MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Thursday, April 19, 2012, 1:30 p.m., Conference Room 214, 2nd Floor, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska


STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Historic Preservation Commission Meeting

Chair Greg Munn called the meeting to order and acknowledged the posting of the Open Meetings Act in the room.

Munn then requested a motion approving the minutes for the regular meeting held March 16, 2012. Motion for approval carried 5-0: Beecham, Jones, Kuhlman, McKee and Munn voting ‘yes’; Johnson absent at time of vote; Francis absent.

NOMINATION TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES OF “BROWNBILT HISTORIC DISTRICT”, GENERALLY LOCATED BETWEEN A AND D STREETS, AND S. 37TH STREET AND S. 40TH STREETS, INCLUDING RANDOLPH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PUBLIC HEARING: April 19, 2012

Members present: Beecham, Johnson, Jones, Kuhlman, McKee and Munn; Francis absent.

Ed Zimmer presented the application. This application is scheduled for the May, 2012 meeting of the State Historic Preservation Board. This is a district nomination of almost 200 buildings. It includes a half dozen houses on the west side of S. 37th St. The character of the district is very strong. There were only two buildings in the district that he felt had to be excluded for lack of integrity. There are five duplexes in the district, a couple of them are in the center of the district. There is a very high degree of compatibility throughout the district. Through the central streets, there are enormous trees that are planted close to the street. He has many files on the buildings complete with drawings, all identified as “by H. A. Brown, Contractor.” However, in the individual building files, we also see that the builder was paying fifteen to thirty dollars for each house for architectural purposes. It never says who he was paying, but Selmer Solheim has been suggested as the architect. Two houses
in the neighborhood were occupied by Brown. He built in other neighborhoods as well, Indian Village and northeast Lincoln. A huge percent of his work is in this neighborhood. The nomination is under Criterion A for use of FHA financing and C, architecture. He also listed A for the FHA race restriction policy. He broadened his research of race restriction. It had fallen out of use until FHA came along. National policies included race restrictions and “Caucasian only” clauses. Gordon McGill of Building and Safety is a resident of the neighborhood and has helped organize neighborhood meetings. The school was included because it was built in 1928 at the beginning of the platting of the land. They go hand and glove, school and houses. Brown shifted to earth moving around 1949.

Beecham inquired if the duplexes are original to the district. Zimmer replied yes.

ACTION:

Jones moved approval, seconded by Johnson. Motion carried 6-0: Beecham, Johnson, Jones, Kuhlman, McKee and Munn voting ‘yes’; Francis absent.

APPLICATION FOR A SPECIAL PERMIT FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION UNDER LMC 27.63.400 FOR THE LEWIS-SYFORD HOUSE, A DESIGNATED LANDMARK AT 700 N. 16TH STREET
PUBLIC HEARING: April 19, 2012

Members present: Beecham, Johnson, Jones, Kuhlman, McKee and Munn; Francis absent.

Marvin Krout stated that Zimmer felt there might be an appearance that he has a conflict of interest, so Ed left the room.

This property is in the middle of Greek Row Historic District. It was in previous ownership of the State Historical Society Foundation. Now it is in the ownership of a private foundation. The owner is looking at a potential reuse of the property as a private school for autistic children. When the State Historical Society Foundation conveyed the ownership, they asked the City to accept a preservation easement including a clause allowing for “no additional buildings”. This application has proposed additional buildings. There are several issues to deal with. Any project is going to require historic preservation review and approval. Secondly, there is the easement situation. He spoke with the City Attorney. There is the ability to waive, either informally by not enforcing the easement or formally by amending the easement. Third, this will require a special permit. The use itself may need a waiver, but a special permit would definitely be required for the additional building being proposed in the rear yard. The applicant will not be able to meet the usual parking requirements. There are typically parking requirements for this type of use. There is metered parking in front of the building. Earlier discussions showed parking in the front
yard. Staff didn’t feel that was appropriate. The applicant is not proposing parking in the front yard anymore. There are a number of zoning issues. The applicant has made application for a special permit. This goes to Planning Commission and on to the City Council for a final decision. They are anxious to build. The applicant is optimistic to start construction this year.

