

PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD

MONDAY, JANUARY 28, 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, Fisher, Wallace, Chatterjee and Raser present. Kreider and Young, absent.

MINUTES

The Board approved the minutes of January 7, 2008 (motion by Spraul-Schmidt, second by Chatterjee).

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, 837 DAYTON STREET, DAYTON STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member Caroline Kellam presented a report on a proposal to modify a plan for a detached carriage house that the Board approved on May 5, 2003. The applicant proposes to change the exterior materials on the south (facing the alley) and east façades from the brick previously approved to cement clapboard over a split face block base and to replace the two easternmost garage doors on the south elevation to a single, large door. Ms. Kellam reminded the Board that the larger garage door had been rejected at the 2003 hearing. Given its earlier decision, staff recommended that the Board restate its earlier approval and deny the proposed changes.

Project architect Matt Schreidt of Bruce Goetzman Architects and owner Jerry Bates were present to answer questions for the Board. Mr. Bates said the wider garage opening would facilitate entry off the 10-foot-wide alley and would be similar to that on his neighbor's garage that he said was constructed approximately eight years ago. (Neither the staff nor any Board member had any memory of the garage, so it may have been built without approval.) Mr. Bates said that the new neighborhood residences being built by Drees Company inspired the clapboard siding and split-faced block.

Mr. Senhauser said that the wider garage opening was unfortunate, but that he was sympathetic to the problems created by the narrow alley. He suggested that the owner install a double door that had the appearance of two joined singles. He indicated that several manufacturers offer such a product. Mr. Bates was agreeable to the change. Mr. Chatterjee suggested that the larger opening be centered on the windows above to reestablish the symmetry of the earlier design. Mr. Schreidt said that this could not be accommodated in the plan.

There were some inconsistencies among the elevation drawings and sections. Mr. Schreidt acknowledged that not all sheets had been changed. There was some concern that the mixture of brick, split block, cement board siding and vinyl siding (on the dormers) introduced too many disparate materials on the building. It was agreed that the split-faced block would be used on the base of the building, to the height of the stringcourse shown on the original south elevation. The upper floor would remain brick and the dormers vinyl-sided. Mr. Bates agreed to the change.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Chatterjee, second by Spraul-Schmidt) to take the following action:

1. Find that the proposed garage door, split-face block and cement board siding do not meet the letter of the Dayton Street Conservation Guidelines

2. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the modifications to the previously approved design as follows:
 - a. The two single garage door openings on the east side of the south elevation may be replaced with a single garage door having the appearance of a pair of singles,
 - b. The base of the new building may be constructed of split-faced block having the appearance of stone; the upper floors shall remain brick as previously approved, andwith the condition that final plans and revisions to be reviewed and approved by the Urban Conservator prior to issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness.

**CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, 1306 MAIN STREET, OVER-THE-RHINE
HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Staff member Adrienne Cowden presented a report on a proposal to rehabilitate 1306 Main Street with balconies, decks and a garage addition. Ms. Cowden first distributed revised drawings for the garage to the Board and said that in addition to those interested parties identified in the staff report, Walter Reinhaus had called to express the Over-the-Rhine Community Council's support of the project. She explained that although the proposal generally meets the Over-the-Rhine Historic District conservation guidelines, a number of work items completed without a building permit or Certificate of Appropriateness do not. Ms. Cowden pointed out that the second floor window openings on the Main Street façade were enlarged and the heavy bracketed cornice had been removed and replaced with a much smaller cornice that bore no relationship to the historic one. Ms. Cowden reviewed staff's recommendations and indicated that the architect, Mark Gunther of Wichman Gunther Architects, and the contractor, Bill Baum, were present.

Ms. Cowden confirmed for Mr. Senhauser that the applicant had submitted only the two photographs included in the staff report. She agreed that an interior lower panel installed below a window was not atypical of historic buildings and should not be taken as evidence that the window opening ever extended to the floor. Ms. Cowden commented that physical conditions, such as remnants of the original window frame and distinct dimensional changes in the exterior facing brick, suggested the second floor window openings matched those of the upper floors.

Mr. Gunther passed out additional photographs of the building, including work completed on the new cornice, and an 1898 historic photograph of 1306 Main discovered at the Cincinnati Historical Society Library that afternoon. Mr. Gunther said that although the project did not go through the proper permitting process, there was evidence of prior conditions. The applicant acknowledged the copy was of a poor quality but asserted that the 1898 photograph showed the building with full height windows and a balcony across the second story. Mr. Gunther said that the building had multiple periods of significance and there was sufficient compelling evidence to support the conclusion that 1306 Main once had a simpler cornice and full height window openings with a decorative iron balcony across the second floor. He concluded by stating that the work was undertaken in an effort to enhance the building's uniqueness.

