

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 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, Kreider, Raser and Young present.

### **CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, 1614-1616 HUGHES STREET, OVER-THE-RHINE HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Staff member Caroline Kellam presented a report on a proposal to demolish 1614 Hughes Street, a contributing building in the historic district. She indicated that the owner intends to demolish the structure and combine it with 1616 Hughes to create an open building lot. The owner has indicated that he has no intention himself of developing the property and has had the lots on the market for some time. Ms. Kellam circulated two letters from area property owners opposing the demolition.

Ms. Kellam indicated the owner Yousef Sahel had provided documentation to substantiate that he could not realize an economic return on the rehabilitation of the residence. The property was purchased for \$9,000 and is presently listed for sale for \$19,000, demolition costs are estimated at \$7,000. Construction estimates of \$150,000 cannot now be supported by area rents or recovered through resale. Mr. Yousef had received an acceptable offer of \$12,000, but the deal has fallen through. The property remains for sale.

Given the fact that the owner has no plan for the property himself and given that he had received at least one offer that would have given him an economic return, staff can find no justification for the demolition, so recommends denial of the application.

Mr. Sahel said that he regrets having purchased the property and that his primary concern at this point is to avoid the ongoing cost of maintenance and a VBML. Mr. Raser asked whether Mr. Sahel had generated cost estimates before purchasing the property. He answered that he had and that he planned to rehabilitate the building when he purchased it, but his backers have since withdrawn.

*[Ms. Wallace joined the Board]*

In answer to Mr. Senhauser, Mr. Sahel confirmed that at this point he would sell the property for his purchase price of \$9,000.

### **BOARD ACTION**

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

1. Find that the building at 1614 Hughes Street is a contributing building on the Over-the-Rhine Historic District
2. Deny a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of 1614-1616 Hughes Street.

*[Mr. Kreider joined the Board]*

### **CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, HILLSIDE REVIEW & ZONING VARIANCE, 432-434 LIBERTY STREET, PROSPECT HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Staff member Adrienne Cowden presented a report on a proposal to construct a new single-family residence at 432-434 Liberty Street. Ms. Cowden reminded the Board that it had previously conducted a preliminary design review on this proposal on September 24, 2007 (as 557 Corporation Alley). She explained that owner/architect Richard Butz had originally intended to erect a two-

family residence on the southern portion of this lot that extends from Liberty Hill through to Corporation Alley. His present plan is for a single family only on the northern portion facing Corporation Alley, hence the Liberty Hill address. Although he has the option of subdividing the property and building on the southern portion in the future, this is not an immediate consideration.

Ms. Cowden summarized the changes that Mr. Betz has made in the design to accommodate the Board's earlier comments. Principle modifications include the introduction of three unglazed openings on the first floor of the east wall of the house and the substitution of a solid foundation wall for the piers originally proposed. Ms. Cowden suggested that the new window openings on the east wall should either be removed or aligned with the second floor window in that wall. She added that the relief pattern in the foundation wall should be divided into three bays as the house above.

Ms. Cowden said that a zoning variance would be required to allow the house to be built with a five-foot front yard setback. She said that other buildings on Corporation Alley have similarly shallow or no front yard setbacks. Ms. Cowden said that only architect Don Beck had attended the prehearing and that he supported the project.

Mr. Butz explained that the revision to the foundation will save \$40,000 as well as simplify the installation of mechanical equipment.

### **BOARD ACTION**

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

1. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed single-family residence, as shown in the drawings presented to the Board at this hearing, finding that the proposal meets the Prospect Hill Historic District conservation guidelines with the following conditions:
  - a. The three openings on the first floor east elevation shall either be removed or spaced evenly across the wall below the 2nd floor openings.
  - b. The foundation on the rear (south) elevation shall be divided into three bays that relate to the division of the floors above.
  - c. Final plans and specifications shall be submitted to the Urban Conservator for review and approval prior to construction.
2. Approve the necessary Zoning Variance to permit a 5'-0" front yard setback for the house finding that such relief from the literal interpretation of the Cincinnati Zoning Code will not be materially detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare or injurious to property in the district or vicinity where the property is located and is necessary and appropriate in the interest of historic conservation as not to adversely affect the historic architectural or aesthetic integrity of the district.

### **NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION, UNION TRUST BUILDING, 36 EAST 4th STREET, CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT**

Ms. Cowden presented a staff report on a National Register nomination for the Union Trust Building at 36 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street, downtown. The nomination will be heard by the Ohio Historic Site Preservation Advisory Committee on April 4, 2008. Ms. Cowden said that the building was designed by Burnham and Root as the City's first skyscraper and was clearly eligible under Criterion C.

Mr. Cowden indicated that the nomination was well-organized and written, but suggested that it would benefit from a more comprehensive discussion of Burnham's other Cincinnati commissions.

Ms. Spraul-Schmidt agreed that such a comparison would help place the Union Trust Building in context with Burnham's work and other important city projects of the period when Cincinnati was the marketplace of the nation, not just "the west". Mr. Kreider said that the additions to the first and second floors were not clearly delineated.

**BOARD ACTION**

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Chatterjee, second by Raser) to take the following actions:

1. Find that the Union Trust Building (also known as the Bartlett Building) located at 36 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street in Downtown Cincinnati meets the requirements of Criterion C for listing in the National Register of Historic Places;
2. Encourage the author to undertake the revisions outlined in the staff report
3. Direct staff to forward the Board's findings regarding this nomination to the Ohio Historic Preservation Office prior to the April 4, 2008 meeting of the Ohio Historic Site Preservation Advisory Board.

**CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT GRANTS**

Mr. Forwood reported that the City will be making application to the Ohio Historic Preservation Office next month for a matching grant to update the Cincinnati Historic Inventory for an additional four neighborhoods.

**ADJOURN**

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

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William L. Forwood  
Urban Conservator

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John C. Senhauser, Chairman

Date: \_\_\_\_\_