McKee inquired if the applicant will be removing the structure to the east. It appears to be a garage. Krout replied that the carriage house will remain. The applicant is proposing a pretty large building adjacent and connected to the carriage house.

McKee asked about the Historic Preservation Commission’s role with regard to the easement. Krout replied that the City Council will ultimately deal with the easement. This commission can make a recommendation.

McKee thought the easement was very clear, structures could not be added.

Krout believes the applicant would at least like to get a sense of direction.

McKee is unsure. He doesn’t see how this is ready to go forward.

Jones inquired who originally agreed to the easement. Krout replied the State Historical Society Foundation sold the property. They asked the City to accept the preservation easement, including a prohibition on additional buildings on the site.

Jones further asked who bought the property with the easement. Krout replied the foundation.

Robert Scott appeared. His foundation acquired the site. They have been looking for a use to bring attention to the site and the building, so it is significant again. Architect Cristy Joy is representing the design side.

Cristy Joy stated that what was provided is a sensitive approach that maintains the character of the front of the property. As you start to approach the site, there is a major drop to the east. There have been some modifications to the interior. They were looking at adding a building to expand the autistic program. Currently, the students are home schooled. She believes what has been proposed, keeps the flavor and deals with some of the light sensitivity of the students. As you approach the rear of the site, there could possibly be an all glass enclosure. There is a maximum of 2,000 square feet for each level.

Beecham questioned how many changes will be made to the building interior. Joy replied that not very many changes will be made to the interior, except for repair. They will probably have to install sprinklers and repair the foundation, but plan on keeping the exterior as it looks.
Beecham asked about the proposed use for the carriage house. Joy replied they would like to utilize the carriage house for an interior group room. The application would be submitted as a private school with the Department of Education.

Beecham asked if a play area will be addressed. Joy stated that because of the needs of the children, they wanted a fence that matched the historic element of the house, but there will be no play equipment. Krout sees street being utilized in front of the carriage house. This appears to be about five or six spaces. He inquired if any additional parking is being proposed and how parking issues will be dealt with. Joy responded this proposes great challenges. There is the potential for a drop off zone where the current metered parking is. They are in conversation with the property owner to the south and seeing how it could all tie together. They are working with the sorority. They have discussed the possibility of widening the driveway. They could stagger the start times for each of the children, so parents all arrive at a different time.

McKee would like clarification on renovation of the carriage house. Joy believes reconstruction would be a more correct term. It would be replaced.

Munn does not want to see the house changed, or anything added onto it.

Bob Puschendorf of the Nebraska State Historical Society appeared. The society's foundation previously owned the house. They decided the house was not going to be made into a museum, as was originally looked at. He opted to work with the foundation. The house was listed on the National Register in 1972. All the defining features were identified. It was also locally landmarked. This plan has evolved quite a bit. The City of Lincoln holds the easement. The easement went through Historic Preservation Commission and the Planning Commission. The review of this property is under the local landmark designation. The guidelines were adopted. They have been trying to find an appropriate use for the building with minimal alterations. He believes Historic Preservation Commission can comment on the easement. The nomination stated explicitly “no new buildings or structures”. He can’t advise, only give background.

McKee wondered how the proposed changes and alterations would affect the National Register listing. Puschendorf stated they would look at the nomination again and determine if the alterations were overwhelming enough to remove it from National Register listing.

McKee wonders if the listing would be in jeopardy with this application.

Beecham stated that unfortunately, as much as we would like it to, National Register or local landmark status doesn’t give protection to a property.

Puschendorf noted that the easement is different.

Beecham likes the idea of something like this, instead of a coffee shop or a sorority.
McKee questioned changing the easement. He thought it was very clear. Krout stated that the City Council can set aside or amend the easement.

Beecham wondered if there is any way to put in a non-invasive structure.

