

Historic Preservation Commission Agenda



The regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was held on November 12, 2024 at 3:30 PM in Community Room of the City/County Complex at 414 E. Callender St. The meeting was facilitated by Vice-Chair Lindie Gibson.

1. Call to Order (3:34 pm)

2. Roll Call (0:46 minutes)

In Attendance: Vice-Chair Gibson, Jack Luther, Eli Isaly, Kristin Vanderland. Tom Blurock absent.
Staff: Jennifer Severson, Planning Director.

3. Approval of September 10, 2024 Minutes (1:10 minutes)

Date of September 11, 2024 noted by Severson was incorrect; the correct meeting date was September 10. Vanderland moved to approve the minutes; Isaly seconded the motion. Motion approved 4-0.

4. General Public Comments (2:53 minutes)

Grant Gager, City Manager (220 E. Park Street)- thanked HPC members for their volunteer service on the board. Gibson stated that it was a privilege to serve on the board.

5. New Business (4:40 minutes)

A. DEMOLITION OF INDUSTRIAL TOWEL & COVER BUILDING (218 S. 2ND STREET). ACTION REQUESTED.

Severson introduced the item – applicant has submitted a request for a Demolition Permit and has provided limited information about the project after demolition. Severson confirmed that the applicant is not required to provide details about the project after demolition.

Chris Salacinski represented the applicant (944 E. Park St, #6, Livingston)- stated his appreciation for the HPC in making tough decisions about preservation and said he has a passion for preservation but also understands the need for housing in the City. The project is intended to include affordable housing units; however, there is significant unsafe and deteriorated conditions in the building that prevent preserving the façade. Preservation of the existing building will divert funds away from the number of affordable units that may be included in the project. The applicant would like to repurpose some of the brick from the existing façade in the new building; however, preserving the existing building and/or façade is not viable for this project.

Applicant cited key points from a letter from the developer, Eric Horn, dated November 7, 2024 that was included in the agenda packet for today's HPC meeting:

- The building exhibits visible deterioration in its roof, masonry, timbers, and mechanical systems resulting from a previous fire in the building.
- Retaining the 2nd Street façade would necessitate extensive upgrades to align with current safety and seismic standards, with costs far exceeding potential benefits.
- The façade requires additional support for stability, rendering its retention both impractical and costly.
- Preserving the façade during new construction poses various risks and operational difficulties. The rhythm and sequencing of the project would be significantly hindered, leading to increased costs, delays, and extended timelines. Coordinating safe demolition while ensuring structural stability could result in further complications and financial burdens.
- Keeping the existing façade as-is will limit how much and where parking for the new residential units can occur, and the applicant would like to provide on-site parking for each unit.
- Compliance with current seismic codes introduces additional scope and costs. The need for a seismic separation from the adjacent property to the north further complicates the situation, necessitating additional construction costs.

Applicant reiterated the need for affordable housing in Livingston and the intent of this project is to address that need and bring much-needed housing to the City and the downtown. Salacinski believes this project can be beneficial for the community but the cost to preserve the existing building/ façade jeopardizes the scope of the affordability components.

Gibson asked if the original wall along 2nd Street can remain and then if the new structure can be built within/ behind that wall. Salacinski cited complications with needed below-grade reinforcements to save the wall and that would conflict with area needed for stormwater detention required by the City.

Severson asked if the board could hold additional questions until after the public comments on this agenda item so those comments may be included in the board discussion. Additional board member questions can be asked after public comments.

Bob Ebinger (128 S. Yellowstone Street, Livingston)- provided a handout to the board to be included in the meeting minutes/ record. He is disappointed at the proposal to demolish the existing building. It is impossible for the board to make an informed decision without knowing what will replace the building. The proposed scale/ height of the new building is inappropriate for historic downtown Livingston and impacts from the development will extend beyond the immediate neighbors. He has concerns with the impacts of demolition of the Industrial Towel building on the apartment building immediately to the north. There is no guarantee that there won't be negative impacts on the surrounding area when the sub-grade parts of the building/ foundation are exposed during demolition for the first time in many decades. Grants could be obtained to assist with preservation of the existing building/ façade. Additionally, keeping the existing façade/ building would negate the need for a setback variance, which would be required for new construction to meet fire setbacks and allow windows on the north side. At the very least, the façade should be preserved if it's determined the rest of the building cannot. He requested a condition be placed on an approval for the demolition permit that requires the existing sign be preserved and remain placing 2nd street.

