

PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 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, Jones and Young present.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, 1839 MADISON ROAD, EAST WALNUT HILLS HISTORIC DISTRICT

Interim Urban Conservator Adrienne Cowden summarized a report on the construction of a three-car garage addition at 1839 Madison Road. The garage will be constructed onto the southwest corner of the house. It was designed specifically to complement the Queen Anne style historic residence and featured many of the same details. The paving area in front of the garage represented the minimum turning radius necessary for automobiles to exit and enter the garage and the addition would not result in the removal of historic walls or mature trees. Ms. Cowden pointed out that final selections had not yet been made for elements such as windows and doors, but the appearance of these elements would be as shown in the submitted drawings regardless of the manufacturer.

Additional future work items, some of which were shown on the submitted plans, included landscaping, an in-ground pool, removal of the non-original solarium and construction of a new addition that would create an internal connection between the garage and house. Ms. Cowden indicated that the applicant would need to submit a separate application for this work.

The East Walnut Hills Assembly Board reviewed the plans at its regularly scheduled meeting on October 28th and had no objections. The project architect, Tom Wilcox, sent copies of the plans to adjacent property owners; staff has received no comments, favorable or otherwise, from any of these individuals.

Tom Wilcox was present to answer questions from the Board.

Mr. Wilcox clarified for Mr. Raser that the foundation would either be parged or covered with lap siding and not a combination of the two finishes.

Mr. Wilcox confirmed for Mr. Jones that construction of the garage would not damage the historic residence and was designed specifically to fit around the house.

In response to general inquiries from the Board, Mr. Wilcox stated that he was waiting for pricing on the windows and doors from various manufacturers and that the final choice would depend on these bids. He said that the simulated divided light windows were selected to complement window sash on the house, the majority of which was multi-paned. The new sash would have an applied interior and exterior mullion and would have the appearance of a true-divided light window. Similarly, Mr. Wilcox said that a specific light fixture had not yet been selected.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Raser, second by Spraul-Schmidt) to find that the proposed new three-car garage addition and associated site improvements meet the East Walnut Hills Historic District conservation guidelines and to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness with the condition that final plans and specifications shall be submitted to the Urban Conservator for approval prior to construction.

PRELIMINARY DESIGN REVIEW, 716 MT. HOPE, DEMOLITION, NEW GARAGE AND LOT SPLIT, MOORE-KNIGHT HOUSE LOCAL LANDMARK

Staff member Caroline Kellam presented a report on Preliminary Design Review at 716 Mt. Hope, the Moore-Knight House, a Local Landmark in East Price Hill. She explained that the owner, Rakesh Ram, was proposing to demolish an existing carriage house and to construct a new attached garage onto the house. Ms. Kellam described the carriage house as visibly deteriorated and extremely altered.

The proposal also involved splitting off two parcels from the larger 1.32-acre property. Ms. Kellam said Mr. Ram hoped to develop the two new parcels with single-family residences. She pointed out that the lot split would be reviewed and approved by the Department of City Planning. However, any development on the two new lots would be subject to the review and approval of the Historic Conservation Board. She asked the Board to consider the impact any future development on these lots might have upon the historic nature of the Moore-Knight House and the surrounding property.

Mr. Ram and his architect, Denis Back, were present to answer questions from the Board and to provide additional details as needed.

There was general agreement among Board members that the frame carriage house had lost its integrity due to significant alterations and no longer contributed to the larger property. The Board was also reasonably comfortable with the new garage design and noted its construction was likely necessary to market successfully the Moore-Knight House. Mr. Young asked that the applicant clarify specific design details of the garage. Mr. Back said the dentil moldings would be fabricated out of wood and represented a smaller scale version of those seen on the house. The exterior walls will be painted brick. Mr. Young commented that embossed metal doors were not always the best choice. He indicated that he would like to see more information on the doors and windows for the final review.

The Board focused the remainder of its review and comments on the proposed lot split and the development of the resulting two new lots.

Upon inquiry of the Board, Mr. Ram confirmed that he owned only one lot on Bushnell Street at 2607 Bushnell. Mr. Ram stated that there was currently one driveway on 716 Mt. Hope and another on 2607 Bushnell. He said that cross easements could be created so that any new construction on Mt. Hope would share a single driveway.

Mr. Senhauser remarked that while the Board could not dictate how the property was subdivided it did have purview over any new construction, which would be evaluated based on how it affected the historic residence and its setting. He observed that the proposed cut up was for two 35'-0" wide lots. The width, required setbacks and desired amenities would inform the type of development that took place on the lot.

