NAME OF GROUP: HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Thursday, February 21, 2019, 1:30 p.m., Conference Room 214, 2nd Floor, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Liz Bavitz, Melissa Dirr Gengler, Jim Hewitt, Jim Johnson, and Gregory Newport; Greg McCown and Jim McKee absent.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Ed Zimmer, Stacey Hageman, Amy Huffman and Chelsey Pounds of the Planning Department; the media and other interested citizens.

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Historic Preservation Commission Meeting

Acting Chair Jim Johnson called the meeting to order and announced the Open Meetings Act posted at the back of the room.

Johnson requested a motion approving the minutes for the meeting of January 17, 2019. Motion for approval made by Hewitt, seconded by Gengler and carried 4-0: Gengler, Hewitt, Johnson, and Newport voting ‘yes’; Bavitz, McCown and McKee absent. (Bavitz arrived after this vote was taken.)

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

Commissioner Bavitz arrived.

RECOMMENDATION ON DESIGNATION OF THE FORMER BLESSED SACRAMENT CHURCH, 2015 S. 16TH STREET, AS A LANDMARK, AND RECOMMENDATION ON SPECIAL PERMIT FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION FOR THE SAME.

PUBLIC HEARING: February 21, 2019

Members present: Bavitz, Gengler, Hewitt, Johnson, and Newport; McCown and McKee absent.

Jessie Myles, Pastor of No Greater Love Church, stated they are a small congregation in a small building, but they seek to maximize the services they provide in community. It is a challenge in such a small building. They especially hope to expand the children’s ministry classrooms.

Heather Keele of the Clark Enersen Partners said they spoke with the Near South Neighborhood Association who intended to send a letter of support for both items, though she has not seen the letter. They voted officially and the church has their approval.
Zimmer said the landmark application was reviewed by HPC last month. The basis for that application is that this building was the foundation church for Blessed Sacrament, which later grew farther south at 17th & Lake. There they built a school intending to eventually turn that into the church. Instead, they added a second floor to the school and constructed the larger, purpose-designed-and-built church across the street. This small original building was used as the gym until the 1970s and was then served as an AA meeting location and for other uses associated with Houses of Hope. The special permit would allow the proposed addition in the rear. Normally in this zoning district, there is a requirement to retain a rear yard setback. The addition will use up space currently being used as a tiny parking lot. The application is very similar to that requested and approved for the First Bible Church at 1st and West F Streets. Parking adjustments and waivers to the yard area are within the authorization of the special permit.

Johnson asked if two separate votes are needed. Zimmer said a motion or motions should address both the landmark and the special permit, as this category of special permit is only allowed for designated landmarks.

**ACTION:**

Hewitt said this is a worthy project so he will move approval for both the landmark and the special permit. Both seconded Bavitz.

Zimmer said he wanted to mention in the interest of disclosure that included in the agenda packet is the cover sheet with Liz Bavitz included as the sponsor of this project. Members of this body serve as officials in this process and as such can sponsor applications. That is her involvement in this matter, not a professional interest, so Zimmer said that did not constitute a "conflict of interest."

Motion carried, 5-0: Bavitz, Gengler, Hewitt, Johnson and Newport voting 'yes'; McCown and McKee absent.

**REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR WORK AT THE STRODE BUILDING, 1600 O STREET, A DESIGNATED LANDMARK.**

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

February 21, 2019

Members present: Bavitz, Gengler, Hewitt, Johnson, and Newport; McCown and McKee absent.

Gengler introduced the owners of this property. She is working on this project with the developers and will recuse herself from voting.

Jeff Koepke, 1600 O Street, said their plan is to renovate the building to reveal its original character by opening up the windows, now bricked in. There will be apartments on the second floor with retail and enclosed parking on the first. The second story windows, including those that face the alley, will be replaced to accommodate the new apartments. Shown at the far right
of the O Street side is a fire exit for the second floor. All the windows will be opened on the south. The access to the apartments will be in the middle of the west side. The retail bays will be 60 x 100 feet with the back 80 feet reserved for the 8,000 square feet of indoor parking. A few of the first floor, west windows towards the north (alley) will stay bricked in to discourage people from looking in to the parking area. Some tuckpointing is necessary in the masonry.

