

COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

JUNE 23, 2022

Members Present

Robin Crews
Kathryn Waters
Robert Weir
Jackson Weller
Sonja Ingram
Susan Stilwell
Robert Stowe

Members Absent

Staff

Doug Plachcinski
Lisa Jones
Alan Spencer
Shanika Williams

Ms. Crews called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

ITEMS FOR PUBLIC HEARING

- A. Certificate of Appropriateness request PZ22-119 for window replacement, painting the exterior of the building, and signs at 750 Main Street (Parcel ID # 26402).*

Mr. Doug Plachcinski, stated I am the Planning Director for the City of Danville. I am going to kind of work with the applicant on this. What happened and let me tell some background. They submitted to the River District Design Committee an application, and we didn't check the map and the boundaries are right there. This is a CAR application not a River District Design, and the River District approved it and it wasn't until we realized the first email that I received from Sonja saying hey is this coming to the CAR? I asked Jo Ann to come in case there were any questions because I feel responsible because this was a staff oversight to make sure that it was presented in an appropriate way. The painting has already started on the building, and we have some color samples of a light and darker gray included in the packet. There will be a sign within the CAR guidelines for wall signs; 32 square feet. The sign falls within the CAR guidelines. The painting, the design guidelines say that to painting non-historical contributing buildings in the district that you need a certificate of appropriateness, but it does not provide any standards about painting the masonry. It says for new construction that don't want masonry painted but existing construction it is silent on that. I also want to point out that there are several houses in the stretch of Main Street that have painted masonry already. It is not unique, and somebody mentioned to me that Danville is somewhat unique in that several of our historic homes on Main Street are painted masonry and that is kind of unusual for historic districts that the masonry itself being painted as part of the historic context. I appreciate Jo Ann coming in case there are any questions but that is where we are at.

Ms. Crews opened the Public Hearing.

Present to speak on behalf of this request was Jo Ann Pyles, who stated I just wanted to come up in case anyone has any questions. Do you remember me Ms. Stilwell?

Ms. Stilwell stated I do.

Ms. Pyles stated Ms. Stilwell helped me get my first business when I was twenty-three years old, and it is so good to see you.

Ms. Stilwell stated I am so old now; I wish I was twenty-three.

Ms. Pyles stated no you're not, you're just as spunky as the day that I met you.

Ms. Crews closed the Public Hearing.

Ms. Stilwell stated I have a question does the building need more repair and that is why it is painted or is it an aesthetic reason you decided to paint it?

Ms. Pyles stated we decided just to give it a different look to it to make it pop and that the paint would do it more justice for the building now as opposed to doing the windows now. We would like to do the windows later on, but I do have a picture on my phone if you would like to see it? The landscaping and everything will be done this weekend, but it is a dramatic difference if you want to see it.

Ms. Crews stated we have not purview over landscaping, and we are fine with that. Thank you.

Ms. Stilwell stated what is your use of the building? I'm just curious.

Ms. Pyles stated the top floor will be saman suites because you know I have been a beautician for years. Where archmoulds can come in and rent their own space. The gym area we will use for rentals. We hopefully will have a tutorial program for that. The downstairs, there are other areas where someone can come and say can I rent this portion of the building, there is an area for a gym, and there is a full kitchen downstairs. We kind of want to keep it the way that it was because once upon a time it used to be a daycare. We are going to be looking for people that are interested in having a daycare business.

Ms. Stilwell stated that would be fabulous for people that work downtown.

Ms. Ingram stated why were you replacing the windows? Are they in poor condition?

Ms. Pyles stated the windows now if you look at them, they have a bay window and they have some kind of rocking on the outside. We thought that the windows would give it a better look and some more sun light into the building. We researched it and at this point we didn't want to get into any structural issues because the way that the bay windows are made. They are made up into the structure of the building which would have to incur further cost. We said rather than do that, let's paint.

Mr. Plachcinski stated so, you're not moving forward with the windows at this time?

Ms. Pyles stated not at this time.

Ms. Ingram stated who is doing the painting and the reason that I asked is, because people call me all the time and say something is happening at this house. They mentioned that the people painting were painting right over weeds and things and maybe they weren't doing a good job. I was thinking maybe you should take a look at who is doing the work really closely.

Ms. Pyles stated it is a company out of Charlotte and what has happened the building had as you know there are about three or four trees in the front, and they are big and overgrown. The landscaping company came in and cut the trees down and they painted so some of the over spray could have possibly got on those trees that were already painted but all of that has been cleaned and got up as of the day before yesterday. When I checked everything was good. I didn't see any over spray or anything.

Ms. Stilwell stated they are metal windows, aren't they?

Ms. Pyles stated they are actually metal frames but there are windows on the side and then there is brick with some kind of rocky topping on top of a moisture board. You know the moisture board that they use to lay tile they put that moisture board on that front facing and then put a rock design on it. The sides are just glass windows.

Ms. Stilwell stated I would urge you not to replace those windows unless you have to, because you are going to open up a can of bad worms.

