

Development Activities Meeting Report (Version: 06/24/2020)

This report created by the Neighborhood Planner and included with staff reports to City Boards and/or Commissions.

Logistics	Stakeholders
Project Name/Address: 204 Tennyson Ave exterior renovation	Groups Represented (e.g., specific organizations, residents, employees, etc. where this is evident): Oakland Planning and Development Corporation (OPDC) Schenley Farms Civic Association (SFCA) Family House Pittsburgh City of Pittsburgh Office of Community Affairs (OCA)
Parcel Number(s): 27-L-46	
ZDR Application Number: DCP-ZDR-2020-10927	
Meeting Location: Virtual via Zoom/Facebook Live (Oakland Planning and Development Corporation account)	
Date: 11/24/2020	
Meeting Start Time: 6:00 PM	
Applicant: Dr. Qing-Ming Wang (building owner)	Approx. Number of Attendees: 40
Boards and/or Commissions Request(s): Historic Review Commission (HRC)	

How did the meeting inform the community about the development project?

Ex: Community engagement to-date, location and history of the site, demolition needs, building footprint and overall square footage, uses and activities (particularly on the ground floor), transportation needs and parking proposed, building materials, design, and other aesthetic elements of the project, community uses, amenities and programs.

- Wanda Wilson, executive director at OPDC, and Norm Cleary, president of SFCA, made clear that the Applicant would be going before the HRC after the fact — that is, he had already completed the renovations to his accessory building but had not gone through the proper approvals ahead of time.
- The Applicant stated that he did not know that he had to go through approvals to do work on his detached rear garage and apologized. He mentioned that he had bought the house at 204 Tennyson without really knowing much about the neighborhood or the Schenley Farms Historic District requirements. He added that he knew from the real estate agent that exterior renovations required additional approval but did not realize that approval was also required for renovations to accessory buildings.
- The renovations to the exterior of the accessory building were completed by a friend of the Applicant and included replacement of single-pane and broken windows and replacement of a garage door with a front wall that included two windows and a door. The front wall was painted with a color that was chosen to match the brick of the existing structure as well as of the main house.
- The Applicant's desired interior renovations include converting a half-bathroom in the building into a full bathroom. The building has access to water, gas, and electricity.
- The Applicant said that the accessory building in questions was used by the previous owner as a two-car garage and that it was in bad shape, with nesting animals, cracks in the walls/concrete, motor oil spills, etc. Prior to that, it was a butler's or boarder's house. The Applicant noted that he had never used the building as a garage himself.
- The Applicant added that the previous owner had made renovations to the accessory building as well so that the building had not been in its original state.
- The Applicant would like to turn the accessory building into a research space or a workshop. He intends to move some of his laboratory equipment from his office at the University of Pittsburgh, where he is a professor, to the building, so he can work on his research there.

- Cleary remarked that plans for the renovation were not submitted for a building permit. The Applicant rebutted that he had indeed submitted plans produced by a professional architect.
- Cleary also noted that there had been some concern by neighbors previously about the work that the Applicant had done.
- Cleary mentioned that all of the garages on the street, especially on his side of the street, are architecturally consistent with their principal buildings, with the same brick, trim, window styles, etc. He added that the Applicant's project will be the only building that deviates from the standard in the historic district but that it would be up to the HRC to give the Applicant a Certificate of Appropriateness. Cleary said that he wanted the Applicant to be aware that the Applicant's accessory building is the only property that has inconsistent architecture from the street.
- The Applicant was asked by Cleary if he had moved into the main house yet. The Applicant responded that he will sometimes stay there on the weekends, with his main residence remaining in Franklin Park. Four people generally live in the home at 204 Tennyson, which is occupied at various times by the Applicant's niece (a graduate student at the University of Pittsburgh), his daughter (a student at Carnegie Mellon University), his son, his friend's son who is a student, and his wife's college friend's son, which just meets the City's occupancy limits for unrelated tenants.
- Cleary noted that he had advised the Applicant in a letter six years ago when he had bought the house that it is in a historic district and that exterior modifications needed to be approved by the HRC. In that letter, he offered the SFCA's help on ensuring that exterior renovations would be endorsed by the neighborhood and the HRC. He added that the HRC tends to be very appreciative of neighborhood endorsement of architectural work consistent with that of the existing neighborhood.
- Wilson noted that it is a property owner's responsibility to know what the rules are and to get the proper approvals.
- The Applicant responded that he is waiting for an engineer to complete the design before going to the Department of Permits, Licenses and Inspections (PLI) and then to the HRC. He does not yet have a hearing date with the HRC.
- Wilson instructed the Applicant to inform OPDC and the SFCA when he learns when the HRC hearing will be. (This meeting was held in anticipation that the Applicant would have that information.)

Input and Responses

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
<p>I'm failing to understand how someone can buy an \$800,000 house, yet fail to grasp that it's located in an historic district AND requires reviews PRIOR to any construction or alterations. Is ignorance of the law a valid excuse? Isn't this essentially a rooming house in violation of the city's ordinance of more than 3 unrelated individuals?</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>I am a neighbor and welcome any family who treasures their home and takes care of these historic gems. My concern is compliance with zoning single family home or no-more-than three unrelated persons. I am concerned about large homes which could be considered as potential rental property for multiple persons, including students. Dr. Wang would be very welcomed as a neighbor, especially if he chose to live here. There is some concern about multiple persons living there, in the past, and perhaps planned for the future.</p>	<p>n/a</p>

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
we're federal and local historic designation.... both are only cob concerned with exre exterior changes. none can be permitted that change from original architecture..	n/a

Other Notes

Planner completing report: Phillip Wu