Gengler said they are pursuing a National Register listing so this will be a federally certified historical rehabilitation project. The first part of that has been filed. Almost all of the windows were covered over with brick. Hageman confirmed they were covered in 1971. Zimmer noted that Hageman’s research found the building permit to confirm that.

Koepke said that on the alley elevation, the second floor windows will also be opened back up. The frames are there, but the sashes were removed and covered with plywood. The first floor alley windows will remain covered for security reasons. Gengler added that the windows are different on every elevation.

Koepke went on to say that the name of the project is "Willys Knight Lofts" which recalls the historic automotive use of this building and its long affiliation with automotive businesses in Lincoln. The goal is to replicate the old signage, so they may need to come before HPC in the future. He showed an image of the proposed sign including the historic photo on which it is based. The apartment entrance was moved to the west side to allow more space for the retail spaces on the O Street side and the proposed sign would be installed at the apartment entrance.

**ACTION:**

Newport moved approval, including the future sign with input from Staff, seconded by Bavitz.

Bavitz commented that this is a really nice project.

Motion carried, 4-0: Bavitz, Hewitt, Newport and Johnson; Gengler abstained; McCown and McKee absent.

**REQUEST FOR A PRESERVATION CERTIFICATE ALLOWING DEMOLITION OF 1105 E STREET IN THE EVERETT LANDMAR DISTRICT.**

**PUBLIC HEARING:** February 21, 2019

Members present: Bavitz, Gengler, Hewitt, Johnson, and Newport; McCown and McKee absent.

Shawn Ryba, South of Downtown Community Development Organization, said this vacant house was brought to his attention by the neighborhood association. It has been vacant for over 10 years, has substantial code violations and has had several calls to the police from neighbors concerned about various safety issues. His organization has held three public meetings to talk about potential future uses and what the neighborhood would like to see. The owner was
eventually reached and the home was purchased by his organization with the help of $15,000 of
donation money from the community. NeighborWorks was contacted provide ideas about
rehabilitation and associated cost. It is evident that the structure is just a shell with no HVAC, no
plumbing, little electric, failing basement walls, and fire damage. Rehabilitation is estimated to
be in the $150,000-$160,000 range, which is the same as building a new home. In light of that,
they propose demolition of this building and are excited by the prospect of building a new
residential unit, possibly a duplex, though there would be hoops to jump through to accomplish
that. All attempts will be made to follow design standards and to have porches so residents can
have eyes on the street and interaction with surroundings. There is not yet a rendering or
substantial plans, but they are slowly working towards that and will happily bring this back to
HPC at that point.

Newport asked for confirmation that today's requested action is for approval of the demolition.
Ryba said yes, a permit is needed since this is a historic district.

Zimmer added that there are a few ways to accomplish a demolition within a landmark district
including emergency certification of hazardous conditions, or fire threat. Those options are
narrowly prescribed and do not apply here. There is an option to approve on the basis of
“insufficient return or hardship,” and that appears to be the appropriate choice to be considered
by this body. Ryba and his former employer NeighborWorks have long experience in both
rehabilitation of housing and appropriately designed infill. Their analysis that it is not
economically feasible to restore this structure is credible, as is the idea that this property has
become a detriment to the district.

Newport asked the results from the neighborhood meetings and what residents would like to see
happen; he wondered if there was an official position taken. Ryba said a few things rose to the
top. Mainly, they just want to see the site improved. They are also supportive of creating
affordable housing and would love to see this redevelop as a single family or duplex for affordable
housing. The third area of interest would be to create a small pocket park for the neighborhood.
Zimmer noted that it looks as though the lot has ample back yard, but that belongs to the
property to the south. Ryba agreed that a new structure would most likely be non-conforming.

Gengler asked what the timeline would be if the exception is granted. Ryba said they could get
the structure demolished within a month. They have been reaching out to architects to get
renderings and would hope to have construction started by the end of this year.

Gengler asked if there are sufficient funds for reconstruction. Ryba said they are working on
grants from the Department of Economic Development and are working with the City to see if
there is opportunity for partnership.

