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Planning Department
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MINUTES

May 14, 2020
Historic Landmarks Committee
Regular Meeting

2:00 pm
McMinnville Civic Hall
McMinnville, Oregon

Members Present: Mary Beth Branch, Mark Cooley, Joan Drabkin, Christopher Knapp, and John Mead

Members Absent:

Staff Present: Heather Richards – Planning Director and Chuck Darnell – Senior Planner

Others Present: Zack Geary

1. Call to Order

Chair Branch called the meeting to order at 2:08 p.m.

2. Citizen Comments

None

3. Approval of Minutes

A. October 17, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Committee Member Mead moved to approve the October 17, 2019 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Knapp and passed 5-0.

B. November 14, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Committee Member Mead moved to approve the November 14, 2019 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Drabkin and passed 5-0.

4. Action Items

A. HL 3-20: 835 NW Birch Street - Certificate of Approval for Alteration

Chair Branch asked if any Committee member had any disclosures to make or needed to abstain from participating or voting on this application. Chair Branch would be abstaining from participating and voting as she was part of the applicant's team.

Vice Chair Mead asked if any Committee member needed to declare any contact prior to the hearing with the applicant, any other party involved in the application, or any other source of information outside of staff regarding the subject of this application. There was none.

Senior Planner Darnell said this was an application for a certificate of approval for alterations at 835 NW Birch Street. The property was listed on the Historic Resource Inventory as a historic landmark. It was listed as a significant resource. The proposed alterations included relocating one window on the rear façade to allow for a new window opening between two existing windows that would create a row of three continuous windows and re-roofing the entire structure with a standing seam metal roof. He discussed the applicable review criteria. The applicant was proposing “rehabilitation” treatment and staff thought the application met that treatment. The existing structure had windows replaced sometime in the past with vinyl windows, there was vinyl siding, and the roofing was replaced with asphalt shingle materials. The Secretary of the Interior standards called for replacement of the missing historic features wherever possible or to design a new feature that was compatible with the overall historic character of the building. The new design should always take into account the size, scale, and material of the building itself and should be clearly differentiated from the authentic historic features. The HLC would need to consider whether the proposed standing seam metal roofing was compatible with the historic resource. The applicant provided photos of other buildings that appeared historic with metal roofing. Staff did not think there was adequate context provided for the photos. There was also no evidence provided of metal roofing as a typical material in use on residential structures in McMinnville during the period of development (circa 1900). The applicant also argued that metal was listed as a roofing material by the National Park Service and Secretary of the Interior in a Preservation Brief called “Roofing for Historic Buildings”. In that brief it did state that an alternative material could be an option in a rehabilitation project. The decision to use an alternative material should be weighed carefully against the primary concern to keep the historic character of the building. If the roof was readily visible, the alternative material should match as closely as possible the scale, texture, and coloration of the historic roofing material. Asphalt shingles or ceramic tiles were common substitute materials intended to duplicate the appearance of wood shingles. But on roofs with a high degree of visibility and patterning or texture, the substitution might seriously alter the architectural character of the building. One of the Secretary of Interior’s recommended guidelines was an incompatible roof covering or any deteriorated non-historic roof could be replaced with historically accurate roofing material or another material that was compatible with the historic character of the building. Another recommended guideline stated roofing materials might be replaced by a new design that was compatible with the size, scale, material, and color of the historic building. Staff thought the guidelines focused on compatibility of the replacement material. The historic roof material was a wood shingle. Standing seam metal roofing was different in scale, texture, and appearance from shingle roofing that was more repetitive in scale and appearance and had a different texture than flat metal with a standing seam. Currently there were asphalt shingles on the structure. The Preservation Brief specifically listed asphalt shingles as a common substitute intended to duplicate the appearance of wood shingles. Staff recommended that standing seam metal roofing was not compatible and recommended a condition that they allow a like-for-like replacement of the existing asphalt shingle roof.

The proposed window alteration was unique and did not involve preservation of a historic window or replacement of a missing historic feature. The alteration involved relocation of one window and creation of a new window opening to allow for a continuous row of three windows. The Secretary of Interior’s recommended guidelines stated adding new window openings on rear or other secondary, less visible elevations could be allowed if required by a new use. The new openings and the windows in them should be compatible with the overall design of the building but not duplicate the historic fenestration. The HLC needed to consider whether the new window opening could be allowed “if required by a new use.” If the HLC did support the new opening, they could find the new opening met the recommended guidelines. The window alteration was on the rear elevation that was less visible and not prominent. The alteration would not duplicate any historic fenestration pattern. The HLC should also consider compatibility of the proposed materials (vinyl window). Staff suggested a condition of approval to not allow the vinyl window but to require a wood window that was consistent

with the historic features of the building. Staff recommended approval of the window alteration with conditions. He then reviewed the conditions of approval.

