

# Minutes

## HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Regular meeting

6:30 p.m. Dec. 7, 2023

Human Resources Training Room, Town Barn, 101 E. Orange St.



Present: Chair Will Senner, Vice Chair Mathew Palmer, and members Elizabeth Dicker, Hannah Peele and Bruce Spencer

Absent: Members G. Miller and Sara Riek

Staff: Planner Joseph Hoffheimer and Town Attorney T. C. Morphis, Jr.

### 1. Call to order, roll call, and confirmation of quorum

Chair Will Senner called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. He called the roll and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

### 2. Commission's mission statement

Senner read the statement.

### 3. Agenda changes

There were no changes to the agenda.

### 4. Minutes review and approval

Minutes from regular meeting on Nov. 1, 2023.

Motion: Member Elizabeth Dicker moved approval of the Nov. 1, 2023, minutes as submitted. Member Bruce Spencer seconded.

Vote: 5-0.

### 5. Written decisions review and approval

Written decisions from regular meeting on Nov. 1, 2023.

Motion: Member Hannah Peele moved approval of the written decisions from the regular meeting on Oct. 4, 2023, as submitted. Spencer seconded.

Vote: 5-0.

### 6. New business

#### A. Certificate of Appropriateness Application: 203 Saint Mary's Road

Applicant is requesting approval to repair and replace the front porch in kind. (PIN 9874167661)

Senner opened the public hearing and asked whether there were any conflicts of interest or bias among the commissioners. Peele disclosed that she had worked on the project.

Motion: Senner moved to recuse Peele from consideration of the 203 Saint Mary's Road application. Dicker seconded.

Vote: 4-0.

All commissioners disclosed that they had visited the site in preparation for reviewing the application. No additional conflicts of interest were disclosed.

Planner Joseph Hoffheimer was sworn in. David Cates, speaking on behalf of the applicant, was sworn in.

Hoffheimer presented the staff report and noted the inventory information, application materials, and applicable design standards would be entered into the record as evidence. He provided the staff comments: Everything proposed for this project is an in-kind replacement except for the restoration of the porch flooring to its original direction. The application is being brought to the board because full replacement of a historic porch exceeds the threshold for ordinary maintenance or minor works. The subject section of the porch is likely original to the building, but the materials may be newer. If columns and railings are to be restored, they are considered a minor work; replacement requires board approval. The red detail on the site plans is from a past project and are not part of the current proposal.

Cates introduced the application by explaining that the intent is to make repairs so that there will not be any noticeable difference between the current structure and the repaired structure except for its improved state of maintenance.

He added that if a column must be replaced, it will be replaced with wood to match the current structure, and that the original flooring ran in the direction of the proposed repairs.

Cates said that the brick walls will be replaced entirely, including the piers under the columns. The current piers do not have footings under them, and the applicant would like to build the new porch on a firm foundation.

Cates explained that a curtain wall is a 4-inch brick wall between the piers that is not load bearing, is not attached, and has no backing behind it. The curtain walls were built to conceal the gaps between the piers.

Senner referenced Masonry Standard 7 and asked for Cates's assessment of whether there is opportunity for the piers to be repaired rather than replaced. Cates confirmed that there is no opportunity to repair the masonry in place; the piers need to be removed to add a foundation for the long-term structural integrity of the building.

The brick curtain walls need to be removed to be repaired, and the existing brick will not be re-used. The plan for the project is to replace the materials in kind to match the existing appearance. Some of the masonry will remain as-is and does not need repair, so the new brick will be painted to match the rest of the existing foundation. Cates mentioned that he believes there are multiple vintages of brick under the paint and that it was initially painted to provide uniformity.

There was discussion of the design standards' indication of painting historic versus new masonry. There was also discussion of diagnosing the root cause of the deterioration of the brick.

Cates confirmed that should the columns and railing need to be replaced, they will be replaced in kind as they are. The commissioners agreed to propose this as a condition for approval.

Senner summarized the discussion, observing that the commission had no significant concerns about the proposal being incongruent with the Historic District.

Senner closed the public hearing and called for deliberation.

**Motion:** Spencer moved to find as fact that the 203 Saint Mary's Road application is in keeping with the overall character of the Historic District and complies with all relevant standards of evaluation based on the commission's discussion of the application and the standards of evaluation in Section 3.12.3 of the Unified Development Ordinance because the plans are consistent with the Historic District Design Standards: Masonry; Wood; Architectural Metals; Paint and Exterior Color; Exterior Walls; and Porches, Entrances and Balconies. Vice Chair Mathew Palmer seconded.

