

PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD

MONDAY, JUNE 18, 2007

3:00 P.M., J. MARTIN GRIESEL ROOM, CENTENNIAL PLAZA II

The Historic Conservation Board met at 3:04 P.M., in the J. Martin Griesel Room, Centennial Plaza II, with members Senhauser, Spraul-Schmidt, Chatterjee, Kreider, Raser and Young present. Absent: Wallace.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, 2702 CLEINVIEW AVENUE, CLEINVIEW-HACKBERRY HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member Adrienne Cowden presented a report on the proposed construction of a new porch on the rear (east) elevation of 2702 Cleinview Avenue, a contributing resource in the Cleinview-Hackberry Historic District. She reminded the Board that it had first considered this project on May 7, 2007. At that time the Board tabled the application pending the submittal of more detailed, accurate drawings. The Board agreed that a rear porch of the size and location proposed, but suggested changes to the design to make it more compatible with the house and its architectural details. The Board addressed the level of detail in the submitted drawings, stating that hand-drawn plans were acceptable if they contained clear dimensions and design intent. The Board tabled the application to give the applicants an opportunity to provide additional details and measurements and to resolve inconsistencies in the drawings.

Ms. Cowden indicated that the applicants resubmitted the original drawings with revisions and additional dimensions. One new drawing detailing the front gabled roof was also submitted. Ms. Cowden said she spoke with Mr. Stavsky and expressed concern that the level of detail provided in the drawings was still insufficient to meet the Board's request. She pointed out that many of the newly provided measurements were to be verified in the field and the drawings still included inconsistencies, but that Mr. Stavsky requested that the project be presented to the Board as is.

In response to Ms. Spraul-Schmidt, Ms. Cowden stated that the Plans Examiner, John Schueler, conducted a preliminary review of the application. Mr. Schueler will ask for more detailed drawings that accurately depict the porch construction and location.

Applicant Victoria Chester felt the changes made to the drawings adequately answered the Board's questions and suggestions. She indicated she had some experience with large construction projects and noticed that design changes are often made in the field. For this reason, she was not concerned with the number of measurements that needed to be verified in the field. She stated that one option would be to abandon the project and to undertake interior renovations instead. Ms. Chester asked the Board for clarification on how the drawings were deficient.

Mr. Raser said that he would like to see the applicants complete the project, but it was the Board's responsibility to ensure the guidelines are followed. He noted that architect-prepared drawings were not required, but that any drawings must be complete and legible. The drawings that were submitted were sketchy, not well done and lacked the necessary detail to determine the final built appearance of the deck and its relationship to the house. He pointed out some inconsistencies and suggested that the Board could not approve plans that were unclear or incomplete.

The Board indicated that verifying measurement in the field was acceptable for some things, but other calculations were too critical to leave to chance. Mr. Kreider indicated said that complete plans are necessary for the Board to approve a project, but they also provide protection for the homeowners. He felt that the drawings did not need a great deal more work and encouraged Ms. Chester to continue fine-tuning the plans and to see the project through to completion.

Mr. Senhauser informed Ms. Chester that the Board had the option to either table the request or deny the Certificate of Appropriateness. He said that he would prefer to table the matter to give the applicants the opportunity to draft acceptable drawings. Ms. Chester did not object to tabling the proposal and said she would ask Mr. Stavsky or her builder to contact Ms. Cowden for direction.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Spraul-Schmidt, second by Young) to table the application to give the applicants the opportunity to submit plans with clear dimensions and design intent with all inconsistencies in the drawings resolved.

**CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, 1715 ELM STREET, OVER-THE-RHINE
HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Staff member Caroline Kellam presented a report on the proposed demolition of 1715 Elm Street at the northwest corner of Elm and Green Streets. The building was once three-stories, but a major fire destroyed the second and third floors, leaving only elements of the original storefront. Although it no longer contributes to the historic district, the building does maintain the street edge and corner.

Ms. Kellam indicated that the applicant, Chris Wiedeman, would buy the building contingent on approval of its demolition. He intends to fence the open lot until the streetcar system is built through Over-the-Rhine; at that time Mr. Wiedeman would design a new building for the site. Ms. Kellam stated that staff was concerned about demolishing without knowledge of its replacement or specific timeframe. She said that although the building is non-contributing and its demolition could be considered an allowable loss, it does occupy an important corner site. Its loss would create more missing teeth along the streetscape. At minimum staff encouraged conditioning an approval on the property being kept free of garbage and overgrown vegetation and the installation of an appropriate wrought iron or painted steel fence along Grant and Elm Streets.