Munn believes this is a much better solution than adding on to the house.

Beecham sees that a freestanding addition can always be taken down and the house returned to the way it was.

Krout believes it is unlikely that someone will want to tear down a 2,000 square foot structure.

Munn stated that this Commission is constantly faced with changes of historic structures. We need to decide if this is detrimental to the site.

McKee agrees that a use must be found for this building. The autistic school would be a good use. Parking out front would be good. He is unsure about the large addition.

Beecham thinks a drop off zone is a great idea.

Jones disagrees. This area is already under supplied with parking.

Kuhlman wondered if some criteria can be set stating no additional square footage. McKee believes that would be meaningless.

Kuhlman questioned the future of this property, if this school doesn’t happen. Scott can’t think of another use that would help support a renovation. He is not in the business of sprucing up buildings. This is about improving the community.

Munn believes in a use that supports and maintains the house for the future. He understands the property needs to be viable.

McKee approves of the “no material effect” for the house and the use, but doesn’t believe he can go much beyond that.

Krout stated that Planning Commission is the next step. City Council would have final action on the lot waiver and the decision on the easement.

Beecham if the proposed use is an approved use with a special permit. Krout replied that a private school is an approved use.

Krout believes it would be good to come back and visit with Historic Preservation Commission on more building specifics, signs and other detail questions. It would be good to have a vote on the special permit.
ACTION:

Beecham moved approval of the special permit, seconded by Johnson.

Motion for approval carried 4-1: Beecham, Johnson, Kuhlman and Munn voting ‘yes’; Jones abstaining; McKee voting ‘no’; Francis absent.

The Commissioners all agreed that they will be expecting another visit from the applicant.

Kuhlman stated that it seems that the restriction was placed due to concern for the aesthetic of the site. You can try to blend or do something completely different. She believes this site calls for something that blends and is cohesive. There are ways you can have it look like it was always there.

Jones would be less unhappy if it blended.

McKee would like more details on the carriage house.

Beecham agreed. The signage should be small, and the more neutral the better.

Munn thinks the scale of the building is fine, but doesn’t believe you want to copy the details.

Kuhlman doesn’t think it should be a stark contrast.

Munn believes the architecture can be reinterpreted. He would like to see it look like a 2012 building, but blend with the property and compliment the original.

APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF EXCEPTION ON GROUND OF HARDSHIP OR INSUFFICIENT RETURN FOR THE DEMOLITION OF A LANDMARK ORIGINALLY KNOWN AS LONE OAK, 7503 WEST O STREET

PUBLIC HEARING: April 19, 2012

Members present: Beecham, Johnson, Jones, Kuhlman, McKee and Munn; Francis absent.

Zimmer stated that Todd Reinhardt is the current owner. The house was published in the journal of the Portland Cement Institute. It is a very late, historic bale construction building. The original function was a road house. It was founded in Emerald in a house. It was landmarked in 1990 by a prospective buyer who had a proposal for a restaurant, along with a sewing business. That combination was not otherwise allowed, hence the special permit. The buyer never acquired the property, and the use never happened. Reinhardt has been the present owner since December, 2011. Zimmer suggested the exception on the grounds of hardship or insufficient return. The current building condition is not of the
present owner’s making. Dave Murphy visited this building and didn’t think it was salvageable due to water damage. A horticulture professor believes some 1945 seed could be salvaged during the demolition.

McKee questioned if the house is gone. Reinhardt replied it is still there, but pretty much in the same condition. There is standing water in the basement and the structure is moldy and damp. The foundation is good, but the structure is too damaged in his opinion. The house is not a hay bale construction.

Zimmer suggested if this building is removed, the Commission should ask the owner to change the zoning and remove the landmark status from the property.

McKee inquired what the applicant proposes to do with the property. Reinhardt stated that he is going to place his business there.

Munn is not an expert on hay bale construction, but it seems if the hay is compromised, the structure is already gone.

Zimmer believes the building has enough problems that it is not salvageable.

