MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Thursday, July 16, 2015, 1:30 p.m., Conference Room 214, 2nd Floor, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Tim Francis, Jim Hewitt, Jim Johnson, Liz Kuhlman, and Jim McKee; (Greg Munn absent). Ed Zimmer, Stacey Groshong Hageman, and Amy Hana Huffman of the Planning Department; Kevin Abourezk from the Lincoln Journal Star.

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Historic Preservation Commission Meeting

Acting Chair Tim Francis called the meeting to order and acknowledged the posting of the Open Meetings Act in the room.

Francis requested a motion approving the minutes for regular meeting held June 18, 2015. Motion for approval made by Kuhlman, seconded by Johnson and carried 5-0: Francis, Hewitt, Johnson, Kuhlman, and McKee voting 'yes'; Munn absent.

The opportunity was given for persons with limited time or with an item not appearing on the agenda to address the Commission.

APPLICATION BY ENCOMPASS ARCHITECTS ON BEHALF OF U.S. PROPERTIES FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR WORK ON THE FORMER U.S. COURTHOUSE AND POST OFFICE, AKA GRAND MANSE, 129 N. 10TH STREET. PUBLIC HEARING: July 16, 2015

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

Todd Hesson, Encompass Architects, stated this project is broken into two phases. The two venues are very connected architecturally, but not operationally. The first is a relatively minor adjustment, the second will have more impact to the historic fabric of the structure. In the first phase, the proposal is to renovate the basement area under the southeast corner of the building to become the Grand Manse Boiler Brewing Company. The parking lot would be reconfigured and a piece of the existing ramp will be modified and opened up to create stairwell access to the basement. It will lead to a taproom venue with the brewery elements on display. In general, the intent of the first phase is to maintain the architecture already in place. The second phase proposes an outdoor dining patio in the southeast corner of the main level for a future first floor venue. Since that is more prominent, more consideration will be given to the appearance.
McKee asked if the patio would be used by the brewery and if the only access to the basement portion was the stairwell on the south side? Hesson said the patio will be for a yet-to-be-determined venue on the first floor. The basement tap room will have a second interior entrance on the north side of the building near the elevators. Johnson asked about the hours of access for the two entrances, explaining he has concerns about entering and exiting using the dark ramp. Jessica Lindersmith of the Grand Manse replied that there would be access to both exits.

Kuhlman asked if the patio railing would be open all the way across the top? Kesson said only a small portion of the existing railing will be removed and replaced to opened it up. He went on to say that elements of the existing architecture such as the pillars and the concrete that ties in with the existing dock and the base of the building will be echoed in the new patio. The existing electronic sign will also remain.

Mckee asked if lighting is part of the design? Hesson said yes. There is was an original entry that was repurposed as a window, but will be opened up again. Fixtures similar to the original lighting sconces are being considered.

Kuhlman asked if opening the entry would require cutting into the foundation of the building. Hesson said it is an existing entrance. From the inside, it is possible to see how the doors are blocked. It is not highly visible because it is below ground level. Zimmer added that this building has had many generations of modifications. The basement opening is somewhat west of the middle of the east wing. Hesson said it was an older boiler room so it may have been an access point for coal delivery or something similar. Lindersmith added that the doors are still physically in place.

Mckee wondered if the interior work on basement level will affect any features near Blue Orchid restaurant and what type of signage will be installed? Hesson said Blue Orchid is farther west and will not be affected. The sign for the new first floor restaurant and its patio is unknown since the business is yet to be determined. A small sign will be proposed for the brewery, but it has not been designed yet. It is unlikely that it will be lit. The original concept was for the venue to have a speakeasy feel. Though that has changed somewhat, the sign will still be on a smaller scale. McKee went on to ask about the boiler equipment that was housed in the basement. Hesson said it has already been removed. One comment in the staff report suggested making the reintroduced first floor entrance more prominent.

Kuhlman asked about the timing of the two phases. Hesson replied that the first phase would like to move forward as soon as possible. The interior is already being designed. There is no critical timing on the second phase yet.

Hewitt questioned how appealing outdoor dining would be along the highway. Hesson said that is a business and operation choice. He noted that this is an urban environment and there are other similar arrangements in the area such as Single Barrel, Green Gateau, and Barry’s. Lindersmith noted that the patio is setback a good distance from the street.
Kuhlman added that she agrees with the comment that if the first floor entry is to be opened up, it would be nice to widen the stair and make it more prominent, unless the intent is to discourage entry that way. Hesson said that was not the intent, but it was more to create a buffer between the brewery and the other venue. The basement could have a dark narrow entry, so it was held off the building for architectural reasons, but also to open it up.