Lucas Schad (422 S. 5th Street)- architect who worked on restoring the neighboring brick condominium building to the north. Supports preserving the existing façade; expressed concerns about any demolition of the north wall of the Industrial Towel building may damage the south wall of the condo building which is only inches away. Also concerned about the building foundation.

Robin Ebinger (128 S. Yellowstone Street)- showed photo of existing views of mountains from the downtown and has concerns about how the proposed building height would impact those views. Doesn't think the board should approve the demolition request until the applicant provides details about what will replace the existing building.

Dan Vermilion (44 Adair Creek Road)- has concerns about impact on historic neighborhood and also how demolition may impact his property (condo building to the north). Wants to make sure his property is protected from damage during demolition and new construction and that his property rights are respected.

Colleen Frye (214 S. 2nd Street, Unit C)- Will this be low-income/ affordable housing? What is the timeframe for the demolition?

Gregory Raczniak (214 S. 2nd Street, Apt. B)- just purchased one of the condo units next door to the north. He was unaware of the proposed demolition until this week and would like the board to consider that neighbors were not given much notice of this demolition request.

Public Comment closed (33:06 mins).

Vanderland asked if there were any reports the applicant can provide reports related to structural integrity, quality of brick and mortar on the existing façade, and any damage the fire may have caused to the building. What, if any, mitigation strategy has been discussed to address impacts to the neighboring condo unit building during demolition.

Isaly said this is a design review process; without understanding what will be built once the existing building is demolished, and can only consider the current request to demolish, he will not approve the request. If he is provided details about the new development after demolition, he could make a better informed decision.

Severson confirmed that the by-laws of the HPC only require the board to consider the request before them at the time (i.e. demolition of the building only). Isaly said he will not support moving the project forward (or approve the demolition) if he is not provided with information about what will replace the demolished structure. Severson stated it is up to the applicant if he wishes to provide that additional information about any new development after demolition. If he doesn't wish to provide that information, Severson asked that the HPC take action and make a decision on the demolition request today, regardless.

Gibson asked for confirmation that the adjacent condominium building actually shared a wall with the Industrial Towel building or if they are actually separate buildings. Ebinger stated that the buildings are

separate but very close together. Luther confirmed no foundation or walls are shared between the two buildings as they were built at different times.

Severson restated the questions by public commenters. Since housing affordability is not under the purview of the HPC, she requested Colleen Frye contact her direct to discuss. Severson stated that the use of the property in the future is also not under the purview and cautioned the board against including uses in their discussion. Salacinski confirmed the demolition permit will be valid for one year; they don't anticipate starting demolition until spring 2025 and the actual time for demolition will be 3-4 weeks. Salacinski reiterated that the developer is aware of the concerns related to demolition impacts on the condo building next door and is working with engineers and architects to make sure the demolition and new construction mitigate impacts to the condo building.

Severson restated Vanderland's question if there are any reports available related to structural integrity, quality of brick and mortar on the existing façade, and any damage the fire may have caused to the building. Salacinski confirmed studies were done for Phase 1 and 2 of environmental, soil samples from two wells, vapor samples and asbestos has been abated from the building. Vanderland asked if the building is structurally unsafe in its current condition; Salacinski said a lot of work needs to be done on the existing structure to comply with current code (i.e. it's not safe to use in new development). Isaly and Vanderland asked if there are any studies that show the existing building is unsafe/ cannot remain. Salacinski reiterated the existing building cannot be preserved/ repurposed for multi-story residential development.

Isaly stated he has seen examples where facades are preserved while still allowing for new construction (see Bozeman Main Street). Salacinski stated the scope of those types of projects- large commercial developments- is very different than high density (primarily) residential development and that it's not an equal comparison. Isaly stated that his understanding from this discussion is that the developer of the Industrial Towel property does not believe the existing building can be utilized for the proposed residential multi-story development as proposed. Salacinski stated that to use the existing building for the new development is cost-prohibitive. Vanderland expressed her concern that there is no guarantee about what will eventually replace the demolished Industrial Towel building since the board has been advised that cannot be considered during today's consideration of the demolition request.

