

CITY OF MUSKEGON
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES

July 11, 2023

Chairperson S. Radtke called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. and roll was taken.

MEMBERS PRESENT: S. Radtke, J. Huss, T. Emory, G. Borgman

MEMBERS ABSENT: K. George; D. Gregersen, excused

STAFF PRESENT: J. Pesch

OTHERS PRESENT: A. Straub and P. Straub (1164 Terrace); J. Mayberry and K. Newton (1715 Peck); C. Cockream and E. Cockream (557 W. Western); Jo. Hoff, Je. Hoff, and Baby Hoff (1122 Terrace); K. Neumann and D. Neumann (1065 4th); K. Frazier (MCGS)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of June 6, 2023 was made by G. Borgman, supported by T. Emory and approved with S. Radtke, J. Huss, T. Emory and G. Borgman voting aye.

OLD BUSINESS

Case 2021-32 – 1164 Terrace St. – Porch

Applicant: Andy Straub - District: McLaughlin - Current Function: Residential

The applicant was seeking approval to restore the second story porch on the rear of the house with a new replacement railing design. This was a portion of proposed work that was reviewed and approved by the HDC in October 2021, but had not been completed, and this request was essentially an extension of the previous HDC approval from 2021 which included approval to “remove and restore the second story porch on the rear of the house with a new replacement railing design.”

J. Pesch explained that the porch railing and roof had already been removed at the time of the 2021 review and summarized previous work approved by the HDC as it related to this request. Board members reviewed photos in the staff report of two versions of the porch that had existed previously.

A. Straub mentioned that the porch had fallen over when they had initially started work on the house and that their plan was to essentially rebuild the porch in the same railing design that had existed in 2009, and without the roof. T. Emory asked what would be used for corner posts. A. Straub stated that he intended to match the new corner posts with those found on the second story porch on the front of the house and the side entrance. J. Huss asked if the proposed knee-wall on the back porch would be sided with shingles or lap siding and A. Straub said it would have lap siding. S. Radtke asked if the former railing around the rounded bay window visible in the 2009 photo would be reinstalled and A. Straub stated that it would not.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to restore the second story porch on the rear of the house with a new replacement railing design matching the design that previously existed in 2021, but without the roof and with corner posts that match those used on the front porch as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained was made by J. Huss, supported by G. Borgman and approved with S. Radtke, J. Huss, G. Borgman, and T. Emory voting aye.

NEW BUSINESS

Case 2023-10 – 1715 Peck St. – Siding, Soffit/Fascia, and Windows

Applicant: Alive on the Lakeshore - District: Clinton-Peck - Current Function: Commercial

The applicant was seeking approval to reside the building, install new aluminum soffit and fascia, and replace all windows in the building. J. Pesch added that the siding surrounding the front porch would be board and batten.

J. Mayberry stated that the existing siding material was vinyl, not aluminum, and that the proposed replacement siding would match the width of the siding currently on the house. He added that the request would also involve removal of the right-side front door and siding over the opening, as the two doors on the front porch led into the same space.

K. Newton said that the wood soffits were likely original other than the rear addition which had aluminum soffits, but that the urgent concern was the condition of the roof. J. Pesch shared a Historic District Commission Staff Approval Form with the contractor for the reroofing work.

J. Huss asked what material the current windows were made of and J. Mayberry stated that they were a hodgepodge of materials including vinyl and wood, and that the wood was rotting in a number of places. He added that it appeared that the windows had been replaced as necessary over time, so it was difficult to determine which may be original; he stated that the three windows on the bump-out of the north elevation, two on the east elevation, and the dormer windows were likely the only original windows in the house. S. Radtke discussed the enclosed front porch and its possible original appearance (comparing it to another house at the northeast corner of Peck and Dale) prior to the building's conversion into a commercial office space. S. Radtke proposed drawing inspiration from the three windows on the bump-out on the north elevation for the replacement windows on the front porch, noting that the majority of the front porch was not original to the house. The board recommended installing three casement windows with divided lites in the upper panes.

S. Radtke said he was curious about the original siding and J. Pesch noted that the HDC files contained no photos of the building prior installation of the current siding. J. Mayberry explained that the original siding was removed when the current siding was installed. Because the current siding was likely much wider than the original siding, the board discussed what would be an acceptable replacement. G. Borgman proposed replacement vinyl siding with a narrow, three-inch, reveal to replace the existing vinyl siding. The board stated that the existing board and batten siding on the porch was also not original, and its replacement was preferred to match the rest of the body of the house. J. Mayberry stated that they were hoping to use board and batten siding to avoid using a single type of siding on the entire house. S. Radtke suggested switching the siding above the bottom sill of the second floor windows to shakes and keeping the lower portion as lap siding, similar to the neighboring house. K. Newton expressed concern about the cost of shakes and the board clarified that it was only a suggestion, not a requirement.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to reside the building with three-inch reveal horizontal siding with the option of shakes on the top half, install new aluminum soffit and fascia, and replace all windows with windows of the same size and design as the existing windows with the exception of the front window which is to be converted to three fixed, casement, or double-hung windows that match the design of the three windows on the bump-out on the north side of the house, and remove the right-hand front door as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained was made by J. Huss, supported by G. Borgman and approved with T. Emory, G. Borgman, J. Huss, and S. Radtke voting aye.

Case 2023-11 – 557 W. Western Ave. – Awning

Applicant: Corrine Cockream - District: Clay-Western - Current Function: Commercial

The applicant was seeking approval to install an awning on the W. Western Avenue elevation of the building.