**Vote:** 4-0.

The commissioners agreed that the evidence that all materials are being replaced in kind and cannot be repaired in place supported the finding of fact. They also agreed that painting the masonry is appropriate because the design standards allow for painting new brick and because there is existing brick in the remaining foundation to match the new brick to.

**Motion:** Spencer moved to approve the application as submitted with conditions. Senner seconded.

**Vote:** 4-0.

**Conditions:** If the columns and railings need to be replaced due to the impossibility of reusing or repairing them, they can be replaced in kind with coordination with staff.

**B. Certificate of Appropriateness Application: 100 S. Churton St.**

Applicant is requesting approval to replace the existing side entrance facing West King Street. (PIN 9874064291)

Senner opened the public hearing and asked whether there were any conflicts of interest or bias among the commissioners. All commissioners disclosed that they had visited the property in preparation for reviewing this application. No other conflicts of interest were disclosed.

Cates, who had already been sworn in, served as the main representative of the application before the board. Applicant Daniel Brown, the owner of the property, was also sworn in.

Hoffheimer introduced the staff report. He mentioned that though the address for the property is 100 S. Churton St., the entrance that is the subject of this application is on King Street. He said that the inventory information, application materials, and applicable design standards would be entered into the record as evidence. Hoffheimer presented the staff comments: The location of the transom window and doors is unique, and staff did not find many standards that applied to a noncontributing commercial entryway. The location of the transom window and doors appears to have once been part of the building at 103-105 W. King St., though those features were added later and are not contributing. A pent roof was added to the 103-105 W. King St. storefront around 1985, which made that building noncontributing. The subject entrance is no longer part of that building.

Cates introduced the application. He mentioned that the proposed project will be an improvement to the entryway, as the entrance currently looks like it is part of the next-door building, but the proposed project visually bridges the two portions of the buildings.

Cates added that there has been a lot of repair of the custom wood windows, and he said that what is being proposed will be a significant improvement to its current state. The entrance looks to be part of the building to the right, but the proposed project bridges the two buildings appropriately.

There was discussion of the entryway's origins as an alleyway and entrance to the basement.

There was discussion of whether the panel over the transom window was part of the historic signage that had previously been on the building. Brown clarified that he believes the wood above the transom to be plywood from the 1980s or 1990s that has been painted. Cates added that it is not enameled.

There was discussion about whether the trim around the doorway is appropriate and congruent with the surrounding area. It was noted that Lloyd's Pharmacy has molding around the doorway, but that other storefronts in the area are a simpler design. Brown said he wanted the molding style to reflect the time period of the original structure. He added that the awning was included to blend in with the neighboring awning. He said that the current casement is a simple, off-the-shelf casement that came with the door in the 1980s or 1990s and is now in disrepair.

There was discussion of whether adding molding to reflect the time period creates a false sense of history, in reference to the design standards for wood, p. 43, numbers 9-10. The commissioners discussed whether the addition of more ornate molding falsely represents its original state of a humble alleyway entrance.

Cates confirmed that the proposed door will have glass, similar to doors in adjacent and nearby structures on King Street.

It was noted that the proposed entrance feels grander than the original humble alleyway entrance. Senner summarized the intent of the proposal, confirmed by Cates: The intent of the proposal is not to replicate a historic feature that previously existed; there was no door previously. The intent with this new level of detail is not to falsely replicate something, to attempt to deceive, or to pretend it is a historic feature or a replica of a historic feature; rather, the intent is to be in keeping with other elements that currently exist on the same street. It was noted that there is a variety of levels of detail in the ornamentation of nearby structures: The hardware store and Purple Crow Books have a simpler style, while Lloyd's Pharmacy and Matthew's Chocolates are more ornate. The commissioners agreed that a plainer entry might be more congruent, but that there is precedence for the proposed level of detail, and the proposal does not seem incongruent.

The commissioners agreed that it is appropriate to replace the existing door because it is not historic. Adding a portico over the door is not routinely done, but the commissioners observed that there are multiple examples of roofs that have been added to entryways of similar properties along Churton Street.

The commissioners asked the applicant about the intended relationship between the design of this door and the main storefront door or other features of the building. Brown said that the main intent is to tie in the design to make it look like it fits in with the overall style of downtown.

Brown clarified that the entryway in question is the entrance used to access the second floor of the building.

