

**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF OCTOBER 16, 2019**  
Municipal Building Commission Room  
151 Martin, Birmingham, Michigan

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Historic District Commission ("HDC") held Wednesday, October 16, 2019. Chairman John Henke called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

**1) ROLLCALL**

**Present:** Chairman John Henke; Board Members Natalia Dukas, Patricia Lang, Michael Willoughby; Student Representative Klea Ahmet

**Absent:** Vice-Chairman Keith Deyer; Board Member Doug Burley, Gigi Debbrecht; Alternate Member Kevin Filthaut

**Administration:** Nicholas Dupuis, City Planner  
Laura Eichenhorn, Transcriptionist

**10-39-19**

**2) Approval Of Minutes**

**Motion by Mr. Willoughby  
Seconded by Ms. Lang to approve the HDC Minutes of October 2, 2019 as submitted.**

**Motion carried, 4-0.**

VOICE VOTE  
Yeas: Willoughby, Lang, Dukas, Henke  
Nays: None

**10-40-19**

**3) Courtesy Review (none)**

**10-41-19**

**4) Historic Design Review (none)**

**10-42-19**

**5) Sign Review (none)**

**10-43-19**

**6) Study Session (none)**

**10-44-19**

## **7) Miscellaneous Business and Communication**

### **A. Pre-Application Discussions**

#### **1. 100 N. Old Woodward**

City Planner Dupuis reviewed the history of the 100 N. Old Woodward building, explaining:

- The building was built in 1889 and was a two-story brick building.
- In 1969 the brick was covered over with marble and the City Commission at the time granted a license agreement for the facade to encroach into the public right-of-way.
- If the brick under the marble could be restored it would be a major contribution to the Maple-Old Woodward intersection.
- Victor Saroki, architect for the potential project at 100 N. Woodward, indicated he and his team would be interested in maintaining the brick if it was still in good condition.
- With the planned setbacks on the upper floors it is unlikely that the proposed project will feel more imposing than the building that is currently there.

Mr. Saroki then presented the architectural drawings and potential project to the HDC. He said:

- If his team were to peel the travertine off the facade and discover the brick was in poor shape, they would endeavor to restore the brick or duplicate the original historic aesthetic should direct restoration not be possible.
- The Palladium Building in Birmingham would give an accurate sense of the scale of the proposed building. The corner of the building at Hamilton is five stories in height.
- While the proposed building would be five stories, it would also have its upper floor facades stepped back.
- His team is seeking a way to add on to this building in a way that is appropriate in terms of what the City needs and in terms of its aesthetic, historical and architectural context.
- The team would consider whether they would want to pursue use of the roof for building occupants.
- The facades of the Tiger and Boyd buildings would intentionally be done in a newer style in order to distinguish them from the older facades.
- He could not say for sure, but the facades of the Tiger and Boyd buildings would probably be done to match the style of the upper floors.
- He would consider whether the entrance to the upper floors should be located on the Maple or Old Woodward side. The N. Old Woodward streetscape is superior to the Maple streetscape in terms of views, amenities, and parking, which is why the plans currently designate the entrance as being on the N. Old Woodward side. A Maple entrance, however, would be located on the non-historic part of the building which could be preferable from a preservation standpoint.

- The potential buyer would not want to purchase the building without some certainty that they could proceed with plans that would make a development at this location profitable. The decision to pursue a four- or five-story building would be a matter of the likely return on investment for the potential buyer.
- Andres Duany, head of the teams that developed both the City's 2016 Plan and current master plan, is of the opinion that Birmingham is now a five-story City, and buildings with that massing and scale are appropriate for the City's streetscape.
- If these projects are done well they can both preserve the history of the City and be a part of the City's careful but continued development.
- If his team ends up breaking ground on this project, it will be essential that the plans for the single story of underground parking be maintained.

Chairman Henke noted that under the Secretary of Interior standards the travertine is considered historic because the building received historic designation in the 1980s. He also said:

- He has seen two other buildings in town negatively impact the adjacent buildings in the pursuit of underground parking, so the logistics of putting in one story of underground parking would be a concern.
- With the plan's five-story proposal, this building would be the tallest at the Maple-Old Woodward corner, and would feel like a five-story building even with the proposed setbacks.
- 101 N. Old Woodward Ave, located in the same Maple-N. Old Woodward intersection, is unlikely to be able to build higher due to structural impediments.
- When the travertine is peeled the underlying facade will start deteriorating as soon as work on the underground parking commences.
- Restoration of the facade to its original appearance would not be preferable.
- Having a full HDC weigh in on this proposal would be the most appropriate next step in Mr. Saroki's due diligence.
- A few renderings would likely help the discussion of the proposed project.
- He is very in favor of open rooftops with green space, for this and other projects.
- There is ongoing discussion regarding how developed the City's downtown should become, and how the light and air would change if the City becomes a five-story City whereas it was previously a two- to three-story City.
- Walking by the Daxton Hotel on Woodward will give an accurate sense of what a five-story building feels like when viewing it from street level.

