



Division of Development Administration and Review

City of Pittsburgh, Department of City Planning

200 Ross Street, Third Floor

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15219

HISTORIC REVIEW COMMISSION OF PITTSBURGH

Minutes of the Meeting of October 1, 2008

Beginning at 12:00 PM

200 Ross Street

First Floor Hearing Room

Pittsburgh, PA 15219

In Attendance:

<u>Members</u>	<u>Staff</u>	<u>Others</u>
		Raymond Hildreth
Michael Stern, Chair	Katherine Molnar	Bill Hunt
Paul Tellers	Russell Blaich	Robert Moro
Ruth Drescher		Blaive Lamperski
Earle Onque		Anne Nelson
Jill Joyce		Alida Baker
Daniel Cipriani		John Francona
Noor Ismail		Tom Earhart
		Andrew McSwigan
		Jack Grzybek
		John Kosar

Old Business

Nominations Report: There are two buildings in the nomination process. Ms. Molnar reported that the Workingmen’s Savings Bank building is on hold at City Council. Molnar indicated that an agreement had been reached between all parties to extend the public comment period for 90 days. Saint Mary’s Academy building in Lawrenceville went to Planning Commission on 9/23/08, and has to go back.

New Business

Approval of Minutes: Ms. Molnar asked for approval for the August 2008 minutes. Mr. Cipriani motioned to approve the minutes; Mr. Onque seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Certificates of Appropriateness: Molnar directed the commissioners to the Certificates of Appropriateness. In regards to the September Certificates of Appropriateness, Mr. Onque moved to approve, Ms. Drescher seconded the motion, all voted in favor.

Applications for Economic Hardship: 2312 E Carson Street – an application that might become pertinent at the end of this hearing.

Adjourn: Mr. Stern motion to adjourn, Jill seconded the motion, all vote in favor.

Discussion on hearing items follows on the attached pages.

ATTACHMENTS

The National Aviary

Allegheny Commons Park Historic District

OWNER: City of Pittsburgh, with leasehold to the National Aviary in Pittsburgh	WARD:22 nd	APPLICATION RECEIVED: 00/00/00
	LOT & BLOCK:008-B-150	SITE VISITS: 00/00/00
	INSPECTOR:R. Freyermuth	CERTIFICATES OF APP.: #01-019
APPLICANT: The National Aviary	COUNCIL DISTRICT:	#02-052
	ZONING CLASSIFICATION:P	
ARCHITECT: Springboard 24 Terminal Way Pittsburgh, PA 15219	ARCH. RATING:Typical	
ARCHITECT’S REPRESENTATIVE: Bill Szustak, AIA Springboard 24 Terminal Way Pittsburgh, PA 15219		

NATIONAL REGISTER: LISTED ELIGIBLE.....

DISCUSSION:

1. Ms. Molnar introduced the Briefing, indicating that the Historic Review Commission would not be making a motion or taking a vote on the application, but rather issuing feedback in preparation for the next meeting where the application would be voted on. Molnar indicated that the HRC would not be taking public comment on this application. Molnar invited the applicants to the table to present the project.
2. Paul Rosenblatt, principal of Springboard Architecture introduced the proposal.
3. Rosenblatt said that currently the building is 40,000 sq. feet. It exists in Allegheny Commons Park. He said that the proposal aims to unify the buildings on that site. Paul described the new avian theater which is a large reason for the new expansion.
4. Rosenblatt showed slides of the sketches for the new design; he described the proposed new materials. He described the history of the site, and included when the oldest structure was built. In 1968, another structure was built on the site. He did not know if there was any historic significance to these buildings.
5. In the 1960s another part of the building was designed and created. Rosenblatt described the “rear” elevation.
6. Mr. Stern asked if the playground was a new addition, and Rosenblatt said that it was, though The Aviary has not committed yet to any of the site plan details. Rosenblatt said that currently there is no real sense of entrance at the Aviary, and Springboard aimed to adjust that. Rosenblatt showed the before and after footprint/plan views of the Aviary.