**ACTION:**

Beecham moved approval of demolition with the condition that the scientist mentioned in the report, and David Murphy of the Historical Society, be permitted to observe the site and otherwise work with the owner as it is being torn down, seconded by Johnson and carried 6-0: Motion carried 6-0: Beecham, Johnson, Jones, Kuhlman, McKee and Munn voting 'yes'; Francis absent.

**APPLICATION BY LIZ KUHLMAN FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR WORK AT 301 N. 8TH STREET IN THE HAYMARKET LANDMARK DISTRICT**

**PUBLIC HEARING:** April 19, 2012

Members present: Beecham, Johnson, Jones, Kuhlman, McKee and Munn; Francis absent.

No new information to present.

**Advisory review for redevelopment agreement: Innovation Campus – Industrial Arts Building and 4-H Building and associated new construction**

Zimmer stated that there is a redevelopment agreement pending.

Greg Newport with Clark Enersen stated that one of the goals of this development is developing this site in a holistic way. There is a history to the building. It had a skylight structure with surrounding brick walls. One of the complexities of this project was trying to find a use that would utilize the structure. As we looked at the building for a laboratory
function, we knew this structure had some great architectural elements. The dimensions were not conducive to what was needed for modern lab use. They considered a greenhouse. They want to try to maintain the exterior walls as much as possible. They looked at how to incorporate the most greenhouse space. Attached is a life science building with the mechanicals on top. One of the complexities of a lab building is a tall building height. They wanted to make a connection to the 4-H building. There is a need to move researchers back and forth. There is a very cohesive need for all these buildings to be connected. Parking will be screened and bermed. Because of the weight, a double slab must be built for the greenhouses. They have to be above the ground. Part of the wall might have to be removed to install the pilings for the greenhouse structure, but it will be replaced. A desire has been expressed to have some historical context to the new building with regard to materials.

Dan Worth stated the building exterior has long brick facades with medallions. A lot of the architecture remains. The openings around IAB have undergone a number of generations of alterations. Their approach is not a true rehabilitation, but more of an adaptive reuse. The design efforts will be to respectfully restore the elements that remain. The openings themselves, he believes they will remain and need to be cleaned up. The concrete elements will be restored.

Josh Berger stated the plans are for dismantling the walls to install the greenhouse, but they will be rebuilt. There are some areas to the north that are not buildable. In addition to this, the University is commissioning a history of the IAB and 4-H.

Kuhlman stated that Sinclair Hille is working on the 4-H building and the companion building to the north. As you come in on Salt Creek Roadway, the main drive will be on the north of the building. One of the challenges was to proceed along the historic buildings and then go onto this building. They were trying to maintain the aesthetic of the building. The main corner of the campus is in this location. A plaza has been created between the 4-H building and the NIC building. Half of the 4-H building will be used by the University. They have to demolish the interior arena of the space. They will be maintaining everything on the exterior. They are carrying on some of the different features of the 4-H building such as the saw tooth detailing of the brick. There will be a link that connects the new lab life science building to the south. There was a comment from the Innovation Campus Review Board that stated they wanted more masonry. They are working on this. The majority of space on the west side of the 4-H building will be used administratively. The University will be leasing the east half of the building. After many different configurations, they elected to demolish the original arena and build a new lecture hall. They have been able to maintain the original trusses and the wood ceiling. They hope to be able to lease this out for weddings or receptions.

McKee questioned if these greenhouses will replace the UNL east campus greenhouses. Kuhlman believes these will be in addition to those.
Wynn Hjermstad stated that these will be very state of the art. They are not like old greenhouses at all.

Everyone agreed that this is all very exciting.

Beecham wondered if there is a time line for completion. Kuhlman responded that construction is planned to start this Fall.

Zimmer inquired if there is any advice for City Council as this is carried forward by Urban Development.

All the Commissioners enthusiastically endorse the projects.

Munn is excited to see something that is truly innovational for these buildings. It is inspiring. This is beyond expectations. All the Commissioners agreed.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.