Mr. Forwood explained that typically the Board would consider the economics but since the building is non-contributing, the concern involves the affect on the streetscape. He reminded the Board that the applicant would be required to apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness at whatever time he would like to construct a building.

In response to Mr. Raser, Ms. Kellam stated that the front portion of the neighboring building, 1717 Elm shared a party wall 1715 Elm, but that the rear was freestanding. Mr. Raser stated that if the Board approved the demolition of 1715 Elm, it should be with the caveat that the exposed wall 1717 be cosmetically presentable and the applicant allow access to the building owner for any necessary maintenance.

Mr. Kreider suggested that a zero lot line could hinder the development potential without the cooperation of the adjoining owner. Mr. Senhauser responded that 1715 Elm would remain a lot of record and therefore a buildable piece of property.

Mr. Kreider expressed concern about allowing demolition on pure speculation. He felt that non-contributing buildings serve as placeholders if nothing else and that there are enough vacant lots in Over-the-Rhine. Ms. Wallace said that that in order to protect the district, more information was needed before a property owner should be allowed to demolish even a non-contributing building. Mr. Young stated that if the demolition were approved, a time frame for the demolition should be specified to avoid further deterioration of the building and blight in the district.

Mr. Kreider acknowledged the applicant's offer to install an appropriate fence, but stated that a grass lot could be worse than keeping the building. Ms. Wallace agreed and stated that allowing

demolition of non-contributing buildings without imminent plans for new construction could be setting a bad precedent. Mr. Young said that he felt that if a building was non-contributing and had no potential to ever be contributing, demolition could be justified.

Ms. Kellam confirmed for Mr. Young that staff had not received any comments from the Over-the-Rhine Community Council or residents. She added that the building had been on the market for some time and Mr. Wiedeman's was the only offer made.

Mr. Wiedeman said that he was seeking assurance that the building could be demolished before he closed on the property. He expressed his willingness to keep the building until he was ready to build, but that the building was structurally unsafe, a visual blight and more of a detriment to the neighborhood than a vacant lot would be. In reply to Mr. Kreider, he said that the building was currently secure but in poor condition. In response to Ms. Wallace, Mr. Wiedeman stated he felt that due to the extent of the deterioration, within the next three years, the building would be condemned and ordered down.

In reply to Mr. Kreider, Mr. Wiedeman said he was willing to work with the adjacent property owner in regards to the resulting exposed party wall.

Mr. Raser asked Mr. Wiedeman what type of fence he envisioned. Mr. Wiedeman responded that he would like to use a less expensive fence than that recommended by staff. He said a wrought iron fencing around the entire lot was not financially feasible. Mr. Raser said that he would prefer a well-maintained open lot to a boarded up building or a badly fenced lot.

Ms. Wallace stated that she was not objecting to staff recommendations but was concerned that if a precedent were set there would be a danger of excess demolition of non-contributing buildings in Over-the-Rhine. Mr. Kreider stated that in this particular case, the building was functionally and economically obsolete.

Mr. Senhauser commented that the building basically holds the corner and little else and asked why staff had recommended fencing. Ms. Kellam replied that a perimeter fence would maintain the street edge. Mr. Kreider said that at minimum, the lot should be kept level, mowed and kept free of weeds and garbage. Ms. Wallace concurred.

BOARD ACTION

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

1. Finding that 1715 Elm Street is a non-contributing building, missing two of the three original floors, in a deteriorated condition, functionally and economically obsolete within the Over-the-Rhine Historic District.
2. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish the building with the following conditions:
 - a. Applicant may install an appropriate wrought iron or painted steel fence along both street frontages, design to be reviewed and approved by the Urban Conservator prior to installation.
 - b. Maintain the property free of garbage and tall weeds
 - c. Protect the neighboring party wall and allow access to for maintenance.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS AND ZONING VARIANCES, 114 E. MCMICKEN AVENUE, OVER-THE-RHINE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Ms. Cowden presented a staff report on the conversion of an existing residential building at 114 E. McMicken Avenue into a garage. She said that there were two structures on the lot, but that the proposal involves only the rear two-story building fronted on Hust Alley. Ms. Cowden pointed out that the applicant, Steve Hampton, had already begun work to stabilize and rehabilitate the structure, and said that the pictures in the staff report show the building before and after work began.

Ms. Cowden focused on two elements of the proposed conversion – the siding and the garage door. She said that the exposure of new siding did not match the existing and recommended that its be removed and re-installed with a 5” reveal. She said the 12’ wide overhead door was larger than an historic carriage house door, but the width was necessary to permit automobiles to access the garage off the narrow alleyway.

