

**MINUTES – HARB Regular Meeting
July 12, 2021**

MINUTES

**HARRISBURG ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
July 12, 2021
VIRTUAL MEETING ON ZOOM PLATFORM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jeremiah Chamberlin, Vice Chair
Anne Montgomery, Assistant Codes Administrator
Camille Bennett
Kali Tennis

MEMBERS ABSENT: Trina Gribble, Chair
April Rucker

STAFF PRESENT: Frank Grumbine, Historic Preservation Specialist and Archivist
Isaac Gaylord, Deputy City Solicitor

OTHERS PRESENT: Sign-In Sheet Available Upon Request

CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 PM

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Ms. Montgomery moved, and Ms. Tennis seconded the motion to Approve the June 7, 2021 minutes. The motion was adopted by unanimous vote (4-0).

OLD BUSINESS: N/A

NEW BUSINESS:

1. 1704 North 3rd Street, filed by Shannon and Corbett Anderson, to construct a new 14' x 12' lumber and Trex deck on the rear of the first floor.

Mr. Grumbine gave a synopsis of the case report recommending the request be Approved with the following condition(s):

1. The Applicants must work with the Planning Bureau if the proposed project is to be modified.
2. The Applicants shall not utilize any vinyl or inappropriate product materials on the exterior of the deck.
3. Exposed lumber shall be painted or stained within one year of installation.

The case was represented by Shannon and Corbett Anderson, 1704 North 3rd Street Harrisburg PA 17102 (aka “the Applicant”).

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Mr. Chamberlin asked if the applicants had anything to add to the proposal. The Applicants had nothing to add. Mr. Chamberlin asked Mr. Grumbine regarding the approval of Trex in the past. Mr. Grumbine stated that the HARB has approved of the use of Trex in the past and can be administratively approved for certain uses. Mr. Chamberlin asked if there will be stairs. The Applicants stated that there will be stairs. The Applicants also stated that the deck will not be visible from the side streets and will only be visible from the rear alley which is only used by residents.

Mr. Chamberlin opened the discussion for public comment. There were no comments.

Ms. Tennis moved; Ms. Bennet seconded the motion to Approve with Conditions. The motion was adopted with a unanimous vote (4-0).

2. 1100 North 3rd Street, field by Judd Goodman, to install an internally illuminated Lexan and aluminum sign on the storefront column.

Mr. Grumbine gave a synopsis of the case report recommending the request be Denied for the following reason(s):

1. The proposed sign material (polycarbonate) and sign type (internally illuminated “box” style) are not appropriate for use in the City’s historic districts. The Harrisburg Historic District Design Guidelines state “Internally illuminated plastic signs are not compatible with historic buildings and are discouraged.”
2. The sign is not compatible with the architecture and materials of the building and will have a negative impact on the character of the architecturally significant facade. The Harrisburg Historic District Design Guidelines state that a new sign “must be compatible with the historic architectural character of the building in its style.” Additionally, the method of anchoring will cause damage to the historic support column.

The case was represented by Judd Goodman, 614 Showers Street Harrisburg, PA 17102 (aka “the Applicant”).

Mr. Chamberlin asked if the applicant had anything to add to the proposal. The Applicant stated that he was reviewing types of signage on the street and was unclear on the difference between internally illuminated signage and backlit signage. Mr. Grumbine explained the difference between the two types of signage. The Applicant stated he is unsure of what materials are appropriate for signage. Mr. Grumbine elaborated the types of signage materials appropriate for use in municipal historic districts and stated that all the necessary information is available in the historic district design guidelines which has been sent to the applicant.

Ms. Tennis asked about the size of the sign. The Applicant stated it is about 28 inches in diameter. Mrs. Montgomery stated that she would prefer an appropriate material for the sign. Ms. Tennis stated that she agreed with the Planning Bureau and that the proposed signage and material is not appropriate. Mr. Chamberlin asked if there would be an alternative method of mounting the sign. The Applicant stated that it could be strapped on with a band. Mr.

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Chamberlin explained that it is important to cause minimal amount of damage when mounting signs and anchoring through repairable materials such as wood or mortar joints.

