



Meg Dunn, Chair
Per Hogestad, Vice Chair
Doug Ernest
Bud Frick
Kristin Gensmer
Dave Lingle
Mollie Simpson
Alexandra Wallace
Belinda Zink

City Council Chambers
City Hall West
300 Laporte Avenue
Fort Collins, Colorado

Regular Meeting September 20, 2017 Minutes

- **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Dunn called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

- **ROLL CALL**

PRESENT: Dunn, Zink, Hogestad, Ernest, Simpson
ABSENT: Gensmer, Lingle, Wallace, Frick
STAFF: Bzdek, Bumgarner, Yatabe, Schiager

- **AGENDA REVIEW**

No changes to posted agenda.

- **STAFF REPORTS**

None.

- **PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

None.

- **CONSENT AGENDA**

1. CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 16, 2017 REGULAR MEETING.

The purpose of this item is to approve the minutes from the August 16, 2017 regular meeting of the Landmark Preservation Commission.

2. 1016 W MOUNTAIN AVENUE - FINAL DEMOLITION/ALTERATION REVIEW

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: This is a proposal to add a 2-story addition to an existing residence and connect the existing garage to the residence. The property was determined to be individually eligible for designation as a Fort Collins Landmark.

APPLICANT: Darryl Austin, Owner

Mr. Ernest moved that the Landmark Preservation Commission accept the Consent Agenda as presented at the regular meeting of September 20, 2017. Ms. Simpson seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

● **DISCUSSION AGENDA**

3. 227 WOOD STREET (THE HARDEN HOUSE) - CONCEPTUAL DESIGN REVIEW

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: This is a request for conceptual design review of The Harden House at 227 Wood Street, designated as a Fort Collins landmark in 1999. The proposed work includes demolition of an existing rear porch (undated, historic), addition on the northwest corner of the residence that spans the rear elevation, addition of a skylight, and addition of a deck. The applicants previously presented two design options for conceptual review at the August 16, 2017 LPC meeting. This a revised option based on feedback received from the Commission at that meeting.

APPLICANT: Gordon Winner, property owner
Heidi Shuff, architect

Staff Report

Ms. Bumgarner presented the staff report. She reviewed the role of the Commission, noting that the project was not yet ready for final design review. Ms. Bumgarner reviewed the relevant Code sections and Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation. She provided some basic information about the property and proposed work, including current and historic photos, and updated the Commission on the new information added to the packet since the work session.

Applicant Presentation

Mr. Winner said he had spoken to the Assistant City Forester about the tree, which is a male green ash. The Forester said it was a hearty species, and would be likely to survive the effects of the construction. He said their desire is to move forward with the project maintaining the tree in its location.

Ms. Shuff quickly reviewed the existing conditions of the property. She discussed the engineer's report regarding basement excavation, and pointed out the limited usable space that would be created with that option.

Ms. Shuff discussed the two basement excavations that had been provided by the Commission as examples, and while she felt they were appropriate for their specific properties, she noted that this property is not as wide and would not provide sufficient usable space. She also pointed out that the concrete foundation of the Oak Street home was more stable and easier to work with than the 114 year old sandstone foundation of this home. Ms. Shuff also noted that the other examples already had more finished basement space with existing stair access. She explained that the excavation of the home on Whedbee was limited to opening up one side to let in more natural light, as opposed to excavating an entire basement. The Oak Street basement excavation was done in sections, which is not a viable option with a load-bearing masonry wall, making the excavation much more difficult. Ms. Shuff concluded that excavating to accommodate the programmatic needs is not feasible, and argued that an addition should be an acceptable alternative.

Ms. Shuff discussed the adjustments that were made based on feedback from the Commission at the last meeting. She said the addition was shifted to the west, so that all of the addition is behind the existing house. She stated that efforts would be made to maintain the tree and allow for future growth with a properly sized opening in the deck. She pointed out they had stepped both sides of the east/west primary running walls and gabled roof of the addition six feet in from both the north and south walls of the original house, removed the stairs going to the attic, and eliminated the new north gable roof. The large casement window on the west was replaced with an attic vent similar to that on the east side. Ms. Shuff noted that the basement would be storage at this point, but another bedroom with an egress window would be added later. A stoop and steps for the

laundry/mud room entry had also been added to the drawings. She also confirmed that the new window head heights will match the existing windows, maintaining the existing fascia height around the building. The addition to the north has been lowered to reduce the scale of the addition on the side of the home. They also replaced the long windows with square, punched windows, based on Commission feedback.

Finally, Ms. Shuff showed the additional drawings that were requested by the Commission.

Public Input

None

Commission Questions and Discussion

Chair Dunn disclosed that the Oak Street house being discussed in relation to the basement excavation belongs to her, but said she didn't believe that affects her ability to comment on this house.

Chair Dunn explained that the Commission had a discussion at the work session about the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) comments regarding additions the Commission had approved in the past. Based on the SHPO feedback, Chair Dunn said the Commission is rethinking how they evaluate additions, and that will have some impact on tonight's discussion.

