

**NORTHVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
**May 15, 2013**  
**Wednesday 7:00 P.M. – Northville City Hall - Council Chambers**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Commissioner Hoffman called the Historic District Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL:**

**Present:** Argenta, Gudritz, Hoffman, Luikart and Vernacchia

**Absent:** Field and Johnson

**Also Present:** Sally Elmiger

**3. CITIZEN COMMENTS:** Limited to brief comments for items not on the agenda.

None

**4. MINUTES: March 20, 2013**

**The following changes were made to the minutes: the addition of standard 3.24 at the top of page nine; change from Commissioner Hoffman to Commissioner Field regarding curb cut, page three; and Commissioner Argenta referred to a wall proposal at 36” not 42”, page 10.**

**Motion by Argenta, supported by Luikart, to approve the minutes of March 20, 2013, as amended.**

*Voice Vote: Motion Carried unanimously.*

**5. REPORTS**

**A. CITY ADMINISTRATION: None**

**B. CITY COUNCIL: None**

**C. PLANNING COMMISSIONER: None**

**D. OTHER COMMUNITY/GOVERNMENTAL LIAISONS: None**

**6. CASES**

**CASE #1**

**GGL INVESTMENTS  
111 N CENTER ST**

**NEW PAVERS, PLANTER  
& AWNING**

Applicant Gary George was present and explained his request to replace a span of heaved concrete with pavers and a planter at the rear entrance at above address. He also wants to recover an existing awning; and paint the rear and side façade of the storefronts in the same colors as he repainted the front façade several years prior. (Dark brown and taupe) He said he wanted to replace the outdated awning canvas, but keep the same frame. (Also dark and taupe)

Mr. George mentioned a tree in the rear of the property, near the stairway. He said roots have grown up and pushed up the concrete. A tree company indicated the tree would not survive, and if he requested permission to remove the tree, eliminate concrete and include brick pavers and a planter.

Ms. Elmiger said she reviewed the matter and was satisfied that the requested materials were provided. Photos were also provided, as well as sample materials of the brick paver.

Mr. George said option one was not a tumbled stone, and would be easier to walk on. The second option was a tumbled stone. He indicated he contracted with Jack Kelly who did the Sports Den. He said if both options could be approved, he could go with the option that has enough material for the project. (Sunbrella True Brown, 4621-000; lettering was Linen, style 4633-000.)

Commissioner Argenta preferred the flat over the tumbled stone, and said it may be safer. Mr. George concurred.

Discussion took place regarding signage. Ms. Elmiger said since it was only an address, it was not considered signage. The colors of the pavers were noted as Winter Mist and Castano Brown. Mahogany Ash was the second choice of colors if a tumbled look was chosen.

Commissioner Luikart said either one was appropriate.

**Motion by Vernacchia, supported by Argenta, to accept the application as complete.**  
*Voice Vote: All. Nays: None. Motion Unanimously Carried.*

**Motion by Argenta, supported by Vernacchia, to grant a Notice to Proceed, referencing the Northville Historic District Design Standards 4.12, for streetscape amenities; 4.21 for materials; 4.23 for awnings; and 4.27 for rear façade; with a choice of either option one or option two for the painting, as presented by the Applicant.**  
*Voice Vote: All. Nays: None. Motion Unanimously Carried.*

## CASE #2

**ANGELA CARSON  
117 N. WING STREET**

**PAINT**

Ms. Carson was present and explained her proposal to repaint her home. She said there would be a slight change of color to more of beige, with a little more color added to the trim.

Committee Luikart noted this house was one of the only area homes with beautiful slate.

Commissioner Argenta inquired about the photo in the last page on the lower left.

Ms. Carson said it would be the left panel and trim color around the windows. She noted that they would be replacing a few boards, as they are, with similar materials. She said she would begin the project very soon.

Ms. Elmiger said she reviewed the matter and was satisfied that the requested materials and information were provided.

**Motion by Luikart, supported by Argenta, to accept the application as complete.**  
*Voice Vote: All. Nays: None. Motion Unanimously Carried.*

**Motion by Luikart, supported by Vernacchia, to grant a Notice to Proceed, referencing the Northville Historic District Design Standards 5.18, for paint and color; as presented by the Applicant.**  
*Voice Vote: All. Nays: None. Motion Unanimously Carried.*

**CASE # 3**

**PAT & JANINE MCLAUGHLIN/PRESLEY  
373 LINDEN**

**NEW HOME**

Mr. Presley was present with homeowner Pat McLaughlin. He explained their proposal to construct a new house and garage on the northwest corner of Linden Street and Linden Court. He said they received approval for demolition of the existing house on this lot at the March, 2013 HDC meeting. He described the following: house is about 2,900 square feet; lot coverage is about 21.2 % on the lot; a rendering was shown of the building that would replace the demolished building on the corner lot; it is important the house faces both sides; it has an octagonal turret; it is intentional to fit the mass and scale of the neighborhood, similar to the south side of Linden Court. It has a separated garage connected by a breezeway to create private space; the neighbor has a barn that can only be accessed through the subject property; elevation is important; existing shed to be removed; one correction—all siding materials above the first and second floor beltline trim will be shake (it was drawn differently).