7. Mr. Tellers asked about the semi-circle on the drawing, if it was a memorial. It is, replied Mr. Rosenblatt.
8. Ms. Drescher asked for clarification on the expanded footprint. Rosenblatt described the footprint again, including the parking expansion.
9. Mr. Stern asked where the new entrances would be; Mr. Rosenblatt answered those questions, and told the HRC that the drop-off area would not be implemented.
10. Ms. Joyce asked if there were more pictures. Rosenblatt replied that more information would be provided at the next HRC hearing.
11. Mr. Tellers asked for confirmation that he thought the Aviary was going to do a “free flight zone” where you could go through the building’s main corridor, attend the café, and restrooms without buying a ticket. Rosenblatt confirmed this.
12. Mr. Stern asked if the Aviary intended to come back to the HRC for approval in November, and upon an affirmative reply, Stern commented that it didn’t seem like there would be enough time to get ready for that hearing.
13. Mr. Tellers said that it was the HRC’s job to make sure that the Park would be enhanced, or not damaged, by the installation of this addition. Rosenblatt added that the Allegheny Commons Steering Committee seemed to be in full support of the application.
14. Molnar indicated that the reason the applicant came to a briefing was because the Aviary project would require so many reviews, all parties thought it would be helpful to brief the HRC before a final approval. The project has to go to Art Commission (briefing, and action hearings), and to Planning Commission in addition to HRC.

OWNER:
Renaissance Housing FP I LP
230 Wyoming Avenue
Wilkes Barre, PA 18704

WARD:..... 21st
LOT & BLOCK:022-L-(295A-298A)
INSPECTOR: Ron Freyermuth

APPLICATION RECEIVED:
07/08/2008

APPLICANT:
Russell Blaich
200 Ross Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

COUNCIL DISTRICT:
ZONING CLASSIFICATION:
ARCH. RATING:

SITE VISITS:
CERTIFICATES OF APP.:

Discussion:

1. Ms. Molnar introduced the application by saying that the HRC had seen these demolition requests two months ago. At that time the HRC tabled the demolitions based on testimony from Manchester residents.
2. Mr. Stern asked whether Mr. Lowe had followed up on his promises to fundraise for these buildings' stabilization. Molnar replied that she had not heard anything.
3. Mr. Tellers injected that he did not think that Warlo Street is considered a primary street in the district, and for that reason, he would support a motion to demolish.

MOTION: Mr. Onque.....moved to approve the demolition application

SECOND: Mr. Tellersseconded the motion.

IN FAVOR: All.....**PASSED**

OPPOSED: None

OWNER:
Lagom, LLC
508 N. Taylor Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15212

WARD:22nd
LOT & BLOCK: 23-J-217
INSPECTOR: Ron Freyermuth
COUNCIL DISTRICT:
ZONING CLASSIFICATION:
ARCH. RATING:

APPLICATION RECEIVED:
07/08/2008
SITE VISITS:
CERTIFICATES OF APP.:
NONE

APPLICANT:
Lagom, LLC
508 N. Taylor Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15212

Proposed Changes:

Renovation of the façade.

1. Molnar introduced the application by saying that the HRC had seen this application in the past, but chose to table for more information. The HRC indicated, at that time, that the applicant should decide what the use of the building would be, and that he should talk to the zoning department to decide if his work would be a permitted use.
2. Paul Johnson addressed the HRC and said that he had made some decisions regarding what to do with the façade and the proposed use. He wanted the building to be a single family dwelling, with no commercial space, but they would maintain the storefront. The design reflects the structural elements of the original building, as closely as Mr. Johnson could determine.
3. He indicated that he would keep both façade entrances, and that he is confident that what he has designed is very close to the original.
4. Jill said that she thought the signboard or cornice might be missing, and Johnson said that he would be happy to provide all of the final drawings to the staff person when they became available. He said that more decorative elements would be appropriate. Mr. Stern asked if Katie could review changes.

MOTION: Ms. Drescher.....moved to accept the plans for 508 N Taylor Street, with the final details and colors submitted to HRC staff when they become available.

SECOND: Mr. Onque.....seconded the motion.

IN FAVOR: All.....**PASSED**

OPPOSED: None

OWNER: First Baptist Church of Pittsburgh	WARD: 4 TH	APPLICATION RECEIVED: 04/19/2006
	LOT & BLOCK:027-M-044	SITE VISITS: 00/00/00
APPLICANT: The Elmhurst Group One Bigelow Square Suite 630 Pittsburgh, PA 15219	INSPECTOR:	CERTIFICATES OF APP.: 00-000
	COUNCIL DISTRICT:	
	ZONING CLASSIFICATION:EMI	
	ARCH. RATING:	
ARCHITECT: Burt Hill		
NATIONAL REGISTER:	LISTED <input type="checkbox"/>	ELIGIBLE..... <input type="checkbox"/>

Proposed Changes:

Construction of a medical office building on site of existing church parking lot.