Gengler asked if this body will vote on the design. Zimmer said that is required, and that Mr. Ryba
has stated his intention to return this item when ready.
Bavitz wondered what would happen if the demo is approved but the funds cannot be pulled together right away. She wondered if there is consideration to create a pocket park. Ryba said that would be a last resort. Other ideas include partnering with Habitat for Humanity or NeighborWorks.

Bavitz asked who actually owns the property now. Ryba said South of Downtown Community Development Organization owns it now.

Hewitt wondered who owned the property before it was purchased; it seems they should be willing to help support this endeavor given the condition of the house. Ryba said it is disappointing that it was left to rot beyond a point of repair; it was probably originally a beautiful house. Now they are left in a position of trying to resolve the problem. Hewitt noted there should be a way to enforce code violations and neglect. Zimmer offered that the owner put forth some sporadic efforts to make improvements, but it seems to have spun out of his control.

Newport wondered about the condition of materials in the structure and if there is any way to reutilize them. Ryba said there is interest in that and some items are already spoken for, should this be approved. They will repurpose in any way they can.

**ACTION:**

Motion for approval of a certificate of hardship made by Gengler, seconded by Newport and carried, 5-0: Bavitz, Gengler, Hewitt, Johnson and Newport voting ‘yes’; McCown and McKee absent.

**REQUEST FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR WORK AT LINCOLN STATION, 201 N. 7TH STREET, IN THE HAYMARKET LANDMARK DISTRICT.**

**PUBLIC HEARING:** February 21, 2019

Members present: Bavitz, Gengler, Hewitt, Johnson, and Newport; McCown and McKee absent.

Jim Arter said that in 1989, they did a certified rehabilitation of the Lincoln Station building. At that time, they removed window sashes and rebuilt each to accept insulated glass. It was a labor intensive effort and at that time, clad replacement windows were just starting to be accepted. Now, they are 5 years beyond the life expectancy and there is dry rot and deterioration on the sashes. They were not able to find anyone to replicate the sashes, so they sought companies to do replacements. Pella offered the option that looks the most like the existing. They can match the exterior trim profiles closely.

This will be done in phases, starting at the south end where there is sun damage. Pella is proposing to remove the oak interior trim, put in the new windows, and then put the trim back on. The exterior will look as close to the existing as possible. Since it will be done in phases, it will be important to match the existing color so they do not look different. The great hall windows
are unique and will not be touched. The windows that were within reach had more ongoing maintenance and some may be rehabilitated. The major difference will be the clad metal verses the painted wood. They will add maintenance locks on some windows in hopes of making them operable.

[Hewitt left the meeting at 2:09 P.M.]

**ACTION:**

Motion for approval made by Gengler, seconded by Bavitz and carried, 5-0: Bavitz, Gengler, Johnson and Newport voting ‘yes’; Hewitt, McCown and McKee absent.

**FIRST HEARING:**

**RECOMMENDATION ON DESIGNATION OF THE BEELER HOUSE, 3460 EAST PERSHING ROAD, AS A LANDMARK, AND RECOMMENDATION ON A SPECIAL PERMIT FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION FOR THE SAME.**

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

February 21, 2019

Members present: Bavitz, Gengler, Johnson, and Newport; Hewitt, McCown and McKee absent.

Dane Todd, 3460 E. Pershing Rd., stated their 100 year old home has a detached garage in the back. There is a fence within a few feet of that garage, which sits near the lot line. They would like to be able to expand the garage to fit two cars, particularly with the single, narrow drive which makes it nearly impossible to park two cars at a time and they would like to be able to park a second vehicle to avoid street parking. They would also like to build a story above the garage to use as a gym space and to have a deck off the back to take advantage of the view, which overlooks the Country Club. Design elements would be in keeping with the home and neighborhood. The idea has been discussed with neighbors, was presented at their HOA meeting and emails were sent out to answer questions. Only one was received.

Emily Faubel, Woodsshire HOA President, said she had two calls of support for this project. They are in support of investment in the property to make it livable and to make updates to accommodate modern living needs, all while maintaining the character of the neighborhood.

