

PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD

MONDAY, JANUARY 7, 2008

3:00 P.M., J. MARTIN GRIESEL ROOM, CENTENNIAL PLAZA II

The Historic Conservation Board met at 3:00 P.M., in the J. Martin Griesel Room, Centennial Plaza II, with members Senhauser, Spraul-Schmidt, Wallace, Kreider, Raser and Young present. Fisher and Chatterjee absent.

MINUTES

The Board approved the minutes of Monday, December 17, 2007 (motion by Raser, second by Spraul-Schmidt).

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, 2121 VINE STREET, OVER-THE-RHINE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member Caroline Kellam presented a report on a proposal to reconstruct the rear and portions of the side walls of 2121 Vine Street. She reminded the Board that it had conducted a preliminary design review on this project at its December 17, 2007 meeting and that there was general agreement that the rear wall should be replaced. Ms. Kellam said that since that meeting, the plans had been modified to reflect the Board's comments.

The side walls were previously to be stucco and were changed to brick as suggested. The first floor windows in the new rear wall were lengthened to better approximate the vertical proportions of the existing windows. Two new metal doors and a fire escape were added on the second level; the attic was still windowless. The clapboard sheathing and windows were vinyl; trim was aluminum. Staff recommended that windows be installed at the attic level and that the clapboard be hardboard.

[Mr. Kreider joined the meeting.]

Ms. Wallace said she felt that given the effort to preserve the building and the owner's budget, she could accept the windowless attic level and vinyl siding. Project architect Ted Johanson showed a sample of the proposed siding and distributed a photo of a garage he had designed using the product. He added that the attic windows were presently boarded and that the attic space could be sufficiently vented through the roof. In answer to Mr. Kreider, Mr. Johanson said the attic's height and egress requirements made the space usable only for storage.

Mr. Johanson showed additional photographs of 2121 Vine and indicated that the proposed work was barely visible from the hillside to the rear. He also distributed a section drawing clarifying the relationship between floors and a retaining wall parallel to the rear wall.

Mr. Senhauser suggested that louvered vents might be installed at the attic level instead of windows. This would re-establish the rhythm of the original openings, serve a practical purpose and be lower maintenance and less expensive than windows. Mr. Kreider added that the vents could be replaced with windows if the attic were to be occupied in the future. He also pointed out that the boarded windows presently vented. Mr. Raser said that the rear wall needed the openings to maintain the vertical line of the originals.

Mr. Young objected to the vinyl siding. He said that once the brick wall was lost, it was important that the replacement material conform to the guidelines. He said that he felt the sheathing was more significant than the attic openings. Mr. Raser agreed that the vinyl siding was unfortunate, but that maintaining the brick side walls compensated for it.

Mr. Johanson indicated that given the condition of the building and the season, it was necessary to begin demolition as soon as possible. He said he intended to apply for the demolition permit immediately, before submitting for the wall reconstruction. The Board agreed that under the

circumstances it would permit the demolition to proceed, but that the revised elevations would still be subject to approval by the Urban Conservator.

BOARD ACTION

The majority of the Board voted (motion by Kreider, second by Spraul-Schmidt) to take the following action:

1. Find that the proposed vinyl siding, vinyl windows, aluminum trim and metal doors do not meet the letter of the Over-the-Rhine (OTR) conservation guidelines.
2. Find that the work is largely out of view and that costs warrant relief from the specific language of the OTR conservation guidelines.
3. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed work at 2121 Vine Street with the following conditions:
 - a. Third floor (attic) openings be incorporated into the design.
 - b. Final plans be reviewed and approved by the Urban Conservator prior to approving a building permit.
4. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the immediate demolition of the rear wall per the findings and actions above.

CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION REGARDING THE REUSE OF ROTHENBERG SCHOOL

Ken Jones, President of the Over-the-Rhine Foundation, submitted a letter on behalf of a study committee composed of his and other community groups formed to evaluate the future of the Rothenberg School requesting that the Board formally support City Council's Resolution No. 60. The resolution expressed City Council's opposition to the demolition of Rothenberg School and encouraged the Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) to find a viable reuse for the building. Rothenberg School, located at Main Street and E. Clifton Avenue, contributes to the Over-the-Rhine Local and National Register Historic Districts. The resolution was introduced and passed by City Council without the knowledge or consultation of the Board on October 24, 2007.

Mr. Kreider said that since a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) would be required for the demolition of the Rothenberg School and since the Board would have to hear that request, it would be inappropriate for the Board to comment on the issue at this time. Julia Carney, Law Department, agreed that should the Board comment on this specific case prior to an application and without hearing testimony from all parties, such action could be cited as justification for reversal on appeal.

The Board had on other occasions encouraged the CPS to preserve and reuse its historic buildings as symbols of community aspirations and as important contributors to neighborhood fabric. Likewise, the Board had reviewed and accepted the 1998 inventory of CPS schools undertaken by the Cincinnati Preservation Association in preparation for CPS's master plan. The Board agreed that it had already gone on record as supporting the retention of all of CPS's historic structures (including the Rothenberg School), but would reserve judgment on this specific case should CPS submit a COA in the future.

ADJOURN

As there were no other items to be considered by the Board, the meeting was adjourned (motion by Kreider, second by Raser).

William L. Forwood
Urban Conservator

John C. Senhauser, Chairman

Date: _____