MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Thursday, January 17, 2008, 1:30 p.m., Conference Room 206, 2nd Floor, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Cathy Beecham, Jerry Berggren, Bruce Helwig, Berwyn Jones and Bob Ripley; (Tim Francis and Jim McKee absent). Ed Zimmer and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; and other interested citizens.

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Historic Preservation Commission Meeting

Chair Bob Ripley called the meeting to order and requested a motion approving the minutes for the regular meeting held December 20, 2007. Motion for approval made by Helwig, seconded by Beecham. Motion for approval carried 5-0: Beecham, Berggren, Helwig, Jones and Ripley voting ‘yes’; Francis and McKee absent.

The opportunity was given for persons with limited time or with an item not appearing on the agenda to address the Commission. No one appeared.

APPLICATION BY MONTE FROEHLICH FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR WORK AT THE GRAND MANSE/OLD FEDERAL BUILDING (129 NORTH 10th STREET)

PUBLIC HEARING: January 17, 2008

Members present: Beecham, Berggren, Helwig, Jones and Ripley; Francis and McKee absent.

Greg Munn appeared. He presented a site plan to the Commissioners. They are proposing to reinstall a door that was turned into a window.

Ed Zimmer noted that the opening started out as a door and was turned into a window nearly a century ago. The opening was left as is, so it is wider than the other windows and easily converted back into a door.

Munn stated that they want to maintain the transom window and would install a door that matches the existing doors. The Historical Society indicated to him that they would like to see the transom window remain.

Beecham inquired where the door leads. Munn stated that currently behind the door is an apartment that will be turned into a commercial space. They would like to see a coffee house or something along that line.
Beecham noted that the current parking in front will be lost.

Zimmer stated that on most buildings, the alley side would be counted as 'no material effect'. This building is different.

There was discussion regarding the drawings submitted by Munn.

Helwig observed that if someone is in a wheelchair, they will probably go direct to the outside seating area instead of going inside first.

Beecham wondered where the disabled parking is. Munn replied that there is handicap parking straight across the alley.

Berggren questioned if the ramp is all cast in place concrete. Munn replied he was correct.

Berggren doesn’t have a problem with the door but he would like to see more detail on the plinth. The elevation shows them symmetrical but not on the plan. He would like to see a better drawing of the grease trap. He isn’t too sure that carrying the motif of the columns and the railing might be just as appropriate as concrete. He would like to have more information on the plinth. He does not have enough information.

**ACTION:**

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Berggren moved approval of the door opening as presented, seconded by Helwig.

Ripley questioned if the width of the stairs as drawn is consistent with the photograph. Munn believes the actual stairs are a little wider.

Berggren does not strongly object to the design of the plinth, he would just like to see more detail on the drawing. Helwig agreed.

Motion for approval carried 5-0: Beecham, Berggren, Helwig, Jones and Ripley voting 'yes'; Francis and McKee absent.

**APPLICATION BY JASON METCALF FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR WORK AT SCOOTER’S IN THE FORMER SALVATION ARMY BUILDING, 737 P STREET, IN THE HAYMARKET LANDMARK DISTRICT PUBLIC HEARING:**

January 17, 2008

Members present: Beecham, Berggren, Helwig, Jones and Ripley; Francis and McKee absent.

Jason Metcalf stated that they would like to do the same sign as their store in the Gold’s Building. They are paying premium rent and aren’t satisfied with their sign situation. Traffic
is a problem with the Harris Overpass road construction. A tree in front blocks the only sign they have. The current sign is a blade sign on the corner of the building lit by a gooseneck light.

Ed Zimmer stated that the Haymarket District limits translucent signs and backlit plastic signs.

Beecham inquired as to the difference of neon and backlit signs in the Haymarket.

Zimmer explained that neon is a technology that has been around since the 1930’s and more in line with the era of the Haymarket. It is a way of allowing a night-illuminated sign. A plastic faced sign is a second half twentieth century sign.

Metcalf stated that the sign would be hanging inside the business and float in front of the window.

Zimmer stated that a possibility could be to grant approval of the plastic faced sign conditional on the City Council changing the special sign district.

Ripley stated that would be a precedent setting decision. It would open the Haymarket up to more plastic backlit signs.

Zimmer stated that the sign originally presented is a black acrylic back with yellow neon lighting. The backlit plastic faced sign would need the sign criteria changed. The Ordinance would have to be changed and approved by City Council.