Mr. Saroki said he does expect that 101 N. Old Woodward will be able to build higher sometime in the future. He said that even though it may be structurally challenging it would not be impossible. He also said he would be willing to make some renderings of a four-story building in this location, in addition to renderings of the currently proposed plans, to see if there is a significant difference.

Mr. Willoughby said he was inclined to support a project like this. He continued:

- Stepping the third floor back, as the plans propose, will allow the team to restore the first two floors while distinguishing the upper floors from the lower historic ones.

- Many historic buildings throughout Europe have had new parts added on to them in aesthetically appropriate ways. Projects like that allow a community to maintain the historic feeling while allowing for development and investment in the community's properties.
- Mr. Saroki's proposal is a good one, especially in regards to the respect it exhibits for the historic portion of the building.
- This project would not likely remain the only five-story building in this intersection if these plans come to fruition. The other buildings would likely follow suit.

Ms. Lang said this proposal merits serious consideration on the part of the HDC members.

Mr. Saroki said he had heard the present HDC members' feedback, and would try to return for another pre-application discussion with some conceptual renderings. He thanked the HDC for their time.

## **2. 163 W. Maple**

City Planner Dupuis summarized the proposed plans for Seven Daughters, a coffee shop and roaster which is not in a historically designated building but would be located in the historic district.

Maryam Razak, owner of Seven Daughters, said she wanted to remove the box structure and cut back to the existing glazing of the building, so the facade would be completely flat. She asked if she would be able to do the whole application as an administrative review in order to save herself time and resources.

Chairman Henke advised Ms. Razak that she would not be able to receive approval administratively, but would have to return to the HDC. He also advised her to spend a bit more time with her architect working on some clearer renderings that will show her goals accurately. He said if her application is done well she should only have to come before the HDC once.

City Planner Dupuis told Ms. Razak that if she wanted to be on the November 6, 2019 HDC agenda that he would need her application and the majority of her materials by Monday, October 21, 2019.

Ms. Razak thanked the HDC for their time.

## **3. 366 W. Brown (Fence)**

City Planner Dupuis summarized the item, saying 366 W. Brown would be willing to use the lattice top fencing or the Kingston fencing.

The HDC told City Planner Dupuis that they would prefer the Kingston fencing in a matte white.

## **4. 384 W. Brown (Windows)**

City Planner Dupuis summarized the item.

After discussion, the HDC asked City Planner Dupuis to determine whether the owner intended to match and replace the remaining historic windows, or the newer windows which are not historic. The HDC said City Planner Dupuis could then administratively approve the windows if all the window specifications are reviewed to ensure that whichever windows are being replaced will be replaced with historically accurate windows.

Chairman Henke stated that there is significant documentation regarding the historic windows for this house because this project's historic aspects were much discussed when the architect, Robert Ziegelman, built these homes.

## **B. Staff Reports**

### **1. Administrative Sign Approvals**

### **2. Administrative Approvals**

135 Pierce received a number of small administrative approvals. City Planner Dupuis then found the glass being replaced on their windows, which was not reviewed or approved by the City.

The HDC agreed that the responsible parties should be brought in before the HDC for a historic review. Chairman Henke said that the building's owners have repeatedly undertaken, or attempted to undertake, changes to the building's exterior without City review or permission.

487 Willits received approval for a number of different changes in 2018, but when City Planner Dupuis went for a final inspection several more changes had been made without City review or approval. Some of these changes included a different color of exterior paint, the addition of shutters, a different roof, different gable details, and changes to the summer home in the back of the home. As a result, City Planner Dupuis is requiring that the owners of 487 Willits return for a historic review as well.

Chairman Henke confirmed that owners are expected to modify their buildings to meet the HDC's requirements, even if the historic review occurs after the unapproved changes have already been implemented.

### **3. September Demolitions**

**10-45-19**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

No further business being evident, the board motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 p.m.

Nicholas Dupuis  
City Planner

APPROVED