

LANDMARK PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

June 25, 1996

Council Liaison: Gina Jannett

Staff Liaison: Joe Frank

Commission Chairperson: Jennifer Carpenter (225-0960)

SUMMARY OF MEETING: The LPC heard public comment on current preservation programs. The LPC then discussed issues and suggestions. A work session has been planned and a sub-committee created to discuss these issues.

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL: Jennifer Carpenter, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m., 281 North College Avenue. Nicole Sneider, Secretary called the roll. Commission members Jennifer Carpenter, Ruth Weatherford, Per Hogestad, Jean Kullman, and James Tanner were present. Terence Hoaglund and Bud Frick were absent. Carol Tunner, Karen McWilliams, and Joe Frank represented staff. Leanne Lawrie, City Planner also attended the meeting.

GUESTS: Diana Ross, newly appointed LPC member, observed the meeting. Public input was offered from the following citizens: Jeff Bridges, 725 Mathews Street; Mary Arnett, 622 Remington; Nancy Eason, 1019 Remington Street; Rod Vaughn, 451 ECR 56; Karla Oceanak, 425 Elizabeth; Jeff Benjamin, 824 Remington; Gene Morley, 301 18 th Street, Windsor; Cindy Standley, 300 North College Avenue; and Michael Early, 315 East Prospect (144 North College).

AGENDA REVIEW: None.

STAFF REPORTS: Ms. Tunner announced that Ms. Ross was the new appointee to the LPC.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The April 9, 1996 minutes were accepted as submitted.

COMMISSION MEMBERS' REPORTS: Ms. Carpenter discussed the goal in creating an opportunity for public input. There has been a lot more interest in the Old Town area and the Visual Preference Survey done by Tony Nelessen has confirmed that Old Town and the river corridor are valued by the citizens of Fort Collins. The Historic Resource Preservation Program was designed to educate the people about the historic places in the city, to explain the federal and state incentives, and to develop local ones. This evening, the Commission wanted to focus on evaluating their progress and developing new ways to provide better service. Ms. Carpenter said that they were looking for feedback and streamlining the increased work load for staff.

Citizen Participation:

The following people provided commentary:

* Mary Arnett, owner of 622 Remington, received a Community Block Grant in 1981 to do a \$30,000 renovation. She explained that if it wasn't for the help she got, the house, a local landmark, probably would not exist today. She has been renting the house out for the past ten years. The only way she was informed of this meeting was when she picked up the letter at the property. She recommended sending information to the owner's current address. Ms. Arnett added that the houses to the north and south of her are both deteriorating to a severe degree and she feels that she has very little recourse. She was concerned that her property value would not go up even when maintaining the property, because of the condition of those houses. The Commission should work on ways of facilitating communication between neighbors and encouraging better property maintenance..

* Jeff Bridges, owner of 725 Mathews, commented that he was a strong supporter of the staff and the Commission, was committed to the cause, and a leader in the community. He provided an overhead map to show a perspective of the northern section of the East Side neighborhood. Eighty percent of the Laurel School National Historic District was shown. Individual Local Landmarks were indicated by green on the map. For other properties, Mr. Bridges developed a way of evaluating their potential for historic designation. The structures in red may meet two or three criteria for designation and were called qualified. The properties illustrated in blue had potential for landmark designation and did not have any major alterations. The properties in black have had major alterations or were not old enough to be considered for designation. The white areas meant that he does not have enough information on the property to make a determination. He has over three hundred properties on a computer database that have the potential for local landmark designation. District designation will also increase the workload immensely. Mr. Bridges stressed that The LPC needs to develop processes to stimulate designations and streamline design review. He also commented that by designating, there are ways to manage and maintain an historic building, but not many processes to manage the damage being done by the impact of surrounding neighbors. He explained that historic properties are in more danger from the surrounding environment than by themselves. Local landmarks will be lost because a building's use is no longer viable, the collapse of the neighborhood, and property values not increasing with investments in the property.

