

Historic Preservation Commission

August 16, 2007

Meeting Notes

Members present: Tim Francis, Bruce Helwig and Carol Walker; (Jerry Berggren, Jim McKee, Bob Ripley and Terry Young absent). Ed Zimmer and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Dept.

DISCUSSION:

Application by Bryan Mitcheltree for a certificate of appropriateness for work at 1916 B Street in the Mt. Emerald Landmark District

The members present directed Ed Zimmer to handle this as 'no material effect'.

Application by Brownbaggers for a certificate of appropriateness for work at 151 N. 8th Street in the Haymarket Landmark District

No quorum present

Conceptual discussion of redevelopment uses and signs for Old Federal Building (Monte Froelich)

Monte Froelich appeared. He initially got into real estate as a hobby. He is now in real estate as a full time business. He has gotten involved in mixed use projects. The historic tax credits will expire on the Old Federal building in 2009. He and his wife took over management of the building recently. He presented some photos of things they have done inside the building. They have also addressed some of the exterior landscaping. They want to rebrand the building. He thinks there is untapped commercial potential in the building.

Tyler Riewer is a project manager for Archrival. He stated that it is his job is to look at the history, character and personality of the building. "The Grand Manse" is the name and brand Archrival has suggested to Mr. Froelich for the building.

Froelich stated that they wanted to come up with a new name that people did not recognize. They want to start over with this building. The focus has been on the main level as primarily commercial space. He presented a design for possible reconfiguration of the first floor. The residential side of the building seems to be working. Blue Orchids the only commercial enterprise on the first floor. He would like to create additional restaurant space. They would like to explore the possibility of using some of the existing hallway.

Francis questioned if there is a public access easement on the hallways. Zimmer replied that there is, along with the court room. There would have to be some kind of an agreement reached.

Froelich would like to see signage for the commercial tenants. He would like to rename the courtroom as The Great Hall. It would be a good space for small weddings, business meetings, cocktail parties, etc. It has not been very accessible. He would like to see two more major tenants.

Greg Munn, architect from Bahr, Vermeer & Haecker appeared. He designed the Blue Orchid Restaurant. Froelich wants to redirect where the restaurant entrance is. The entrance now is very convoluted. They want to bring the focus to the east door. He presented drawings of options for signage.

Ed Zimmer wondered about the shape of the base of the proposed signs as they relate to the building. Helwig shares the same concerns. Walker likes the shape.

Froelich is looking to turn the building into something more attractive to commercial tenants. He is looking for flexibility and speed of approval. He is pursuing a great top end steakhouse for the building. He would like to have stationary and digital signage. He would like to see a half scrolling message and half stationary sign. He could foresee valet parking. He wants this to be a top end destination.

Zimmer has talked with Froelich about how difficult digital signage could be on this building. This is very challenging. Zimmer would like to see them study having the digital signage on the bottom portion of the sign. It would frame the sign better. Walker liked the idea of having the digital on the bottom.

Froelich would like to address the smeared out name on the north side of the building. He is considering somehow covering it up. Zimmer noted that the Federal government does not have a say anymore.

Zimmer commented on the Grand Manse and Grand Hall entrance. It would have to look like materials as fine as carving and limestone—perhaps a bronze appearance.

Staff Report

- Zimmer stated that the county survey will be starting next month. The County Board will be briefed. The Planning Dept. will work with them on the mapping and coordinating of their information into our geographic information system.
- Havelock Avenue Landmark District goes to City Council on Monday, August 20, 2007. The Planning Commission recommendation matched the recommendation of this Commission.
- The tea room application for 1204 Peach Street will go to Planning Commission for public hearing on August 29, 2007.