There was discussion regarding the definition of alteration as it related to the windows.

Committee Member Mead asked about requiring a wood window in the middle of two vinyl windows. Senior Planner Darnell said that was something for the HLC to discuss in terms of compatibility. Staff thought if the windows were replaced in the future, materials that were more compatible with the historic character of the building could be installed. A wood window in this location would allow for that to occur.

Committee Member Mead asked if they could require all three windows to be wood windows. Senior Planner Darnell said the proposed alteration would only affect one of the vinyl windows.

Committee Member Knapp thought they would have to take out both windows to do the project.

Committee Member Drabkin suggested putting in a picture window that was wood and could encompass the whole area.

Zack Geary, representing the applicant, said the applicant wanted to do a kitchen remodel and a key element was bringing light into the room. The change in the windows was a way to achieve that. The house needed to be re-roofed and the applicant was hoping to use metal roofing. He thought the metal roofing was an acceptable roofing material in the era. It also had environmental benefits as well as longevity with possibility for solar access in the future. The proposed windows would respect the home's history as well as create a well-designed space that worked for current lifestyles. The kitchen was undersized with uncomfortably low ceilings, poor natural lighting, and low quality carpentry. It was disengaged from the two story original structure that represented the best qualities of an old historic home. The owners' investment in this project showed their commitment to the stewardship of this property. Adding the extra window in the kitchen made the biggest impact to add in natural light and comfort in the remodeled space. To require it to be wood while flanked by vinyl windows was not reasonable and would not contribute to the overarching design goals of creating beautiful, intentional structures that would most likely to be cared for and protected by current and future owners. Staff stated the new wood window could be designed to be the same form and function as the adjacent vinyl windows to not be inconsistent in design or appearance. He disagreed that a single hung wood window would look similar enough in profile, texture, and other details to be consistent in appearance with the existing vinyl windows. The recommended guidelines used to support the recommendation for a wood window seemed inaccurately represented. While new windows and other new alterations to a structure were compatible with the historic building, they were also meant to be obviously new and not misrepresent themselves as historic elements. Mixing a new wood window with existing vinyl windows could appear to look like the wood window was original to the building, especially being flanked by vinyl windows. The siding on the house had been changed previously to a vinyl siding product. While some of the wood windows still existed in combination to the siding, allowing a new vinyl window would not add additional deviation from the historic house's character. The HLC had approved other window materials in the past taking into account the existing building as a whole as well as particular facades and visibility from the public right-of-way, the financial implications, and overall design aesthetic. Alternate window materials had especially been considered where they had not currently existed and there was no photograph or descriptive evidence in the original space. Regarding setting precedent, he thought it should be considered on a case by case basis. This was a unique case and would not create long term precedence.

Mary Beth Branch, representing the applicant, said there was interesting language in the standards in replacing like for like and how they could replace a vinyl window with another vinyl window. She thought it was important to remember the economic feasibility and costs associated with making all the windows wood windows or replacing them with a larger picture window. The job of the HLC was

not to expand the scope of an application. The visibility of these windows was non-existent from the public right-of-way. They were not replacing any wood windows with a vinyl window. There was confirmation that the wall with the windows was not a primary load bearing wall and discussion regarding the location of the façade which was facing the backyard only and not the Birch Street side. There was further discussion about how the wall would be structurally altered to make space for the third window.

Committee Member Cooley said there was the possibility that the wall would be disassembled in its entirety including the exterior siding and trim. He asked if they would consider replicating the exterior trim on the existing double hung wood windows. Mr. Geary said that was a possibility.

Committee Member Mead asked if they had priced out the metal roof vs. asphalt roof or priced wood window vs. vinyl. He thought the savings from doing an asphalt roof might be used for a wood window to make it cost neutral. Mr. Geary said they had not priced those out. Ms. Branch said the applicant was willing to spend more money on the metal roof because of its sustainable features. They were not interested in expanding the scope of the kitchen remodel. They viewed these as two different things and she did not think it would be justifiable as it was money they had not intended to spend on the kitchen.

There was no more public testimony.

Committee Member Drabkin did not think they should approve a vinyl window. They needed to be consistent with what they had done for other projects and the new window should be a double hung wood window. She did not think a metal roof was acceptable. It was introduction of a material that was not historic.

