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LANDMARK PRESERVATION COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
June 24, 1997
Council Liaison: Scott Mason
Staff Liaison: Joe Frank
Commission Chairperson: Jennifer Carpenter (225-0690)

SUMMARY OF MEETING: The Commission denied the request to install neon borders around the storefront windows at 238 Linden Street, Vincent's Old Town Cigar Shop. The LPC granted a two year extension to finish the interior work for the Colorado State Tax Credit Program at the B. F. Ayers House, 518 Peterson Street. Timothy Wilder, City Planner presented changes to the Local Landmark Rehabilitation Grant Program.

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL: Ms. Carpenter called the meeting to order 5:35 p.m., 281 North College Avenue. Commission members Ruth Weatherford, Per Hogestad, Jean Kullman, Diana Ross and James Tanner were present. Bud Frick was absent. Joe Frank, Carol Tunner, Timothy Wilder and Karen McWilliams represented Staff.

GUESTS: Shawna Cirillo, Signs by Tomorrow; Vince Young, owner, Vincent's Old Town Cigar Shop; Stephen Short, citizen.

AGENDA REVIEW: Ms. Tunner wanted to update the Commission under other business on plans to construct a new building adjacent to the Forest Service Building, 148 Remington Street.

STAFF REPORTS: None.

COMMISSION MEMBERS' REPORTS: None.

CURRENT DESIGN REVIEW:

238 Linden Street, Vincent's Old Town Cigar Shop – Install Neon Window Border

Ms. Tunner explained that Vince Young, owner, Vincent's Old Town Cigar Shop would like to install a burgundy neon light border around the two storefront windows of his shop. Also vinyl letters will be applied directly to the window. Ms. Tunner had questioned whether the neon border is considered part of the signage or is considered to be an ornamental feature on the building. Peter Barnes, sign coordination, says that the neon light should be considered part of the sign. Ms. Tunner explained that according to Old Town Design Guideline #53 and the Secretary of the Interior's Guideline #9, a contemporary design of a sign must be compatible with the building facade, the street and neighborhood. She said that the light and the signage should not be overbearing and that the LPC should look at the intensity, color and coverage of the illumination. The LPC recently reviewed neon

lighting and discouraged it, but each application should be reviewed individually. Shawna Cirillo, of Signs by Tomorrow, explained that the cigar shop is an upscale operation and that they would like to create a nicer image than that which is created by a traditional hanging neon sign. She made one change to the application, which is to propose an off-white or cobalt blue color for the neon instead of the burgundy. She also explained that an alternative to the neon border is a stainless steel, indirect fiber optic light sign. This option would be three times the cost. Ms. Carpenter explained that they could not separate the neon from the lettering of the sign, so the total sign is considered to fill the window at six by six feet. Mr. Frank said that it could also be considered a decorative element. Ms. Weatherford agreed and considered the light border to be more of an ornamental feature. Guideline #27 does allow neon signs, but states that a neon border is considered a non-historic feature. In this case, the LPC should use the criteria used to review a decorative element. Ms. Carpenter explained that most historic districts do not allow neon, but neon has been allowed in signs in Old Town. Mr. Young requested that they compare the neon border to the look of a hanging neon sign such as the one next door. Ms. Carpenter explained that the design must meet the guidelines. She said that their approval would be setting a precedent to allow neon. Mr. Hogestad asked if the light would only be in the lower portion of the window and not the transom and about the intensity of the illumination. Ms. Cirillo did not have the specifications on the intensity of the illumination of the lights. Mr. Tanner stated that the neon border should not be separated from the vinyl lettering of the sign. If the border is not considered to be part of the sign than it should be considered a decorative element, which is trying to detail an architectural feature. He asked, should the LPC be trying to detail architectural features and other details on buildings with neon. Ms. Weatherford explained that she liked the outlining neon, but it might not be appropriate for the district. Mr. Young said that he would have to install a traditional hanging neon sign, if not allowed to install the border. Mr. Hogestad and the Commission agreed that the neon border in the storefront window should be considered a trim piece and not a sign.