Mr. Presley spoke about the rooflines that go below the wall bearing height; there is a wrap porch on the front east and south side to create a viewing spot; windows are a combination of double hung with 2:2 pattern; a specification was provided for the front door; specification was provided for the Clopay garage doors; stone base around the house, below water table line—sample provided of cultured stone manufactured by Owens Corning—Chardonnay color, European Castle stone, pf 81112. White trim color is Sticks and Stones, with a warm taupe.

Commissioner Argenta noted that the information matched with the thumbnail sketch provided at the time of demolition approval. He said the proposed house will play nicely against the neighboring house.

Commissioner Hoffman inquired about the period appropriateness of the turret.

Mr. Presley said there is a square turret, but not in the Historic District. He said they chose an octagonal turret; and no examples came to mind.

Commissioner Argenta said he no problem with the turret, and they are seen commonly in Historic Districts.

Discussion took place regarding the turret has a point to it; that it will integrate with the house; and it will be used for office space.

Commissioner Luikart said she liked the proposal, it was more appropriate to have a detached garage; and she appreciated the design.

Ms. Elmiger said all requirements, comments and samples have been satisfied. She confirmed that the space above the garage is only for storage; and regarding materials information on the retaining wall on the north side, Mr. Presley said field stone and big boulders would be used.

**Motion by Argenta, supported by Gudritz, to accept the application as complete.**

***Voice Vote: All. Nays: None. Motion Unanimously Carried.***

**Motion by Argenta, supported by Vernacchia, to grant a Notice to Proceed, referencing Secretary of Interiors standard number 10; the Northville Historic District Design Standards 3-13 for new construction; 3-14 for setback and spacing; 3-16 for mass; 3-17 for**

**height; 3-18 for scale; 3-19 for proportion; 3-20 for hierarchy; 3-21 for materials; 3-22 for details; 3.24 for garages; 5.9 for asphalt shingles; 5-14 for windows; 5-17 for siding; and 5-18 for paint and color; as presented by the Applicant.**

*Voice Vote: All. Nays: None. Motion Unanimously Carried.*

Mr. McLaughlin said they would demolish in the next month or two; and they would be living in this home.

Commissioner Hoffman complimented Mr. Preseley for the presentation process.

#### **CASE #4**

**SAM KHOURY  
129 N. WING**

**DEMO GARAGE & FOUNDATION  
& REBUILD**

Mr. Khoury was present with Mr. Presley who explained the proposal to demolish an existing attached garage, building foundation, and two small porches at the above address, and then build a two-story addition onto the rear of the house. This building is being renovated into two dwelling units (modified from four dwelling units). The addition will be a garage on the main level, and part of the dwelling unit on the second level.

Commissioner Hoffman proposed the Historic District Commission proceed to consider the a brief project overview; followed by the issue of demolition of components on the building to be removed; followed by the details for the renovation.

Mr. Presley explained the following:

- Mr. Khoury has owned the building for over 20 years;
- There have been four occupants and it has been vacant for the four years;
- A brief history about the house, dating back to the late 1800s;
- The current four apartments do not meet current rental standards;
- The owner wants to upgrade it and keep it residential;
- It is zoned GCD, general commercial district;
- There are many use possibilities, but it lacks in terms of parking

Ms. Elmiger confirmed that the Historic District Commission should treat this as a residential structure, but it has to follow GCD zoning requirements, with a number of issues regarding that; however, they do not have to be concerned regarding the parking.

Mr. Presley spoke about the elements of the building they were proposing for demolition. He detailed the following:

- The sidewalks and concrete are higher, and water flows back to house;
- The basement is musty;
- They want to raise the house up a foot to change the grade and have drainage away from the house;
- They propose a new basement, with a stone ledge using existing stone;
- Basement is Michigan style with low head room and a crawl space;
- Create a new building using existing materials;
- Create a double garage for the two residential units;
- They cannot do a detached garage in GCD zoning;

- The existing garage is obsolete, on a sinking, floating slab that cannot be built upon;
- The timbers are not original; it may be from the 1920s;
- There is a concrete porch facing east with a wooden structure facing north, both would be removed, and reinstate it with a raised landscape bed;
- They would lift the house up on rails, support it; insert a new foundation with safeguards to be used; pour the footers; use masonry block to conform to the irregularities of the structure;
- May be left using the existing footprint

Commissioner Hoffman emphasized the importance of close oversight on the part of the City so that it does not exceed the initial intention. The Applicant was directed to contact the City relative to when the process would begin.

