



*SYRACUSE
LANDMARK
PRESERVATION
BOARD*

**Landmark Preservation Board
Thursday, April 6, 2017**

Meeting Minutes

Common Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Don Radke called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Tom Cantwell, Cynthia Carter, Bob Haley, Dan Leary, Julia Marshall, Don Radke, Jeff Romano, Joe Saya

Staff: Kate Auwaerter

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of March 16, 2017 were approved unanimously on the motion of C. Carter, which was seconded by J. Romano with the following revisions:

Project Site Review (PR-17-04): 728 Genesee Street E... The proposed new construction, in particular the wing on the west side of the former church appears to be sited close to the historic property and blocks the view of the church *from* the west.

Project Site Review (PR-17-03): 500 Salina Street S... J. Romano noted that the *exterior wainscoting* of the new storefront system appeared to be too tall. The Board agreed and recommended that the *molding at the top of the panel should be no higher than 30"*, which will give the ~~baseboard~~ panels under the storefront windows a horizontal rather than vertical appearance.

Finally, B. Haley recommended and the Board agreed that the glass storefront system underneath the overhang at the "prow" of the building should be brought forward to meet the square corner columns and the edge of the existing planter. This will match the location of the original storefronts and main entrance to the building *and it will restore the footprint of the first-floor commercial retail space closer to its original configuration.*

OLD BUSINESS

Project Site Review (PR 17-04): 728 E Genesee Street. Andrew Schuster and Ed McGraw (Ashley McGraw Architects) and Brian Sivin (Owner) presented the plans for the construction of a multi-story apartment building on the same lot as the former First Church of Christ Scientist. The proposed new construction will have an "L" shaped plan consisting of an 11-story section located behind the former church and an 8-story section located immediately to the west of the church. The construction of the 8-story section will require the demolition of a single-story, c. 1950 church school addition. The addition was gutted and also refaced with Dryvit stucco in 1997 when it was converted into a bank. The Board agreed that the building had lost its architectural integrity and its removal would not damage the historic integrity of the original church property.

D. Radke reminded the Board that the design team had introduced the Board to the project in November 2016 as a discussion item. At that time, the Board had encouraged the designers to think of the new construction as a backdrop for the historic church. D. Radke complemented the design team on the articulation of the façade of the new building and its exterior cladding, noting its simplicity and how it did not detract from the historic building. However, the Board expressed its concern regarding the height and massing of the new construction and the concern that the new building would cast a permanent shadow over the historic structure. The Board

asked if the design team had considered massing alternatives that would limit the shadowing of the former church.

A. Schuster reported that the design team had conducted shadow study, which indicated that between March and September, the new building would cast a shadow over the historic building after 3pm every day. During winter months, it would be cast in shadow daily after 11am. He also noted that in order for the project to be financially feasible, it had to meet certain density requirements. With those requirements in mind, they had considered different massing alternatives including pushing the 8-story wing back further from E. Genesee Street and raising its height to compensate for the smaller footprint. He noted that for aesthetic reasons, changing the massing of the building was problematic. Also, a geotechnical report of the site indicated that the soils could not support a taller structure. E. McGraw also noted that the pedestrian experience along E. Genesee Street would be improved if the new building was constructed up to the sidewalk. A. Schuster indicated that the commercial space on the ground floor at E. Genesee Street would feature tall storefront windows which would provide some transparency between the two buildings from the west. After the discussion, the Board agreed to provide the following comment to the Zoning Administrator: the Board was appreciative of the developers' interest in protecting and reusing the historic church structure. However, it remained concerned that the scale and massing of the new construction will visually overwhelm the historic building. This was particularly true of the 8-story section to the west of the former church, which substantially blocks the view of the historic building from the west. The Board remained concerned about the shadowing too. The Board urged the applicants to continue to look for ways to create more separation and/or greater transparency between the new construction and the historic building, especially on the west side.

