

Wilmington Design Review and Preservation Commission
Wednesday, February 27, 2019
Third Floor Conference Room

Commissioners Present: Peter von Glahn, Stewart Baron, Sandra Dolan, Leo Lynch, William Krauss

Staff: Pat Maley and John Kurth, Planning, no representation from Law

Call to order – 6:33 pm

Introduction of commission and staff and reading of rules of order was done by Chairperson Peter von Glahn.

Acceptance of the January minutes was moved by Sandra Dolan, seconded by Stuart Baron and approved by all except Peter von Glahn who recused due to absence from the January meeting.

Summary of the subcommittee on BPG's 200 block of Market Street project was presented by Peter von Glahn and (briefly) Bill Krauss.

Leo Lynch notes that the exterior materials are critical for that project and expressed a preference for red brick. It was also noted of the importance of side façade treatments to give a comprehensive design.

Permit Referral DR- 1605: 509 West Street. Request for renovations to a multi-family building to convert it to a single-family home. Quaker Hill City Historic District. Resolution 03-19.

Dave Mengers made the presentation, noting they were engaged by the Department of Real Estate and Housing to renovate the 2 houses in the way that they had already done with other properties in that block. They chose to use the same architectural vocabulary with interior and exterior to build context with surrounds, and there would be no changes to the façade, although there were some “manipulations to the façade” proposed.

They place to restore the façade to something that could be as contextually related to the rest of the street as possible. This led to a discussion of stucco removal, with Mr.; Mengers saying that there is usually a good reason why folks put stucco over brick, and that it also works when dealing with windows that were cut in.

He noted that on the rear of building there was at least one if not 2 additions when the building was multiple units.

To convert back, Breckstone has chosen to remove some of the extremities, and he used the basement as the defining template to show the boundaries of the original space. There is currently a different roofline, and a change of materials. Breckstone plans to bring the building back to single family by removing additions.

They then will build roof decks off the back to create an outdoor element that gives people access to outdoors but with privacy and puts eyes on the street.

Planning's Power Point slides were shown.

Lei Lynch stated, "Frankly I think that your approach to it makes me happy! It is very straight forward." He added that he had known those houses for a while.

Sandra Dolan agreed, also liking the removal of the additions.

Leo Lynch expressed approval that the decks should help to create /encourage more interaction among neighbors.

Stuart Baron thought it was a great job.

William Krauss called it well done.

Peter von Glahn stated, "You did a wise thing – the newer the addition, the poorer the quality (generally). The proposal is a good job, commission has nothing to change."

Dave Mengers noted that they were also restoring the original front door, and the vestibule and the trim which appears original would also be salvaged. This led to a discussion of the joy of vestibules. It was also noted that the main stair is original and will be maintained.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Bayard Marin of the Quaker Hill Historic Preservation Foundation remarked that he liked the idea of reducing the back as a way of making them single family eligible. He stated it will make it a great project. It was noted that there will be parking behind the place on Willing Street, and that the chain link fences will be replaced with black aluminum.

The prepared resolution was read by Leo Lynch as presented; it was seconded by William Krauss and approved unanimously.

A notation was requested that that downspouts are not a decorative element and should be made to blend into the façade, not stick out.

Permit Referral DR-1606: 508 Washington Street. Request for renovations to an existing three-unit building to convert it to a single-family home. Quaker Hill City Historic District. Resolution 04-19.

George Ludwig of Breckstone Architects made the presentation. He noted that his project was for the same client (City of Wilmington Department of Real Estate and Housing), and they are taking the same design approach but with a front façade different approach (because it was not stuccoed).

They plan to restore windows, place new architectural shingles on roof (replacing rolled roofing). It is more modest than other (West St) project. The back of the building is similar to the West Street project – removal of the addition brings the building back to scale, portion will be kept. Stucco on the rear will be restored with ProSoco product.

Planning's Power Point slices were shown.

Peter von Glahn stated, "You missed something on the laundry list – a shed roof on the back." It is remarkably consistent with the architecture, encloses the original basement stairs.

William Krauss called it another well done application.

COMMUNITY COMMENT

Bayard Marin – (on behalf of Quaker Hill Historic Preservation Foundation) they would like to see the project approved.

CORRECTION to the text – boards are 1" x 6" inch, not 1'x6' (feet).

Peter von Glahn stated the need for a #19 point to be added as follows-

#19 Construct a new, shed roof, one story, rear addition in style and materials sympathetic to the original architecture.

Sandra Dolan read the resolution with the correction and addition, it was seconded by Leo Lynch and approved unanimously.

Permit Referral DR-1607: 1313 Delaware Avenue. Request to remove the exterior stucco surfacing of the 1980s rear addition to the building due to water infusion and damage and resurface that rear section with vinyl siding. Delaware Avenue City Historic District. Resolution 05-19.

Presentation was made by Eric Allen, the condo association president who stated that he purchased his condo in Nov 2017 when he moved to Wilmington (about 2 years ago) To take a position as Corporate safety director. He also noted he was part time military.

He briefly gave a background of 1313 Delaware Avenue (its rear addition in the 1980s, etc). He covered that the association had called in several experts under the previous property manager. He noted that the association has hired a professional – to do moisture level studies and been told that the stucco exterior is failing.

Unit 3 needs complete repair and overhaul – contractors have stopped trying to do any interior repairs until the exterior is replaced.

