

**HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**MINUTES**

July 15, 2019

The Historical Commission held a regularly scheduled monthly meeting on Monday, July 15, 2019 in the Commission Room, City Hall Annex, 120 North Duke Street.

**Commission Members Present:** Christopher Peters, Chairman; Eric Berman; Robert Fields; Steve Funk; John Lefever; Stephanie Townrow

**Commission Members Excused:** Alex Folk

**Staff Members Present:** Suzanne Stallings, Historic Preservation Specialist

**Guests Present:** Karen Bresch, Simply from Scratch; Kyle Schillaci, Schillaci Architects; Kirk Liddell, East Marion Properties, LP; Don Brown, Irex Corporation

**Review and Action on Applications for Historical Commission Review**

Chairman Peters called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He explained the function of the Commission as a recommending body to City Council, with the Commission's discussions and deliberations guided by the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (SISR)* and the Design Standards.

**Item No. 1 -- Approval of Minutes of the June 17, 2019 Meeting**

The June 17 meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

**Item No. 2 -- 555 South Water Street  
Simply from Scratch, owner  
Schillaci Architects, Ltd., applicant**

2.1 New Construction: Construction of a new one-story building to house a commercial catering operation, to feature wall coverings of vertical and horizontal siding and ground-face CMU, a steel awning on the west entry door and a canopied entrance on the south elevation, per the submitted plans.

Ms. Stallings read her review, which stated that the building's design was generally appropriate to this KOZ site and its commercial function, based on SISR No. 9 and the Design Standards, with clarification of the materials palette for the Commission's review. The review noted that the two other commercial buildings constructed to date within the KOZ had been designed with similar forms and materials, with a generally modern industrial aesthetic.

The application was presented by the project architect, Mr. Schillaci, and the property owner, Ms. Bresch. She explained that the company is a social and corporate caterer that currently works out of 237 West Chestnut Street. Mr. Schillaci distributed color renderings that included the plain north elevation. He explained the project scope, stating that the bulk of the building will contain production space, with very limited public traffic to the building. He displayed material samples, including the ground-face CMU, vertical metal siding in a light gray and horizontal metal siding in a darker charcoal, and a cutsheet for the Kawneer® doors and windows. He explained that the powder-coated front awning and side canopy would incorporate orange as part of the company logo or branding.

In questions from the Commission, Mr. Peters noted that the adjacent building to the south utilized metal panels but not seamed siding, and asked how the decision was made to use corrugated siding on this structure. Mr. Schillaci responded that the use of darker siding and CMU on the lower façade put greater visual interest at eye level, while the vertical siding provided shadow lines on the upper walls. Mr. Peters also noted use of a parapet around the lower roof, with plain coping on the higher roof. Mr. Funk asked about enclosure of the dumpster.

There being no further questions or comments, Mr. Fields made a motion to recommend to City Council approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed new construction per the submitted plans and material samples. The motion cited SISR No. 9 and the Design Standards, was seconded by Mr. Funk and passed by a unanimous vote.

The applicant was informed that the Commission's recommendation would be discussed either initially at the City Council committee meetings on August 5, 2019 or the full Council meeting on August 13, 2019.

**Item No. 3 -- 216 North Lime Street  
East Marion Properties, LP, owner**

3.1 Demolition: Demolition of a vacant one-story 1,066SF cement-block commercial building on the south end of the parcel, set back from North Lime Street, per the submitted proposal.

3.2 Demolition: Demolition of a vacant one-story 231SF brick-faced cement-block commercial building on the north end of the parcel, set back from North Lime Street, per the submitted proposal.

Ms. Stallings read her review, which noted that both structures have been owned by the applicant since 1982, so the current deteriorated roofing and interior damage was due to neglect or lack of protective maintenance; a demolition request based on deterioration that occurred during the applicant's ownership is not valid per the Conservation District Ordinance. The review stated that the Commission can consider an applicant's claim that a building has limited potential for rehab or reuse based on size, construction or siting, but no corroborating evidence was submitted. The review also noted that the proposal did not meet typical circumstances that the Commission takes into account when considering requests for demolition, including redevelopment of another more significant building or any new construction plans at the site beyond increased surface parking. The application narrative stated that "Full interior and exterior renovations would cost significantly more than rental market conditions could support even if parking were available," but cost estimates for demolition were not provided. The review quoted from the National Park Service's Preservation Brief #46, "*The Preservation and Reuse of Historic Gas Stations*," which states that "gas stations are being rediscovered for their historic significance and the way they are easily adapted for new uses" unrelated to automobiles. The review concluded that the proposal was inappropriate without further clarification, citing SISR Nos. 1 and 2.

