

HISTORIC AREA COMMISSION  
1 Municipal Drive  
April 11, 2024

Present: Tera Hayward-Olivas, Chairperson  
Lisa Doak  
Michael Westman  
Cynthia Batty, Planning Commission Liaison

Absent: Kevin Wade  
Leila Hamroun, City Architect

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

161 East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street – ONC Toner, LLC – Peter J. Toner

Ms. Hayward-Olivas explained that Ms. Hamroun was unable to attend the meeting but she did supply notes. Ms. Hamroun's notes stated that the Application is not approved as presented because the proposed work is not appropriate. It is an enlargement of an existing dwelling and the design removes any reference to the existing building's architectural features and scale that is, for all purposes, demolition of all historic features and new construction, and it does not conform to HAC Guidelines and Standards.

Ms. Hayward-Olivas stated that Ms. Hamroun would reach out to Mr. Toner and his architect to discuss the design.

A discussion of Ms. Hamroun's decision ensued. A number of design features were noted that do not meet the HAC and Department of Interior Standards; i.e., encapsulating the house and the brick. Ms. Batty made the argument that Ms. Hamroun stated that the Commission could override that and asked that the HAC not be dictated to and to think of the good of the neighborhood and the community.

Ms. Hayward-Olivas stated that the HAC must adhere to the Guidelines and Standards, and if the application does not conform to them, the Commission cannot consider it as presented. She reiterated that Ms. Hamroun would reach out to Mr. Toner and his architect to discuss the design changes she is suggesting.

Ms. Batty stated that in 2019 a structural engineer determined that the foundation was structurally unsound, and it was a tear-down when Mr. Toner purchased the property. Ms. Doak stated that the previous homeowner came before HAC within the past year and informed the Commission that he had resolved the structural issues and the home was no longer a tear-down.

In response to a question from Mr. Toner, Ms. Doak stated that a project of this magnitude requires that the Commission have before it all the exact data for the entire encompassing project. She added that feature-wise, as was discussed during a consultation at the March

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meeting, it must at least try to stay true to the original structure and to incorporate into the design any existing elements of the house that can be salvaged to mimic the original structure.

Ms. Hayward-Olivas opined that the application presented should have been for a second consultation. She apologized again and reiterated that Ms. Hamroun would be in touch with Mr. Toner and the architect.

Ms. Hayward-Olivas noted that discussions of the Market Square Brick project and Having accurate information regarding the Historic district given to potential buyers would be tabled to the May meeting.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the November 9, 2023 meeting were not in the Packet and will be reviewed at the May meeting.

In response to a suggestion from Ms. Batty that the Commission discusses creating an Action Item List that the HAC could track and manage through the Minutes, Ms. Hayward-Olivas stated that a discussion on that matter would be added to the May Agenda.

**A motion to approve the March 14, 2024 minutes as amended was made by Ms. Doak, seconded by Mr. Westman and unanimously carried.**

### 109 The Strand – Kristen and Donald Bowdoin - Consultation

An application was received to construct a new colonial revival three-story home with driveway and rear carport and a rear screened porch.

Ms. Hayward-Olivas reviewed Ms. Hamroun's notes on the application.

1. Provide elevation showing adjacent properties to confirm relationship between roof ridges elevations.
2. Provide louvers and shutters of approved materials (wood, engineered wood).
3. Provide a list of all materials for roof, window, door, and porch trim, and deck railings.
4. Provide roof plan and building sections – transverse and longitudinal.
5. Revise panels on first floor window shutters. (Showing three panels. Two panels is preferred to match other shutters in town.)
6. Provide scale comparison of peak height for comparison with adjacent properties.

Items that conform to Guidelines and Standards:

- Wood windows
- Exterior light fixtures
- Brick masonry exterior finish
- Alternative wood siding (Hardy plank)
- Architectural shingle roofing
- Copper gutter and downspouts
- Front stair and metal railing

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Items for which additional information is needed:

- Crown molding materials not specified. Profiles conform with HAC Guidelines and Standards
- Door and window trim materials not specified. Profiles conform to HAC guidelines and Standards.
- Door materials not specified. If wood – conforms to HAC Guidelines and Standards.
- Door and window lintel materials not specified. To be confirmed.
- Rear porch materials not specified. To be confirmed. No vinyl or fibrex trims or railings are proposed.

NOTE: Styrene Plastic or Aluminum louvres and shutters do not conform to HAC Guidelines and Standards.

In response to a question from Ms. Doak, Mr. Bowdoin stated that the divided lights are exterior.

Ms. Hayward-Olivas stated that Ms. Hamroun would reach out to Mr. Bowdoin. Ms. Batty reiterated the list of concerns from Ms. Hamroun's notes. Ms. Doak reviewed a number of items for further clarification.