Beecham is hesitant to change the sign guidelines for the entire district. She is not always entirely certain that a neon sign will look better than a plastic sign.

Jones believes acrylic signs are a nice new feature, but this is a historic district.

Zimmer believes the age of the building is part of the issue as well as the district. This building was built in the 1960’s for the Salvation Army. When this building was built, neon existed.

Berggren thinks that the sign company is misrepresenting the image to their client. The image in the window takes on more of a look of the window and no essence of the can this sign will be sitting in. He thinks the applicant will be disappointed with the bulk of the sign. He thinks a vinyl sign applied to the inside of the window with all the colors wanted and lit by a can from the ceiling would work. He likes the image presented by the applicant.

Zimmer stated the vinyl could also be applied to the window surface and backlit from inside.
Metcalf likes the idea of the vinyl window sign for their Gold’s Building location. He would prefer to see the neon sign for this location instead of a window sign. He would also like a sign on the door stating their business name and hours of operation, possibly a logo. He does not have any drawings of the proposed text.

ACTION: January 17, 2008

Jones moved approval of a window sign, either the vinyl four color applied direct to the window and lit from the inside or the neon sign as presented, hanging inside behind the window, seconded by Helwig.

Rita Metcalf thinks that a vinyl sign applied to the window looks cheap.

The Commissioners disagreed.

Berggren likes that the neon sign is inside the building.

Motion for conditional approval carried 5-0: Beecham, Berggren, Helwig, Jones and Ripley voting ‘yes’; Francis and McKee absent.

Berggren believes we need to see a drawing of the door signs and what it would entail before the Commission approves it. The other Commissioners agreed.

OTHER BUSINESS:

* Zimmer stated that the Preservation Association of Lincoln is holding their annual meeting in March of 2008. The Commissioners agreed that would be a good time to present previous Commissioner Carol Walker with a Certificate of Appreciation for her years of service as a Historic Preservation Commissioner.

STAFF REPORT:

* Zimmer stated that he has a couple of pending landmark applications. The Slattery House is the former Lois Pegram house on N. 14th St. It is a 10 acre parcel. It used to be a 200 acre parcel. It is a Tudor revival, Ferdinand Fiske design. The original owner was a physician, Dr. Slattery. This was a grand country house. Lois’s daughter currently owns the house. A tricky question is the lot across the street. It is also owned by Lois’s daughter. That lot contains what is reported to be the only artesian well in the city limits.
• Zimmer has had two contacts from fraternities. 16th and “S” St. is the oldest of the fraternities on campus. It doesn’t have the best physical integrity, but he believes enough remains. It is in Greek Row Landmark District. They are getting better organized than they have been in previous years. Sigma Chi on Vine Street, another fraternity, has made contact. He believes we will continue to see more fraternities come forward for landmark status.

Ripley noted for the new Commission members that if a fraternity takes in funds for preservation purposes, if it is a locally designated landmark, it can be reviewed by this Commission and the foundation is assured that the donations will be used for what they were intended for.

• Zimmer noticed a 1905 original Lincoln building permit on eBay recently. He contacted the owner of the building and they authorized him to purchase the building permit on their behalf. He spent $11.00 and sent it to the owner who was thrilled to have it.

• Zimmer is working on a book with Doug Kieste r. He is an author from California who has images from John Johnson. Johnson was an African American photographer. Keester signed a contract with Arcadia Books. Zimmer signed on to write the captions. He shared some of the photographs with the Commissioners.

• Zimmer stated that the State Historic Preservation Board meeting was last week. National Register applications were considered. The Governor’s Mansion was one of them. The application was originated by the Director of the State Historical Society. The Historic Preservation Commission, with much discussion, approved the application as meeting the criteria. The discussion at the State Board sounded much like this Commission’s discussion. This was not an architectural designation, but designated for its association with a person or event.

Berggren had a call from McKee. George Haecker couldn’t be at the State Historic Preservation Board meeting. Haecker indicated he would not be voting to approve the application. An architect’s voice was wanted. It gave him another few weeks to review the application. If it came before this Commission again, he would vote against it. He believes that when the end result is a piece of architecture, you can’t separate the technicalities from the actual piece of architecture. He thinks the historic label is misleading the public. The point he wanted to make is he feels this has been done a couple of times in the past and thinks this Commission has acted in haste. Sometimes sitting on something until the next meeting will bring some perspective.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.