Ms. Pyles stated as we further went and looked at it, we decided not to because it goes up to you know.

Ms. Ingram stated I think mistakes happen and I'm not concerned about that, and I think it's good to come together and figure out a good way forward. It certainly is not your fault at all. I was a little concerned because when you painted you kind of got rid of those little details at the top, and so forth, and it will be more uniform. It is what it is. The bigger thing for me is that it brings up between the two commissions you know the River District and CAR, and how different the guidelines are and how we should work and maybe do more together. I think maybe the River District Commission should work on their guidelines some and that might be something that we can look at in the future. Doug, I know you are leaving, so I don't know who will do that?

Mr. Plachcinski stated I am leaving behind a transitional report that will include a list of things and updating both committee's guidelines is important to that as well because the River District actually comes as two separate historic districts and maybe even part of a

third. Well, the Old West End is to the historic boundaries but definitely it needs to be more consistent and both commissions are ready for updating.

Ms. Stilwell stated I know the Chairman over the River District painted a brick building that he owns down there where the VC was.

Ms. Ingram stated it had never been painted?

Ms. Stilwell stated never been painted and I can't imagine why he painted it. It is a commercial building but between the two commercial buildings was a Victorian house and, on that side, you could see that house well where it had been added on with Victorian detail. Now all of that has been obliterated and I don't understand why they painted a building on Main Street that I had sold someone who literally spent \$100,000.00, restoring the building. They took out the windows I had an 1896 ad that showed the lines, and this woman restored the façade identical to what it had looked like in 1896 and they had turned the Victorian windows and it is a mess. They are just not doing the job that they should be doing.

Ms. Crews stated commissioners lets redirect our attention to this application in front of us, if you will.

Ms. Pyles stated we are trying to stay within the guidelines and not go with anything too much, but to keep the contrast and the color like what you say is the brick and then the tan. So, that is why we went with the lighter gray verses a darker gray and still have that contrast and subtle change instead of you go down there and say omg. I do and we do appreciate the historical value of the area.

Mr. Plachcinski stated certainly if this was a contributing historic building the conversation would be different, but it's not.

Ms. Stilwell made a motion to approve COA request PZ-22-119 at 750 Main Street to paint the majority of the brick building the lighter white metal color and have the sections of the windows and sign area be painted the magnetic gray color and to install a metal sign. Mr. Weir seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 7-0 vote.

Ms. Stilwell stated have you had your sign made?

Ms. Pyles stated not yet, we are working with power signs to get the sign made. It will be like a gray metal 3d that kind of stands out from the building and nothing too dramatic.

Ms. Stilwell stated I highly recommend that the background be dark, and the lettering be light because you can see them three times the distance that you can when it is a white sign and dark lettering.

Ms. Pyles stated we are not going to go with a white sign because if you see on the examples that we sent you can see the letters kind of sit out.

Mr. Will Mackaman stated can I just make a quick comment. I work for the River District Association, and I have been helping Jo Ann with the grant for that façade. I think part of the confusion came when this is on the map of the River District it's just like on the one little section which it overlaps something. I think maybe that is where the confusion came from. When we checked the map, it is within the River District boundaries as well.

B. Certificate of Appropriateness Request PZ22-126, to renovate the existing home and property at 503 Holbrook Avenue (Parcel ID # 21964).

Present to speak on behalf of this request was Steve Ryder, who stated I am one of the owners of the house. I bought the house with my wife and my brother, and his wife and we have been working to bring it back to its former glory there. If you drove by you can tell that it has been neglected for a number of years, but it is still in pretty good condition. There is a little bit of dry rot that we are taking care of and a lot of dry rot in the back. Our desires are to keep the historical look to it and instead of replacing the windows we want to restore them the best that we can. We are putting on storm windows to help keep the utility cost down as much as we can to. The siding is double lap siding, and we are replacing that with double lap siding and a fair amount of it is still in pretty good condition. We had to take off that whole back end because it was completely dry rotted to the point that a 4 by 6 was about this big. Whenever originally built it was not done properly and that all is going to be replaced with cedar siding. The sides and the front, there are some replacements that need to be done and we will match that up accordingly with that. Like I said with the windows we are going to replace the windows and add storm windows to it. The front concrete walkway we are going to put in brick pavers so that it will match the sidewalk that is existing there. The concrete was pretty bad, and it was a hazardous condition, because we were concerned that people would be tripping over it, so we decided to dig it up and put in the brick there. The decking in the back you can't see very much of the decking, but it is pretty worn, and it is wood decking. Our desire is to change that to a Trex similar product material and something that will last a lot longer and have less maintenance. We would like to have a hot tub and my goal is to set the hot tub down so that it is flush with the deck and that it is not visible from either around from walking it of either side of the house from the streets. The roof we may or may not get to as far as replacing; that is workable with some repairs. We have a quote to replace the roof, but it was more than the cost of the house. We've kind of reassessed when we are going to be able to do that.