- Ms. Molnar introduced the project, and directed the HRC to the packet, starting on page 12, where she provided information about the history of this proposal. She also indicated that a letter from the City’s Legal Department was provided for the HRC members in the packet, which spoke to the HRC’s rights of purview over the project. The HRC took a few minutes to review the letter from Legal Department.
- Mr. Stern invited Mr. Hunt to the table.
- Mr. Bill Hunt introduced himself as president of Elmhurst Company, the developer. He wanted to give an update as to where we have been in the last 12 months. Starting in January, they worked with a new architect at Burt Hill to give them 4 directives: a certain size building, upper floor plates, 14,500 sq. foot footprint at minimum, and they needed a necessary setback on Ruskin. “3rd”, they asked for a complementary design w/ the neighborhood and historic district. 4th, they asked him to design a building that he personally would be happy to live across the street from. He mentioned that Elmhurst was pursuing a LEED certified bldg. at the site. Finally, they are not working with the medical use, but rather this will be a traditional office building. The office could house some medical offices, but won’t be acute medical care. Also, they have lowered the height of the building by one floor. They have tried to meet with everyone involved, and have tried to keep an open mind, and he thinks that the building design is better for it. The feedback that they’ve gotten has been very positive, and the questions asked have helped them make changes in the design.
- Mr. Ray Hildreth introduced himself as the project manager for Elmhurst. He stated that they met w/ various community groups, and that he has received many letters of support from these groups. He read into the record a letter of support from the Bellfield Community Organization. Mr. Stern interrupted him to say that it would not be necessary to read all of the letters aloud. He said the group also met with PHLF, who he expected would give their thoughts this afternoon. Hildreth said that the design proposal was submitted to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission because the church accepted either federal or state funding and that a federal historic review was necessary. They did not receive a response yet. They also initiated a traffic study through the city, but have not yet received final results from the Traffic Planner.

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5. Robert “Bob” Moro (correct spelling) did not introduce himself. He began the PowerPoint presentation and showed the aerial and the site plan. Moro said that he was so familiar with the community because he lived there and has walked the streets so many times. Beginning to talk about the building, he said that the community had a feeling of brick and stone, it was a wonderful “Mr. Rogers’ Neighborhood.” He showed an outline of the Historic District, but also pointed to the Schenley Farms district, and indicated a need to blend the new building with both districts.
 - a. Moro advanced slides and showed some images of buildings in the general vicinity... the site photos, he indicated, were either compatible, or not compatible, with the historic district character. Mentioning the trees, Moro said that they are working with the City Forester to determine which trees should be saved and/or not saved. He said that many trees have sicknesses, and saving them might not be wise. Pointing to the last image, Moro mentioned Ruskin Hall – a building with a classic proportion. The next slide had more images of site photos – to demonstrate context and surrounding materials.
 - b. Mr. Moro showed the elevation of Ruskin Hall, to demonstrate the classic form of surrounding structures. Advancing to the site plan, Mr. Moro pointed out the trees of the new site plan, which included a parklet between the new building and the existing church. Mr. Moro wants the HRC to notice all of the connections that the architect firm has made with the surrounding buildings, and incorporating into the new building. He wants the new building to look like its been there as long as Schenley Farms.
 - c. Moro gave some dimensions of the building and pointed out features of the site plan including 122 lined parking spaces, 175 total parking spaces.
 - d. Moro said that they would like to continue the low stone wall from the church across to their building, to continue the pedestrian-friendly nature of the church.
 - e. Moro showed the schematic photo-montage of the new building inserted into a photograph of the site. He showed the next slide to demonstrate the stone and brick treatment of the new building – to demonstrate the break-up of the massing. Moro indicated that this building did not try to duplicate an historic building, per say, but rather to take cues from the historic character of the neighborhood, but retain a contemporary style. The next slide showed the view from one of the Schenley Farms resident’s house. At the next slide, Mr. Moro said that the bulk of the structure was the part behind the 3-story massing. He showed a slide that demonstrated a “walking view” of what the pedestrian would see coming from the North East. He showed the HRC how the niches cut out of the corners of the 3-story piece would take some of the harshness off of the severity of the structure.
 - f. Moro showed some of the materials that they were considering using in the building, including brick samples and glass. Ms. Drescher asked if the 3-story and the 7-story portions of the building were different colors? Mr. Moro said that they were, because the materials would be different. He showed a dark green granite for the base of the building, to protect the base from harsh wear and winters.
 - g. Jumping to the section view of the building, Mr. Moro described the setbacks and lines of site.

