



HISTORIC REVIEW COMMISSION OF PITTSBURGH

Minutes of the Meeting of January 2, 2008
Beginning at 12:30 PM
200 Ross Street
First Floor Hearing Room
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

In Attendance:

<u>Members</u>	<u>Staff</u>	<u>Others</u>
	Susan Tymoczko	Gia Tatore, YPA
Michael Stern, Chairman	Katherine Molnar	Anne Nelson, PHLF
Paul Tellers, Vice Chair		Wayne Kist
Ruth Drescher		Kenneth J. Yarsky, II
Noor Ismail		Phil Molnar
Jill Joyce		David McMunn
		Steven Paul, Pres. Pgh.
		J. Tracy Mortimore

Old Business

Enforcement: There were no new enforcement issues to report, or resolve.

Historic Reviews: Ms. Molnar reported on her Section 106 hearing with representatives from the State Historic Preservation Office. She indicated that a new agreement with the State (Programmatic Memorandum of Agreement) was being finalized. No one at the S106 meeting knew why the HRC would be involved with the federal historic review process, but that it could be a holdover from earlier years. Molnar said she would prepare a memo and distribute it to the Commission members once the PMOA was finalized.

Nominations Report: There are five buildings in the nomination process. Ms. Molnar reported that three of those items would be discussed at the end of the hearing: 800 E. Ohio, 7101 Apple Street, and 100 W North Avenue. The Garden Theatre (12 W. North Avenue) nomination went before Planning Commission on December 11. At that action hearing, Commission asked to table the nomination until the URA could attend, and offer their comments/recommendation. The new date for Planning Commission is January 14. The August Wilson house is *still* unscheduled for City Council Public Comment hearing. Ms. Molnar reported that she has asked City Council to schedule the hearing at least “a dozen times.” The nomination needs to be completed by early February (to stay within the 8 month time frame for nominations). Ms. Ismail replied that we need to keep asking, as to not let City Council forget about the request for a hearing.

New Business

Minutes: Ms. Molnar erroneously indicated that minutes were included in the HRC packets. Mr. Stern passed around his copy of the minutes. HRC members examined that copy. Ms. Joyce asked whether there was a motion made for 848-50 Western Avenue, to which Ms. Molnar replied that there was not. Molnar reminded the commissioners that they agreed the offending building owner (enforcement issue) would come back before the HRC in April to present his plan for replacing the missing architectural detail (finial/bracket). Ms. Drescher moved to approve the minutes; Mr. Tellers seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Certificates of Appropriateness: Ms. Molnar presented the Certificates of Appropriateness which included several window replacements. Ms. Molnar explained the circumstances behind each window replacement. Mr. Tellers asked why/how applicants are allowed to replace windows; Ms. Molnar replied that the guidelines vary from district to district regarding window replacement. There was some discussion as to why the district guidelines varied from district to district. Ms. Molnar informed the commission that she intended to examine the guidelines, and probably amend them to be one document. Mr. Stern asked if the HRC had the authority to amend the guidelines, or whether the proposed changes had to go before Council for approval. Ms. Molnar said the Ordinance indicated that the Commission can update and change the guidelines, but it doesn't say how. Molnar offered to ask the legal department (*At the January Legal Meeting, Molnar discovered that the Commission does have the power to change and update the guidelines at their digression. The changes, however, cannot supercede anything written in the ordinance*). Mr. Stern asked if we could look for a grant to hire a consultant to change the guidelines for us. Mr. Stern asked if it would be possible to ask to be put on the list for a budget request. Ms. Drescher asked if an intern could do the job, but Ms. Molnar thought that an intern might not be able to handle that technical job. The Commission and Staff forgot to approve the Certificates of Appropriateness Report.

Applications for Economic Hardship: There were no Applications for Economic Hardship.

Adjourn: Ms. Joyce moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Tellers seconded the motion. All in favor.

Discussion on hearing items follows on the attached pages.

Attachments

1321 N. Franklin Street

OWNER:	City of Pittsburgh 1321 N Franklin Street Pittsburgh, PA 15233
APPLICANT:	Russell Blaich Bureau of Building Inspection
WARD:	22 nd
BLOCK & LOT NUMBER:	22-K-333
BUILDING INSPECTOR:	Ron Freyermuth
COUNCIL DISTRICT #:	
ZONING CLASSIFICATION:	R2-H
ARCHITECTURAL RATING:	(typical)

APPLICANT’S PROPOSAL – *To raze the structure to the ground*

DISCUSSION OF PROPOSAL

Ms. Molnar introduced the application by showing the location of the property, and by showing a map of all the HRC approved demolitions in Manchester in 2007. There were at least four other properties approved for demolition on North Franklin Street in 2007. Ms. Molnar showed images of the building.