Committee Member Knapp agreed. There were no examples in McMinnville of a residential home with a metal roof. It was not historically accurate and would set a precedent. He thought there were other sustainable alternatives for the roof that would look like the original.

Committee Member Cooley agreed with the comments about the roof. No windows were being replaced and only one window was being added. He thought the biggest difference was the exterior trim of the original wood windows and the vinyl. If they did put in a vinyl window, he suggested altering the trim to more closely match the historic exterior trim.

Committee Member Mead agreed as it took the windows one step closer to the historic appearance without the full cost of wood windows.

Committee Member Cooley thought it would be an incremental pursuit of historic restoration similar to putting in the wood window in the middle of the two vinyl windows.

Committee Member Knapp said this was the back of the house and not as important. However, if they were going to open that wall, they would put in a new header and it might be an opportunity to replace the two vinyl windows also. It might be the right thing to do for a historic home to stay in character with the house. The trim was a good compromise because it would mask the vinyl. He was not in favor of the metal roof.

Committee Member Mead was in agreement about the metal roof as it was not appropriate for this house due to the scale, color, pattern, and texture.

Committee Member Drabkin thought the best idea since they were going to open the wall was to put in three wood windows to preserve the historic character of the house.

Senior Planner Darnell said the conversation about the materials and applicability of the standards did apply regardless of which elevation they were discussing. In regard to expanding to all three windows, he was not familiar with the construction requirements and what the header situation would be. He was not comfortable that there was a good basis for including all three. He could explore it more if the Committee wanted. The 120 day deadline expired in August.

Ms. Branch was not sure if the existing double hung wood windows were original to the house and she did not know how many were vinyl and how many were wood. The project was running on a tight timeline and this decision was important to the work progressing on the interior of the house.

There was discussion regarding the Committee's purview for the windows, which would include any of them that were moved with the disassembly of the wall.

Committee Member Cooley suggested to add language to Condition #1 that if any existing vinyl window was removed during the construction process, it would have to be replaced with a wood window.

Mr. Geary clarified that would mean potentially two wood windows next to a vinyl window.

Ms. Branch clarified the condition was the wood windows would be built to match the profile of the existing vinyl window.

Committee Member Knapp said if they matched the original house windows' profile, they would not need to match the vinyl window.

Senior Planner Darnell reviewed the recommended guidelines regarding materials. The Committee had to decide whether the addition of one wood window was compatible or use of a vinyl window was more compatible potentially with the wood trim as suggested. Another alternative was to require a new wood window which would be more in line with past Committee actions and also have the wood trim that might disguise the difference in the windows adjacent.

The Committee discussed these options.

Committee Member Cooley moved to approve HL 3-20 subject to the conditions of approval provided in the decision document as follows: Condition #1, the new window proposed on the south elevation shall be a wood window. The window shall be a double hung one over one window in the same dimension as the existing windows and any existing vinyl window retained but moved would also be wood. Condition #2, the proposed standing seam metal roofing material was not allowed. The existing roofing material may be replaced with a like for like replacement of the asphalt shingle roofing material that currently existed on the structure. Replacement of the asphalt shingle roofing material shall maintain all of the existing forms and features of the roof including the cross gables and eave returns. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Knapp and passed 3-1 with Committee Member Cooley opposed.

B. 2020 Historic Preservation Award Selections

**Note – Staff will provide presentation on Historic Preservation Awards at meeting*

Senior Planner Darnell said they had received two nominations for the 2020 Historic Preservation Award. One was for the Premises building on Baker Street and the other was for the Taylor Dale building. If the HLC wanted to award both of these projects, it would be done at a City Council meeting in the future.

There was consensus to award both projects.

5. Committee Comments

None

6. Staff Comments

Senior Planner Darnell said there would be another HLC meeting in May. He had been made aware that there was concern about the installation and finishes on one of the projects recently reviewed by the HLC, the apartment complex on First Street. Staff inspected it and there were some potential issues with the hardie panel siding and some of the other features of the design. Staff discussed the issues with the applicant and would continue working to resolve the issues. The primary issue was the siding that was supposed to appear as smooth stucco but the level of the seam being covered varied drastically throughout the building. It highlighted a potential problem with it being an alternative design method. Another issue was some of the details of the features of the building such as the cornice and belt course were not installed as they were shown in the design plans. Some features were not yet constructed, such as the brick on the base of the building, painting, and finishes. He explained the process for the building permit and inspection of the building.

There was discussion regarding the need for a remedial process so the brick would not be put over the hardie board that had already been installed.

Chair Branch confirmed it was not being constructed as it had been presented in the renderings.

7. Adjournment

Chair Branch adjourned the meeting at 4:22 p.m.