Mr. Bridges also designed a flow chart of the historic preservation program procedures. It illustrated where duplications occurred on application forms. He suggested categorizing the same information, making certain decisions early for items which are common on many of the program applications, (for instance is the project a restoration or a rehabilitation), and focusing on key issues to help move through the programs more efficiently.

* Nancy Eason, 1019 Remington had some questions about the district designation

process included with the *Standards and Guidelines for Historic Properties*. She wanted to know if there would be a vote included in the process and stated that she would like to see a vote included in that process. A vote would create an opportunity to have a say about the neighborhood and to express approval or disapproval of the designation. Ms. Eason was also concerned over what process homeowners would need to go through when they wanted to make changes to a property in an historic district.

* Scott Calhoun, 825 Peterson, presented a check list of what he would need to do if he was to build an addition to his building if it was designated. He explained that he did not wish to create scale drawings or hire an architect. Therefore, how was he being helped by the city by designating his property? He stated that he felt like he would be contributing a visually pleasing structure, according to the VPS™, and his efforts to beautify the city places the burden on him. He wanted to know how he was going to get support from the city.

* Ron Vaughn, owner of the Troutman House, explained that his house was now outside city limits and was moved from the south end of town to a County road to the north. He encouraged the LPC to work with the County to establish a partnership to designate properties. He was in support of burying utility lines. He also explained that the Larimer County building code was difficult to deal with because when he moved his historic structure, it was treated as a new structure in the code. They had to tear out lath and plaster from the inside to add new headers. He would like to see better procedures developed for historic structures to be incorporated in the County building code. He addressed historic preservation issues involved in the federal highway plans and encouraged historic preservationists to participate in the planning process. He also requested that the LPC review the impact which new buildings make when built next to an historic structure.

* Karla Oceanak wanted to thank the LPC and staff for their time and support in rebuilding the porch on her home at 425 East Elizabeth. She felt that the process for her project was straightforward, but she did find some duplications between forms. She suggested that there should be a more uniform process for the State Tax Credit program, the Rehabilitation Grant program, and Local Landmark Designation especially because people tend to utilize them together. She also compared the historic structures and preservation processes which exist in Fort Collins to that of the East Coast. She felt that back East, there were a lot stricter guidelines and standards for historic structures. She stressed that what we have should be preserved because there is not as much. It is an important issue for the City and the procedures should be friendly and made easier for the applicant. Ms. Oceanak said that there are not many owner occupied properties in her neighborhood. She feels that homeowners and perspective home buyers do not see property protection around them and are skeptical about purchasing a home in her neighborhood. She emphasized that given the current momentum of preservation efforts, especially on the east side of town, the LPC should pay more attention to the macro level of historic preservation through neighborhood and district designation.

* Jeff Benjamin went through Local Landmark Designation, the State Tax Credit program, and the Rehabilitation Grant program for his house at 824 Remington. He also saw a lot of duplication through those three processes. He suggested that the LPC take a more active role in advertising themselves and their programs. Some ways of promoting historic preservation include advertising in the areas that the Commission is targeting and sending information to the property owner, not just to the property. As the number of applicants for different programs increases and the work load increases, look at different levels of detail depending on the project and the program. Ms. Carpenter explained that for State Tax Credit, staff and the LPC need to answer to the State. Locally, the LPC has tried to dovetail their own programs with similar applications. Mr. Benjamin added that the LPC should outline the benefits of having detailed plans and dimensional drawings ahead of time when renovating a structure. He did suggest that staff organize the information they already have on renovation and rehabilitation, so that they can provide the applicant with a list of books, magazines, etc. in order to expedite the design process from the beginning. Ms. Carpenter expects the Design Assistance Program to help people as well.

* Gene Morley initiated historic preservation efforts in Windsor, Colorado in 1990. By 1992, they had adopted an ordinance to designate local historic structures. Currently they are performing a survey of the city with the help of the State. He thanked the preservationists from Fort Collins for their help and has been inspired by the work that the LPC has done in the City.