Kuhlman said the exterior stair is a good solution. She wondered about the change in heights of the lighting. Hesson said the lights on piers occur all the way around the building.

Zimmer added that he questioned whether the mixed elevations from the 10th Street view might look ragged. Lindersmith noted that they are not consistent now.

**ACTION:**

Johnson moved approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the first phase of work at 129 N. 10th Street, Grand Manse, seconded by Kuhlman. Motion for approval carried 5-0; Francis, Hewitt, Johnson, Kuhlman, and McKee voting 'yes'; Munn absent.

Johnson moved approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the second phase of work at 129 N. 10th Street, Grand Manse, seconded by McKee.

McKee asked for clarifications about which lighting fixture would be used. Lindersmith said the larger 4' fixture will be used.

Kuhlman asked if the railing that will be used will be consistent with what is there now. Any railing that is added as a continuation of the dock will be the same. The railing on the patio is proposed to be the same as the railing on the northwest corner and other parts of the building. Zimmer said that is a well chosen for the prominence of this element. It is better with the higher finishes since it is not a back dock, but a corner feature.

Motion for approval carried 5-0; Francis, Hewitt, Johnson, Kuhlman, and McKee voting 'yes'; Munn absent.
APPLICATION BY “BLINK” RESTAURANT FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR WORK AT 803 Q STREET IN THE HAYMARKET LANDMARK DISTRICT.

PUBLIC HEARING: July 16, 2015

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

Ryan Haffey of Nebraska Neon Sign stated that this request is for an existing sign frame. There is other signage within twenty-five feet. This sign frame cannot change but can only be repurposed so the applicant is stuck with the same bounds and must use roughly the same framework. The applicant would like to change the neon sign to reverse channel letters. It will likely end up being illuminated with downlighting or something similar to nearby signs.

Zimmer said this kind of unusual structure in that it is a pole sign. Haffey said it is built into the building so there wasn’t provisions to do a projecting sign in this location. There is an angle in the building and the sign is attached to a structure that is not attached to the building. It appears to be a projecting sign, but it is not.

ACTION:

Kuhlman moved approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for work at 803 Q Street, seconded by Johnson.

McKee asked for further clarification about the lighting. Haffey said it will be two different lightings. There is currently neon on the lettering. The upper part will be reverse lighting. The other part will most likely be a cutout, with the letters cut out of the metal. The black is seeing through to the background and when lit at night, it illuminates that background. Having two lighting is not uncommon because the letters get too small to fabricate in metal. Zimmer said the consistency is in the fact that there is not exposed tubing on any part of it. It also provide durability.

Motion for approval carried 5-0; Francis, Hewitt, Johnson, Kuhlman, and McKee voting ‘yes’; Munn absent.

ACTION:

Kuhlman moved approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for work at 803 Q Street, seconded by Johnson. Motion for approval carried 5-0; Francis, Hewitt, Johnson, Kuhlman, and McKee voting ‘yes’; Munn absent.
DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR APPROVAL OF ADDITIONAL WORK AT 803 Q STREET IN THE HAYMARKET LANDMARK DISTRICT.

PUBLIC HEARING: July 16, 2015

Kevin Knudsen, Blink Eatery, requested the advice and direction of Commissioners regarding changes to the front of the building that may be officially brought forward at a later date. The intent is to bring back the screening. It currently feels hidden and pushed back. There is a metal framework to put some type of screening to look similar that would complement the adjacent buildings. The structure will not support weight and will be like a false front.

Francis asked if Knudsen intended to install a sign? He said he would like to consider that. But the store front will still be recessed. Commissioners discussed the configuration of the addition. McKee said if it could be set back from the adjacent brick wall to the east, it would look better. Commissioners agreed that it would be better set back to the south rather than flush with the other buildings.

Kuhlman asked if other materials were considered? Knudsen said the thought was that the brick would match historical elements better, but they would prefer a high-tech looking material to fit the concept of the restaurant. McKee noted that there is appropriate and effective use of metal panels in the area. Kuhlman said she is uncomfortable with the brick located above with no connection to the ground. If brick is chosen, there should be a cap so it has more presence. Commissioners agreed the modern elements would be agreeable. Zimmer suggested looking for a metal that is industrial in look, rather than high-tech. That building was a blacksmith shop at the back of the space, but there are metal clad elements. It would also be lighter and would potentially cut down on structural costs. The perforated metal is more for the West Haymarket District.

