

PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD

MONDAY, APRIL 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, Fisher, Wallace, Chatterjee, Kreider, Raser and Young present.

MINUTES

The Board unanimously approved the minutes of March 24, 2008 as corrected (motion by Fisher, second by Wallace).

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, 108 WEST CENTRAL PARKWAY, OVER-THE-RHINE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member Adrienne Cowden presented a report on a proposal to modify the approved plan for the new School for the Creative & Performing Arts to include an outdoor theater at the corner at Twelfth and Elm Streets. Contributing buildings at 1122 and 1126 Elm and West 12th Streets would be demolished to accommodate the new theater. She said the present application for demolition is similar to the earlier request approved by the Board to remove three buildings from the northeast corner of the site at 12th and Race Streets.

Ms. Cowden said the plan was substantially unchanged from that discussed with the Board at its October 23, 2006 when approval was granted for the remainder of the project. She indicated that changes include extending the wall screening the service area on Elm Street eleven feet north to accommodate additional mechanical equipment and installing a transformer in the new open lot. Ms. Cowden said that a new wall sign identifying the (as yet unknown) patron for the outdoor theater is not part of this application, but may require a zoning variance at a later date.

Project architect Jeff Dodge of Cole+Russell Architects was present to answer questions from the Board. In response to Mr. Raser, Mr. Dodge said he had not been through the buildings at 1122 and 1126 Elm and West 12th Streets, only the basements. He indicated that no structural report or reuse analysis had been prepared. Mr. Raser expressed concern that there is insufficient documentation to determine whether the demolition of the three buildings was justified. He recalled that the issue of their demolition was not fully discussed at the October 2006 meeting and that such information would be forthcoming when the application was formally presented.

Mr. Dodge said that it had been determined earlier that the three structures could not accommodate the required spaces of the new SCPA building, but that the proposed outdoor theater would be a valuable amenity for the school. Mr. Senhauser indicated that the committee of the Board formed to review the SCPA design (Senhauser, Spraul-Schmidt and Chatterjee) had discussed the outdoor theater prior to the October 2006 hearing in anticipation that CPS might acquire the properties at 12th and Elm Streets. He said the proposed design had been developed at the behest of the committee as an alternative to be compatible with the 12th Street streetscape. Ms. Spraul-Schmidt added that the theater had been design to speak to the neighborhood as a whole and to complete the integration with Washington Park.

In answer to Mr. Kreider, Mr. Dodge said that to his knowledge there had been no consideration of rehabilitating the buildings for rental to a business (such as musical instrument restoration) that might compliment SCPS activities and programs. Robin Brandon representing the Cincinnati Public Schools confirmed that SCPA's required academic programs were contained within the main building, but that the outdoor theater was a resource for both the school and the community. She

emphasized that the school site is particularly tight and offers few outdoor spaces, especially for the school's older students who would benefit from a gathering and performance venue.

Walter Reinhaus, President of the Over-the-Rhine Community Council indicated that his organization had voted at its April 2008 meeting to oppose the demolition of 1122 and 1126 Elm and West 12th Streets. He explained that since CPS had not made a presentation to the Council, the group could not voice support for the project. He added that the vote might have been different had the Council heard the plan presented today.

Julie Fay confirmed that the Community Council vote reflected the organization's preference that the historic buildings be reused. She said the community continues to be concerned that non-profit applicants are judged by a different standard than private owners.

Ms. Spraul-Schmidt emphasized that the SCPA projects as a whole is unique and that this application should be considered in the context of the development of the entire block. The committee found that the theater proposal was compatible with the monumental scale of the project and helped form a northern edge to the block, relating it to Washington Park and Music Hall beyond. Ms. Wallace agreed that it was important to consider the whole block and its relationship to the park. She said she liked the community aspect of the project that would help to bring the school into the neighborhood.

Mr. Raser said he was not opposed to the notion of an outdoor theater, but in this circumstance, the theater cannot be constructed without the demolition of three prominent, contributing buildings. He said that he could not support an application to remove useable structures when no information had been submitted to demonstrate their condition or adaptability. He advised CPS not to proceed with the purchase until this issue was resolved. Mr. Kreider agreed that the Board should not approve the demolition of such buildings that have recently been occupied. He said that CPS had not made its case and that CPS does not need the site for its programs. Mr. Kreider disagreed with staff's conclusion that the properties had lost their sense of time and place.

David Crafts, project engineer, said his organization has been working for two years to relocate the transitional housing that has occupied 1122 and 1126 Elm and West 12th Streets, a use he described as incompatible with the new SCPA.

Mr. Young said that he would prefer the item be tabled until CPS meets with the Over-the-Rhine Community Council. Mr. Raser agreed that at a minimum, CPS should meet with the community council and produce an engineering report on the three buildings.

Mr. Raser made a motion (second by Kreider) to table the application pending the submission of additional information on the physical condition of the three buildings to be demolished and their potential for reuse. The motion failed by tie vote.

BOARD ACTION

The Board by tie vote (motion by Chatterjee, second by Spraul-Schmidt; Senhauser, Spraul-Schmidt, Wallace and Chatterjee voting aye, Fisher, Kreider, Raser and Young nay) failed to approve an application for a Certificates of Appropriateness for the demolition of 1122-1126 Elm Street and 129 West 12th Street and for a modification to the approved plans for the new School for the Creative and Performing Arts at 108 West Central Parkway.

**CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, 1237 VINE STREET, OVER-THE-RHINE
HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Ms. Cowden presented a report on a proposal to rehabilitate the five-story building at 1237 Vine Street and to construct a surface parking lot at the rear of the property on a separate lot at 9-11 West 13th Street. She explained that the existing structure would be renovated into seven residential units on the upper floors; the first floor would remain commercial. An unimproved parking lot on the adjoining lot west of the property would be resurfaced and landscaped to provide parking for 1237 Vine Street.

Ms. Cowden said that there are two alternatives for the parking lot at 9-11 West 13th Street. As proposed, the new lot would provide seven parking spaces solely for the tenants and users of 1237 Vine Street and be entered off Republic Street. An alternative would increase the number of spaces to eleven to serve both 1237 Vine and a second rehabilitation being undertaken by Rick Kimbler at 1224 Republic Street; this scheme would have an entry off 13th Street. The two alternatives would be landscaped similarly.

Ms. Cowden said that the exterior of the existing building would remain much as it is on the street level. New storefronts would be installed. New door and window cuts would be made in the rear (west) elevation on the upper floors to serve new balconies overlooking the parking lot. Ms. Cowden suggested that the transom over the fifth floor openings should be removed to reflect the lower ceiling at that level and to be consistent with the treatment of that level on the street facades. She also suggested that the balcony railing be simplified. Project architect Kirk Adams said the balcony railings had been designed to mirror the profile of those on the street facades, but agreed to eliminate the fifth floor transoms on the rear elevation.

Two new gable-roofed penthouses will be added; one will be visible from 13th Street. Mr. Senhauser expressed concern for the proliferation of rooftop additions throughout the historic districts and that they should be kept to a minimum. He observed that if the penthouse roofs had been hipped, they would be less visible from the street. Mr. Adams acknowledged that one penthouse was visible from 13th Street, but that the gable roofs reflect that of a large adjacent skylight that was being restored. Project developer Bill Baum stated that decks have become a major factor with buyers, especially in this area of the city.

Mr. Adams showed a modified roof plan that eliminated the northside windows on the penthouses. In answer to Mr. Raser, Mr. Adams said the penthouse would be sheathed in 30" sheet cement board and that the storefronts would be a sage green. He confirmed to Mr. Young that a railing may be required at the parapet edge to enclose roof-mounted mechanical equipment, but that it would not be highly visible from the street.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Raser, second by Chatterjee) to find that the proposed improvements to 1237 Vine Street and the parking lot at 9-11 West 12th Street meet the Over-the-Rhine Historic District conservation guidelines and approved a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed work with the following conditions:

1. A covenant restricting the use of the parking lot at 9-11 West 13th Street to the owners, occupants and customers of 1237 Vine Street and if necessary 1224 Republic Street be prepared and filed with the building permit.
2. Final plans and specifications shall be submitted to the Urban Conservator for review and approval prior to construction.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, 105 WEST CLIFTON AVENUE, OVER-THE-RHINE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member Caroline Kellam presented a report on a request to approve work already completed on 105 West Clifton Avenue and for a rear deck not yet built. She indicated the completed work included the removal of porch columns and box gutters, installation of vinyl siding on all exterior walls, replacement of windows, window opening eliminated or infilled with glass block and new window and door cuts on the rear to access a proposed three-story deck/porch. She said that the owner had applied for a building permit after being cited by a City building inspector for working without permits.

Ms. Kellam indicated that when the Over-the-Rhine boundaries were drafted, 105 West Clifton was in a row of similar small houses at the western edge of the district. Buildings on both sides have been demolished in the last few years, destroying the streetscape and leaving this property out of historical context.

In answer to Mr. Young, the owner Kenneth Henry indicated that the houses on either side of his were damaged by fire, boarded and eventually demolished. He said that 105 West Clifton had also suffered some fire damage and vandalism, but that he believed it to be salvageable when he purchased the property from HUD in 1991. He said has been working on the house ever since (as his finances would allow) to convert the property to a two-family. He indicated that most of the exterior work is complete and that the only additional work he anticipates is the construction of the wood deck on the rear.

Mr. Henry stated that he had done most of the work himself, except for the siding that was installed by his son-in-law who was a carpenter. He said he was not aware of any historical restrictions on the property, but could not explain why neither he nor his son-in-law had secured building permits for any of their work.

In answer to Mr. Senhauser, Mr. Henry said that the existing mansard roof is painted tin and has not been replaced, although the box gutter beneath the second floor window was been removed. More extensive changes had been made to the rear elevation with new sliding glass doors and shortened window openings. Mr. Senhauser said that the Board might have been more receptive to the project and the new work associated with the deck had he retained more of the original materials and details.

Mr. Kreider said that the Board was in the position of making the best of a bad situation. He found craftsmanship to be acceptable and asked whether Mr. Henry would consider rebuilding the box gutter and modifying the changes he has made to the rear window openings and the design of the new porch/deck. Mr. Henry answered that he would. There was general agreement that Mr. Henry should work with conservation staff to resolve the areas of concern. The Board confirmed for Mr. Forwood that it could live with the vinyl siding as installed.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Raser, second by Kreider) to table the application in order to give the owner an opportunity to work with Historic Conservation Office staff to modify his plans for the proposed new work and to mitigate the affect of the rehabilitation work already competed.

ADJOURN

As there were no other items to be considered by the Board, the meeting was adjourned.

William L. Forwood
Urban Conservator

John C. Senhauser, Chairman

Date: _____