Mr. Chamberlin explained that the Applicant can have a conversation with the Planning Bureau regarding appropriate alternative signage for the site. Mr. Grumbine stated that there are a variety of effective signage types for use in historic districts but they must be compatible with both the materials and architecture of the building and district. Mr. Grumbine stated that internally illuminated signage is inappropriate for use in historic districts and that the proposed sign is not compatible with the architecture of the building and should blend in with its built environment. Mr. Grumbine further explained the appropriate materials for signage in historic districts and once again stated that all the information is outlined in the new historic district design guidelines.

Mr. Chamberlin opened the discussion for public comment. There were no comments.

Ms. Bennett moved; Ms. Tennis seconded the motion to Deny. The motion was adopted with a majority vote (3-1).

3. 1012 North 6th Street, filed by Bethel Village Associates LLC, to construct a new four story multi-residential building for the purpose of providing affordable housing for senior citizens.

Mr. Grumbine gave a synopsis of the case report recommending the request be Approved with the following condition(s):

1. The applicant shall submit the necessary applications and information for variances and/or special exceptions, street vacations, and land development plans for review by the Planning Commission and the Zoning Hearing Board.
2. The applicant shall work with the City Engineer's office to coordinate the installation of sidewalks, ramps, and parking.
3. Any modifications or changes to the initial concept of the new construction including design and materials should be coordinated with the Planning Bureau and the HARB.

The case was represented by Benedict Dubbs, 1600 North 2nd Street Harrisburg, PA 17102 and Ava Goldman, 122 Church Street Philadelphia, PA 19106. Others present representing the case were Christine Juba with Murray Associates and Ryan Sanders, 1713 Forster Street Harrisburg, PA 17102 (aka "the Applicants").

Mr. Gaylord stated that the Applicants have received approval from the Planning Commission and will be reviewed by the Zoning Hearing Board the following week.

Mr. Chamberlin asked if the Applicants had any comments. Mr. Dubbs gave a presentation outlining the architectural design of the project in relation to the surrounding built environment.

Mr. Chamberlin asked about the proposed material on the Herr Street façade. The Applicant stated that it will be a metal siding material which maintains the horizontality of the wood siding

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in the neighborhood. The Applicant stated that they have done their best to design the building to be compatible with the existing buildings in the historic district and that there are several stakeholders who had input on the design of the building.

Ms. Tennis asked about the potential use for community and public space. The Applicants stated that the idea is to make a neighborhood corner for use by the community and neighborhood. The Applicants also stated that there will be a community room on the first floor of the building for use by the residents including computers and other amenities.

Mr. Chamberlin asked about the refuse service for the building. The Applicants stated that they will work with the City of Harrisburg to potentially pick up refuse and that they did not want the trash to be stored external of the building to ensure that it is not a design intrusion and neighborhood nuisance. Ms. Tennis asked about the type of windows in the building. The Applicant stated that the lower level will be fixed windows and the rest will be casement windows with simulated divided light on the exterior which are ADA and code complaint. The Applicant further explained that the first floor of the building will be commercial style fixed windows.

Ms. Tennis asked about the roof line from 6th Street to Herr Street. The Applicant stated that the roof will be flat and that the roofline will be straight but the way their software projects the roofline distorts it. Ms. Tennis asked if the entrance will be on grade. The Applicant stated that it would be on grade from 6th Street. The Applicant stated that both elevators go up and down in the full height of the building.

Mr. Chamberlin stated that the Planning Bureau recommended that HARB closely review the massing and stated that the 6th Street elevation is appropriate but the Herr Street elevation is much taller than the surrounding neighborhood. Mr. Chamberlin asked if there was discussion to resolve this issue. The Applicant stated that the building was designed in relation to its fenestration types and articulation with the intent to minimize its massing impact on the neighborhood.

Ms. Montgomery asked what will in between the Herr Street elevation and the next residential house. The Applicant stated that they pulled the building back to have green space in between the house and the proposed building. Ms. Montgomery asked about the specific distance between the house and the building. The Applicant stated that the distance will be about eighteen feet. Mr. Chamberlin asked if the public would be able to walk through from Herr Street to Snipe Alley. The Applicant stated that there will be access through that area and will not be any fences. Ms. Tennis asked about HVAC systems and their location. The Applicant stated that the units will be located on the roof and will not be visible from the streets.

