

City of Excelsior
Heritage Preservation Commission
Minutes
Tuesday, January 24, 2012

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Chair Sanders called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Bolles, Finch, Macpherson, Meyer, Mueller, Roden,
and Chair Sanders

Commissioners Absent: None

Also Present: City Planner Richards, Advisor Caron

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Heritage Preservation Commission Meeting of December 20, 2011

It was moved by Commissioner Roden, seconded by Commissioner Meyer, to approve the minutes as written. Approved unanimously.

3. CITIZEN REPORTS or COMMENTS

None

4. MISCELLANEOUS/COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

a. Recent City Council Actions

Richards stated that the Yumi's project had been approved by the City Council consistent with the HPC's comments in connection with the Site Alteration Permit. The color and finish of the proposed brick had been approved by several commissioners on site, and the brick will be a similar red tone but with a more textured finish, which was determined to be compatible with other Water Street buildings. The sign materials were also approved at the on-site meeting, and will feature a brushed aluminum mill finish. The applicant will put a backing on the sign so that it can be anchored through the mortar joints and not through the bricks.

5. NEW BUSINESS

a. Site Alteration Permit for Exterior Alterations and Signage for 244 Water Street -- Mark Kozikowski, MTK Properties

Mark Kozikowski presented the application and described the proposed exterior alterations. The wood storefront will be repainted a satin black color, which will be similar to the color of the Jake O'Connor's storefront, using paint from the Fine Paints of Europe collection (rather than the bronze color indicated in the application). The exterior door to the upstairs level will be repainted Buckland Blue, a Benjamin Moore historic color, and the area around the door will be blue in a similar color family as the door color.

5. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Site Alteration Permit for Exterior Alterations and Signage for 244 Water Street -- Mark Kozikowski, MTK Properties – (Continued)

Tom Lauer was also in attendance, and stated that he is planning to open his store, Que Sera, in February, which is relocating from the Galleria in Edina. The proposed sign lettering will be cut out of hardiboard and mounted on a header. A new wood sign will be positioned above the existing header, which is new header that was added when the second story was reconstructed and will be covered with wood. A small crown molding cap will be added on the top of the sign to provide a more finished appearance.

Kozikowski explained that the signage is intended to mimic the storefront signage of the past, and showed photos with similar signage that had been on the building up to the 1950s.

Commissioners expressed concern about the apparent scale of the signage, which covers the new brick front all the way up to the second story windowsills. It was clarified that part of what appears to be the sign is actually the painted wood covering over the header.

Kozikowski stated that there were no proposed changes to the lighting.

Richards stated that the proposed signage meets the ordinance requirements for size. Commissioners Roden and Bolles stated their preference for a small break above the sign and underneath the upper sills of a few brick courses. It appeared that there were only 5-7 brick courses above the header, which the applicants stated would make the signage too small.

Since the sign is not a permanent feature of the building, would be carefully mounted through the mortar joints and not the bricks, and it did not conceal any historic detail, Commissioners was determined that the signage was acceptable.

It was also pointed out that repainting the aluminum clad transom windows would have to be done carefully, or the paint will not adhere to the aluminum over the long term.

It was moved by Commissioner Roden, seconded by Commissioner Macpherson, to approve the Site Alteration Permit as submitted with the paint color changes described at the meeting. Approved unanimously.

- b. Site Alteration Permit for Exterior Alterations for 421 Third Street -- Excelsior Brewing Company

John Klick, Jon Lewin, and Patrick Foss introduced themselves as the partners in the new Excelsior Brewing Company business.

5. NEW BUSINESS

b. Site Alteration Permit for Exterior Alterations for 421 Third Street -- Excelsior Brewing Company – (Continued)

Klick, Lewin, and Foss presented an application to replace the existing windows. The rear portion of the building that will be occupied by the brewery has 12 total windows, with 8 large windows and 4 small windows, two of which are boarded up and do not contain glass panes. The large windows are steel frame windows with 12 individual panes per window, and appear to be original to the building.

The Commissioners discussed whether installing interior storm windows might be an option to address any thermal and moisture issues. The windows are operating windows and the center portion of each window can be opened, and the applicants stated that they do not need them to be functioning windows, with the possible exception of the small windows, which might be used for air circulation during brewery tours.

Commissioners noted that the original windows are the most significant surviving features of the structure from its past as a car dealership. The ordinance requires that the existing windows should be retained if they can be repaired. A pane could be installed on the inside for energy efficiency, similar to what has been done with other midcentury metal windows in the district. To replace the windows, the HPC would require a professional report from a window restoration expert that the windows cannot be saved, and any replacement windows would need to match the historic windows in style.

Sanders agreed to meet with Klick and a window restoration expert on site to discuss the potential options with the original windows.

The small windows are not original, so they could potentially be either glass block or more contemporary windows. Any replacement of windows should retain the original size of the windows openings. The original building appears to date from the 1920s with rear additions around 1940, so the Commission had no issue with the use of glass block in the small windows to replace the current plywood. On the rear side, facing the alleyway, the elevation is traditionally not a public way, so the Commission has been more lenient in the use of materials where public exposure is limited, so different materials that are appropriate to the era of the building would be acceptable. The Commission suggested that the applicants decide which small window material (glass block or clear windows) they wish to use.

It was moved by Commissioner Roden, seconded by Commissioner Mueller, to continue this item to the next meeting to do further research on the condition of the existing windows and potential options. Approved unanimously.