Mr. Ernest pointed out that the SHPO had provided comments on this proposed addition, which are included on page 101 of the packet. He asked for clarification as to whether the options reviewed by the SHPO were the most current options, and Ms. Bzdek confirmed they were.

Ms. Shuff expressed concerns about the predictability of the process. She compared the process of making changes to the Building Code, which includes a lot of public outreach, to these changes in the Standards just now being discussed which appear to raise questions about whether additions would even be allowed. She said she had started working on this project with her client back in March, and the design has already undergone three revisions based on the Standards at that time and what had been approved in the past. She said changing the rules this far into the process puts everyone in a difficult position, and seems very unfair. She also inquired as to the plans for informing the public about the new Standards.

Chair Dunn clarified that the Standards had not change, but the Guidelines had been updated. Ms. Shuff said there is a shift in the interpretation of the Standards, which makes things difficult for her client. Chair Dunn emphasized that there have not been any Code changes or changes in the Standards, but that some of these concerns may come up in the discussion.

Mr. Ernest referenced page 102 of the packet where the SHPO had stated that installing a skylight is not consistent with the Standards. He asked which skylight that was referencing, to which Ms. Shuff responded it was the kitchen skylight

Chair Dunn suggested reviewing the letter from the SHPO in the packet. She said the first step is to determine the character of the house. She then noted the question as to whether the owners had made a convincing argument to allow demolition of the historic rear porch, which the Commission hadn't even addressed.

Mr. Winner explained how the porch is constructed and described its current condition. He stated it is pulling away from the house, and is probably unsafe. Ms. Shuff mentioned that the rear porch was constructed of scrap materials, but in the landmark designation application, the owner stated that he intended to remove it.

Chair Dunn asked whether any materials from the porch could be reused. Mr. Winner said there were some usable pieces for blocking and infill-type framing.

Chair Dunn pointed out that the 30% rule mentioned by the SHPO was new to them, but this proposal appeared to comply with that. There was some discussion about whether the 30% rule applied to the footprint or finished square footage, and whether the basement counted. Ms. Bzdek said they would clarify that with the State.

Chair Dunn mentioned the SHPO's concern about the projecting addition on the north side altering the rectangular plan, which had been identified as a character-defining feature.

Chair Dunn reviewed the SHPO's comments about the doors and windows. Ms. Shuff inquired as to whether the north side window needed to be a tall, double-hung window, pointing out that she had matched the head height. Chair Dunn said it should match one of the window types on the north side. Ms. Shuff asked whether they need to replicate the historic windows. Mr. Hogestad said while the head alignment makes sense, the addition should not replicate the building. Ms. Zink said the proportion of the window seemed a little jarring, compared to the rectangular shape of the others.

Ms. Zink questioned the way the addition was attached to the rest of the house. Mr. Hogestad said there should be a distinct separation of the new and old, possibly with a reveal. He added that the north elevation is a primary elevation of the building, and it portrays the building as simple. He said the whole addition should be in the back, maybe almost free-standing so as not to remove historic material. He suggested a connector piece to preserve the north elevation. Chair Dunn said the Guidelines call the connector piece a “hyphen”.

Ms. Shuff said one of the main objectives of the program is to create a connection between the kitchen and family room and the outdoors. Mr. Hogestad said it was important to preserve the historic material on the back side of the house. Chair Dunn showed an example of a hyphen from packet page 206. Ms. Shuff requested clarification about a connector piece versus a step-in.

Ms. Simpson said the hyphen accomplishes two things: limiting the amount of material lost on that elevation, and creating a separation between the old and the new. Ms. Zink said that would also maintain the volume of the original house. Mr. Hogestad suggested that the bulk of the addition be moved to the back and to the west to allow for a connector piece. Ms. Shuff said they would lose the tree and the connection between outdoor space and family room.

Mr. Winner questioned how the hyphen would work, since there is a door and window in back, and expressed concern about losing the connection from the kitchen to the outdoors. Mr. Winner asked if they are at an impasse, if they can't alter the rectangular shape. Mr. Hogestad suggested the west side is less important than the north side.

Ms. Simpson asked about keeping the more of the brick historic material intact. Mr. Hogestad said the Secretary of Interior would like to see no changes to the original material so that if the addition were removed, it would expose the historic fabric. However, he acknowledged that may not be realistic in the context of modern day space planning. He suggested exploring the connector piece or hyphen, and finding a new location for the laundry/mud room. Chair Dunn suggested a glass connector piece, which would bring in a lot of light.

Ms. Shuff recalled that at the last meeting, the concerns discussed were maintaining the tree, exploring whether a basement could be excavated, and pushing the north addition to the west. She said they've addressed some of those, but now she's hearing something totally different with regard to the hyphen, and not having any part of the addition on the north. She asked how they can get all of the input and requirements in a timely fashion in order to minimize the number of revisions and the design time and cost to her client. Chair Dunn suggested reviewing the Guidelines again.

Mr. Hogestad suggested that Beaumont sketches, rather than detailed drawings, might be a good option in the conceptual stage.