Todd said the fence is inches away from the garage. Their goal would be to maintain the north wall and expand it. They have talked about keeping the brick taken down from the side of the garage to widen it south and extend the back portion to 20th Street, an area that is unusable now. The area does not get sun and is mud all year. They do not want kids playing in that area and the extension would provide extra storage which is lacking in these older homes. On top of that would be the deck. Newport commented that the wall may need to be pushed back. Todd said they have discussed that option. The whole yard is 60 feet wide and there are two frontages—East Pershing and South 20th. Other options were considered but involved giving up access to
Zimmer said this is packaged as a landmark special permit because that permit allows adjustments to yard area. It is important to be sensitive to the appearance, but in this case, the affected area is only visible to the adjacent neighbors who are here in support. This method has been used to solve similar issues in other neighborhoods. Faubel commented that there are cedar trees between their properties and this proposal will not look unusual in their neighborhood.

Zimmer said the landmark side of this application centers on one of the original residents of the house, Richard Beeler. When his parents had the house built in 1930, he was already a licensed pilot, although he was still in high school. The Woodshire area was where Lindbergh learned to fly. Beeler reflects a next phase of Lincoln’s aviation history, as he spent a life-long career in aviation. He was a flight instructor, first in Lincoln and then in Florida, where in WWII he trained Army Air Corps pilots. One story about Mr. Beeler is that even while a student at Lincoln High School, he flew his sweetheart (later his wife) to his father’s ranch in Kansas on dates. His story adds the history of aviation in Lincoln.

ACTION:

Newport asked if separate motions are needed. Zimmer said that the landmark comes first, then the project is on a plausible track and issues with the garage can be resolved through the special permit.

Gengler asked if it would be necessary for the applicant to return during the design stage. Zimmer suggested that it could be delegated to staff due to lack of visibility.

Gengler moved for approval, including further discussion with staff regarding the visibility and design of the project; seconded by Newport and carried, 4-0: Bavitz, Gengler, Johnson and Newport voting ‘yes’; Hewitt, McCown and McKee absent.

DISCUSS AND ADVISE:

Zimmer noted that the Pepperberg Building, 815 O Street, was listed on today’s agenda.

The location has been a succession of bars, including Box Awesome, which went on to become The Bourbon at another location. There was a more recent bar that had added a deck for outdoor dining. The new project is an axe throwing business, similar to “Craft Ax Throwing” that recently opened at 1821 N Street. The new tenants, Tomahawks, have experience a series of issues and have not obtained a liquor license. They also installed a rollup glass door in their storefront without a building permit, and without the required review by this body.

The look of the door is not visually dissimilar to what is in the area. They cannot utilize the outdoor dining area without offering food service. They have now applied for a building permit.
If this body denies the design, they could be fined $100 per day for 90 days or until the previous façade is returned.

Gengler wondered how to draw the line between the tenant and the owner for this issue. Zimmer said the owner bears the ultimate responsibility. They are the experienced developer of the Grand Manse and so are familiar with the Commission. Gengler asked what materials were removed. Zimmer said they removed what had been in place since 2014, so not historical material. That does not change the fact that they were supposed to ask first. Had they done that, staff likely would have recommended approval as the design is not unlike the storefront of Old Chicago in the same district. Gengler commented that the idea of the door does not bother her, but it could have been done better. She does not know if it is worth punishing the owner; however, the process needs to be acknowledged. It could set a bad precedent to allow this to go unchecked if the next applicant were to ahead with a change and ask for permission after the fact.

Bavitz asked how this was discovered. Zimmer said they saw the boarded up storefront and informed Building and Safety. Newport said he does not see a problem with saying they need to start the process regardless of what has been built. It is not the City’s responsibility to initiate the request. Bavitz said she would prefer for the applicant or owner to be present when a motion is made. Johnson asked if a motion is necessary today. Zimmer said the Commission has the option of deferring action until next month if they need additional information or explanation from the owner.

**STAFF REPORT**

- Zimmer reported that this noon, he was the substitute “brown bag” speaker for Heritage Nebraska. He gave a talk on early African American professionals who worked or were educated in Lincoln. He said the room was full, probably because he was not the announced Black History Month speaker, and free lunches were provided by a sponsor.

- Gengler reminded Commissioners of the upcoming opportunity through the Association of Historical Preservation to learn more about the Guastavino tile at the State Capitol on April 12, 2019.

- Zimmer said the Omaha Preservation group is offering a statewide convention on March 1, 2019 and attendance can be sponsored if anyone is interested and able to attend.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:31 p.m.