



York Historical Architectural Review Board
Meeting Minutes
February 23, 2017

Members in attendance included: Craig Zumbun, Chair; Mark Shermeyer; Dave Redshaw; Justine Landis; Mark Skehan

Absent: Robin Pottorff; Teresa Johnescu; John Fox; Becky Zeller

Consultant: Mary Alfson Tinsman, JMT Cultural Resource Manager/ HARB Consultant

| AGENDA ITEM | DISCUSSION | ACTION/RESULT |
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| Welcome and call to order Craig Zumbun, Chair | The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm. The agenda was prepared by the HARB Consultant. | A quorum was present. |
| Changes to the Agenda | | None. |
| Minutes of January 26, 2017 | | Move to approve by Mr. Redshaw with minor changes (see note below), seconded by Mr. Kunkle. Approved. |
| Cases | The following cases are approved with the recommended actions. | |

Changes to the Meeting Minutes: Mr. Redshaw noted that he did not abstain from approving the previous minutes dated January 26, 2017.

Case #1 – 215-219 S. George Street

A request for a Certificate of Appropriateness by Mr. Josh Lutz, of Pennsylvania Counseling Services, for the demolition of 215 and 219 S. George Street and the construction of a new 18,000 - 20,000 SF building and parking area on the resulting lot.

The applicant was present to discuss his application. Mr. Lutz explained that they have outgrown their existing location and are looking to demolish these two buildings to rebuild a new facility with parking. Mr. Redshaw asked if the application had met with the York Redevelopment Authority (RDA), and the applicant indicated that they had not met with the RDA. Mr. Redshaw noted that the RDA has several

properties that they will sell throughout the City for \$1, and suggested that as an option. The applicant noted that they have not purchased the property yet, however they have an agreement to purchase. Mr. Redshaw noted that the example that the applicant provided in their application is a modern building that was constructed on a mainly vacant lot. Mr. Shermeyer noted that there were several iterations of the plans for this modern construction before the HARB Board approved.

Mr. Shermeyer noted that the buildings in question on S. George Street are in good condition, and that the facades are in good condition. He noted that there are other properties in much worse condition. He noted that other properties have been built, where properties were burned, where the facades were maintained and new buildings were constructed behind them. He further expressed a desire that the applicant contact and coordinate with the RDA to find a better option for the new facility. If the applicant would proceed and these buildings were demolished, then there might be a case for retaining the historic facades and building a new building behind the façade.

Mr. Shermeyer reiterated that he feels that there are other locations that are in City that are in worse condition that the applicant should look at.

Mr. Lutz noted that they have concerns with renovating buildings as you have the maintenance issues associated with older buildings, even if they are properly rehabilitated. They have done this in the past and are aware of the issues. Mr. Lutz asked if the HARB Board would be able to approve this application if the facades on these buildings were retained. Mr. Zumbrun replied that this was a possibility, however, the Board is working within the Secretary of the Interiors Standards and would be hard pressed to approve an application to demolish these buildings, that appear to be in good overall condition. He further noted that the Board is aware of the green energy concerns and financial concerns of each of the applications received by the Board, but that he would like to see the applicant work with an architect to explore the costs to rehabilitate and reuse these buildings. He noted that often demolition costs will far exceed what is expected due to the various issues with historic buildings. He indicated that an application that would re-use these buildings would be better received by the Board.

Mr. Shermeyer noted that the buildings on S. George Street where facades had been retained were primarily burned out and damaged buildings, however that was an extreme case. He noted that the Board would look at an application where the facades were retained, but that Mr. Zumbrun made a valid point in discussing the demolition and abatement costs may exceed what the applicant would want to pay. He noted again that if they were to look at buildings that the RDA needs to clear - or that they have cleared already – could be a more economical option to consider.

Mr. Zumbrun asked if the applicant was a non-profit, and the applicant indicated that they were a for profit business. Mr. Zumbrun noted that as a for profit building they would be eligible for historic tax credits, pending the building selection. He also noted that another factor to consider in demolition and reconstruction is the utility costs, and that rehabilitation may save them money.

The applicant noted that another issue that they have is the concern regarding parking. Mr. Zumbrun noted that there would be an option to remove some of the more modern additions at the rear of the buildings in question which would allow for more parking. Mr. Redshaw noted that in terms of being energy efficient the older brick buildings, with thicker brick walls, would be more energy efficient due to their construction methods. He also recommended looking at solar energy use at the property.

Mr. Redshaw made a motion to deny the application as presented, with the opportunity if investigated, to consider other avenues and alternatives. Mr. Kunkle seconded the motion.

Additional Discussion: Mr. Shermeyer further noted that there is not enough information on the proposed new building to make an informed decision. The application, and the idea, is not finalized enough for the Board to make an informed decision on demolition and new construction. Mr. Shermeyer noted that the application also mentioned vinyl windows, and that vinyl windows would not be approved on the façade of a building along main street. The applicant noted that they have had issues with a project in Reading using wood siding and wood windows. Mr. Shermeyer noted that the board has previously approved fiber cement on properties in the historic district.

The motion was amended to read as follows: The building contributes to the historic district and the proposal does not meet the Secretary of the Interiors Standards for demolition. Moreover, the design proposal is insufficiently detailed. The Board Recommends consideration of adaptive reuse or, at a minimum, retention of the façade. The alternative might be to consult with the RDA on other sites available.

The motion was denied 6 to 0.

Other business:

Adjourning and next meeting **The meeting was adjourned by general consent at 6:30pm; the next scheduled meeting is set for Thursday March 9, 2017.**

Minutes recorded by Mary Alfson Tinsman, JMT Cultural Resource Professional/HARB Consultant.