Ms. Stilwell stated is it standing seams?

Mr. Ryder stated yes.

Ms. Stilwell stated I know a very good repair man and he works on the worsts parts and then moves along.

Mr. Ryder stated okay, I will talk to you after the meeting. We have a couple of worse parts and then we can take care of the rest. That is pretty much the exterior that we are going to be doing. We are going to replace the white picket fence that is there with another white picket fence. My wife is a gardener, and she likes having a nice landscape and that is going to be her thing where she can get that back in shape.

Ms. Crews opened the Public Hearing.

Ms. Crews closed the Public Hearing.

Mr. Weir stated the windows that you are going to replace what kind of windows are you talking about?

Mr. Ryder stated the windows themselves are in good enough condition where I can repair them for the most part. There are a couple that I'm not sure if I am able to repair them, so I may have to find some matching windows or have some made to do that. We decided we want to keep the actual wood windows that are there. I have restored three of them already and they look beautiful once they are restored with enough sanding and wood putty, we can get them back to good condition. Then just putting on storm windows so it makes it more energy efficient.

Ms. Crews stated I have to ask, there are only three items in front of the commission and none of them are windows.

Mr. Plachcinski stated right because the application stated they would repair them and not replace. Then repair is like for like and does not require a COA. The applicant listed seven items on their application and only three of them require a COA. As listed, the walkway replacement, roof replacement, and siding replacement. I would like to caution Mr. Ryder though a lot of the windows in these old houses are asbestos for the putty. Be careful when you remove because even though if you are doing the work yourself as a homeowner you can do it, but you are still subject to osha requirements. That is my heads up in case someone from the State shows up.

Mr. Ryder stated I did not realize that they had asbestos in the putty to.

Mr. Plachcinski stated they could, and I don't know if there is a way that you can test it.

Mr. Ryder stated I am sure there is a testing facility around here somewhere.

Mr. Plachcinski stated just please be careful.

Mr. Ryder stated I appreciate that.

Ms. Ingram stated I have a couple of things. The storm windows, don't we review storm windows?

Mr. Plachcinski stated storm windows do not required a COA.

Ms. Ingram stated are they interior or exterior?

Mr. Ryder stated I would like to do exterior because I would like to have the ones that open. The interior ones that I have seen so far, they do not open where you can allow fresh air during the nicer days. The exterior ones, you can get the ones that have screens on them and be able to open up. They have some that are invisible storms and that is what I would like to look into and see if they have something like that. The biggest thing to me is being able to open those windows and get some fresh air in.

Ms. Ingram stated I think you answered my question about the roof. I mean it looks okay to me. I think you could probably repair it instead of replacing it.

Mr. Ryder stated that is what we are hoping for.

Ms. Stilwell stated I have the best guy.

Mr. Ryder stated I love hearing that and we are learning all of the good people to work with here.

Ms. Stilwell stated if you ask all the people that live in the Old West End, they can help you.

Mr. Ryder stated that is the thing that we have found that everyone has been super friendly.

Ms. Stilwell stated I have some antique windows that I am giving away that you might can use, you are welcome to look at them. I also have some exterior doors.

Mr. Ryder stated thank you, I will definitely look at them.

Ms. Ingram stated do we review the trex, it is on the back?

Mr. Plachcinski stated it is.

Mr. Weir stated you would have to go into his driveway to see it.

Mr. Ryder stated you would have to be up into the yard.

Mr. Plachcinski stated if it were expanded then I would say maybe but not if they are just re-decking it.

Ms. Ingram stated the fence that you are doing are you going to use wood to replace that?

Mr. Ryder stated yes.

Ms. Ingram stated that is all the questions that I have but I did want to make a comment. On applications are people required to send examples of the materials that they are going to use?

Mr. Plachcinski stated they generally should if it is getting to be that kind of work or if it not a like for like. If they were proposing an asphalt shingle roof, then yes please bring an example, but they are not.

Ms. Ingram stated that might be something to add to your list and to the application form.

Mr. Plachcinski stated it is a delicate balance and we have a lot of folks in the Old West End who are trying to do a lot of the work themselves and are not hiring contractors or not familiar or sophisticated with the work as others. By hearing his story, I can tell that he is familiar with what is going on and we have other folks that aren't. We try to encourage them to submit the materials but if we were to go strictly by the code and not allow any flexibility the dangerous people would get frustrated and do it without asking. That is kind of where we are at, and we have some cases where some people have been asked and they get frustrated and they either stop working or they just do stuff and don't bother. It is a very fine line and we do try to work with them.

Mr. Weller made a motion to approve COA request PZ22-12632 at 503 Holbrook Avenue as submitted. Ms. Water seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 7-0 vote.

APPROVAL OF THE MINTUES

Mr. Weller stated to make one correction on page number 5 to change the numbers of votes to 4 instead of 5 because there were only 4 members present.

The March 24, 2022, minutes were approved as amended by a unanimous vote.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Approved