NEW BUSINESS

CA 17-05 306 Berkeley Drive. Gary Winslow (owner/applicant) presented his application to rebuild a failing retaining wall at the end of his driveway. The existing dry laid stone wall is "L" shaped and supports the northwest corner of the driveway. The short section of the wall (approximately 10' long) runs along the western property line and is approximately 6' tall. This section connects at a right angle to a longer section of the wall (20' long) that runs north-south and tapers from approximately 6' tall at the northwest corner to approximately 1-foot tall at its southern end. The proposed new Versa Lok retaining wall would follow the same alignment and feature grey concrete blocks.

The Board discussed the plans with the applicant noting that Versa Lok block was not a material that the Board usually approves in historic districts. D. Leary commented that it might be possible to regrade the site so that some portion of the wall could be replaced by a planted embankment. The applicant agreed to allow a subcommittee of Board members review the site in person and make recommendations regarding how to proceed.

CA 17-06 108 Dorset Road. The applicant was not present. The Board reviewed the application and agreed that the proposed porch enclosure fundamentally altered the character of the rear of the house. J. Romano made a motion to deny the application as submitted, which was seconded by C. Carter. The motion passed unanimously.

Project Site Review (PR16-27 M3): 462-74 South Salina Street. Tim Webber (Schopfer Architects) presented the modification of the design to the penthouses on top of the Empire Building. He reported that the Department of State had determined that the new penthouse construction would require the construction of a stretcher-size elevator to service the penthouse level. The owners determined that this was not financially feasible. Instead, they proposed to demolish the existing penthouse (which was part of the original approved design) and construct a new, single-story penthouse on the same footprint as the original. The exterior cladding and overall design was the same as the earlier approved plan. To make up for the lost revenue, new residential units were proposed for the first floor on the Clinton Street side of the building. The Board agreed to recommend approval of the modified plans as submitted.

Project Site Review: 201 South State Street. David McNeil (QPK Design) presented the application to remove a portion (approximately 4-stories) of the existing microwave tower on the 1971 addition to the 1928 telephone building. The antennas on the top of the tower have not been in use for approximately 10 years and the masonry is in distress. Approximately 4 stories of the tower will be removed and the remaining portion will be capped with a flat-roof with drainage. The entire tower cannot be removed because it contains elevator shafts. The Board agreed to recommend approval of the application as submitted.

DISCUSSION

Fire Station #1: New windows. Will Szczech (owner) came to the Board to discuss the windows in his condominium at the top floor of Fire Station #1 (106 Montgomery Street). The building is on the National Register at part of the expanded Hanover Square Historic District. His third floor condominium features three pairs of wood, 9-over-9, double-hung sash windows on the main façade facing Montgomery Street. Each window is 91” tall. He is seeking to replace these windows because they are inoperable, leaky and provide no sound protection from the restaurant/bar on the first floor. The existing windows are not original – the previous owner, Washington Street Partners, had installed the current wood windows before selling the condominium unit. Unfortunately, W. Szczech reported that he had not found a window company that made 91” windows. Unless they were custom made, the largest he had found were 84” tall.

The Board recommended that the owner investigate other manufacturers, including Marvin Windows. It also discussed materials, noting that vinyl replacements would not be acceptable. B. Haley suggested that it might be acceptable if the owner installed a panel in the base of the window opening to shorten the sash height. He suggested this might be acceptable because the lower third of the windows are not visible from the street. The Board discussed this option and recommended that the owner experiment placing 7” panels at the base of the windows to determine what the visual impact would be from both the exterior and the interior. Nonetheless, the Board agreed that a full-height window that retained the original dimensions and glass area would be the best solution and encouraged the owner to continue to inquire into other window companies. K. Auwaerter also noted that his property and project would be eligible for the state’s residential rehabilitation tax credit program.

ReZone and historic preservation implications. The Board agreed to postpone this discussion until the next meeting.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 AM.