Mr. Tanner moved to deny the request for the neon border at 238 Linden Street on the basis of Guideline #27, which addresses architectural details and requires trim material to be subordinate to and work with the building material and Guideline #53, which states the sign must be compatible with the color and material. Ms. Weatherford seconded the motion.

Ms. Carpenter made a friendly amendment to also include Guideline #52, which requires signs to be subordinate in size to the other facade elements.

Mr. Hogestad said that he does not feel comfortable with including Guideline #52 in the motion. Mr. Tanner explained that another City Department is considering the application as a sign. Mr. Frank agreed, the Building Department has called it a sign, but it can be considered an architectural feature as well. This friendly amendment failed for lack of a

second.

Mr. Hogestad made a friendly amendment that the request be denied because of the size of this portion of the sign.

Ms. Weatherford accepted this friendly amendment and the motion passed unanimously. (6-0) (Yeas: Carpenter, Weatherford, Hogestad, Kullman, Ross, Tanner) (Nays: none)

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

518 Peterson, B.F. Ayers House – Time Extension for the Colorado State Tax Credit Program

Ms. Tunner explained that most of the work which is unfinished is on the inside of the house. Financial restraints have slowed the work down and the owner, who was expecting, did not want to work around lead paint. The applicant requested a one year extension, but she is entitled to two years. The LPC and Staff discussed who should conduct the final review of the State Income Tax Credit Program after December 1997, when new reviews will go back to the CHS. They decided that they would complete the reviews for State Tax Credit applications that are already underway by December.

Ms. Ross moved to approve the extension for 518 Peterson for two years. Ms. Weatherford seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. (6-0)

Local Landmark Rehabilitation Grant Program – Proposed Changes, Timothy Wilder, City Planner

Mr. Wilder reviewed the major changes to the Local Landmark Rehabilitation Grant Program. One of the major changes involved timing. He explained that submittals of concurrent Landmark Designation applications with Rehabilitation Grant applications has caused confusion for applicants when a designation is approved but a rehab grant is not awarded. Some applicants do not realize that the Landmark Designation is still in effect for their property. Mr. Wilder suggested that the designation deadline should be moved up to September and the grant application should be submitted by November. Ms. Carpenter said that Staff will need to revise the flyers to inform people of the new deadline dates. The Commission agreed that the November Rehab grant deadline and the September Landmark Designation would improve the process.

Mr. Wilder then reviewed the proposed changes to the decision making process for the grant program. He explained that last year a sub-committee reviewed and ranked the applications. This year, he proposes to have Staff review the applications for basic eligibility. Then a sub-committee would look for eligible and ineligible elements of the

proposals and determine if the projects could go through the design review process. The applications would be divided among groups of three to five LPC members and each member would go through the ranking worksheets. Ms. Carpenter recommended that a work session be scheduled for the LPC to review and rank all the applications as a whole group. Mr. Frank recommended that Staff rank the projects and then bring that information back to the LPC for review. Ms. Carpenter explained that this program involves the public and so the review should really be done at a LPC meeting. Mr. Hogestad agreed that the full LPC should be more involved in the review and not just Staff. Ms. Tunner was concerned that in blocking out a meeting or two, applicants with other projects may have to wait up to two months for review. The LPC agreed that the review and ranking should be completed by the full LPC, but Staff could initially review the applications for certain basic criteria. Mr. Hogestad suggested that Staff could also weed out maintenance items from the applications. Mr. Wilder added that Staff may also request additional information on a project from the applicant. Mr. Frank reviewed the proposed program schedule: at the second meeting in November projects will be presented; in January projects will be ranked; and in February final decisions will be made. Ms. Carpenter suggested that the LPC break into smaller groups to rank the projects. Mr. Hogestad recommended that the ranking sheets then be shared so everyone gets to review all the applications.