Ms. Cowden explained that the garage door required a Zoning Variance to permit a 6’-0” setback from Hust Alley and approval for its installation. Ms. Cowden pointed out that the proposal was consistent with other Board decisions for similar projects in Over-the-Rhine. In response to Mr. Raser, Mr. Forwood explained that under the Zoning Code, the minimum setback is required only of an accessory building and not to additions.

Steve Hampton was present to answer questions from the Board. He stated that the siding work on the north wall was nearly complete and asked that the Board allow it to remain. Mr. Hampton indicated he selected a 6” reveal to match the remaining original siding on the south elevation. He said the building was not highly visible and was located on an alley that had low traffic. Mr. Hampton indicated he has also considered restoring the alley to the south by removing the wooden fence/gate, repairing the balcony railing and installing a new metal fence and gate.

Mr. Kreider felt that the Hardie plank was acceptable as installed. Mr. Raser concurred, stating the building was on a secondary alley. Mr. Senhauser stated that he felt it would be amenable to allowing the Hardie plank to remain, and that the savings should be spent on a more appropriate, residential style garage door and improvements to the south side yard.

Mr. Kreider also encouraged removing the wood fence/screen and replacing it with a more transparent, metal gate. Mr. Kreider felt the south elevation staircase was a nice feature and the improvements would allow for a better view of and from the building.

Mr. Young pointed out the building appeared to have remnants of two-over-two wood sash on the east façade but that the drawings specify one-over-one sash. Mr. Hampton stated that he intended to match the existing two-over-two windows.

BOARD ACTION

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

1. Find that the proposed conversion meets the Over-the-Rhine Historic Conservation Guidelines and approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work with the following conditions:
 - a. A more domestic style garage door be selected and installed in the east elevation.

- b. The open courtyard at the south side of the building shall be restored. The existing wood screen/fence shall be removed, and a simple metal gate/fence be installed to secure the area.
 - c. New windows that match the originals in size and configuration shall be installed in the east elevation.
 - d. Final plans and specifications shall be submitted to the Urban Conservator for review and approval prior to construction.
2. Grant relief from the requirements of § 1421-01-01(f) and § 1421-33 of the Zoning Code to permit the newly installed garage door to be 6'-0" from the centerline of Hust Alley and an 8'-0" tall fence, finding that relief from the literal interpretation of the 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, AMERICAN CAN COMPANY BUILDING, 4101 SPRING GROVE AVENUE, NORTHSIDE

Staff member Adrienne Cowden presented a staff report on the historic designation of the American Can Company Building in Northside. She gave a brief overview of the Registration Form and stated that staff felt that it was clear that the building meets Criterion A and Criterion C for listing in the National Register.

Ms. Cowden stated that since the 4101 Spring Grove facility was one of American Can Company's few machine shops, the Registration Form should include a paragraph describing the company's inventions in the canning field and the types of equipment that may have been produced at the Cincinnati factory. This important subject was alluded to but never discussed in any detail and could help place the specific function of the facility into context. Similarly Ms. Cowden felt the nomination could benefit through the addition of other American Can Company facilities designed by C.G. Preis, including those in Maisonneuve and Vancouver, Canada, and a succinct comparison of these buildings with Cincinnati's American Can Company Building.

Ms. Spraul-Schmidt stated that she felt that the Registration Form was well done and the American Can Company Building was deserving of listing in the National Register. Ms. Spraul-Schmidt said that the nomination should clarify the construction (and relevant closures) of canal, railroad and road transportation corridors in Cincinnati and the resulting industrial development along the routes.

Mr. Kreider and Ms. Spraul-Schmidt pointed out that the Registration Form identified the "Heekin Can Company" as another name for the property but only mentions the company briefly in Section 8. Ms. Spraul-Schmidt said the nomination should document the association of the Heekin Can Company and the Heekin family with the property at 4101 Spring Grove Avenue or this secondary name should be removed.

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

1. Find that the American Can Building located at 4101 Spring Grove Avenue in Northside meets the requirements of Criteria A and C for listing in the National Register of Historic Places;

2. Encourage the author to include in the Registration Form a brief summary to address:
 - a. Inventions by the American Can Company in the canning field.
 - b. The types of canning equipment/machinery that may have been or were produced at the Cincinnati factory.
 - c. Any known American Can facilities designed by C.G. Preis and a comparison of these facilities with the Cincinnati American Can Building.
3. Direct staff to forward the Board's findings regarding this nomination to the Ohio Historic Preservation Office prior to the August 3, 2007 meeting of the Ohio Historic Site Preservation Advisory Board.

ADJOURN

As there were no other items for consideration by the Board, the meeting adjourned.

William L. Forwood
Urban Conservator

John C. Senhauser, Chairman

Date: _____