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6. Ms. Joyce asked about when they were presented with the project the first time, they saw the shadow studies. Mr. Moro responded that they had the shadow studies, and he showed them to the HRC.
7. Mr. Tellers said that the shadow studies show the wisdom of the zoning code, and the required setbacks.
8. Mr. Stern called for public comment.
9. Andy McSwiggen, 4131 Bigelow Boulevard, Schenley Farms, in representation of the Schenley Farms Civic Association. The members pay a fee for various reasons. He said that the members in Schenley Farms find it very inappropriate to build a commercial building across from a high-end residential neighborhood. He thought that the new construction could have an impact on the plaster of their homes. He asked the HRC to do their jobs and give the residents some protection from the development.
10. Van Hall, 5854 Douglass Street, president of board of trustees of First Baptist Church. The congregation uses financial contributions to support its ongoing programs, but it also must afford the maintenance of the beautiful building into the ongoing future. If they don't have the finances, then it might lead to the decay and possible destruction of the church. To remedy this, the church decided to lease the parking lot to fund the current and deferred maintenance on the landmark building. In addition, the long term lease would provide an income to maintain the building, Hall thought the existing parking lot is ugly, and finally, the lease will provide the City of Pittsburgh with an extra tax revenue.
11. Anne Nelson, PHLF. Nelson indicated that Landmarks has reviewed the plans for the new building, and appreciates the efforts of the Elmhurst Group. PHLF find the building's height, massing, and setback appropriate, but have the following concerns:
 - a. Top portion should be redesigned without the central overhang,
 - b. The walkway around the building be planted with sycamore instead of trees shown. General landscaping concerns.
12. Paul Tellers wanted to address Mr. McSwiggens' concerns for the zoning district. Tellers said that the zone has always been an EMI district, and he thinks that the building is appropriate for its use. Stern said it was not our purview to address the use, which would be a zoning question. Mr. Tellers said that the lower height was an improvement from the last submission. The L-shape building responds to the lower portion of the church, and the higher portion responds to the steeple of the church. In Tellers' opinion, the relationship between the church and Ruskin Hall has been much improved. The centering of the front elevation to the street is a good improvement. His question, for the architects to consider, is the tinted glass. He thought that the building should have clear glass. He remains disappointed that the setback on Ruskin could not be more substantial, though it is not a "deal breaker."
13. Ms. Drescher asked the architect if the cut-out corner on the first three levels was very attractive, and she wondered if it could be continued on the upper floors. Mr. Moro said that it couldn't be done because of the floor plates, and to create a usable floor space. Mr. Moro said that we would be more in touch with the forefront building, so it was more appropriate to do the cut-out corners there, but the upper portion would be out of the pedestrian sight, for the most part. Mr. Hunt said that he also thought the notches would help differentiate the two portions of the building.
14. Ms. Joyce said that she was very pleased to see the three-story component, she likes the cut-outs...

15. Mr. Stern echoed a lot of the comments made. He thinks that a lot of care has been put into the project. He concurs with PHLF’s comments about the center, upper, cornice. Mr. Stern was concerned about the trees, and he thinks they’re key historic elements in the plan. He said that the architect might want to think about a different layout of trees, speaking as a landscape architect.

16. Mr. Onque concurs with Mr. Stern.

MOTION: Mr. Tellersmoved to approve the design, as presented to the HRC, with three conditions:

- a. Clear glass in lieu of tinted glass
- b. The cornice line as proposed by PHLF
- c. And a reconsideration of the street trees.

SECOND: Ms. Joyceseconded the motion.

IN FAVOR: *All.....PASSED*

OPPOSED: *None*

OWNER: Richard and Stephanie Cupka 57 S. 28 th Street Murrysville, PA 15203	WARD: 16 TH LOT & BLOCK: 012-L-229 INSPECTOR: Bob Molyneaux	APPLICATION RECEIVED: June 2008 SITE VISITS: June 25, 2008 CERTIFICATES OF APP.: 06-090
APPLICANT: Richard and Stephanie Cupka 57 S. 28 th Street Murrysville, PA 15203	COUNCIL DISTRICT: ZONING CLASSIFICATION: LNC ARCH. RATING:	
NATIONAL REGISTER:	LISTED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ELIGIBLE..... <input type="checkbox"/>

Proposed Changes:

Seeking HRC approval to construct a side-patio as a suitable replacement for the approved new construction.