Chair Dunn pointed out that the information about placing functions for a new use in secondary or non-character defining interior spaces was in the old Guidelines (page 90), as was the information about hyphens and setbacks. Ms. Shuff said the Guidelines are subjective, and said that in the past, the hyphen has been interpreted as a step-back.

Mr. Winner asked whether the width of the addition can exceed the width of the original house. Mr. Hogestad noted the six inch setback on south side.

Ms. Shuff asked whether the Commission was saying that the addition has to be completely to the west. Chair Dunn said that ideally, all of the Guidelines would be met, and that the Applicant needs to make strong argument for not following the Guidelines, as they have done in ruling out the basement option.

Mr. Winner asked whether saving the tree would be a strong argument, but Chair Dunn said since the tree is not historic, it could be removed. Ms. Simpson argued the tree was a character-defining feature of the back yard. Mr. Ernest read a portion of page 137 of the revised Guidelines about landscaping, and questioned whether the tree was historic or not. Ms. Simpson asked whether the City Forester had looked at the tree, and Mr. Winner replied that he had seen photos. Ms. Dunn said the tree was not identified in the designation as a defining historic characteristic. Mr. Hogestad said he didn't think the tree has any character-defining significance. Mr. Winner argued the merits of the tree, but conceded it did not have character-defining significance. Ms. Shuff asked for a determination on whether they can extend further to the north in order to preserve the tree, or whether they must put all of the addition on the west, which would require removing the tree. Ms. Zink said the tree may be useful, but it is not historic. She said an addition on the north should be avoided, and added that the northwest corner of the house should be especially clear.

Mr. Ernest doesn't see a way to save the tree and also avoid a north addition. He will go along with the majority, but personally, he would save the tree based on page 137 of the Guidelines. Chair Dunn pointed out that the tree wasn't mentioned in the designation. She went on to explain her view that a landscape feature would have

to be a specific part of what defines the character of the property, and if that were the case, it would be mentioned in the designation. There was a discussion about what makes a tree a character-defining feature. Ms. Simpson mentioned Land Use Code Section 3.4.7 with regard to mature landscape. Mr. Hogestad said it must have some basis in preservation, not just personal preference. He referred to Chapter 14 of the Municipal Code which defines a major alteration as one that causes a loss of two or more aspects of integrity. He argued that the design is injured by the addition, and the setting and feeling are also impacted. He urged the Applicant to find a way to make the program work, but not on a primary elevation. Ms. Shuff confirmed that Mr. Hogestad feels the addition must be inset on both sides of the building.

Mr. Ernest said that making sure the addition is compatible with the Standards is more important than preserving the tree. He also expressed his belief that the basement is off the table, acknowledging that they have made a case that it is not feasible.

Ms. Simpson would like to hear the opinion of the City Forester about the health of the tree. She said it is important to distinguish between the original and the new, while keeping as much historic material as possible. She said it was okay to remove the tree, if the Applicant feels it's necessary, but stated they also have a compelling argument for keeping the tree.

Ms. Zink said that Land Use Code 3.4.7 applies to new development, and is not relevant to this discussion. She said it was unlikely that the Commission can tell the Applicant definitively what they should do, but whatever they decide, they need a very clear preservation argument to support it, based on the Standards and Guidelines.

Chair Dunn said, while it would be great to save the tree, the best way to follow the Guidelines is to locate the addition on the west instead of the north. She would also like to see a hyphen and setbacks, as described in the Guidelines.

Chair Dunn brought up the SHPO's concerns about the skylight. She said it is pretty far back on the house, is flush with the roof, and increases energy efficiency. Mr. Hogestad thinks this skylight is minor. Ms. Zink added that if it fit between existing rafters, it would be reversible. Mr. Ernest and Ms. Simpson agreed that the skylight isn't an issue.

Chair Dunn addressed the fish scale shingles in back, saying they should probably pick a different style or pattern to differentiate them from the original. Mr. Hogestad added that the addition doesn't have to mimic the house, which allows for some design freedom.

Mr. Winner commented about the increase in design costs due to the revisions and lack of clarity, and expressed concerns about the process and how to move forward. He suggested having some training with the professionals who are on the list for the design assistance program. Mr. Hogestad again suggested Beaumont drawings.

- **OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Hogestad asked Staff to think about where there might be some trees that would be considered historically important or character-defining. Ms. Simpson pointed out that they should consider formal versus informal trees, as well as planted versus non-planted. Ms. Bzdek noted that what is included in the designations has evolved over time, and that they are now including more contributing features. She also mentioned that Forestry has information on historic trees. Ms. Zink suggested having a work session presentation from Forestry about trees. Mr. Ernest mentioned that someone had compiled a list of champion trees. Chair Dunn suggested they also consider how the period of significance relates to the trees or landscaping. Chair Dunn also asked for more information about skylights and sun tunnels. Ms. Bzdek said Staff would follow up on that.

- **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Dunn adjourned the meeting at 7:41 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Gretchen Schiager.

Minutes approved by a vote of the Commission on 18 Oct 2017


Meg Dunn, Chair