Mr. Raser commented that the Moore-Knight House pre-dated most of the surrounding neighborhood and that this large estate has become an anomaly over time. Nearby homes were predominantly turn of the 20th century single-family residences with front porches and deep setbacks. He observed that the proposed new lots almost required an altogether different kind of house type that was not consistent with the Moore-Knight House. Mr. Raser also expressed concern that a new building on Lot #2 may be sited so close to the Moore-Knight House that it ultimately destroyed part of the historic nature of the landmark residence.

The Board asked if the property could be subdivided differently or if Mr. Ram would consider splitting off one rather than two lots from the property that could be developed with a larger, more substantial single- or two-family residence.

Mr. Back distributed color photographs of surrounding buildings and the Moore-Knight property. Mr. Back emphasized the importance of the views to any future development and said the lot split was intended to take advantage of this amenity. He said that the property could be subdivided differently but the resulting lots would not be as marketable. Mr. Ram reiterated that the value of the land was in the views and added that the Moore-Knight House required substantial work. The sale of the lots would help to subsidize this work, and Mr. Ram believed he would net a greater profit through the sale of two lots as proposed.

Mr. Raser suggested that a single estate size building would exhibit a volume, scale and appearance that would be comparable to the Moore-Knight House and the neighboring residences. Mr. Kreider agreed stating that a larger building could be internally divided to create two or more units as needed. Mr. Back noted that two- to four-family residences could be designed and detailed to have the appearance of a single larger house. Mr. Ram responded that he hoped a single organization or individual would purchase both lots and develop them with single-family residences but that the market would dictate what was ultimately proposed for the site.

Mr. Young and Ms. Fisher expressed concern that the proposed lot split would necessitate Zoning Variances and possibly result in a future development proposal that did not comply with the guidelines. Ms. Fisher stated her preference that any new development on the two lots be submitted as one application. This would allow the Board to make a more effective decision. The Board generally agreed with this statement.

BOARD ACTION

No official Board action was required.

**REPORT, REINSTALLATION OF THE RIVERVIEW PLAYGROUND ENTRANCE
LOCAL LANDMARK**

Ms. Cowden presented a report on the reinstallation of the Riverview Playground Entrance, a local landmark also known as the "Good Friday Arch." She reminded the Board that the entrance was dismantled nearly 20 years ago and placed in storage with Hummel Industries (Hummel). In 2004 Hummel notified the City that it was no longer able to store the pieces and the City administration decided it was no longer able/willing to pay to store a structure for which there was no future plan. At the same time, the Department of Transportation & Engineering (DOTE) was investigating the repair of the St. Gregory Street steps. The department chose to expand its project scope to include the Riverview Playground Entrance, and identified the funding necessary for a \$1.5million transportation enhancement project that will connect the East End to Mt. Adams through a series of pathways and steps. Ms. Cowden commented that the project was not yet complete, but that the archway and steps are in place and can be easily viewed from Adams Crossing.

Ms. Cowden indicated that Jack Martin, DOTE, was present to answer questions from the Board.

Mr. Jones commended the DOTE and the City for having recognized the value of the playground entrance and saving the landmark.

Mr. Kreider agreed and pointed out that the playground entrance represented a quantifiable physical and visual amenity for Captain's Watch. He commented that Cincinnati was once a walking city

and hopefully would be again; the reinstallation of the playground entrance and the larger project pointed the City in the right direction.

Mr. Senhauser recalled that he was a member of the Board when the entrance was dismantled. He was pleased to see it reinstalled as the centerpiece of a larger development picture as was originally intended.

The Board thanked Mr. Martin and DOTE for its efforts to preserve the landmark entrance and asked staff if DOTE had publicized its efforts. Ms. Cowden responded that various publications including the *Cincinnati Enquirer* had already written articles about the installation. She said that she had discussed various other possibilities to publicize the reinstallation with Mr. Martin. Soapbox, an online e-publication, was notified and appeared to be interested in the story. Bobbie McTurner, Cincinnati Preservation Association, also agreed to publish an article in her organization's December newsletter.

BOARD ACTION

No official Board action was required.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Spraul-Schmidt stated that the search committee was continuing to interview candidates for the Urban Conservator position. She indicated that the committee will be narrowing the applicant pool to a few candidates who will be introduced to the Historic Conservation Board at a future meeting.

ADJOURN

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

Adrienne Cowden
Interim Urban Conservator

John C. Senhauser, Chairman

Date: _____