Mr. Chamberlin asked about the proposed condition from the Planning Bureau regarding sidewalks. The Applicant stated that is the intent to reinstall new sidewalks and to preserve the existing granite curbs and maintain all historic materials possible. Mr. Gaylord stated that the applicant agreed to a condition to provide appropriate trash receptacles at the Planning Commission meeting.

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Mr. Chamberlin opened the discussion for public comment.

Angela Williams, resident of Red Lion, York County and a member of Bethel AME church asked the Applicant regarding what he meant about the proposed building blending into the site in relation to the buildings on the other side of Herr Street. The Applicant stated the proposed building is not an attempt to match the 1960's townhouses on the northern side of Herr Street and that the use of materials in the building is an attempt to be compatible with the historic district on 6th and Herr.

Ted Hanson, 432 & 434 Boas Street Harrisburg, PA asked about the distance of the proposed building to Snipe Alley. The applicant stated the distance will be about twenty-eight feet from Snipe Alley. Mr. Hanson stated that the building will be four stories tall at that point and will tower over Boas Street and asked about the easement necessary for the alley and the parking on Snipe Alley. Mr. Hanson stated that he is not objected to affordable housing and that there is plenty of affordable housing in the area from Cumberland Court and Jackson Lick. Mr. Hanson stated that he needs data on the number of units and vacancy of these units. Mr. Hanson stated that affordable housing is not only renting but it is making home ownership affordable. Mr. Hanson stated that he has a problem with the size of the building. Mr. Hanson stated that the required letters sent out are incomprehensible. Mr. Hanson stated that he has issues with the variance application and parking. Mr. Hanson stated that the staff recommendation should not have considered the social implications of the project. Mr. Hanson stated that the neighborhood residents stated that they have not heard a word from Bethel AME church in 26 years about what they want on the site. Mr. Hanson stated that he saw initial concepts of the project and was as horrified as he was at the moment. Mr. Hanson stated that he would want commercial retail space for community business incubators for African American businesses. Mr. Hanson stated that only four parking spaces for the density is inappropriate.

Mr. Chamberlin stated that Mr. Hanson makes some good points but many of the points being made are outside of the purview of the HARB. Mr. Chamberlin stated that the point regarding the massing and size of the building from Boas street is an appropriate criticism. The Applicant stated that if standing on Boas Street the building will not be visible as the sightline would be towards the sky.

David Alexander, 220 Kelker Street Harrisburg, PA also a member of Bethel AME church voiced his support for the project. Mr. Alexander stated that it is difficult to design a building to blend into the historic neighborhood and that the site has been vacant for over twenty years. Mr. Alexander feels that the design of the building is appropriate for the neighborhood.

David Morrison, 1230 North 3rd Street Harrisburg, PA asked about the site of the former Jackson House at 1006 North 6th Street. The Applicants stated that they have considered the fact that the Jackson House and its mural may be reconstructed and considered that as part of their design. Mr. Morrison stated that it is a great concern of the neighborhood and the efforts to rebuild the building as the streetscape is being redesigned.

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Mr. Chamberlin asked what the approximate distance would be between the proposed building and the lot line for 1006 North 6th Street. The Applicant stated that the distance would be about twelve feet and that they are beyond the allowable setback line.

Mary-Grace Majors, 2317 Market Street, Harrisburg PA is also a member of Bethel AME and voiced her support for the project. Ms. Majors stated that she believes it is a wonderful design and a good opportunity for senior citizens to have a safe comfortable place to live.

Mr. Chamberlin asked about the imitation wood material on the northeast corner. The Applicant stated that it will be a metal material made to imitate wood which will have the appearance of stained wood.

Ryan Sanders, 1713 Forster Street Harrisburg PA stated that the project is named after the church and is one phase of the redevelopment of North 6th Street. Mr. Sanders stated that it is important to restore the African American history in the neighborhood. Mr. Sanders stated that the City's new comprehensive plan stated that the City needs more affordable housing. Mr. Sanders stated that they have sixteen million dollars to invest in this project and is asking for support in the project.