Luther commented that in the information provided by the developer, the taller residential part of the new structure, including parking, will be located on the north end of the property (where the existing building is) and that the one- or two-story restaurant will be located on the south end of the property along Clark Street. Luther asked if that layout can be reversed so that the existing building can house the restaurant and the new tall residential building can be located along Clark Street. Salacinski commented that placing a tall building across the street from single family low density residential development is not ideal for the residential neighbors to the south.

Gibson asked if the developer would consider reducing the height to three stories (from 5 or 6 that is planned). Salacinski stated that would be up to the developer. Severson reminded the board that there are currently no height restrictions in the CBD. Severson asked the board if they have concerns with demolition of the metal structure add-on to the south of the brick Industrial Towel building; board

members expressed no concerns with demolition of the metal part of the building, only the brick portion of the building.

Salacinski stated that he doesn't believe the current state of the brick building is the original brick or façade details- it has already been greatly altered from its original design/ materials and he questioned its remaining historical value. He expressed his desire for the board to take action today on the demolition request and not delay decision until a future meeting.

Gibson stated she doesn't believe the current façade of the Industrial Towel building represents the original architecture and no longer has the same historic integrity, and since there is a critical need for housing/ affordable housing in Livingston, she supports the demolition request.

Vanderland is not willing to approve the demolition request since no information is being provided about what will replace the demolished structure and there are no assurances that a new multifamily residential development with affordable housing will be built. The value of the building that is there now within the historic district is greater than an empty lot that would result from the demolition approval. She also has concerns that the applicant has not provided any studies that support their claim that the building is not structurally sound.

Luther asked if the letter written by Tom Blurock (HPC Chair) that was submitted as public comment will be part of the meeting record. Severson confirmed it will be included in the meeting minutes. Luther stated that the name of this board is Historic Preservation Commission. The Industrial Towel building is roughly 100 years old and is part of the City's downtown historic district. He does not support demolishing the building and will vote to deny the demolition request. He also thinks the multi-story building that the developer has mentioned is the intent of the new development will destroy the vistas of the mountains down 2nd Street.

Severson confirmed for the board that, although the demolition of the existing building is all that can be considered today, any future construction on the portion of the Industrial Towel property within the historic district must go through design review by the HPC. Gibson asked for clarification about the demolition request- Severson confirmed that if the demolition request is denied, any modifications to the portion of the building within the historic district must go through HPC design review in the future. Because the metal part of the building is within the historic district, its demolition must also go through HPC review.

Luther moved to deny the demolition request; Vanderland seconded the motion. Severson stated her intent to poll the board vote. Vanderland- aye; Isaly- aye; Luther- aye; Gibson- aye. Motion to deny the request for a demolition permit is unanimously denied (4-0).

Severson asked the board to clarify why they denied the request.

Vanderland and Isaly indicated they are not comfortable approving demolition of a historic structure without knowing what is going to replace it. They would recommend the applicant provide details/ conceptual drawings about the future development with the request to demolish the building. The

applicant should also complete their feasibility study before they move forward with either a new demolition request or if they appeal the HPC decision to the City Commission.

Luther and Gibson stated they are against removing a historic building in the downtown historic district.

6. Old Business- None

7. Board Comments (1:20:13 minutes)

Luther asked if the City can continue to conduct surveys of the commercial buildings in the historic district. Severson said they will be getting less grant funding this year and she would like to present a few different options to the HPC at a future meeting for how to use the pass-thru funds this year. Severson also confirmed the completed historic surveys are public information and will be available on the City website soon.

8. Adjournment (4:55 pm)

To: Historic Preservation Board
From: Tom Blurock chair

Re: Proposed demolition of the Industrial Towel Building

I am sorry I cannot attend the HRB meeting on Tuesday. I will be on a plane on a long planned vacation and cannot either attend in person or on zoom. I am very concerned about a developer's proposal to demolish a historic building and replace it with what could be the largest building in the city.