Mr. Presley said the house was added on to; he showed the original structure, a 16 foot wide addition; another addition; then the garage. About 10% of the structure would be demolished; garage being the 10%.

Commissioner Argenta said the spans look like they exceed three feet and there is a lot of rot.

Commissioner Gudritz spoke about the necessary five guidelines relative to justifying the demolition of the structure; and he requested clarity.

Mr. Presley said it is impediment to a major improvement program that benefits the community.

Commissioner Gudritz requested further explanation as to how it will benefit the entire community.

Mr. Presley offered to show the improvements to the house. He said it would change from a four-plex to a two-plex; it would be owner-occupied; the house would be entirely refurbished, stripped, rebuilt and brought up to code; it will be an improvement in that there will be only one renter; that the owner could condo it; but one owner occupied and one tenant is an improvement.

Commissioner Argenta stated that demolishing the garage was a safety issue in that the roof was unsafe.

Commissioner Gudritz agreed with that, but said an engineering study may be required.

Commissioner Hoffman said it appeared that Mr. Presley was making the case for the second item, that the resources were a deterrent to a major improvement program.

Discussion took place regarding the grounds for demolition.

Commissioner Gudritz said he appreciated the proposal, but said he had concerns regarding demolishing because it did not fit the program; and that he was not convinced that the garage cannot be repaired. He said he did not agree with criteria number two in that improvement to a home does not provide a significant improvement to the broader community—perhaps the immediate neighborhood—but not the community.

Commissioner Vernacchia suggested it could be filed as an unsafe structure.

Commissioner Gudritz said that could be acceptable, if there was appropriate documentation that it was irreparable.

Mr. Presley suggested that it could be approved contingent on a letter.

Commissioner Gudritz said he would prefer to have the back-up document.

Commissioner Hoffman proposed looking at a vote regarding the deterrent to a major improvement program; and then based on that, decide upon another grounds for demolition.

Ms. Elmiger said the Commission also needed to decide whether the structure was historically significant and whether they needed to hold a Public Hearing. She clarified that the spirit of demolition included both sections of a structure and the complete structure.

Commissioner Luikart referred to page 5 on the guidelines, and whether it is historic or not and contributing or not; and that no action shall be taken at the first meeting.

Commissioner Argenta spoke about the issue of the need for an engineering study; that there may not be a rat wall in the structure; and he thought a licensed architect can say it is dangerous, especially since water flows toward the house.

Commissioner Gudritz read from page two, where it stated, "...if the resource constitutes a hazard to the safety of the public or occupants, the Applicant shall provide a certified written report by a structural engineer licensed in Michigan as to the structural soundness of the building, and its adaptability for rehabilitation."

The Historic District Commission discussion the following:

- Previous projects where building portions were demolished;
- That percentages were not listed as part of the criteria used;
- Many previously considered were from the 1950s and 1960s, not the age of the subject building;
- The historic significance of the garage

Commissioner Vernacchia said he did not think the garage itself was of historical significance; and he was more interested in what is happening to the house and the overall result.

Discussion took place regarding examples of what makes a structure historically significant.

Ms. Elmiger read from the State Act that defined an historic resource, i.e. whether it is significant in history, architecture, archeology, engineering or culture.

Commissioner Vernacchia said none of those things apply to the subject garage.

Mr. Presley spoke about why he thought this type of attached garage was attached to this house, i.e. the cars were shorter, vehicles were smaller, people had one vehicle, no access into the house, etc.

Commissioner Hoffman said regarding Ms. Elmiger's comments and Commissioner Vernacchia's comments, does the Historic District Commission see this garage as historically significant.

Discussion took place regarding Public Hearings, and that the homeowner should check with the State for more information.

Mr. Presley said if the premise of the improvement to the community was not adequate, they could employ a structural engineer to provide a document regarding the structural integrity of the building.

Discussion took place regarding the need and purpose of a Public Hearing; and the exception to a Public Hearing if the structure was found to have no historical significance.

**Motion by Vernacchia, supported by Argenta, that the garage in question is not of any historical significance.**

***Voice Vote: Motion carried 3-2 with Gudritz and Luikart opposed.***

Commissioner Hoffman clarified that a Public Hearing was not required, and the HDC can act on the demolition at the first meeting.

Mr. Presley said they feel the proposal is a major improvement to the building and therefore to the community.

Discussion took place regarding criteria number two: deterrent to a major improvement.