There was discussion of whether the architecture of the proposed door looks fancier than the windows and main door. Brown said he believes the drawing makes the design look stark, but once it is all painted

white the detail will recede. He confirmed that the intent is for this entryway to be a secondary entrance to access the basement and second floor.

Senner summarized the commissioners' discussion: The conversation had raised no issues that indicated that this proposal would be incongruent with the Historic District. The new addition of the portico roof is not inconsistent with other properties along King Street and Churton Street. The door is not a contributing existing door, so it is not unreasonable to replace it. The detail around the door may be more ornate than what had existed previously, but it still is within the context of similar doors along King Street and Churton Street. It is also not pretending to be historic, as there was no original door there that is being recreated.

Senner closed the public hearing and called for any additional deliberation.

Motion: Dicker moved to find as fact that the 100 S. Churton St. application is in keeping with the overall character of the Historic District and complies with all relevant standards of evaluation based on the commission's discussion of the application and the standards of evaluation in Section 3.12.3 of the Unified Development Ordinance because the plans are consistent with the Historic District Design Standards: Storefronts. Palmer seconded.

Vote: 5-0.

Commissioners expressed appreciation for the work and thought that went into preparing the proposal.

Motion: Spencer moved to approve the application as submitted. Dicker seconded.

Vote: 5-0.

C. Certificate of Appropriateness Application: 122 W. Union St.

Applicant is proposing a rear addition with decks, a roof over the existing front stoop, removal of the existing western stoop, and replacement of existing vinyl windows with wood windows. (PIN 9864988200)

Senner opened the public hearing. He asked whether there were any conflicts of interest or bias among the commissioners.

Senner disclosed that he owns the property next door and is in the process of renovating it, but he did not feel that inhibited his ability to review the application.

Palmer disclosed that he lives two doors down from the property but did not believe that would hinder his ability to offer an unbiased opinion.

All commissioners disclosed that they had visited the property in preparation for reviewing the application.

Hoffheimer introduced the staff report and noted the inventory information, application materials, and applicable design standards would be entered into the record as evidence. He said that the property is a contributing structure by the 50-year standard. He provided the staff comments: In the past, the commission has allowed for new roof overhangs above existing stoops if they are removable. The design standards for windows do not directly address replacement with higher quality materials, but replacing vinyl with wood would be an automatic approval by staff as a minor work. Replacement windows are supposed to retain the same muntin configuration, but staff finds the proposed wood windows without grilles in keeping with the district and with the rest of the house, and that would be preferable to

replacing with the existing grilles between glass. The house has existing inoperable vinyl shutters, which are allowed to remain.

Cates confirmed that the Hardie board siding will be smooth side out.

Cates clarified a typo on the site plan: the roof over the stoop should be noted in yellow as “new proposed.”

There was discussion of the large tree in the backyard that is evident in photographs but is not represented on the site plan. The commissioners reviewed Google Street View to get a sense of its siting. The dripline of the tree extends to roughly the middle of the house. Where the addition is proposed begins from about that point: The eastmost side of the addition appears to be about the same spot as the westmost edge of the dripline of the tree. The addition appears to be sited in a way that the project can be done without compromising the integrity of the tree. Cates said there would be no objections to installing a tree protection fence. Cates said the foundation is made of brick and concrete block, so there is no need to dig deep.

The tree in front of the house was less than 24 inches, so was allowed to be removed.

Senner referenced the design standards for Decks: p. 91, Item 1, which indicates that decks should be inset from either rear corner. The commissioners asked about the western deck, which is lined up with the existing corner of the house, with a step protruding beyond.

Cates said the step would be 11 inches. There was discussion of how and to what extent inseting the deck would become an obstacle to the in-swinging door that leads out onto the deck. The door location onto the deck is due to the kitchen layout, and the door location influences the deck layout.

It was noted that the proposed project removes an existing concrete stoop on the west side of the house that is less congruous with the design standards, and which protrudes farther from the side of the house. Cates asserted that the proposed project is an improvement on the property’s congruence with the design standards.

There was discussion of whether the step down from the deck could be placed at the back of the deck instead of the side, and the possibility of putting in landscaping to provide screening for the step that protrudes beyond the side of the house.

Cates confirmed that the driveway is concrete, but there is no pavement proposed in this project. There are no additional hardscapes or patios proposed.