Mr. Baum said that the building was constructed in two stages. The northern section was built in the 1820s and in 1852 it was expanded for the Good Fellows Hall. Urban Sites purchased the property in 2003. By that time, all the windows were gone and severe water infiltration had damaged the exterior brick walls and the bracketed cornice. He asserted that the walls were repaired but the wood and tin bracketed cornice could not be salvaged. When the cornice was removed, workers found remnants of an earlier one. The new cornice was built based on this discovery. Mr. Baum said that the second floor windows were enlarged based on physical evidence. He described cut off iron rods

on the façade as remnants of a full-width balcony, and interior wood panels found beneath the windows when the drywall was removed. Based on this information, the window openings were enlarged to the floor level.

Ms. Wallace commented that the balconies were identical to those installed in various other Urban Sites projects in Over-the-Rhine, and questioned whether the decision to have second floor balconies was made before or after discovering the physical evidence testified to by Mr. Baum. Mr. Baum said that they chose to open up the windows once they found the metal stubs and wood panels. Mr. Senhauser observed that the photographs indicate that the openings had been enlarged mechanically and questioned why it was necessary to saw-cut the face brick if the larger opening was original.

The Board inquired if the applicant had contacted Historic Conservation Office staff to discuss the work or to inspect physical evidence uncovered. Mr. Baum responded that he had not and that in hindsight he should have done so and applied for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work.

Ms. Spraul-Schmidt expressed her concern that the developer and architect, both of whom have worked on historic properties and in the Over-the-Rhine Historic District in the past, did not receive the proper approvals for the work. Other Board members concurred.

Ms. Fisher commented that work in the historic district must be done in accordance with the City's permitting process. She pointed out that Mr. Baum and Mr. Gunther had placed the Board in a difficult position by not applying for and receiving approval for the work.

The Board asked for clarification about the cornice. Mr. Baum reiterated that the bracketed cornice could not be salvaged. When segments of the cornice were removed, remnants of an earlier, much simpler cornice was revealed across the entire building. Mr. Baum and Bill Powers, who consulted on the project, felt it was an important discovery and decided to rebuild the cornice based on this evidence. Mr. Baum said that no brackets were found, just scarring.

In response to the Board, Mr. Baum indicated he felt there was evidence of a full-width metal balcony across the second story of the building. He said that ½" metal rods were regularly spaced across the entire second story. Mr. Baum was confident the rods were not shutter dogs or tie-back rods. He took this as further evidence of a larger window opening that had since been shortened.

Julie Fay, representing Merchants on Main Street, addressed the Board. She indicated the historic of the building was important but felt it was equally important that the building be restored and reused.

Greg Olson, Chief Operations Officer of Urban Sites, addressed the Board. He said that the decisions made were to improve the aesthetics of the building. He asked that the Board make an exception based on Mr. Baum's past record in the historic district.

Mr. Senhauser stated that the Board's role is to enforce the conservation guidelines. The guidelines state that significant features should be maintained and that damaged elements should be repaired or replaced in kind. The guidelines do not make qualitative judgments or place values on a particular historic period.

Mr. Senhauser felt that it was a stretch to call the work restoration. The applicant had not submitted evidence of an earlier cornice, and the one removed in 2004 appeared to be shown in the 1898 photograph. He said that the cornice was replaced, not restored.

Ms. Spraul-Schmidt commented that buildings change over time and that such changes are a part of the building's history that themselves gained significant over time. She pointed out that the building

had a projecting bracketed cornice for over 100 years. Even if it replaced an earlier element, the bracketed cornice had historic value and represented a significant feature.

Mr. Raser asked the applicant whether he believed he could find additional documentation if given the opportunity. Mr. Baum responded affirmatively. Mr. Raser made a motion to table the application to permit the applicant to conduct further research and submit additional documentation. The motion failed to gain a second.

BOARD ACTION

The majority of the Board voted (motion by Chatterjee, second by Spraul-Schmidt, Raser nay) to take the following actions:

1. Deny a Certificate of Appropriateness for modifications to the 2nd floor window openings on the main (west) façade, finding that:
 - a. The work was completed without a building permit or Certificate of Appropriateness.
 - b. The work does not meet the Over-the-Rhine Historic District conservation guidelines.
2. Require the owner to return 2nd floor window openings on the main (west) façade to their original, historic dimensions using brick and mortar joints that match the original in size, profile, color, hardness and dimensions and reinstalling the original sills.
3. Deny a Certificate of Appropriateness for the removal and replacement of the main (west) façade cornice, finding that:
 - a. The work was not covered by Permit No. 2004P07616 and was completed without a building permit or Certificate of Appropriateness.
 - b. The work does not meet the Over-the-Rhine Historic District conservation guidelines.
4. Require the owner to remove the existing, non-historic cornice and install a new cornice that reflects the design of the original as shown in the attached photographs.
5. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the remaining rehabilitation work as shown in the attached drawings and as described with the following conditions:
 - a. The French doors and metal mesh railings proposed for the 2nd floor window openings on the main (west) façade shall be deleted from the plans and the plans shall be revised to show one-over-one windows shall be installed in the reduced openings.
 - b. The new frame north elevation of the existing one-story garage shall have a brick facing and mortar joints that match the original in size, profile, color, hardness and dimensions.
 - c. The proposed rooftop deck on the garage shall be reduced in size and the privacy wall shall be set back from the Goetz Alley elevation and out of sight lines from the public right-of-way.
 - d. Final plans and specifications shall be submitted to the Urban Conservator for review and approval prior to construction.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, 304 McFARLAND STREET, WEST FOURTH STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

Ms. Cowden presented a staff report on the adaptive reuse of 304 McFarland Street, a five-story building that had originally housed a stable on the lower floors and manufacturing on the upper levels. The rehabilitation would create a condominium residence on each of the upper floors with parking on the first. The hayloft door on the second story will be reopened and the paired windows

on the third, four and fifth stories removed to create recessed balconies to serve each unit. A new garage door having the appearance of an historic wood door will be installed on the first floor and shallow metal balconies added on the rear elevation. Ms. Cowden said that although exterior repairs generally meet the guidelines, the solid wood gate to the alley should be redesigned to preserve the visual opening between buildings.

Project architect Conrad Oppt was present to answer questions from the Board. He said he was amenable to the changes suggested by staff, but explained that the solid alley gate was preferred in order to shield the neighbor's dumpster from view. The Board agreed that a solid gate detailed differently from the garage door would be acceptable. Mr. Senhauser suggested that the windows in front of the new elevator should be fitted with tinted glass rather than the film proposed, a more permanent solution requiring less maintenance. Mr. Oppt confirmed that the original owners, the Cincinnati Gas, Coke & Light Company, had utilized the upper floors to manufacture gas meters.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Spraul-Schmidt, second by Raser) to approved a Certificate of Appropriateness for the rehabilitation of 304 McFarland Street as shown in the drawings presented at this hearing with the following conditions:

1. The proposed passageway gate shall be redesigned,
2. The second floor opening on the south elevation shall be re-established to its full dimensions and a lower panel or open railing shall be installed for the inset deck on this floor, and
3. Final plans and specifications shall be submitted to the Urban Conservator for review and approval prior to construction.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS & DD REVIEW, 22 W. COURT STREET, COURT STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

Ms. Kellam presented a staff report on a proposal to remove the existing storefront and a portion of the building at 22 W. Court Street to create an open patio to serve as outdoor dining for a new pizzeria, Bucci's. Ms. Kellam reminded the Board that it had conducted a preliminary design review of this project on December 3, 2007. She said the plan is essentially as proposed at that earlier meeting, but that the elevations of the streetfront façade and that of the new front facing the courtyard have been reworked to reflect the Board's comments/suggestions.

Mr. Kellam said that little remains of the original storefront. She indicated that the masonry and wrought iron scheme is atypical of other commercial properties on Court Street, but that the new design maintains the scale of the existing storefront and holds the line of the streetscape. Ms. Kellam explained that in the revised design, the streetfront structure remains structurally attached to the main building, not a freestanding fence as originally proposed. As a result, no zoning variance are now required. Staff was concerned that the combined effect of wall signs on both the streetfront and new recessed storefront was excessive. The Board determined that the second sign on the inner storefront was appropriate.

Project architect Mike Uhlenhake was present to answer questions from the Board. He explained that the streetface sign would be on a glass transom and illuminated by recessed lighting. Ms. Spraul-Schmidt questioned why the metal grates on the street façade are proposed to be silver rather than the more traditional black of a metal fence. Mr. Senhauser observed that the silver grillwork would read as a foreground plain and better hold the street line; alternately, one would look through darker bars to the patio and recessed storefront beyond. It was agreed that either color would be

acceptable. Rick Derringer, owner of a property across the street, said he welcomed the renovation of the empty building.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Spraul-Schmidt, second by Chatterjee) to take the following action:

1. Find that the existing storefront no longer maintains its architectural integrity and its removal is an acceptable loss.
2. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed design for 22 W. Court Street as presented at this hearing with the following conditions:
 - a. A more detailed garden design be submitted for the entry patio.
 - b. Final plans and specifications shall be submitted to the Urban Conservator for review and approval prior to construction.

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: _____