

CITY OF MUSKEGON
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES

October 3, 2023

J. Huss called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. and roll was taken.

MEMBERS PRESENT: J. Huss, T. Emory, K. George, G. Borgman, S. Radtke (late),

MEMBERS ABSENT: D. Gregersen, excused

STAFF PRESENT: J. Pesch, W. Webster

OTHERS PRESENT: B. Spray (1420 Clinton); R. Murak

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of September 5, 2023 was made by T. Emory, supported by G. Borgman and approved with J. Huss, T. Emory and K. George, and G. Borgman voting aye.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Case 2023-20 – 1420 Clinton St. – Siding, Trim Wrap, Windows, Doors

Applicant: Helen Sherman - District: Clinton-Peck - Current Function: Residential

The applicant was seeking approval to install vinyl siding over the existing wood siding on the house to match the current reveal of the wood siding, wrap the window trim with aluminum, and replace some windows in poor condition. J. Pesch added that the applicant also had proposed to remove the secondary front door to the house.

B. Spray explained that the house had once been a triplex and that, in addition to the secondary front door, she was proposing to remove the door on the far right side of the house that opened onto the side porch. She planned to have a single front door centered on the front steps, surrounded by side lights. G. Borgman noted that, based on the architectural style of the house, it likely would not have had side lights surrounding the front door. B. Spray asked about the possibility of installing a double door as the main entrance to the house. K. George explained that the HDC's local standards called for retaining the original rough openings. Board members and the applicant discussed which door was likely the original front door and where it had been located; they concluded that the middle door appeared to be the original, but it had likely been in the location of the left-most door. It was proposed that the middle door be replaced with a window and that the far right side door be removed and sided to match the rest of the house. K. George noted that if a window replaced the door, it would likely need to contain tempered glass due to its location near the interior stairway. The board specified that the replacement window should also match the size and configuration of the other windows on the main floor.

Moving on to discuss the proposed vinyl siding, K. George explained that the HDC typically did not approve vinyl siding, but could approve wood, composite, or cement board siding. G. Borgman added that if composite siding was used, the existing wood siding would have to be removed first. B. Spray explained that the siding on the back and right sides of the house received the most sun exposure and was in worse condition; she asked if it would be an option to repair or replace siding on those sides of the house and repaint the siding that was in better condition. The board noted that it would be an option as long as the replacement siding matched the reveal of the

existing siding. The HDC discussed the possibility of allowing the east (rear) and north (left) elevations, which were least visible from the street, to be resided with composite siding, noting that any original wood siding in good condition could be reused to repair any damaged sections on the more visible facades.

S. Radtke arrived at 4:21 p.m.

B. Spray asked if replacing the existing wood windows with vinyl windows would be a possibility. K. George explained that, if the existing windows could not be repaired, the HDC preferred wood replacement windows or other window products that closely mimicked the appearance of the existing wood windows. S. Radtke asked how many windows needed to be replaced. B. Spray said that three windows were damaged to the point of needing to be replaced. S. Radtke explained that if the damage included broken glass, it would likely be more cost effective to repair rather than replace the entire window. B. Spray noted that the large, center window on the front porch had been replaced with a piece of plexiglass and that the original sashes were gone entirely – she proposed that it be replaced with a double-hung window. J. Pesch noted that a historic photo of the house showed that the window was originally double-hung with the split aligning with the two smaller windows surrounding it.

S. Radtke mentioned that aluminum-wrapped window trim was also part of the original request and that the HDC had previously approved such requests when it would not obscure any architectural detailing, as was the case at this house. He suggested the HDC might consider only allowing trim wrapping on the back and side of the house where the sun caused the most damage to the existing wood. K. George explained that there was a chance that aluminum wrap could cause additional damage to window sills and suggested replacing damaged sills with pressure treated wood.

J. Huss left at 4:45 p.m.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to repair and replace the existing wood siding as necessary, allowing for the driveway side and rear of the house to be resided with either wood or composite siding with a smooth finish and an exposure dimension that matches the existing siding; eliminate two of the three existing front doors retaining the leftmost door, replacing the middle door with a window to match the size and configuration of the other windows on the main floor, and removing the far right door and residing with siding to match the rest of the house; replace the center window on the front porch with a wood or composite window to match the house's existing windows as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained was made by K. George, supported by G. Borgman and approved with S. Radtke, K. George, G. Borgman, and T. Emory voting aye.