The application was presented by Mr. Liddell, former chairman of the Irex Corporation and now president of the East Marion Properties LP, a subsidiary of Irex, and Mr. Brown, the firm's property manager. Mr. Liddell stated that this lot provides off-street parking for the company's offices at 120 North Lime Street, which they have occupied since 1958. Mr. Liddell stated that the buildings proposed for demolition have been

boarded up and were not contributing to the neighborhood. He indicated that the larger building, a former gas station and later a pharmacy, had been used for storage until eight years ago, while the smaller structure was used for file storage until two years ago. He stated that the company now has storage space at Burle Industries on New Holland Avenue, and these structures presented access issues if used for storage since they are surrounded by a surface lot. He indicated that the company has a critical need for off-street parking. Mr. Liddell added that nine spaces are rented to Williams Apothecary located on the opposite side of Lime Street. He stated that the buildings are uninhabitable with no functioning plumbing, heating or A/C; while the larger building has an old bathroom, the smaller structure lacks space even for plumbing. Mr. Liddell stated that renovation costs to make the buildings occupiable were uneconomical since market rents would not cover those costs. They distributed cost estimates for demolition of the structures. Mr. Liddell explained that their long-term plans for the parking lot were to comply with stormwater management requirements, for which RGS Associates had drawn up a plan in 2015; the parking lot plan would not increase parking spaces but would add landscaping.

In comments from the Commission and based on the submitted photos, Mr. Lefever noted that there was major roof failure to the larger building that appeared to have occurred earlier than the two-to-eight-year period in which the buildings have been vacant. Mr. Liddell stated that investments have been made in the buildings over the years, and the interior of the larger building was in appropriate condition for file storage eight years ago. Mr. Funk remarked that the demolition and level of ground disturbance would likely trigger review of a land development plan. Mr. Funk also remarked that the 2015 RGS plan was likely intended to comply with stormwater requirements and might add planting beds, but the plan was based on removal of the buildings, noting that demolition of structures to leave concrete slabs was not in itself an improvement to the neighborhood. Mr. Liddell responded that rehab of the structures was uneconomical and taking down the buildings would be most beneficial for the community. Mr. Funk replied that creation of a parking lot for a private company did not provide a public benefit. Mr. Lefever asked if they had considered leasing spaces for after-hours parking to local residents, which would provide a neighborhood benefit. Mr. Peters asked if the Commission wished to table the application pending the provision of other plans or information. Mr. Funk noted that the 2015 plan was not current and was more hypothetical than a formal proposal. He commented that, if the applicant's rationale was to demolish the buildings in order to avoid maintenance, the Commission's approval would reward bad behavior or neglect. Ms. Townrow asked if the Commission might ask for the applicant to provide cost estimates to bring the buildings up to current code and demonstrate that the repairs would be cost-prohibitive, as well as providing alternative ideas for what else might be done with the space. Mr. Lefever remarked that the exteriors could be made structurally sound and weatherproof, and the interiors cleaned out, but mothballing vacant building would not be inexpensive. Mr. Funk suggested that the Commission consider tabling the review to allow the applicant additional time to pull together plans and develop a clearer argument for the proposed demolition. He encouraged the applicant to meet with Mr. Lefever to discuss building code requirements before the next meeting.

Ms. Townrow made a formal motion to table the application until the Commission's August 19, 2019 meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Berman and passed by a unanimous vote.

**Item No. 4 -- Other Business/Public Participation**

None.

**Item No. 5-- Assignment of Commission Member(s) to Attend the August 5, 2019 Committee meeting and/or the August 13, 2019 City Council Meeting, if Required**

No assignment was necessary.

**Item No. 6-- Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Suzanne Stallings  
Historic Preservation Specialist