East 3<sup>rd</sup> & Delaware Street – Austin Markland & Matthew Markland – Pastel Pedals, LLC - Consultation

The applicants were not in attendance. The applicant is proposing adding a new bike station in downtown New Castle. The intersection of East Third and Delaware Streets was suggested to them as a good location; however, they are open to other suggestions for locations, ideally in proximity to historical sites and the business district.

The station would consist of four to eight bicycles, signage with instructions on bike usage, possibly a solar camera, and, if allowed, florals/foilage. The design presented is based on the Pastel Pedal bike rack in Delaware City.

The streetscape in the Historic District is under the purview of HAC, and the Commissioners stated that the proposed location is inappropriate. During discussion several other locations that would be appropriate were noted. It was also noted that HAC was not consulted for the installation of the bike rack at the wharf.

Ms. Hamroun's notes state that the application is not approved as presented because the proposed work is not appropriate. Ms. Hamroun also noted that the location is highly visible on the main thoroughfare, adjacent to the Green and other prominent buildings, which represents an intrusion on the sidewalk, a key feature of the proposed location.

Ms. Doak also noted that the bikes are beach cruiser-type bikes, which would be difficult to ride on the sidewalks.

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Ms. Hayward-Olivas noted the importance of having all stakeholders involved in the process. Ms. Hamroun will reach out to the Markland's to discuss more appropriate areas.

Public Comment

Ms. Hayward-Olivas read a comment into the record regarding this application from Benjamin Ryan in opposition of locating a bike rack at the intersection of East 3<sup>rd</sup> & Delaware Streets.

Mr. John Reaves was in the audience and was recognized by the Chair. He stated that as part of City Outreach they felt there was a place for a town-centric bike rental concession away from the wharf. Ms. Hayward-Olivas noted that HAC was not consulted when City Council approved the bike rack at the wharf, and stated that the streetscape is under the purview of HAC. Ms. Doak added that the location is in front of a key building which elevates the review to the next level, and there are probably concessionaire requirements from the federal and state regarding putting a bike rack in front of a building with federal easements on it.

The Commissioners concurred that they were not opposed to having another rental bike rack in the city; it was just a question of where the best location is.

In response to a question from Mr. Reaves, Ms. Hayward-Olivas stated that because the HAC considers each application on a case-by-case basis, a generic application to fast-track a bike rack installation would not be feasible. Ms. Hayward-Olivas suggested that Mr. Reaves work with the City Administrator and other stakeholders to create a master plan based on other historic cities that are bike-friendly. The Commissioners directed Mr. Reaves to a number of other resources that might be of interest to him. Mr. Reaves noted that he is working with Jim Wilson from Bike Delaware. A further discussion of bike racks and the Historic District ensued.

**New Business**

Historic District Map

Ms. Hayward-Olivas noted that she requested the Historic District Map be added to the HAC tab on the city website. She reviewed areas on the map that are in the Historic District and the National Historic Landmark District (NHLD) and what is under the purview of the HAC. In 1984 the boundaries of the NHLD were expanded. Page 3 of the supplemental document of the Guidelines and Standards has a map that overlays the Historic District map and the NHLD map.

Ms. Hayward-Olivas noted that on May 23<sup>rd</sup> Kara Briggs will be making a presentation on the State Preservation Tax Credit Program at The Arsenal. Ms. Batty suggested this information be added to the HAC tab on the city website. Mr. Westman added that an explanation of the Historic District and NHLD maps noting that they are two separate things could also be added to the website.

Gas Piping Discussion

Ms. Hayward-Olivas reported that Councilperson Day met with the City Administrator and discussed the information that was passed on to him from the HAC. Ms. Batty stated that she also sent Councilperson Day a copy of the motion that was passed in the March HAC meeting.

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Discussion of Updates to the City Website

Ms. Hayward-Olivas distributed a screen shot of the current HAC page on the city website and it was noted that it is not very user-friendly. Ms. Hayward-Olivas noted that there are many resources that could be made available to people on the HAC tab of the city website that would be very helpful to current residents and potential residents. She also opined that it would be helpful to have a brief description introducing each link. Ms. Hayward-Olivas suggested that if it was deemed necessary a work session could be scheduled to discuss the matter in greater detail.

Ms. Hayward-Olivas noted that University of Delaware students are working on a project to update the city website.

Ms. Hayward-Olivas noted that she was asked to do a column in a local publication. She discussed this with Ms. Tantillo and asked if there is any conflict of interest in doing this. Ms. Batty suggested that a quarterly article would be better.

Ms. Batty suggested that it should be made clear on the HAC tab of the city website what each application is for and what the resolution of the application is.

Miscellaneous

Ms. Batty suggested that there be a standing Agenda item for “Planning Commission Update”.

Mr. David Baldini recommended that the HAC request as much money as they can under the upcoming city budget for whatever it is that they want to accomplish.

There being no further business to discuss, Ms. Hayward-Olivas called for a motion to adjourn.

**A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Hayward-Olivas and seconded by Ms. Batty. The motion was unanimously carried, and the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen R. Weirich  
City Stenographer