Mr. Blaich said that this building is beyond saving. The roof has a huge hole, apparently rain may travel from the roof through to the ground floor. Ms. Molnar informed the Commission that the Manchester Real Estate Report of 2005 recommended the building for restoration. She said that because this building is part of a row, it forms an important

context on North Franklin. It is part of a northern boundary of the Manchester district, and if the Commission continues to allow demolitions, the district boundaries will have to be redrawn.

Mr. Tellers agreed but said that damaged row-houses also can cause the most harm to neighboring structures. He said that this was a difficult decision because the building looked so nice from the exterior. Mr. Blaich argued that “everything is intact – there is just no roof, third, or second floor.” Laugh. Mr. Stern said it would have to be a complete reconstruction. Mr. Tellers asked (no one in particular) if the money spent on demolition could be redirected toward stabilizing the building. Ms. Drescher agreed that that was the right question to ask. Mr. Blaich suggested that Ed Jacobs would be the person to ask (Real Estate Director for the City). Ms. Joyce asked if there is a reason why the City can’t actively put this structure on the market. Mr. Blaich replied that Mr. Jacobs probably would put this address on the market if he thought he could sell it. Mr. Tellers asked how much it would cost to demolish the building, Mr. Blaich didn’t answer immediately, but Ms. Drescher said her neighbor’s house cost \$8,000 to demolish. Blaich then thought \$8,000-\$10,000 would be a good estimate. Mr. Cipriani thought calling the finance department might be a good idea as well. Mr. Tellers said he was not inclined to approve the application for demolition.

MOTION: Mr. Tellers moved to investigate the redirection of funds that would be used for demolition to the stabilization of the structure. At this time, the request for demolition is denied. Mr. Stern clarified this motion by saying at this time, the Commission asks the city to investigate means to stabilize the structure and report back to the Commission within six months. Mr. Tellers accepted the clarification/amendment to his initial motion.

SECOND: Ms. Joyce seconded the motion.

VOTE: All members voted in favor.

1311 Hamlin Street

OWNER:	Pearl McCray (deceased) 1311 Hamlin Street Pittsburgh, PA 15233
APPLICANT:	Russell Blaich Bureau of Building Inspection
WARD:	22 nd
BLOCK & LOT NUMBER:	22-P-338
BUILDING INSPECTOR:	Ron Freyermuth
COUNCIL DISTRICT #:	
ZONING CLASSIFICATION:	R2-H
ARCHITECTURAL RATING:	(typical)

PROPOSAL – To raze the structure to the ground

DISCUSSION OF PROPOSAL

Ms. Molnar presented the application. She indicated that the building was more isolated, and lacked the context that the previous building had. Mr. Stern asked to the condition, and Mr. Blaich answered that there were serious problems in the back of the building. According to Blaich’s photos, the building had a mid-sized hole in the brick veneer.

Mr. Tellers argued that without this building at the rear of a West North property, the primary property would increase in value because of its increased lot size. Personally, Tellers did not think that this building was worth saving. It isn’t as historically significant as some of the others, and by its removal, might assist the value of the street-facing houses.

MOTION: Mr. Tellers moved to approve the request for demolition for the reasons he stated during discussion.

SECOND: Ms. Joyce seconded the motion.

IN FAVOR: Stern, Tellers, Joyce, Ismail, Cipriani

OPPOSED: Drescher

1102 West North Avenue

OWNER:	Cosmosurf Technologies, Inc. 1102 West North Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15233
APPLICANT:	Berthony Deslouches, Owner
WARD:	22 nd
BLOCK & LOT NUMBER:	22-R-289
BUILDING INSPECTOR:	Ron Freyermuth
COUNCIL DISTRICT #:	
ZONING CLASSIFICATION:	RM-M
ARCHITECTURAL RATING:	(typical)

APPLICANT’S PROPOSAL – *Exterior Renovations to include replacement windows, replacement roof, and front porch repairs.*

DISCUSSION OF PROPOSAL

Ms. Molnar presented the application, and called for the applicant or applicant’s representative. The applicant did not show-up to the hearing. Molnar asked whether it would be worth discussing the application without the input of the applicant.

Mr. Tellers and Mr. Stern agreed that the replacement window shown did not look to be historically sensitive.

MOTION: Mr. Tellers moved to TABLE the nomination until the applicant could be present.

SECOND: Ms. Joyce seconded the motion.

VOTE: All in favor.

