

HASTINGS HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes of the Meeting of July 16, 2024

Held at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall, Volunteer Room

- I. Call to Order and Quorum** Youngren, Borchardt, Peterson, McCoy, Bremer, Simacek, and Toppin
Absent, Alitz Edell, and Smith
Staff: Fortney

II. Minutes:

- A. June 18, 2024** Approved by Chair Toppin

III. Certificate of Approval Review – Public Hearing

- A. 315 7th St W – Historic house demolition**
Fortney presented the staff report.

Chair Toppin opened the public hearing at 7:17 pm and asked Fortney to explain the HPC's burden of required findings for demolition from the context of other recent structures that individuals said should be demolished but were successfully restored. Fortney explained that the other projects had major issues that were addressed, and the structures were restored. He said the applicant's designer, listed issues that need to be repaired and provided the opinion that the structure should be demolished. Fortney added that the findings required to get from the structure issues to the determination that demolition is the only safe or reasonable remedy is missing.

Michael and Amy Van Ze, neighbors at 309 7th St W commented that the house has been vacant for 16-years and the principal owner during that time didn't complete much work and had been asking too much when he sold it. They added that the last two people who lived in the house did so with a leaking roof, which was only replaced much later.

Speaking on behalf of the applicant, Travis Dunn with Dunn Building Solutions said he has determined that the cost of renovation is prohibitively high because 90% the materials of structural elements are rotted. He added that the structural elements must be completely replaced by new ones because of that high level of rot. He said this doesn't let him place an estimate on restoration because it can't be done. He said a total replacement cost of the structure as it exists is \$500,000.

Dunn said previous structures with even extensive damage did not have widespread materials that were compromised.

Chair Toppin asked what the demolition history is for designated properties in the city. Fortney said to his knowledge, the only designated structures to be approved for demolition by the HPC were damaged by fire so severely they were unsafe to enter for repair. He added that the HPC must report their actions to the State Historic Preservation Office, including demolitions.

Chair Toppin closed the public hearing at 7:54

Motion by Commissioner Bremer to approve the request based on the following findings of fact, seconded by Commissioner McCoy. Approved 7-0

- **No reasonable alternatives exist to the demolition because according to Tavis Dunn, the applicant's consulted contract building official, the restoration is not possible due to 90% of the structural materials being rotted.**
- **Acting as a consulted contractor, Dunn estimates the rebuilding of the structure as it exists to be \$500,000.**
- **The Commission finds that without any original materials left, rebuilding of the structure would not maintain the historical significance.**
- **The Commission also finds the cost of rebuilding the structure is not reasonable given the value of the structure.**

B. 413 2nd St W – Relocate adjacent house as a two-car garage.

Fortney presented the staff report. Chair Toppin opened the public hearing at 7:55 pm.

Commissioner Bremer asked if the garage would be located behind the front of the house. Fred Weiland, applicant, said it would be behind the porch but even with the front of the house. Commissioner Simacek asked if the garage would be placed on fill to bring it up to grade. Weiland said the site would be mostly balanced between the high and low elevations and added that he would prefer a variance to move it slightly closer to the street. John Phelps, owner of 301 2nd Street West spoke in favor of the request.

Chair Toppin closed the Public Hearing at 8:10 pm

Motion by Commissioner Borchardt to approve the request, seconded by Commissioner Simacek. Approved 7-0

IV. Certificate of Approval Review

A. 215 7th St W – Porch modifications

Fortney presented the staff report. The commission discussed the porch skirting compared to other area homes. The commission noted the subject porches foundation is solid block compared to other homes with wooden and masonry piers. They said the skirting should highlight the porches structural design.

Motion by Commissioner Simacek to approve the proposed flooring, seconded by Commissioner Youngren. Approved 7-0

Motion by Commissioner Peterson to approve the proposed porch skirting, seconded by Commissioner Youngren. Approved 7-0

Motion by Commissioner Borchardt to approve the relocation and design of the porch stairs, seconded by Commissioner Bremer. Approved 7-0

B. 618 Ramsey St – Fencing

Fortney presented the staff report. The commission approved 7-0 without discussion.

Motion by Commissioner Simacek to approve the proposed fence panels, seconded by Commissioner Borchardt. Approved 7-0

C. 221 Sibley St – Add 6 basement unit exhaust ports in exterior walls

Fortney presented the staff report. The commissioner Borchardt commented that none of the proposal ideas were very appropriate, but he understood the difficulties. He added that a flat door vent would be less conspicuous. The commission approved the applicant preferred proposal 7-0 in the front bulkhead because it would not affect any historic material or eliminate any windows. They added a condition that they see an example of the proposed metal awning mentioned to cover the vents. They also recommended the owner consider some flat vents available if they are rated and appropriate for the use.

Motion by Commissioner Borchardt to approve the applicant’s preferred option in the front of the building with the proposed flashing hood, with the following condition, seconded by Commissioner McCoy. Approved 7-0

An example of the proposed flashing hood be shown to the HPC.

V. OHDS – Original Hastings Design Standards Review

VI. Business and Information

VII. Adjourn

Motion by Commissioner Borchardt to adjourn at 9:06 pm, seconded by Commissioner Youngren. Approved 7-0

Respectfully Submitted - Justin Fortney