Ms. Carpenter appreciated all of the input and said that she heard strong support for districting. She also heard that the three current programs need to go hand in hand, while recognizing that the LPC has less control over the State Tax Credit program. Staff will also work on developing a current database of property owners and their permanent address in order to reach people with information more effectively. These ideas will next be discussed in sub-committees and in an LPC work session. Then the suggestions will be brought back to the LPC to help change some processes and alleviate perceived problems with the programs.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Ms. Carpenter explained that the list of issues on the agenda provided ideas of what areas needed some discussion.

Local Landmark Designation

The threshold of eligible properties was discussed in terms of where does the LPC draw the line. For example, should a house with aluminum siding be designated? Ms. Carpenter explained her thoughts that until the district designation process is implemented, individual contributing buildings should be designated. This would provide the incentive and the opportunity to have the structure rehabilitated or restored. Ms.

Weatherford added that many alterations could be reversed. Until districting is an option, individual landmark designation is the only protection for an historic structure. Mr. Hogestad said that there still should be a threshold for approval. For example, pop tops and strange windows should not be acceptable. The Commission discussed the public's perception of what they do designate.

Ms. McWilliams explained that the State has a more purist attitude towards preservation. State programs and local LPC programs may have different criteria. Ms. Weatherford stated that the LPC should start by pleasing the community. Mr. Tanner reminded the Commission not to accept structures for designation and programs that would jeopardize the integrity of local landmark designation. Mr. Hogestad said that residential properties must be looked at differently from commercial properties because people have to live there. Ms. Kullman said that homes need to be adaptable to current living styles so that people won't knock them down to build something else. Mr. Tanner suggested that the Commission not rush to designate property as soon as they perceive a threat to it. Ms. McWilliams asked whether designations should be based on plans for rehabilitation/restoration, or on what exists today. Ms. Kullman said that local landmark designation and other incentive programs would persuade people to restore historic structures. Ms. McWilliams explained that a designation may be contingent on restoration or rehabilitation work. The LPC had no problem with that as long as there was assurance that the work would be completed as specified.

Colorado Income Tax Credit for Historic Preservation

Ms. Tunner introduced the topic by discussing the differences in owning a commercial property as opposed to a home. For a residential property, the LPC has not been as strict in their reviews. After a discussion with the Colorado Historical Society, she suggested to establish guidelines and let the applicant know if there was a construction material that was historically unacceptable. Do not require brand names of products from the applicant, but rather methods and ask the applicants to let staff know which methods work for their job so they can pass the information on to the next applicant. Mr. Hogestad stated that the applicant still needed to provide some documentation of what will be done including dimensional drawings, materials, and specifications. Mr. Tanner commented that providing the right information at the start would allow the LPC to move through the process more efficiently. Ms. Carpenter suggested creating a standardized form which addresses these requirements. Mr. Tanner recommended creating a general cover form which asks for the basic requirements and use that form with the applications for the other programs. The Commission also discussed keeping the process friendly and educational and making the benefits of the programs and the applicant's efforts more obvious.

Local Landmark Rehabilitation Grant Program

Ms. Lawrie provided copies of the grant information brochure which the LPC reviewed.

They felt that the pamphlet should highlight the goals of restoration or rehabilitation and explain the requirements of the program. Ms. Carpenter stated that the problem was distinguishing whether the proposed project was a restoration, rehabilitation, or general maintenance. Mr. Tanner suggested rewriting the brochures in an attempt to clarify the program. Ms. Weatherford noticed that painting was mentioned twice in the literature, which could be considered maintenance. Ms. Kullman remembered that painting was included if it was part of a larger rehabilitation plan.

The Commission addressed that the intent of the project was very important and helped to define what direction the applicant was headed in his/her rehabilitation efforts. Ms. Lawrie asked the Commission for suggestions on improving and streamlining the application form for the Rehabilitation Grant Program. Ms. McWilliams suggested applying the requirements of the State Tax Credit Program to the program. Ms. Tunner suggested requiring slides or photographs, which would also benefit the historic record. In addition, a stronger statement needed to be added to the information that not all projects would be funded and that the program is competitive.