Mr. Hanson stated that the lot is still available because the neighborhood fought that it would not become a commercial parking lot. Mr. Hanson stated that the neighborhood does not support the project because it is too big. Mr. Hanson stated that there has been not been a chance for public comment on the project. Ms. Tennis asked Mr. Hanson if he is the President of a neighborhood association and speaking on their behalf. Mr. Hanson stated that he is the original resident in the neighborhood to attempt to fill that type of role. Mr. Hanson stated that he has been carrying a petition around which fifty neighborhood residents have signed in opposition to the project. Ms. Tennis stated that there was a neighborhood meeting about the project for public comment.

Mr. Chamberlin stated that the HARB is reviewing the design of the proposal and its impact on the neighborhood. Ms. Tennis stated that the claim of there not having been a chance for public comment is false given there was a community meeting and public board meetings. Mr. Hanson stated he did not get a leaflet regarding the community meetings. Another resident stated that they received the leaflet. Mr. Hanson stated that is good for them. Mr. Hanson stated that no one on his street received information about the community meeting. Mr. Hanson stated in twenty-six years he and his neighbors have never been asked about the development of the site. Ms. Tennis stated that the HARB does not evaluate the marketing of the community meeting and explained that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the architecture of the building.

Mr. Alexander stated that there have been several opportunities and will be additional opportunities to speak on behalf of the project and that the HARB meeting is not the appropriate forum to discuss the publicity of the community meetings.

Darren Burroughs, representing Harrisburg Housing Authority 351 Chestnut Street Harrisburg, PA, stated his support for the architecture of the building. Mr. Burroughs explained his role in working with the applicants.

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Mr. Chamberlin asked Mr. Burroughs about the conversations regarding size and massing about the building he had with the applicants. Mr. Burroughs stated that the density of the building and affordable housing for senior residents was of paramount concern. Mr. Chamberlin stated that the density and architecture of the building are two divergent aspects of the project. Ms. Tennis stated that she has mostly heard support for the project for those who have attended.

Ms. Goldman stated that the church's parcel is zoned commercial neighborhood and the Applicants could have constructed a seventy-five-foot-tall building by right. Ms. Goldman explained that she, and other City officials, believed that it would be more appropriate to spread out the height of the building across the lot rather than having a very large monolithic structure by right on the corner.

Christine Juba, of Murray Associates and Architects, stated that they worked to ensure that the mechanical systems are worked within the building to keep the scale of the building down. The Applicants stated that the building will be stick built construction. Mr. Chamberlin stated that he is struggling with the verticality of the Herr Street elevation in relation to the existing residential housing on Herr Street. The Applicant stated that the juxtaposition of scale within an urban context gives texture and differentiation in scale.

Mr. Chamberlin opened the discussion for public comment.

Mr. Hanson asked about where the trash will be taken from. The Applicant stated that the trash pickup location has not been determined. Mr. Hanson asked about how far the setback from Herr Street. The Applicant stated the setback will be around 25-28 feet. Mr. Hanson asked if there will be screening in the rear. The Applicant stated that they will not remove any screening that is not necessary but will have to remove some for construction. Mr. Chamberlin asked about screening around parking lots in historic districts. Mr. Grumbine stated that parking is not historic but it usually required that it is screened with native landscaping and using permeable parking if possible. Mr. Grumbine stated that it is both an ecological and pollution issue as well as site design issue and stated that parking lots in historic districts are generally not appropriate but are considered within the context of a proposal.

Mr. Chamberlin and Ms. Tennis stated that they feel like they have thoroughly reviewed the case and have given the public ample opportunity to speak. Ms. Tennis stated that she feels that the project has been well developed.

Ms. Tennis moved; Ms. Bennett seconded the motion to Approve with Conditions. The motion was adopted with a majority vote (3-0) with Mr. Chamberlin abstaining from voting.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Mr. Morrison wanted to commend the HARB and in particular Mr. Grumbine for his efforts for developing the new Historic District Design Guidelines.

ADJOURNMENT: 7:32 PM

Ms. Tennis moved, and Ms. Bennett seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion was adopted by unanimous vote (4-0) and the meeting adjourned at 7:32 PM.