C. Cockream explained that the building originally had an awning and the HDC reviewed a historic photo of that awning. G. Borgman asked if there was a preference for one of the two awning options included in the request and C. Cockream stated that the full-length awning was the preferred option because it was closer to the original size. T. Emory asked what the awning would be made of and C. Cockream said that it would be a fabric material and fixed instead of operable. S. Radtke stated that he felt this was similar to a temporary structure that would not permanently affect the building. J. Pesch added that there was very little guidance for awnings in the local standards aside from the sign standards.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to install the full-length option of the awning on the W. Western Avenue elevation of the building as proposed in the July 11, 2023 HDC staff report with the condition that the awning be mounted in such a way that it only ties into the mortar joints of the facade and 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, J. Huss, G. Borgman, and S. Radtke voting aye.

Case 2023-12 – 1122 Terrace St. – Garage Demolition and Construction of New Garage

Applicant: Josh Hoff - District: McLaughlin - Current Function: Residential

The applicant was seeking approval to demolish the existing garage and to construct a new, 36'x45' detached garage at the rear of the property, accessed from Diana Avenue. The garage was proposed to have an offset face, hipped roof, and the same roofing material and colors as the main house.

Jo. Hoff presented a model of the proposed garage and the existing house; he explained that he was looking for additional parking space and workshop space, and that he currently has all of the building materials for the ongoing rehabilitation of the house stored in the house because the current garage is too small. He explained that there was significant wood rot because of long-term issues with the garage roof.

S. Radtke noted that a gable roof was shown in the provided rendering, but a hipped roof was used in the model. Jo. Hoff explained that the hipped roof would match the existing garage, but he had also considered a gable roof and did not want his architect to have to redraw the roof. S. Radtke stated that either roof style could be appropriate. J. Huss added that the gable roof would match the house. G. Borgman suggested matching the pitch of the garage roof to the pitch of the house's roof, but Jo. Hoff said that the pitch of the house's roof was 45 degrees and the zoning ordinance restricted the maximum height of garages. J. Pesch clarified that a garage could only be 14-feet high from the ground to a point midway between the eaves and the peak of the roof.

Jo. Hoff explained that the roofing material would match that of the house, but the siding would be a cement board siding with either a three- or four-inch reveal, while the house had vinyl siding. He noted that the original siding had a three-inch reveal, but the aluminum siding that was installed later had a four-inch reveal. Jo. Hoff stated that he had planned to use a faux-wood grain finish similar to what had been done with the house. The board specified that cement board siding with a smooth finish was preferred to a faux-wood grain finish.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to demolish the existing garage and to construct a new, 36'x45' detached garage at the rear of the property, accessed from Diana Avenue with an offset face, hipped roof or gabled roof, and the same roofing material as the main house with cement board smooth-face siding with a three- or four-inch reveal (three-inch reveal preferred) as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained was made by J. Huss, supported by T. Emory and approved with S. Radtke, G. Borgman, J. Huss, and T. Emory voting aye.

Because no applicant was present for Case 2023-13, the board discussed Case 2023-14 at 1065 4th Street, first.

Case 2023-14 – 1065 4th St. – Siding

Applicant: First Church of Christ Scientist - District: National Register - Current Function: Institutional

The applicant was seeking approval to replace rotted paneling material with 8” composite grooved panel siding and trim boards. J. Pesch provided some background on the building which was built in 1958 and originally served as the Chamber of Commerce; he noted that it was located in the National Register Historic District but was built much later than the construction date of most buildings in this district. A building remodel in the 1980s replaced much of the original windows and paneling with the current, coated plywood sheathing and smaller, double-hung windows. J. Pesch added that, had the building not been altered in the 1980s, it may have been architecturally significant. K. Neumann passed around a sample of the existing sheathing and D. Neumann explained that the material was failing as the underlying plywood was rotting and the coating was falling off.

D. Neumann added that he was unsure of what to do with the seam between the composite grooved panels he was proposing, as they were not long enough to span the full height of the facade and would leave a horizontal seam where they came together. The board suggested adding a trim board at the top of the windows to hide the seam between the panels. J. Huss asked if the new paneling would be installed on the entirety of the building and D. Neumann stated that it would only be used where the current failing sheathing was used.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to replace rotted paneling material with 8” composite grooved panel siding and trim boards including trim along the seam between the top and bottom panels at the top of the window as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained was made by J. Huss, supported by G. Borgman and approved with S. Radtke, J. Huss, G. Borgman, and T. Emory voting aye.

Case 2023-13 – 22 E. Isabella Ave. – Windows

Applicant: Jeremy Terrell I - District: McLaughlin - Current Function: Residential

The applicant was seeking approval to replace existing wood and vinyl windows with new vinyl windows of like size. J. Pesch explained that a number of windows on the house had been replaced at some point in the last year without building permits but he did not have documentation to determine when that work was completed or which owner was responsible for the unapproved work. The original windows were double-hung with at least two fixed, decorative windows, which had since been removed. Only a handful of original windows remained in the house on the back side.

The HDC acknowledged that little could be done about the work that was already complete and discussed the limited visibility to the back of the house where the remaining windows were proposed to be replaced.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to replace existing wood and vinyl windows on the back of the house with new vinyl windows of like size as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained was made by J. Huss, supported by T. Emory and approved with T. Emory, S. Radtke, J. Huss, and G. Borgman voting aye.

OTHER BUSINESS

Muskegon County Genealogical Society (MCGS) – K. Frazier, President of the MCGS, attended the meeting to discuss a potential partnership between the HDC and the MCGS related to their house histories project. F. Harrington and other members of the MCGS had been sharing their research with the Lakeshore Museum Center and others that were interested; they also offered free research to residents curious about the history of their house. The board mentioned that this could tie in well with their public outreach efforts and new social media presence. J. Pesch stated that he would work with the MCGS to further explore this project and how it could tie into the HDC’s ongoing efforts.

ADJOURN

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