The Commission also mentioned that they have to review the ranking system for the Rehabilitation Grant Program. They need to decide on what basis partial funding would be awarded and if partially funded projects should be awarded by percentages or some other method. Ms. McWilliams also suggested to treat different proposed projects separately and to have the applicant prioritize their projects. A question will be added to the application which asks if the applicant was willing to accept partial funding. Ms. Carpenter and Ms. Tunner also discussed adding a statement to the brochure which explained that if they received partial funding, the next application would go to the bottom of the pile and that the program's goal was to fund as many projects as possible with the limited funding available.

Design Assistance Program

The LPC decided that limited funding will result in considering only designated properties to be eligible for the Design Assistance Program.

Demolitions and Demolition Delay Ordinance

The problems with this issue are related to the ordinance. The ordinance might need to be changed to create a longer time to review a demolition before making a decision. Staff needs time to get the history of the structure, to visit the property, to get the information to the appropriate individuals, for them to have the opportunity to provide input. Ms. Weatherford would like to see a greater penalty created for demolition of an historic structure without a permit. In conclusion, the following were items to be considered by the sub-committee to be added to the ordinance: an extension of time for further, more objective research on the property; 1 to allow the LPC to review the issue if necessary, and a stiffer fine for a demolition of an historic structure without a permit.

Design and Sign Review of Local Landmark Residential Properties and Districts (No. for Colorado State Tax Credit)

Ms. Carpenter believed that the level of review for residential versus commercial project should be different. Some Commission members agreed and others felt that there should be the same level of reviews. Mr. Frick had stated in the past that homeowners may need more design review because they may be completing the project themselves, while business owners would be more likely to hire design professionals. The LPC discussed the level of submittal information for design review of exterior work on local landmarks. The other question addressed how closely the LPC should review projects.

Ms. McWilliams explained that the level of review really depended on the project itself. Ms. Tunner said that the draft Eastside/Westside Design Guidelines for Historic Buildings state that the LPC does not review paint color in historic districts. Ms. McWilliams said that currently, according to Section 14-47 of the ordinance, the LPC does review paint color. Ms. Tunner stated that the Secretary of the Interior's standards do not address color and Mr. Hogestad added that paint was reversible. The LPC decided that the current review of color will be an advisory review and may be handled administratively. Ms. McWilliams explained that the *Standards and Guidelines for Historic Properties* will apply to residential as well as commercial projects once the document is adopted.

Mr. Hogestad addressed the issue of submittal requirements and believed that they should be standardized. Dimensioned drawings, rather than scale drawings could be required. Additional drawings and plans required will be dependent on the project. Ms. Tunner stated that she would inform the applicants that, at a minimum, dimensional drawings would be required and suggested creating a single form for residential applications informing the applicant of their submittal requirements. The Commission discussed that it would be helpful to know materials that would be used. Ms. McWilliams stated that the applicants should experiment with different materials and methods, recognizing that it is important to test products, especially on an historic building, before coming back to the LPC with a completed application. In order to standardize the submittal requirements for design review on historic structures, manufacturer's sheets would be required on strippers, windows, masonry, etc.. Detailed drawings for points of attachment with either a sectional view or a cross section may also be necessary.

The kinds of review made by staff for designations was also discussed. An application for Local Landmark Designation will be reviewed by staff and staff will add any missing history to the packet.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Ms. McWilliams informed the LPC that the City Clerk's office has been incurring the cost of recording designations with the County Clerk & Recorder's Office. The costs are usually

\$1 per document and \$5 per page. The City Clerk's office has started passing these costs on to the Advance Planning Department. Staff will try to set up a mechanism for charging the applicant at least a portion of that cost. The LPC agreed that if people are interested in designating their property then they should pay the fee.

Ms. Tunner said that staff would try to cut down on the number of photos submitted repetitively for the different programs, but that the State Tax Credit Program must be considered a stand-alone program. In the future, staff will have access to the photos and information from a central filing area. Ms. Carpenter said that one of the responsibilities of the sub-committee would be to discuss how to integrate jobs and the files to make it easier for both staff and the applicant to get information.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Submitted by Nicole Sneider, Secretary.