



Landmark Preservation Board
Thursday, September 19, 2019
Meeting Minutes

Common Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Don Radke called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Tom Cantwell, Cynthia Carter, Bob Haley, Dan Leary, Don Radke, Lisa Tonzi

Absent: Julia Marshall, Jeff Romano, Joe Saya

Staff: Kate Auwaerter

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

D. Leary made a motion to approve the minutes of September 5, 2019, which was seconded by B. Haley. The minutes were approved unanimously as submitted.

OLD BUSINESS

CA-19-17 224 Brattle Road (porch replacement)

The applicant was not present. The Board held the application open pending submission of revised plans for the front porch. K. Auwaerter requested that the Board review how it considers alterations to non-contributing properties within preservation districts. D. Radke agreed to include this as part of the discussion phase of the agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

Certificate of Appropriateness

CA-19-19 311 Berkeley Drive. The applicant was not present. K. Auwaerter presented the proposal to repaint the front door of the house a dark blue (Benjamin Moore "Evening Blue"). B. Haley made a motion to approve the application as submitted, which was seconded by C. Carter. The motion passed unanimously.

Zoning Referrals

PR-19-20 444 E Genesee Street. Anthony Rojas (In Architects) presented the proposal for the renovation of 444 E. Genesee Street. K. Auwaerter noted that the property is not historic, but that the Zoning Administrator had requested review by the Board because of the building's close proximity to a number of historic properties, including the Hamilton White House, Park Central Presbyterian, Boys & Girls Club and Fayette Park. A. Rojas explained that the proposed project includes the 24 residential apartments on floors 2-4, a small commercial space on the E. Genesee Street side and parking under the overhang on the N. Townsend Street side. The entire building will be resurfaced in glass and insulated grey metal panels, replacing the windowless, masonry-paneled exterior. Red metal panels in a 3-color gradient (vertically from dark to light) will highlight the tenant and customer entrances (S. Townsend Street and E. Genesee Street, respectively). Several narrow, red, vertical bands are also featured on the S. Townsend Street facade. The red panels are a reference to Firefighters Park adjacent to the building. The building's future name, Corbett Corner, is in honor of the Corbett family, which includes three generations of Syracuse firefighters.

The Board was supportive of the project and agreed that the renovation will result in a significant improvement in the building's appearance. B. Haley expressed concern about the proposed parking on the ground floor and the impact it will have on the quality of the pedestrian zone along N. Townsend Street. A. Rojas stated that

they had pushed the parking as far back from N. Townsend Street as possible and away from the corner in order to limit pedestrian/vehicular interaction.

D. Leary noted that building form is distinctly contemporary (c. 1970) with the recessed first floor under a wide overhang supported by slender columns. He stated that the proposed renovation appeared to be an appropriate update to the modern building. However, a majority of the Board members expressed concern about the material selection, in particular the use of the metal panels in a context of historic masonry buildings. After further discussion, the Board agreed to comment that it was highly supportive of the proposed project. However, the Board requested that the applicant consider substituting an alternative material or finish for the proposed metal panels on the N. Townsend and E. Genesee Street facades. Specifically, the Board suggested that the applicant consider masonry (such as brick or brick veneer) or masonry-textured panels that would provide a reference to the surrounding historic context while maintaining the overall contemporary appearance of the building. It was not opposed to the incorporation of colored panels and the proposed color gradient that highlights the tenant/customer entrances.

DISCUSSION

Non-Contributing Buildings review. K. Auwaerter noted that there was no guidance provided in the preservation ordinance or the Board's rules of procedure regarding review of the non-contributing buildings. She researched the subject and found that City of Ithaca had developed design review guidelines for non-contributing structures. The Board reviewed Ithaca's guidelines and agreed with the overall guidance. Specifically, they favored the language that stated that proposed alterations to non-contributing structures would "be evaluated solely for their impact on adjacent historic properties and on the historic environment as a whole", and that the "proposed alteration may not increase the incompatibility of the non-contributing element with its historic environment". B. Haley recommended that the language be further refined to include that the Board will review "form, color, and materials" in its consideration of alterations to non-contributing structures.

In regard to 224 Brattle Road, it was noted that this house is non-contributing because it was built just outside the period of significance of the district. In most other respects (overall form and materials) the house is compatible with the surrounding district. The Board agreed that having a firm period of significance was important for the district and that it would not be advisable to change the period of significance at this point. The Board agreed that it would review alterations to non-contributing buildings in order to confirm that what was being proposed would not negatively impact the historic character of the surrounding district.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 AM.