

Wilmington Design Review and Preservation Commission
Monday, April 15, 2019
Third floor conference room

Commission Members Present: Peter von Glahn, Stuart Baron, Sandra Dolan, William Krauss, Leo Lynch, Peter Jennings
Absent: Edie Menser (medical)

Staff Present: Rose Tassone DiNardo, Law, Pat Maley and John Kurth, Planning

Administrative Business

- 1) Reading of rules of order
- 2) March Minutes – Motion to Accept was made by Stuart Baron, seconded by Leo Lynch and approved unanimously.

A. Old Business

Permit Referral DR-1611: 109 West 7th Street. Request for demolition of the building to make way for a multi parcel redevelopment for residential use.
Referred under the demolition provisions of § 48-36(D). Resolution 09-19.
TABLED AS INCOMPLETE at March meeting.

Motion to raise from the table was made by Leo Lynch, seconded by Sandra Dolan and approved unanimously.

Sarah Lamb of Buccini Pollen Group began the presentation, picking up where the discussion had ended last month by presenting the financial analysis that had been requested at last meeting. The further options were studied by the group as outlined in the tables provided. The comparisons were of keeping the existing the buildings (reuse) versus new construction. The applicant main point was that the building's footprint was too small to support residential use, and that the Floor heights are not in today's standards of economy. Comparison of basis cost versus demo cost was examined.

Planning's Power Point Slides were shown. Peter von Glahn read the applicable code section from 48-36(D)(5), noting that the code required economic analysis had been provided. He then called for commission comments.

Peter Jennings noted that DRPC agreed at last meeting that they needed this data – and now they have the data in hand and in a good precedent (format, extent of documentation) for the type of data to see in the future. (This was noted by staff).

He continued, saying that if this was a full City Historic district, this would not be enough data, but it is not (it is National Register stand-alone, surrounded by buildings deemed not to be historically significant).

Leo Lynch stated that from a feasibility viewpoint it makes perfect sense, especially since it is not in a City Historic District.

Sandra Dolan stated that she felt that the new financial information made her feel comfortable and I she had not further questions.

Stuart Baron said he had nothing to add to the last time, and the matter was just a situation of unfortunate occurrence of location, with the building located in a place that precludes its continuing existence.

Peter von Glahn found the proposed construction is an appropriate addition to the downtown and had no more objections. The Commission finds this proposal approved.

Stuart Baron read the resolution 09-19. Law's Representative Rose Tassone diNardo noted that the Commission should drop # 3 from the resolution caveats – all agreed.

It was noted that the salvage element stays as a requirement (cornice- entry elements – brackets and protruding window surrounds), as well as photography within the buildings with a photo index.

Sandra Dolan seconded the resolution as modified, and it was approved unanimously.

B. New Business

Permit Referral DR-1612: 1319 West 6th Street. Request for demolition. Wilmington Community Neighborhood Land Bank. Cool Spring/Tilton Park City Historic District. Resolution 10-19.

Dave Mengers of Breckstone Architects made the presentation for the proposed demolition (accompanied by Ray Saccomandi, Land Bank Director of Operations).

The current owner of 1321 West 6th Street has been identified as a buyer for the lot once the building at 1319 is removed.

Land Bank has hired a structural engineer – he deemed the property to be structurally unstable – David Mengers agreed (stated that he almost fell to basement this morning (morning of the DRPC meeting).

They discussed that some elements can be salvaged – they propose to salvage and use in a restoration.

Planning's Power Point slides were shown.

Peter von Glahn discusses the 1100-02 West 6th Street case (from several years back) as possible precedent – he is concerned about the arch supporting the party wall in the current case is as it was in the West 6th Street case in Cool Sprig CHD.

Dave Mengers discussed the facing after the demolition.

Peter von Glahn showed a slide with a reverse brick corbelling to bolster the removed arch. Dave Mengers liked the suggestion on what was done at 1102 /04 W 6th site.

Sandra Dolan noted that she would not argue with those pictures, and asked if they had any idea how long this property has been vacant? No clear answer was given.

Ray Saccomandi noted that this property was to be the first of many to stabilize these neighborhoods.

Leo reads the prepared resolution 10-19, it was seconded by Sandra Dolan, and approved unanimously to allow demolition of the deteriorated property.

Permit Referral DR-1613: 7TH and West Streets. Request for development of a Community Park as part of the “Vacant to Vibrant” initiative. Quaker Hill City Historic District. Resolution 11-19.