Commissioner Hoffman said the written description and nature of proposal was provided in Mr. Presley's narrative.

Regarding site plan to scale, Commissioner Luikart suggested Mr. Presley continue in his explanation, and then separate into two votes. The Historic District Commission concurred.

Mr. Presley spoke about GCD zoning, and that they cannot average the front-yard setback from the neighbor; the porch is not original, but from the 1960s or 1970s; the structure is non-conforming; he spoke about putting the garage on the west side; side-yard setbacks; property lines; and the porch. He said they do not want to increase the footprint of the non-conforming structure; and they want to fit modern cars in the garage. He said 90% is being kept, and all that predates the 19<sup>th</sup> century is safe.

Regarding the proposed new garage, it would go about 10 feet past the west lot line; the new garage would go about 12 feet past the original garage structure.

Commissioner Vernacchia expressed concern with having the second story on top of the garage and having it that height and the gable window changes the look of the house.

Mr. Presley said that is a master bedroom; the dormer is the same pitch as the dormer saved in the existing structure; whether the wall line drops down, respects the ridge line of the original structure to help with balance and mass. It goes no higher than the original structure and they were not changing any height.

Discussion took place regarding mass and not wanting to overpower the neighboring residential.

Commissioner Gudritz said the house across the street has a detached garage; and that the proposed garage is what gives the feeling of mass and change of appearance. He suggested it could be detached or setback a few feet to prevent that mass feeling.

Discussion took place regarding the historic barn across the street.

Commissioner Vernacchia said the addition seemed big, and added onto an historic structure, it needs to look like an addition, to differentiate from the original structure. He expressed concern regarding the dormer, and that the porch makes it enough. He said everything else seemed clear; and he understood why the garage cannot be detached.

Commissioner Luikart inquired about the possibility of having a detached garage and a pad for the second car. She said there are no attached garages on that street; everything is detached and setback.

Mr. Presley said there was not enough room for a two car garage,

Commissioner Vernacchia suggested they look at another way; such as look at the architecture of the existing plan, to make the addition more delineated.

Discussion took place regarding the following:

- Detached garages and corner lots;
- The west elevation and the step-down;
- Commends the plan for saving the ornate work;
- The issue of the garage, it adds to mass and opposes the guidelines

Mr. Presley suggested pulling the garage back three feet; moving the door over for a shorter car and a longer car.

Discussion continued regarding making adjustments for the next meeting; the plan for the garage and the plane of door; and whether to refer to the Applicant to explore other options, including considering a single car garage.

**Motion by Vernacchia, to approve the demolition of the garage, based on grounds two, as explained by the Applicant;**

Discussion took place regarding procedure.

**Motion withdrawn by Vernacchia.**

**Motion by Vernacchia, to approve the demolition application of the garage, as complete.**  
*Voice Vote: Motion carried 3-2 with Gudritz and Luikart opposed.*

**Motion by Vernacchia, supported by Argenta, to grant a Notice to Proceed regarding the demolition of the garage, based on grounds number two.**  
*Voice Vote: Motion carried 3-2 with Gudritz and Luikart opposed.*

**Motion by Gudritz, supported by Luikart, to refer the application back to the Applicant, with their permission.**  
*Voice Vote: All. Nays: None. Motion Unanimously Carried.*

## **DISCUSSION**

Commissioner Luikart provided clarification to the Historic District Commission regarding a request heard last month regarding a project being done by Evergreen Development on N. Rogers Street. She noted that she checked out the property on Realtor.com, relative to when it was sold, because it was a demolition. She pointed out that the guidelines state that prior to any demolition,



it must be determined an attempt to sell it took place, or that an attempt to use it in another way took place. She said the subject property was actually a spec house. She said when she pulled up the house on the internet, it actually had a drawing of the house that the Historic District Commission had yet to approve at the meeting; presently for sale for \$700,000. She said for clarification, it might have been thought it was the homeowner who was present; when there was no homeowner. She said Evergreen Development has done this with many homes along Orchard; where a smaller home was taken down and replaced by a larger home. She said she was not saying it was right or wrong, or that it was historic or not historic, but she did not want to see larger homes be placed next to smaller existing homes, which could create a significant change in the Historic District.

Commissioner Gudritz said while it may not have made a difference, it would have been nice to have known this information.

Discussion took place regarding Commissioner Luikart's clarification. The Commission concurred that more questions need to be asked in these types of situations.

Commissioner Argenta spoke about the Sports Den. He said it was researched; and there was nothing regarding 42 inch walls. He said the project looked good and he signed off on it.

### **ADJOURN**

*Member Hoffman* ~~Chair Johnson~~ adjourned the meeting at 8:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Cindy Gray, Recording Secretary