Case 2023-21 – 382 W. Muskegon Ave. – House Move

Applicant: City of Muskegon - District: Nelson - Current Function: Residential

The applicant was seeking approval to relocate the house currently located at 1292 Jefferson Street to the vacant lot at 382 W. Muskegon Avenue. In the new location, the house was proposed to be listed for sale in as-is condition, with necessary improvements to be completed by a future owner. J. Pesch shared two proposed site plans for the house in the new location, noting that the front of the house would align with the other houses on the block in both options. He explained that the difference between the two options dealt with the back of the house; one showed what appeared to be a rear addition to the house as being removed, the other showed it being retained. J. Pesch shared that the movers had some concerns with moving this portion of the house.

The HDC reviewed photos of the house in its current location and J. Pesch explained that, in order to move it, the house would need to be disconnected from the enclosed back porch and breezeway that joined it with the church, both of which were much later additions and would not be preserved. The back portion of the house consisted of what appeared to be a two-story addition, though its date of construction had not been confirmed. J. Pesch noted that the peak of the roof of that section of the house cut into the frieze board of the front portion of the house and had arched windows that did not match those found on other parts of the house. S. Radtke explained that, based on the style of the trim and arched windows, the back section appeared to be older than the rest of the house –

likely dating from the 1850s or 1860s with proportions and scale more in line with that of the Greek Revival style – whereas the main body of the house was of the Italianate style likely dating to the 1870s (the house was constructed in the late 1860s and early 1870s).

J. Pesch noted that the back section of the house contained the only part of the basement that was not a crawl space, the only staircase accessing the basement, a kitchen and room on the first floor, and a staircase to two small rooms and a hallway on the second floor. While it was likely that moving the house would be easier without including this section, removing it would eliminate some of the house's square footage, require a new means of basement access, and create a dead-end hallway on the second floor at the back of the house.

R. Murak an attendee at the meeting added that the second floor hallway was not on the same level as the rest of the house requiring a step between the two sections of the house. G. Borgman stated that he thought the back section of the house seemed to be older, and that it could have been part of an existing house that once stood on the original site (current location of Hackley Park) or the current site on Jefferson Street. R. Murak added that the only known photo of the house in its original location showed a gable roof and chimney that appeared to match the rear section of the house in question.

G. Borgman asked if the HDC needed to decide to remove or retain the back portion of the house. J. Pesch explained that the HDC had the final say in what parts of the house were moved to the new site, and that he was relying on the expertise of the board members to determine the significance of the back portion of the house after hitting a dead-end in his research. He reiterated that the house would be easier to move without that back portion, and again noted the downsides to doing so.

G. Borgman stated that the bay window on the north side of the house may have to be removed for the move and J. Pesch confirmed that this was a possibility. That section could be moved separately or reconstructed at the new site. The board discussed the bay window and whether it was an original feature of the house. J. Pesch clarified that any change to the design of this part of the house would require HDC review at a future meeting.

The board asked if there were any other issues with retaining the back portion of the house on the new site. J. Pesch stated that there would not be, as the house would still meet all zoning setback requirements and there would still be space for a potential garage accessed from the rear alley, though construction of a garage was not being considered by the board at this time.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to relocate the house currently located at 1292 Jefferson Street to the vacant lot at 382 W. Muskegon Avenue with the requirement that the secondary structure attached and located behind the main house be retained as it has historical integrity in its own right as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained was made by G. Borgman, supported by T. Emory and approved with T. Emory, G. Borgman, K. George, and S. Radtke voting aye.

OTHER BUSINESS

Update on Case 2023-18 at 316 W. Webster – Following the HDC's discussion of this case at the September meeting, J. Pesch and S. Radtke visited the site to meet with Library Director, J. Zappacosta, and better understand the project. J. Pesch explained that the proposed freestanding awning was to be located behind the HVAC unit which itself was screened with a tall block wall. As the awning would not be visible from the street, staff approved the work.

The board chose to table the other items under new business until a future meeting since J. Pesch had to leave to attend another meeting.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:26 p.m.