Jeff Anderson – representing Wilmington Renaissance Corporation made the presentation with Laura Semmelroth. They noted that the project has 2 goals-

- To Remediate

- To Create a new community park – open green space – higher area

They showed sketches of the 2 areas (upper and lower sections, one for Park-like activities of walking, and passive enjoyment, and one for a community garden use with raised beds.

Durable materials that relate to historic of the site were picked for architectural features–

- Hairpin fences

- Durable stone for steps

- All paving material ADA compliant

Result will be useable flexible space for community.

Planning’s Power Point slides were shown.

Peter Von Glahn called the proposal and project “Well done.”

Stuart Baron asked about the water supply for the grass and the plant beds? He was told “Yes, there will be potable water supply for garden and lawn.”

Peter Jennings complimented the project calling it, “Very nice.”

Leo Lynch noted that, “for those of us familiar with the site, it is a welcome relief.”

The hairpin fence that is proposed was indicated as appropriate because years ago structure there had been a hair pin fence on the property. All the commissioners indicated they liked the proposal.

Community Comments

Bayard Marin said the design has never been presented to the community or the neighborhood association. He continued with vehemence that tonight is the first time he has seen some of this, and that 7th and West Street is a very bad corner in Quaker Hill – he called it the 2nd worst in Quaker Hill. He continued that there were a “Lot of issues needed to be talked about.” He elaborated that he had been there on West Street for 36 years (his legal office) and that the beauty has been the height line of buildings – he had hoped that someday this block would add to the beauty of the street height line again.

He stressed this project has not been presented specifically to the QHN Foundation or Association for input. He further stated that he was glad for things done FOR the community not TO the community. He asked for it to be tabled until the Quaker Hill Association and Foundation look at it. He noted that the Ministry of Caring had gone through this with QH Foundation review process.

He further asks about the shed proposed within the park and called it incompatible with the district. He followed that assessment with questions about “What height of fence?” saying it should be 6 feet high.

Peter von Glahn answered Mr. Marin stating that the Commission has no codified requirements for applicants to meet with neighborhood associations before they come before the commission to present their application. He continued that, if the applicant wishes to confer with the neighborhood and come back they can ask that the case be deferred.

Rose Tassone diNardo of the Law Department noted that she does not recall any code section requiring the consultation as described.

Mr. Marin expressed discontent, saying, “You Have Discretion! This has never been presented to any of us – this design has not been presented to any of us.”

Rose Tassone diNardo again stated that, as Peter von Glahn has said, there is nothing in the City Code that requires this. She further added that she did not recall that there is any such requirement. She continued that where it is a public meeting where the public can come and provide info – yes, the commission has discretion, (but such is not the case here).

Renata G, the new director of Wilmington Renaissance Corporation stated that she was certain there was a series of meetings held for the community to weight in on this proposal.

Rose Tassone diNardo added that she was sure this DRPC meeting was posted for the required 7 days prior to the meeting.

Peter von Glahn – putting Mr. Marin’s idea before the commission – stated that he was leery of setting a precedent or standing where DRPC would mandate tabling this project being heard because the civic association had not had specific consultation on the project. He continued that as far as he could see the DRPC requirements have been met. He then asked the applicant whether they would agree to table.

Laura Semmelroth stated that the lot requires a great deal of remediation and that WRC wishes to move forward immediately. She noted that there had been community meetings where the public saw the proposal, specifically calling out that drawings were on display at Hicks Anderson, and that the results are in public documents. She verbalized that she “took the plans to every bodega and corner in the neighborhood to elicit input.” She closed saying that she believes they cannot table this.

Stuart Baron stated that he did not believe they can table things that do not fall under their purview, further saying we are not involved in the process of what is done in the community.

Leo Lynch noted that it was his experience that this issue (to table or not) has come up before –and we have move ahead with the projects.

Laura Semmelroth stated she had a packet with 17 letters of support for the project from residents and people invested in the neighborhood.

Bayard Marin asked to see specifically each element of this design and Peter von Glahn stated no.

William Krauss said, “We are in a position to make a decision,” and the commission members verbalized agreement with that statement.

Peter von Glahn read the resolution as prepared, it was seconded by William Krauss and accepted unanimously. The Wilmington Renaissance Director signed the DRPC paperwork.

Stuart Baron moved to Adjourn, it was seconded by Leo Lynch and approved unanimously.