He noted that the association has zero intention of changing the “historical structure,” but they want to attack the stucco, which he followed up with a quote that to remedy stucco is \$40K. He further stated that he was “Talking to county about how many remediations – (he did not explain why he was talking to the county).

He mentioned that he knew that building codes in 1980s were not what they are now. He further elaborated that some siding contractors today sometimes even will not install stucco.

He continued that he spoke for everyone that they would love to do back to match the front, BUT it comes down to money – they are all paying out of pocket – and to match the front exterior would cost in the mid \$150K.

Hardie board also is pricey – over “6 figures.”
The association has price and longevity concerns.

He moved into saying that VINYL siding is extremely affordable, and that the association wants something that will expand and contract. HE continued that the Williamsport brand vinyl siding has best look – “maintaining historic look.” He further emphasized the vinyl siding would only be used on the back end of building – they are not as concerned about the back of buildings.

Planning’s Power Point slides were shown.

Peter von Glahn stated for the Commission that DRPC has NEVER approved vinyl siding ANYWHERE let alone from something this visible. HE expressed doubts that vinyl can be used on the curve. He notes he has been a renovation contractor and mentioned a project he had done that had been restuccoed successfully. He further Noted the historic of stucco and summed that the real issue is that a properly applied stucco system is based on the notion that it will leak, and stucco expands and that expansion joints need to be installed.

Stucco is always applied over a waterproof membrane – today that means over a plastic membrane. He mentioned Ursuline Academy’s stucco is over steel framing.

The problem at 1313 Delaware Avenue is that this was done in the 1980s and (he suspects) probably that it was done at low cost – detail in stucco is what makes it successful. He noted places where problems can occur.

He explained that the standard approach is metal trim strip 3/8" away from wood - metal water-shedding bracket. He also noted that there does not seem to have been a water barrier applied at the time –does not seem to be any detailing – any anti water measures. He continued that he did not think that this is beyond salvage - one study recommended a saw cut around windows and doors - install a bead of caulk as would perform like the stop.

In summary – the Stucco needs patching – if there are structural issues, they need to be removed from the inside. He then shared the ProSoco info from Breckstone application with him as a possible product to be included in the association's solution, noting that, when it comes to existing structures, Ursuline Academy recently had that type treatment – they came back with 2 coats of ProSoco. He does not think Hardie Plank is correct material. Leo Lynch agreed, saying it would leak in no time because of having to cover a curved surface.

Vinyl has the same problem as stucco with deficiencies in the way it meets up to the structure - membrane, sill cover, then insert window. In vinyl siding it is how it meets existing windows that is crucial.

Leo Lynch reflected on the matter of setting precedence – something that DRPC avoids at all cost – and tis would be a highly visible precedent.

William Krauss agreed that vinyl siding is not going to remedy the problem - stucco is not a bad thing. He noted there was not a moisture stain around the windows which is a tell-tale sign on where the problem was. He stated the association should take Peter up on the suggestion to repair the stucco. By question, he found there are eight residential units total – some are two stories.

The applicant noted they would love to refinish with something to harmonize with the front.

William Krauss briefly noted elements of Title 75 of state code (condo requirements) which specifies requirements for certain amount of reserve. HE noted it is likely there will have to be a special assessment. (This led to discussion of other condo cases the Commission has encountered). He finished saying, "that is the avenue that you should pursue – most cost effective and can be done relatively quickly."

Leo Lynch agreed that the curve in the building is what will dictate the most effective material solution.

Sandy Dolan agreed with Peter's suggestion to the applicant to explore repair of the stucco as the preferable material.

Peter von Glahn encouraged them to get an experienced stucco company to do this, adding that Paul's Plastering comes to mind. He further mentioned that the folks that did the Ursuline project were also good, and that the association could contact Chuck

Ryan at Homsey Architects to find out the name of that contractor. The general contractor on that job for Ursuline was EDIS. He closed by saying that he doubted weep-screed will do much good (in response to the applicant's question).

Stuart Baron reiterated that the Commission has not ever approved vinyl siding – and that the association's next best solution would be to have someone really FIX the stucco. He added, "With all the quotes you got, get the job done right and do it just once." He acknowledged it is a financial problem/ challenge.

Peter von Glahn suggested the possibility of doing repairs now and finish the major work later - he does think they will need a sealing on this and added that they will probably have to do an exterior waterproofing (Elastomeric) which is made to work with stucco.

Sandy Dolan mentions MODAC which led to a discussion of that National Park Service approved material for waterproofing.

Peter von Glahn then suggested the Commission reject the application and direct the applicant to move towards the stucco repair.

Eric Allen stated that he knew the association's proposal might get rejected.

Leo Lynch suggested strongly that the association bring someone out to inspect and prescribe. Eric said he liked the sound of EDIS, which led to a discussion of Paul's Plastering (high recommendation). It was noted that stucco removal would be extensive and messy, and the association DID have a structural engineer come out and the person said the understructure was in good shape. This led to a side bar discussion regarding mold and mildew which is remediable.

Staff noted that the resolution did not recommend approval, so Stuart Baron read the prepared resolution highlighting the "DOES NOT RECOMMEND" clause' it was seconded by William Krauss and approved unanimously.

Motion to adjourn was made by William Krauss, seconded by Leo Lynch and approved unanimously.