819 Liberty Avenue

OWNER:	Martin & Judith Berger 819 Liberty Avenue Pittsburgh, PA
APPLICANT:	Berger Real Estate Wayne Kist
WARD:	2 nd
BLOCK & LOT NUMBER:	9-N-66
BUILDING INSPECTOR:	Ed McAllister
COUNCIL DISTRICT #:	
ZONING CLASSIFICATION:	GT
ARCHITECTURAL RATING:	(typical)

APPLICANT’S PROPOSAL – *Restoration/ rehabilitation of storefront*

DISCUSSION OF PROPOSAL

Ms. Molnar presented this application. She indicated that in 1998 a proposed restoration to the building was approved by the HRC. The current applicant used those pre-existing drawings to help illustrate his current proposal. She invited Mr. Wayne Kist to the table to discuss the proposal.

There was some discussion as to which drawings were accurate to the applicant’s proposal. In addition, there was much discussion concerning the corrugated metal currently in existence at the storefront, and whether it would remain in place or be removed. At first, the applicant stated that it would remain. He later indicated that the corrugated metal piece would be removed, but that the void created would be covered with drywall.

Mr. Stern asked if there was a dropped ceiling behind the current storefront – there is. Mr. Tellers was not comfortable approving opaque glass for part of the storefront – he also did not want to see brushed aluminum. Mr. Stern asked about colors, and, not getting a good answer, said that fundamentally the Commission needed more information.

Mr. Tellers questioned the slenderness of all the storefront stiles. In addition, the commission members thought that keeping the dropped ceiling behind that storefront would create an unusual dark shadow. Ms. Joyce thought that the entire storefront looked too modern. Mr. Tellers wanted there to be a space/recess behind the storefront to allow for more natural lighting. Mr. Stern recommended the applicant look at the building next to Sammy’s and use it as a model. He also recommended that the applicant take the revisions to the LRC. Does the applicant have an architect? Mr. Kist replied no.

All Commission members agreed that the storefront doors would be better positioned in the center of the building, and the signboard would be better if it were continuous. The doors could still be ADA compatible. Mr. Stern cautioned the Commission not to redesign the applicant’s building at this time.

MOTION: Ms. Joyce moved to not approve what was presented. The applicant should come back next month with revised drawings showing the proposed changes: 1) moving the entry doors to the center, 2) making one continuous signboard, 3) fattening-up the vertical members, or stiles, and 4) taking the proposal to the LRC before it comes back to HRC.

SECOND: Ms. Drescher seconded the motion.

VOTE: All in favor.

7101 Apple Street – National Negro Opera House

Nomination Information

Owner: Miriam White & Jonnet Solomon
Nominated By: Young Preservationists Association of Pittsburgh
P.O. Box 2669, Pittsburgh, PA 15230
Date of Nomination: 22 October 2007

Building Information

Date of Construction: 1894
Architect(s): unknown
Builder(s):
National Register Status: Not listed
Current Use: Vacant

Zoning Information

Ward: 12th
Neighborhood: Homewood
Block and Lot Number: 0173-N-00087
Zoning: P (Parks)

DISCUSSION OF NOMINATION

Ms. Molnar informed the Commission of their current duty to either recommend, or not recommend, this designation to City Council. She outlined the three points of significance, as per the prepared reports. Mr. Stern asked if there was any opposition to this nomination, Ms. Molnar replied that there was one anonymous letter that objected to the historic designation of this structure.

MOTION: Ms. Drescher moved moved to recommend to City Council that the National Negro Opera House (7101 Apple Street) be designated a historic-structure.

SECOND: Mr. Tellers seconded the motion.

VOTE: All in favor.

800 E. Ohio – Workingmen’s Savings Bank

Nomination Information

Owner: Lou Lammana, Bentley Inc.
Nominated By: East Allegheny Community Council
Allegheny City Society
Date of Nomination: 10 October 2007

Building Information

Date of Construction: 1902, 1921
Architect(s): Giaver and Dinkelberg (1921 addition)
Builder(s): A & S Wilson Company (1902, 1921)
National Register Status: None

Zoning Information

Ward: 23rd
Neighborhood:
Block and Lot Number: 0024-N-00142
Zoning: NDI

DISCUSSION OF NOMINATION

Ms. Molnar informed the Commission of their current duty to either recommend, or not recommend, this designation to City Council. She recapped the information listed above, and explained the two points of significance identified with this building.

Mr. Tellers added that he thought the windows lacked integrity, but that did not effect the overall integrity of the building. The building looks remarkably similar to its original appearance. Ms. Drescher commented that the rear of the building has been modified to some extent. Ms. Molnar reminded her that the ARC house addition/entrance at the rear of the building had been added to the original structure, and was thus not original itself. It is unclear how that addition impacted original historic materials.

Ms. Molnar said that the developer was hoping to demolish the building. Mr. Tellers said that the HRC should not look at the micro-economic development of the lot, per say, but should look at the economic impact of saving the building in the neighborhood. Mr. Stern said it was important to remember that there was no opposition to this nomination at the last public comment hearing.