Mr. Wilder then passed out the proposed grant application. He explained that the format of the application has been clarified, but the content has not been changed. A third page was added, requiring working drawings and specifications, if applicable. Ms. Weatherford said that in the past they rarely received a construction bid. Mr. Wilder said that cost estimates of proposed work may be sufficient. Mr. Tanner proposed to change the language on the application to read, "Any construction bid which has been made on the project".

Mr. Wilder then reviewed the Selection Criteria and Scoring Sheet. Ms. Carpenter addressed guideline number two, *Demonstrate Project Urgency*. She said that this guideline should help determine the degree of threat to the building. The Commission then discussed the issue of a threat to a building as being considered equal to preservation necessity. They felt that these terms confuse the significance of a building with the threat to a building. The Commission agreed that the issue of funding urgency should be taken out of guideline number two. Ms. Carpenter further discussed the issue of a threat to a building and its preservation necessity, in terms of guideline number 3, which addresses resource significance. She explained that people felt that they were being penalized when they had kept up a property over the years. On the flip side, the grant could help fund projects, which could not have been done otherwise. Mr. Frank explained that it is a sliding scale. He compared more threatened and less significant buildings to less threatened, but more significant buildings. Ms. Carpenter said that most important are the extremely significant and extremely threatened buildings.

The Commission also addressed the degree of matching funds. The rankings for guideline number four could be condensed, so that each rank contains a larger percentage of matching funds. The Commission discussed whether funding would be necessary for the project to be completed. They discussed whether putting less points on with increasing matching fund would help balance the situation between preservation need and funding urgency. Ultimately, the Commission decided to retain the existing categories.

Partial versus full funding of the applications was also discussed. The Commission agreed that the applicants should know that they may not receive full funding. Mr. Tanner said that funding different amounts to different projects may create problems. Ms. Carpenter commented that ineligible pieces of the proposals should be weeded out in the beginning of the review process. The question is whether they want to fund a larger number of projects with partial funding or fully fund just a couple projects. Mr. Hogestad asked if they would require that the full project be completed, even when granted partial funding. He said that to only require that they complete certain items would change the ranking of the project. He suggested that they ask the applicants directly if they could or would complete the entire project, if granted partial funding. Ms. McWilliams asked the Commission if they would like to set aside certain amounts for commercial projects and some for residential. Ms. Carpenter suggested that they rank commercial and residential projects separately. Mr. Frank suggested that they set up a cap for each category and let the ranking system work through the projects. The LPC agreed that partial funding would reach more people and help complete more projects. Applicants must sign the application, giving their commitment to completing a project when partially funded. The LPC discussed what to do if the applicant has a real hardship and also a real preservation need, but this information is too subjective to review. Mr. Hogestad stressed that the award of funding should be based only on the merit of the project. The LPC discussed changing the funding amounts for commercial and residential projects, but they decided to leave the maximum awards. Ms. Kullman suggested that they do change the language on the application to read, "up to a maximum of \$2500 (residential) and \$5000 (commercial)".

Mr. Frank left the meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Ms. Tunner discussed an in-fill building proposed to be built adjacent to 148 Remington, the old U.S. Forest Service Building. Mr. Lenz, the owner of the building would like to put a building in the empty lot up against the historic building with a zero lot line. Ms. Tunner informed the Commission that a mistake was made in the legal description of the designated building. Only three quarters of the building is designated according to the legal description. Ms. Tunner said that they will have to prepare another ordinance to correct the mistake. The proposed in-fill building will cover the rear of 148 Remington. The building will not be attached, so the LPC is not required to review it. There are some code issues which address covering the openings, windows and doors of 148 Remington.

On the inside, Mr. Lenz would like to turn the windows into bookshelves. Ms. Carpenter suggested that the LPC offer their help with the design of the building on a conceptual basis.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Submitted by Nicole Sneider, Secretary