the setback relationship between window and wall.*

*Existing window and door openings, frames and components should be retained.*

*Lintels, sills, architraves, pediments, hoods and steps should be retained or repaired if possible.*

*Existing colors and textures should be matched when repairing windows.*

*The size of window panes or sash should not be altered.*

*Window openings should not be enlarged or reduced to fit new units.*

*New window openings should not be introduced into principal elevations.*

*Enlarging or reducing window and door openings is unacceptable.*

*If combination metal storms are installed, they should have a baked-enamel finish.*

*Aluminum storm and screen window combinations, plastic or metal strip awnings, or fake shutters that disturb the character and appearance of the building should not be used.*

*Wooden storm windows custom fabricated to resemble the inner window as closely as possible in shape and appearance are strongly encouraged. Standard mill finish aluminum combination windows will not be allowed.*

#### **F. PAST APPLICATIONS**

Staff can provide Commissioners with the original application packet if needed.

1. 136 Western / 369 Laurel
2. 1896 Summit