Knudsen asked the general process for approval since the restaurant will open in August, possibly before the next Commission meeting. McKee suggested meeting with Zimmer. Francis stated Commissioner are agreeable to the setback screen and a contemporary material. McKee stated he is comfortable letting Zimmer make the decision as to appropriateness.

ACTION:

McKee moved approval within the parameters as discussed, and at the discretion of Historic Preservation Planner for additional work at 803 Q Street, seconded by Johnson.

Zimmer stated this is a new facade that has been altered every decade or so for the past thirty years so it is not a matter of maintaining historic fabric, but rather, of finding compatible in-fill.

Motion for approval carried 5-0; Francis, Hewitt, Johnson, Kuhlman, and McKee voting
'yes'; Munn absent.

APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR WORK AT 728 Q STREET IN THE HAYMARKET LANDMARK DISTRICT.

PUBLIC HEARING: July 16, 2015

Haffey from Nebraska Neon Sign presented the proposal from PC Sports in the West Haymarket which has a location with no identification. They propose an aluminum, non-illuminated sign that will attach to the wall above the entrance.

Zimmer said there are only signs to the right of the entry so this finishes out the architectural sign package of the building.

McKee asked if there are two signs for same business? It is two divisions of the same business. It would be affixed with studs to the mortar.

Johnson said these signs balance the Cask logo that is on the other side.

Kuhlman asked if there was a limit to the number of signs in this area? Haffey replied that the zoning is written to allow coverage of one-third of the front of the building, so this is not close. Zimmer said that Commissioners can make a decision separate from the sign code by denying a sign proposal that didn’t fit or complete its surroundings.

Francis asked if there would be an advantage to combining the two signs? Haffey said that was originally proposed, but the corporation said they need to be represented separately.

ACTION:

Johnson moved approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for work at 728 Q Street, seconded by Francis. Motion for approval carried 5-0; Francis, Hewitt, Johnson, Kuhlman, and McKee voting ‘yes’; Munn absent.

Staff Report

Zimmer stated that the Commission’s prior discussion of the VA Campus suggested that the VASH housing and market-rate apartments seemed too close to the neighbors on the southeast corner. The VASH housing has been moved to a more central position, and both buildings have come down to three stories. The setback has been increased for the medical office buildings on the south. There was a second public meeting with the neighborhood and it was a much more positive than the first; neighbors were pleased with the adjustments. The first stage of development will be the VASH housing on October 1st, 2015. Your comment were reflected in the plan.
There was an affirmative answer from the Parks Service for the preliminary determination of eligibility for the National Register for Wesleyan Hospital so he and Stacey will submit a formal nomination.

McKee asked if things were moving forward physically on the project? Zimmer said they are waiting on approval in order to get the tax credits. Part one approval will now let them file their description of rehabilitation, so they don’t have to wait for nomination.

We talked about Quinn Chapel for individual landmark on the basis of opening up the possibilities for them in renting their parsonage. In further discussion, it was offered that it did not have to be a parsonage, but an accessory to the church. Realize they might want a caretaker as the tenant which would qualify as accessory, so at the moment they do not need the landmark designation.

It was announced that a group of developers including NelNet and Speedway were selected for the redevelopment project at 21st and N Streets. It will in their application will include the LT & T Warehouse on Capitol Parkway. Their intention would be to do it as a National Register Certified Historic Rehabilitation, so that will be pursued with them. That will also mean a redevelopment plan will come through this group because of the warehouse and the Muni Building. The warehouse is a nice historic building, in a subtle way. They will change some of the landscape so it will be better visible, and preservation a historic sign.

McKee asked if this included redevelopment of the parking garage on the west and the Telephone Museum. Zimmer said yes, it includes everything in that vicinity including the Fisher Foods building. In early discussions, they have said they would try to provide space for the museum and move the artifacts into a portion of the warehouse. McKee asked about the windowless building? The proposal is that it would become a NelNet facility and windows would be put in. So there are many elements that goes well beyond the City owned property on 21st and N. Speedway and Nelnet have ownership or options on most of that property, so it is a large, long-term project. They are calling it the Telegraph District.

They may also bring in another landmark special zoning permit coming forward for a pair of properties in the Everett District that share one lot, but would be better as two. It is one corner lot. A pair of brick foursquare houses of distinction, but there is nothing in the code that would allow them to be separated. McKee asked if they could rezone? Zimmer said even a subdivision would be difficult because they do not have setbacks. The landmark special permit can adjust setbacks, lot area, those otherwise unmoveable things in the zoning codes.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:35 p.m.