

HISTORIC AREA COMMISSION
1 Municipal Drive
May 12, 2022

Present: Laura Fontana, Chairperson
Justin Day
Matthew Lovlie

Absent: Kevin Wade

Also Present: Leila Hamroun, Architectural Consultant

Ms. Fontana convened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. Roll call followed and a quorum to conduct business was declared.

Approval of the Minutes

A Motion to approve the April 14, 2022, Minutes as presented was made, seconded and unanimously carried.

Old Business

37 West 3rd Street – William and Drayton Gerety

In response to a question from Ms. Fontana, Ms. Hamroun stated that she met with the Applicants and their Architect regarding the scale and massing of the proposed structure. The height and footprint of the structure were reduced and further reductions of the pitch were discussed. The height has been reduced by 2.5' and the depth of the building has been reduced from 71' to 61'. In addition, the proposed rear deck has been eliminated and will be replaced by a flat patio.

Ms. Hamroun opined that the revisions will meet many of the parameters recommended by the Commission. The Architect will revise the plans and submit them to Ms. Hamroun for review.

New Applications

161 E. 2nd Street – Shannon Anderson / Phyllis Anderson

An Application for was submitted for the demolition of the dwelling located at 161 East 2nd Street due to significant structural issues to the right basement foundation wall.

Mr. Anderson appeared for the property owner and explained that he wishes to demolish the house and develop the property as his permanent residence. Mr. Anderson purchased the property in March 2020 and lived in the residence full time for six months subsequent to the purchase, and has recently lived there from time-to-time. Mr. Anderson testified that the foundation has moved since the property was purchased in 2020. During a storm in the fall the window frame cracked and the window exploded. He reported that during high winds the entire house moves and opined there are framing issues as well.

Ms. Hamroun stated that the house is a Contributing Building. The parameters for demolition are the condition of the building and whether it is repairable or not. Shaun Ryan Fishburn, P.E.,

Structural Engineer, was engaged to inspect the property. His report stated there are issues with the foundation, the temporary repairs are not productive, and that “the home should not be occupied until repairs are made.” In his conclusion, the report states “The recommended repair is to replace all the basement walls, and to repair all the other structural issues with the wood framing. Based on the overall condition of the home, it should be demolished instead of repaired.”

Ms. Hamroun noted that the cost of work is typically not considered by HAC; however, in the case of demolition the City Code stipulates that it is demonstrated that the repairs will require replacement of 50% or more of the major components the building it can be ordered to be demolished. Ms. Hamroun stated that there is insufficient information in the report to say the building should be demolished.

Ms. Hamroun opined that based on the parameters, a narrative of the repairs and a cost estimate would be necessary for the Commission to consider demolition.

Ms. Fontana stated that in this case cost of repairs would be considered by HAC because that is stipulated in the Code. Ms. Hamroun reiterated that the Engineer’s report mentioned repairs multiple times, and more rationale as to why the conclusion states the building should be demolished and not repaired is needed for HAC to make an informed decision.

Mr. Anderson stated that he was unable to get a contractor to even bid on repairing the structure. Ms. Hamroun recommended that the Structural Engineer provide:

- A descriptive narrative of the scope of repair work;
- Clarification of the rationale for demolition;
- An order of magnitude cost estimate; and
- A brief history of his experience with historic structures.

Ms. Hamroun also offered to have a conversation with the Engineer.

Mr. Anderson noted that he spoke with two Engineers and both stated it was not economically feasible to repair the property.

During discussion the process of resubmitting to HAC and applying for a Building Permit was explained.

Ms. Fontana asked Mr. Anderson what his vision for the property was. Mr. Anderson stated that his vision was not to tear it down; it was to incrementally improve it over time. Mr. Day noted the importance of preserving the historic buildings in New Castle and opined that every effort should be considered before demolition is approved. It was noted that new construction is being done to the adjacent property, and Ms. Hamroun noted that earth movement could potentially impact adjacent structures.

A Motion to table the Application for 161 East 2nd Street was made, seconded and unanimously carried.

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There being no further business to discuss, Ms. Fontana called for a Motion to Adjourn.

A Motion to adjourn was made, seconded and unanimously carried, and the meeting adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kathleen R. Weirich
City Stenographer*