5. NEW BUSINESS

- c. Site Alteration Permit for Permanent Access Road and Landscaping, George Street to Excelsior Elementary School, 442 Oak Street -- Minnetonka Public Schools

Mike Condon appeared on behalf of the applicant, with Paul Bourgeois in attendance, to seek a Site Alteration Permit for their permanent plan for new road access to Excelsior Elementary School from George Street. George Street is proposed to be used for both ingress and egress via a new driveway between Wells Fargo Bank and the Bird House Inn.

Ornamental fencing would be installed from the new George Street entrance with a new limestone retaining wall that will contain a rain garden for bio-filtration. New lighting will be consistent with the City's standard globe style lights found elsewhere in the downtown district. The lights will be on 14 foot, 6 inch tall poles, with 100 watt high pressure sodium lights. The lights will have shielding near any adjacent residential uses. The site setbacks meet all applicable zoning requirements. The landscape plan has been designed to protect the Founders Burr Oak Tree on the site.

Commissioners asked about the reasons for the increased access and parking to the school site. The school district representatives explained that enrollment growth and parent option has resulted in greater parking needs. The site has been designed so that if an agreement were reached with Hennepin County for library access, the site could have space for a library easement and access connection to George Street if stormwater management issues could be worked out. It was stressed that there is no such agreement as of now.

The limestone walls will be made of blocks, and Macpherson noted that the use of Mankato limestone would mirror the WPA style found in The Commons and near Christmas Lake, but these walls would be more massive. The site will keep connections to the bike trail, and the parking area may be suitable for events such as Christkindlsmarkt. The site plan seeks to retain the feel of trees along the bike trail. A manual gate will close off the area near Mud Lake between the George Street parking area and the school property.

It was moved by Commissioner Finch, seconded by Commissioner Mueller, to approve the Site Alteration Permit as presented. Approved unanimously.

- d. Discuss State of Historic Designation for 368 and 374 George Street

Jon Monson presented three potential areas of redevelopment involving the Mason Motors block. For the old Red Owl store, he intends to work with the existing building and reconfigure it for multiple tenants. The current Mason Motors building has been purchased by Oppidan and may be converted into a grocery store. The developers have an option on the 368 George Street

5. NEW BUSINESS

- d. Discuss State of Historic Designation for 368 and 374 George Street –
(Continued)

house, which is also owned by Mason and is a historically designated structure and part of the Downtown Historic District. The house at 374 George Street, also individually designated and part of the Downtown Historic District, is under separate ownership, and is under a purchase agreement with Oppidan. Oppidan has until March 31, 2012 to exercise its contingency. Both houses are in the B-2 district.

The 368 George Street house has at its center the core of the Gould Greenhouse structure that used to sit at the corner of George and Water Street and was relocated and converted to a residence, and in recent years, a commercial use.

Monson stated that the 374 George Street house may have been relocated to the site and may not be the original Gould harness shop and library. Monson described himself as a practical preservationist, and believes that neither designated structure can be expanded or otherwise used for B-2 commercial purposes. He proposes to replace both houses with a single story commercial building fronting on Water Street, with a vintage style. One lot that is part of the proposed development area is still zoned R-2. If demolition were allowed, he would agree to incorporate some of the old materials into the new structure, similar to what has been done for the new Don Shelby residence.

The Commission discussed the genesis of the original 1980's designations of the structures and their inclusion in the original downtown district. It was clarified for the applicant that he could either seek a delisting of the designations if their original designation was in error or if something had changed in the interim, which would require a public hearing and action by the Council, or the applicant could present a Site Alteration Permit seeking demolition of the structures, which would be evaluated by the Commission in accordance with its ordinance standards.

Monson stated that he intended to bring an application for demolition of both houses to the HPC in February. Caron stated that he would contact the historic architectural consultant who conducted the City's historic surveys to get further information on the significance of the structures.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Excelsior Downtown Historic District Boundaries

The Commission discussed the differences between the original and revised boundaries of the Excelsior Downtown Historic District. The City was still operating based on the original boundaries pending comments from SHPO on the revised boundaries.

Commissioners expressed some concern about some of the properties that would be removed from the district as revised, such as the Congregational Church building, and the potential consequences of removing such a familiar visual feature as the church spire from the district.

Richards reported that he was still awaiting comments from SHPO on the status of its review and would continue to follow up.

It was moved by Commissioner Finch, seconded by Commissioner Mueller, to continue this item to the February meeting. Approved unanimously.

b. Possibility of Historically Designating Portions of Excelsior Elementary School

The Commission discussed the preliminary response from Paul Bourgeois regarding potential designation of the school, and the possibility of pursuing a Legacy Grant for further study of the building's significance.

Caron stated that he would determine whether the City's historic architectural consultant would be willing to perform the evaluation and the potential cost, and Sanders stated that she would be willing to work on the grant application.

It was moved by Commissioner Roden, seconded by Commissioner Finch, to continue this item to the February meeting. Approved unanimously.

c. Demolition by Neglect Ordinance

Sanders reported that she had not had the opportunity to meet with Caron to begin work on a presentation justifying the need for the ordinance. It was moved by Finch, seconded by Mueller, to continue this item to the next meeting. Approved unanimously.

7. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS

a. Designate Liaison for Planning Commission Meeting- February 8, 2012

Mueller reported that she had attended the January Planning Commission meeting, but there was nothing to report. Sanders agreed to attend the February Planning Commission meeting.

b. Site Alteration Permits Administratively Approved

None

Sanders reported that there was a meeting with the Hennepin County Library architect scheduled for the following day, and that she had been asked to serve as the HPC representative on the Sandall Marketing Committee.

b. Next Meeting - Tuesday, February 28, 2012

Information only.

8. ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Commission Mueller, seconded by Commission Macpherson, to adjourn. Approved unanimously. Adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Caron
Recording Secretary