MOTION: Mr. Tellers moved to recommend to City Council that the Workingmen’s Savings Bank Co. (800 E. Ohio Street) be designated a historic-structure.

SECOND: Ms. Joyce seconded the motion.

VOTE: All in favor.

100 West North Avenue – Malta Temple

Nomination Information

Owner: Salvation Army
Nominated By: David McMunn
Mexican War Streets Society
Date of Nomination: 11 December 2007

Building Information

Date of Construction: 1927
Architect(s): W. R. Klicker and William K. Beltz
Builder(s): Rose & Fisher
National Register Status: None

Zoning Information

Ward: 22nd
Neighborhood: Central Northside
Block and Lot Number: 0023-K-00411
Zoning: LNC

DISCUSSION OF NOMINATION

Ms. Molnar presented this new nomination to the HRC. She discussed how parts of the Northside are being nominated individually, instead of as a district. The Mexican War Streets National Register district is in the process of being expanded, but the local district is the same. There is some discussion of expanding the local district, but that is not currently happening.

Ms. Molnar invited the nominator, David McMunn, to present the nomination. He outlined various points of significance for the building, as per the nomination. Mr. Stern asked if the building is currently in use, McMunn replied that the Salvation Army currently uses the building for various programming and activities. Mr. Tellers wanted to know if the next block, across Redour, was under development. Mr. McMunn replied that it was. Mr. Tellers then asked, why not nominate the Masonic Temple and nearby Apartment Building as well? Mr. McMunn said that the Central Northside and Mexican War Streets Society actually had an agreement with some of those properties that stipulated those buildings should follow historic standards when considering rehabilitation. Mr. Tellers asked if the owner opposed the nomination, they do. Mr. McMunn described the original and non-original portions of the building, as well as the historic background.

Mr. Stern called for comment from the opposition. Mr. Kenneth J. Yarsky, II came to the table and stated his client's opposition. He made several points to refute the significance of the building. 1) That the Masonic Temple is really the "bookend" of the neighborhood, not Malta Temple, and that the Malta Temple Building is a fragmented portion of another block. 2) He stated that his client was having a difficult time deciding what criteria actually apply when deciding significance. The Malta Temple built their structure in the 1920s, and deeded it to a bank in 1934. Yarsky argued this was not enough time to make a difference. 3) The building has lost integrity over the years. He cited the loss of original windows for this argument, and modification of the storefronts. The total integrity of the building is not what it once was when it was first built. 4) Yarsky found it interesting that the preservationists in town are interested in preserving the entire neighborhood, not just the Masonic Temple, but that those groups have

800 E. Ohio – Workingmen’s Savings Bank

made no effort on that behalf. Yarsky believes that the nominating group (MWSS) is not interested in the preservation of the building, but is rather opposed to the proposed use of the Salvation Army programs. He thinks that the nomination is just a “smokescreen” to prevent development of Salvation Army programming.

Ms Drescher asked Mr. Yarsky what the potential negative effects he thinks historic designation would have on the building. He said that his client operates out of the building, and that the client owns other structures along the block. He said there may be some thought of doing some renovations, probably interior, but didn’t want designation to impinge on the Salvation Army’s ability to do their modifications. Mr. Stern asked for other questions. There were none of Mr. Yarsky.

Ms. Molnar reminded the Commission that it was their responsibility to determine whether the building might meet one of the criteria for designation, and that it maintains sufficient integrity. Either way they decide, the building will continue through the nomination process. The determination made at the hearing will decide whether the building goes through the nomination with protection, or without protection from the Ordinance.

Mr. Stern said that since the HRC took public comment at a previous nomination’s first hearing, he would do so today.

Mr. Tracy Mortimore, 1216 Arch Street, spoke in favor of the nomination.

Mr. Robert Wise, 218 W North Avenue, spoke in favor of the nomination. He said that in newspaper articles, the Salvation Army indicated that they planned to demolish the Malta Temple Building.

Ms. Gia Tatore spoke in favor of the nomination.

Mr. Stern asked Ms. Molnar to review the points of significance listed in the Staff Report. She did. Mr. Stern, Mr. Tellers, and Ms. Molnar continued to clarify what this initial hearing would mean. Mr. Tellers declared that the windows were not a detrimental factor in determining whether the building had sufficient integrity.

MOTION: Mr. Tellers moved that there is reasonable cause to determine that the nominated structure, 100 W. North Avenue (Malta Temple), meets the definitions in Section 1.2 of a Historic Structure. In this way, the structure meets at least one criterion for designation, as outlined in the City’s historic preservation ordinance (Section 1.4 of Title Eleven of the City of Pittsburgh Code of Ordinances), and has sufficient integrity.

SECOND: Ms. Drescher seconded the motion

VOTE: All in favor.