1. Mr. Tom Earhart addressed the HRC as representative of the building owner. Earhart said that the architect was/is out of town, in Prague. As of yesterday, the previous appeal to the Court of Common Pleas has been remanded to the HRC for its decision on the subject.
2. Greg Tutton from Henry Hansen’s office introduced the proposal and provided some aerial views of the property. Mr. Tutton said that at a distance of 45’, you might have a view of the back corner of the building for 1.3 seconds, when traveling at 45 mph. The line of site, as described in the aerial indicates that there would be very limited view of the rear of the property.
3. Mr. Tutton shifted gears, at the suggestion of Mr. Stern, to discuss the front elevation. Mr. Tutton said that what they’re seeing is what the HRC approved previously.
4. Tellers asked if the building was a full, complete building. Mr. Tutton replied that it was not a complete building because it did not have a roof, and the back of the building would be open. The building would be 2 stories in height, but would not be occupiable in two stories. Functionally, the building would be one story.
5. Mr. Onque asked where the entrance was, because the site plan and the elevation had different delineation of where the door would be.
6. Mr. Tellers said that he was concerned as to what the building would look like from a pedestrian view, and what it would look like at night.
7. Mr. Stern asked what STL Above meant in the drawings. Mr. Tutton did not know, but he imagined that it would be bracing because there was no roof, and the steel would be needed to keep the walls in. Ms. Joyce asked if there was no roof because if it had a roof, it would be considered an interior space, and then people could not smoke inside. Ms. Drescher asked if that meant the building could not be occupied for the majority of the year?
8. Mr. Tutton wanted to add some more testimony regarding the depth of the structure, and that the proposed building would be approximately equal to that of the original portion of Chupka’s II.
9. Mr. Rich Chupka addressed the HRC, and asked if they had any questions. He then said that the lighting for the patio would come from the inside of the proposed addition.

10. Mr. Onque asked about the doors., and Mr. Cupka said that they would close the rear garage door at night. He said that the building would not have a roof due to the smoking ban. Mr. Stern said that at a minimum, the HRC would need to see the rear elevation because it would be visible from a public right of way.
11. Mr. Onque wanted to know if the rear of the patio would be gated.
12. Mr. John Martine, Sarah Street, member of the ECS LRC. He said that some of the members would be willing to accept the idea with provisions... but now that he knows it's a "stage set," he is much more wary to accept the proposal because he does not consider it to be a building.
13. Anne Nelson, PHLF, addressed the HRC. She encouraged the HRC to uphold the stipulations of the CofA issued in 2006. She said that deciding to approve the patio would weaken the ordinance.
14. Rick Belloli, SSLDC, was directed from his organization to come speak today. He said that they do not support the notion of taking down a building to replace it with a "blazing saddle" façade. In terms of Economic Hardship claim, the demolition of the existing building should be considered a concession that the owner had an economic hardship in the first place. He was very concerned about the precedent that approving this application would create. Finally, in terms of a building, he wanted the new building to accommodate the problem of public urination, and it should include appropriate water closets.
15. Mr. John DeSantis, Brighton Road, spoke to the HRC because he considers this one of the most dangerous considerations to the ordinance – the precedent to the ordinance would be devastating. He said that he encouraged the HRC to approve a building that upholds the guidelines of the district.
16. Mr. Tellers asked Mr. Larry Baumiller to address the subject of Economic Hardship.
17. Mr. Peter Margitai addressed the HRC saying he was a member of the LRC. He is at the HRC in objection to the proposed application. He said that when the demolition is considered, the HRC had to consider what the new construction would be. He said that if the HRC considered an application for demolition to prepare for this proposal, then the HRC probably would not have approved the demolition in the first place.
18. Jill Joyce said she was not opposed to the concept of the short structure, but she did not like that it was not actually a building.
19. Mr. Tellers said even if it was a building, he did not like the blank façade.
20. Mr. Onque said he has questions about security. He also did not like the way this application was put before us.
21. Ms. Drescher said she was persuaded by the comments of the public, and she thinks that the HRC has an obligation to deny the application.
22. Mr. Tom Earhart addressed the commission and asked if the HRC could table, and possibly reconsider at a later date. Mr. Earhart said that he and his client would consent to the waiver of the timeline on the Economic Hardship Application.
23. Mr. Stern said that they would be amiable to that. Mr. Stern asked for a vote. He said, "all in favor?" and every HRC member said "aye."
24. The application will be held until November.

