

## **PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD**

**MONDAY, JULY 21, 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, Young, Chatterjee, Kreider, Jones, Spraul-Schmidt and Raser present. Members Wallace and Fisher were absent

### **MINUTES**

The Board unanimously approved the minutes as revised of July 7, 2008 (motion by Chatterjee, second by Raser).

### **NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION, SEDAMSVILLE RIVER ROAD HISTORIC DISTRICT, 2449-2748 RIVER ROAD, 309-317 MT. HOPE & 604 MT. ECHO, SEDAMSVILLE**

Staff member Larry Harris presented a report on a National Register nomination for the Sedamsville River Road Historic District in the Sedamsville neighborhood. The Ohio Historic Site Preservation Advisory Board will hear the nomination at its meeting on August 1, 2008. Mr. Harris said that the Sedamsville River Road Historic District met the requirements of Criterion C but that the nomination did not present a compelling argument for the district's eligibility under Criterion A. Although the nomination indicated that the proposed district was significant for its role in the history of transportation in Cincinnati, the narrative did not clearly tie the development of the district back to broad trends, specific events or developments in the city's transportation history.

Mr. Harris indicated that due to demolitions and the realignment of River Road the western boundary should be revised to terminate at Mt. Echo Drive. Interim Urban Conservator Adrienne Cowden said that prior to the recent realignment and widening of River Road, the area west of Mt. Echo Drive possessed a very specific and unique visual character. Ms. Cowden described a winding curve in the roadway west of Mt. Echo Drive. A late 19<sup>th</sup> century brick house (the foundation of which was part of the original St. Martin's German Protestant Church) once stood in this curve and served as a visual anchor for those traveling west on River Road. Ms. Cowden also described the relationship between River Road and the buildings along it. The ground sloped sharply away from River Road to the south while the north side was edged with retaining walls and an equally distinct change in elevation up the hillside. Ms. Cowden said buildings located south of River Road often sat below the road grade, illustrating changes over time in the roadbed, while those to the north were elevated above it. The demolition of most of the buildings on the south side of River Road west of Mt. Echo Drive by mid-2004, the loss of additional buildings on the north side of the road and modifications to the roadway itself had eradicated this area's historic context and character.

Mr. Harris described a private residential development proposed on the north side of River Road on properties located between 2534 and 2654 River Road. If completed, the development would result in the demolition of numerous contributing resources in the center of the proposed district, and Mr. Harris recommended that the nomination be held until plans for the development were finalized. Ms. Cowden corrected Mr. Harris, stating that holding the nomination did not reflect the Historic Conservation Office recommendation and was not the issue before the Board. In response to Mr. Senhauser, she said the Board's role was to provide comments to the Ohio Historic Preservation Site Advisory Board and to express its support of or objection to the nomination.

Bobbie McTurner, the nomination author, addressed the Board. She indicated that by revising the statement of significance she felt that some of the issues identified by staff could be cured. Ms.

McTurner said that she had exhausted the available sources for information on ethnic migration and had already included what she was able to find in the nomination. In response to comments and questions from the Board, she said she was willing to undertake additional research to better define the relationship between residential development in the district to adjacent railroad lines, the interurban and area businesses such as Fleischmann's Yeast Company.

Ms. McTurner stated that she had mixed feelings about revising the district boundary but agreed that the western boundary should be moved east to at least Mt. Echo Drive and possibly 2666 River Road. Mr. Raser wondered what the community's position was on changing the boundary. Susan Feldman, Vice-Chairman of the Sedamsville Community Council, responded that the community had hoped to include as many buildings as possible along River Road in the historic district but she understood the reasoning for modifying the boundary. After further discussion, the Board agreed that the proposed district's easternmost boundary should be revised to terminate at Mt. Echo Drive.

Mr. Chatterjee inquired about the purpose and results of the proposed listing. Ms. Cowden responded that listing the district would hopefully foster community pride, raise awareness and attract property owners who will help preserve it. Ms. Cowden confirmed for Mr. Raser that, provided there was no federal involvement, listing the Sedamsville River Road Historic District in the National Register would not preclude any demolition or new construction. Ms. McTurner added that her clients understood that National Register listing would not prohibit demolition.

Mr. Senhauser and Ms. Spraul-Schmidt pointed out a number of technical corrections in the nomination and said the bibliography and footnotes should be checked thoroughly for spelling errors. Ms. Spraul-Schmidt suggested that Ms. McTurner review Zane Miller's *Boss Cox's Cincinnati: Urban Politics in the Progressive Era* and add it and a number of other sources to the bibliography.

### **BOARD ACTION**

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

1. Find that the Sedamsville River Road Historic District meets the requirements of Criterion C for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.
2. Recommend that the nomination be revised to state specifically the details of the role of the Sedamsville River Road Historic District in the history of transportation for Cincinnati or the broad pattern of events related to transportation to establish firmly the eligibility of the district under Criterion A.
3. Recommend that the proposed boundary be modified so that Mt. Echo Drive represents the westernmost boundary of the Sedamsville River Road Historic District.
4. Direct staff to forward the Board's findings regarding this nomination to the Ohio Historic Preservation Office prior to the August 1, 2008 meeting of the Ohio Historic Site Preservation Advisory Board.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Jones distributed an article by Water Sedovic and Jill Botthelf entitled *What Replacement Windows Can't Replace: The Real Cost of Removing Historic Windows* to the Board. Mr. Jones felt that this article was relevant in light of the Board's recent consideration of window replacement at 427 Plum Street in the West Fourth Street Historic District.

**ADJOURN**

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

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Adrienne Cowden  
Interim Urban Conservator

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John C. Senhauser, Chairman

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