The presentation a very sketchy proposal for a five story residential building with a one story restaurant of indeterminate size on the south side to safeguard single family home as suggested by the recently completed downtown Master Plan. While the addition of more housing downtown is most welcome, it shouldn't come at the loss of valuable historic assets which once gone will never be replaced. That said before we destroy more of our valuable historic fabric we should know what we are getting in return. The proposal at this stage falls far short of that.

Prior to this proposal I had two meetings with the design/construction team to discuss the project. It was clear from these meetings that there was no intention of including the historic structure in the plans either in whole or in part. In my professional opinion as an architect both the cost and the compatibility of the existing structure are exaggerated. I discussed the inclusion of either the building or even just the retention of the brick façade as part of the project. There was no apparent no interest in either.

The recently completed Downtown Master Plan does recommend high density development south of downtown and suggests "*Sensitive height and massing transitions should be prioritized along Clark Street, adjacent to existing single-family residential structures.*" It stops short of mandating one story structures and certainly does not characterize it as "crucial" as the proposal says. It implies but does not require that structures respect the lower structure of the surrounding residential fabric. While not mentioned in the Downtown Plan, the project is surrounded on three sides by lower scale residential fabric. On the north side the project abuts another two story historic structure with no requirement for a setback. If there is an interest in "sensitive height and massing transitions," the final scheme should reflect this.

As to cost, this project will probably have a construction cost of \$10-15 million dollars. The cost of saving the brick façade would not effect the feasibility of a project of this scale. The Urban Redevelopment Agency has a program of façade improvement which could cover a significant portion of the costs.

We are the stewards of historical heritage of Livingston. **It would be a breach of our trust to approve the demolition of an historic building without knowing what would replace it.** It is therefore my recommendation that we reject the any demolition on the site until more definition of the project can be developed. This development should include:

- the massing of all building on the site
- description of uses including the breakdown of all units by income levels
- the preservation in whole or in part of historic elements of the historic building

New housing is welcome and we are in favor of a sensitive project which addresses al community interests. We look forward to a successful project which will be a credit to us all.

Industrial Towel and Cover Building (218 South Second Street)

Comments

Greetings: Identify self: Historic Preservation and URA Boards

I understand infill development and the need for new housing

I want to thank Chris Salacinski for saving the Agrineeds Building but am disappointed that the same respect for historic buildings is not on the proposed new building document

Demolition of a contributing structure to Livingston's Historic District that is appropriate with the streetscape in size and character is a serious decision and a dangerous precedent to establish without knowing the footprint and design of what is going to replace it that is appropriate to the historic district and neighborhood. In any case, the proposed Five story building is unprecedented in our downtown Historic District and wrong for this location. A smaller scale rethought structure should be considered.

It is like placing the four story Murray Hotel plus one floor right smack on this lot, forever marring the scale and visual flow of the street and the view down historic Second Street (picture.)

Concern for the scale facing Clark Street and 300 block residents is stated in the document but what about the Third Street neighbors and the second Street neighbors.

And what about the adjacent Goughnour Condos (2006-2012): the first infill development in Historic Livingston

As one of its developers my major concern is the potential negative effect on the 1891 Goughnour Office Building which I feel is understated in the document

Built on a slab with rock walls with basement occupancy, the exterior wall facing the possible demo Towel building have not been exposed since the 1920s and the rock foundation buried for 124 years' old

Even with the described mitigation can it be guaranteed that negative disaster might occur

And during the requested demo and foundation digging could not the trapped vapors affect the Goughnour occupants?

This proposed five story building would cast a giant shadow over the Goughnour common area: not a friendly neighbor

Saving the original building would mitigate these possible negative effects and provide present day street appeal

URA grants could assist with the façade and seismic concerns as they did with the 1900 Main Street Building

We did this with the Goughnour Condos

Emanuel Goughnour's 1891 Office building was completely gutted and adapted into residences with basement living space. And rather than maximizing the development potential we provided a grass/tree lined common area

Keeping the existing building would also provide the legal setback that the proposed building would need in order to have the fire required setback for windows on the north side.

However, at the very least if the building is demoed, the brick façade must be retained. As stated an Urban Renewal grant could provide financial assistance. In addition, I ask the Historic Preservation Committee to require as a condition that an historic sign with picture and building description be erected on the Second Street façade or parkway. This signage can be provided by the State Office of Historic Preservation.

