



York Historical Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes

October 14, 2021 | 101 S George St, York PA 17401

MEMBERS PRESENT	MEMBERS ABSENT	STAFF PRESENT
Craig Zumbrun, Chair*	Robyn Pottorff	Mike Pritchard, Planner
Dennis Kunkle, Vice-chair	Ruth Robbins	
Mark Shermeyer		
Mark Skehan		
<i>As noted below, Mr. Zumbrun was not present for cases 1 and 2.</i>		

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION/RESULT
Welcome and call to order	Staff prepared the agenda.	Mr. Kunkle called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.
Changes to the agenda	Mr. Pritchard spoke with the applicant for 243 E Market St before the meeting. The proposed roof work is on a flat roof not visible from a public right-of-way.	Mr. Kunkle struck the application for 243 E Market St from the agenda.
Minutes of previous meeting		Mr. Skehan moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Mr. Kunkle seconded. The motion carried 2-0, Mr. Shermeyer abstaining due to his absence from the meeting in question.
Cases	The following cases were considered as described below.	

Case #1 – 31 S Queen St

A request by Ms. Teresa Johnescu to replace third-story windows with composite windows with one-over-one pane configuration.

DISCUSSION

Ms. Johnescu briefly described the need for the project following recent storms.

ACTION

Mr. Shermeyer moved to recommend approval of the proposal as submitted. Mr. Skehan seconded. The motion carried unanimously. (Mr. Shermeyer, Mr. Skehan, and Mr. Kunkle voted in the affirmative. Mr. Zumbrun was not present during this case.)

Case #2 – 21 E Market St

A request by M&T Bank for new signage at 21 E Market St

DISCUSSION

Cindy Orsi and Mike Hyman of M&T Bank were present. The Board elaborated upon the staff review that internally illuminated signage is not consistent with the York Design Guidelines. The Board and the applicant's representative agreed that "halo" lighting behind channel letters is more appropriate for the district and acceptable to M&T's branding.

ACTION

Mr. Shermeyer moved to recommend approval of the proposal, amended to propose "halo"-lit, channel letters with green faces, on both the ATM and the eastern side of the building, contingent upon final review and approval by the City Planner. Mr. Skehan seconded. The motion carried unanimously. (Mr. Shermeyer, Mr. Skehan, and Mr. Kunkle voted in the affirmative. Mr. Zumbrun was not present during this case.)

Case #3 – 21 E Market St

A request by Warehaus, on behalf of RSDC, to demolish 244, 246-248, and 250 North George Street.

DISCUSSION

Mr. Zumbrun arrived at the meeting during this discussion.

The Board noted that parts of the former Cupid's and Gloria's buildings were previously approved for demolition in conjunction with a mixed-use development project.

Ms. Erin Himmelberger of Warehaus and Mr. Dylan Bauer of RSDC discussed the need to redesign the development project on these properties. Mr. Bauer said that the COVID pandemic

has affected construction costs, leaving the project with a significant financial shortfall. The applicants have therefore redesigned the project to 1) highlight the structure at 252 N George St, which is also the oldest structure on the site, and 2) create an outdoor plaza and dining space for a restaurant tenant in 252 N George St.

The Board and the applicant discussed the properties proposed for demolition. The facades were restored and repaired in about 2001. The remaining structure(s) behind the facades are shell buildings and in varying conditions. Ms. Himmelberger noted that they “look better from the street” than upon further investigation inside the structures.

Mr. Shermeyer noted his concerns about approving demolition without certainty that a construction proposal will be completed. He said he does feel that the applicant has addressed many of his concerns.

Mr. Skehan noted that the staff review recommends denial of the application based upon the York Design Guidelines, which state that demolition, “is considered appropriate in very few cases,” and that, “demolition may be appropriate: when the public safety and welfare requires the removal of a building; when the structural instability of the building has been amply demonstrated by the report of an engineer or architect, and after sufficient documentation; when the building does not contribute to the historic district; [or] when economic hardship requirements have been met.”

Mr. Skehan and Mr. Zumbrun noted HARB’s purpose as a recommending body that rarely recommends approval of demolition, however, City Council’s decision on a Certificate of Appropriateness is final and HARB’s recommendation is not always confirmed. Furthermore, Mr. Bauer, Mr. Zumbrun, and Mr. Skehan agreed that all parties are concerned about setting a precedent of HARB’s recommending approval of demolition.

Mr. Shermeyer suggested that the Board might table the proposal for further development of the construction drawings, etc. Mr. Skehan suggested that the Board give the applicant a decision at this meeting so that they may continue in the process in a timely fashion.

ACTION

Mr. Zumbrun moved to recommend denial of the application as presented based on the precedent a decision to approve the demolition of 18th-century structures would set. Mr. Skehan seconded. The motion carried 3-1, with Mr. Shermeyer voting in the negative. Mr. Shermeyer noted that his dissenting vote was based on the fact that the facades are significant but the structures are deteriorating; further, he might agree with the vision of an exciting urban

plaza but would prefer that the applicant provide the Board with additional design documents before a final recommendation.

Case #4 – 230 Gas Ave and Case #5 – 119 Fickes Way

A request by Carlos Fuentes to demolish the structure at 230 Gas Avenue and a request by Carlos Fuentes to demolish the structure at 119 Fickes Way. (The Board reviewed these cases together because the applicant was the same and the properties are adjacent and damaged during the same fire, as discussed below).

DISCUSSION

Following a significant fire, the City of York Bureau of Permits and Inspections ordered these structures to be demolished. Mr. Fuentes noted that the property owner contracted with him to undertake this work following a recent court decision that upheld the City’s order, giving the property owner 60 days to demolish the structures.

Mr. Fuentes said that the property owner would like to rebuild and restore the structure at 230 Gas Avenue, which is a single-family home. He would like to hire a structural engineer to determine the feasibility of this work. Mr. Fuentes said the property owner is amicable to demolishing the structure and 119 Fickes Way.

The Board noted that the staff review found both proposed demolitions to be consistent with the Design Guidelines and that 119 Fickes Way is not a contributing element to the historic district.

ACTION

Mr. Skehan moved to table the Board’s decision on the application for 230 Gas Avenue pending a structural engineer’s review of the building. Mr. Zumbrun seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Skehan moved to recommend approval of the application for demolition of 119 Fickes Way as presented. Mr. Zumbrun seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Other business (None)

Adjournment and next meeting

Mr. Kunkle adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:00 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for October 28, 2021.

Minutes recorded by Mike Pritchard, Planner