The commissioners discussed the proposed roof over the front stoop. Cates provided some examples of stoops which the commission had approved porticos to be added: 158 W. Margaret Lane, a house on Cameron Street, and another on Corbin Street at Hassel Street. The commissioners discussed the compatibility of portico roofs with houses of this design and vintage within the district. The commissioners agreed that there are other similar houses that are contributing structures due to their age that have added porticos, and that the proposed design is not incongruous.

Cates said that the original siding is a vertical striated plywood.

The commissioners expressed appreciation that the elevation of the addition is set lower than the existing roofline so it is clearly subordinate to the existing structure. The new roofline will be dropped 2 feet, 7- and-3/16 inches from the existing roofline.

Cates confirmed that they plan to use vinyl siding from the rear to fill in the 3 feet x 6 feet, 8 inches section where the existing door will be removed.

Cates confirmed that there are no changes proposed to the existing roofline of the rear elevation, just new shingling.

The commissioners discussed the muntin configuration of the windows and agreed that adding windows with no grilles makes the house design more consistent overall.

Cates confirmed that the finish on the steps will match the deck.

Senner summarized the commissioners' discussion: There were no concerns about this proposal being incongruous with the Historic District. The commission would like to include a tree protection fence as a condition of approval. The commission assessed the style and vintage of this property, a 1960s one-story, ranch style property. Based on this property's style and massing; its existing front stoop; and considering other properties in the district of a similar style and vintage, the addition of a portico is not incongruous with the district.

Senner closed the public hearing.

Motion: Peele moved to find as fact that the 122 W. Union St. application is in keeping with the overall character of the Historic District and complies with all relevant standards of evaluation based on the commission's discussion of the application and the standards of evaluation in Section 3.12.3 of the Unified Development Ordinance because the plans are consistent with the Historic District Design Standards: Porches, Entrances, and Balconies; Additions to Residential Buildings; and Decks. Dicker seconded.

Vote: 5-0.

Senner noted that the existing stoop on the west side of the house was a major factor in how the visibility of the rear deck was considered by the commission.

Motion: Dicker moved to approve the application as submitted with conditions. Spencer seconded.

Vote: 5-0.

Conditions: Addition of a tree protection fence around the tree in northeast portion of the backyard, extending to 10 feet from the corner of the new addition.

## 7. Amend Historic District Design Standards

- A. Amend standards for Historic vs. Non-Historic, Masonry, Windows, Sustainability and Energy Retrofit, Utilities, Site Features and Plantings, Fences and Walls, Walkways Driveways and Off-Street Parking, and Art

The commissioners reviewed, discussed, and suggested edits to proposed amendments to the design standards. There was discussion of the intent for the design standards document to be a

flexible and useful guiding document to make the process easier on applicants, the board, and staff.

**B. Amend Ordinary Maintenance and Repair and Minor Works**

The commissioners reviewed, discussed, and suggested edits to proposed amendments to the design standards. There was discussion of narrowing the document to make it more useful to homeowners, and it was suggested that another working group could convene to shorten the language in the minor works guidelines.

**C. Amend Compatibility Matrix**

The commissioners reviewed, discussed, and suggested edits to proposed amendments to the compatibility matrix.

**D. Amend Definitions**

The commissioners reviewed, discussed, and suggested edits to proposed amendments to the design standards definitions.

The board decided to have staff make the proposed edits to the document and review the updated document at the January meeting. Hoffheimer clarified that the new timeline would mean that the approved changes would be ready in time for the March deadline for the joint public hearing.

**8. Elect officers**

Nomination: Peele nominated Senner to serve as chair of the commission for 2024. Spencer seconded. Senner accepted the nomination.

Vote: 5-0.

Nomination: Dicker nominated Palmer to serve as vice chair of the commission for 2024. Spencer seconded. Palmer accepted the nomination.

Vote: 5-0.

**9. Adopt 2024 regular meeting schedule**

The commissioners reviewed the regular meeting schedule for 2024. Hoffheimer noted that both the January and July meetings are moved to one week later than usual to avoid conflicting with holidays.

Motion: Senner moved to adopt the proposed 2024 regular meeting schedule.

Vote: 5-0.

**10. General updates**



There was discussion of the role of the commission and interest in creating an education subcommittee for connecting with the public.

**11. Adjournment**

Senner adjourned the meeting at 9:48 p.m. without a vote.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph Hoffheimer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Joseph Hoffheimer  
Planner  
Staff support to the Historic District Commission

Approved: January 10, 2024