



Planning & Development Services

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Historic Preservation Commission

Hearing Minutes of April 28, 2008

Commission Members Jennifer Stevens, Chair, Scott Chandler, Cathy Sewell, Barbara Dawson, Betsy McFadden, Bonnie Burry

Members Present Sarah Schafer, Julie Archambeault, Teresa Sobotka, Nicki Heckenlively

DRH08-00100 / Amy Yost / 505 Logan Street

Requests Historic Preservation approval to demolish the garage, construct a two-car garage with bonus trusses, move the existing main dwelling from center of lot to the front of the lot, remodel the existing structure and add a second floor on property located in an R-2H (Combined Residential with Historic Overlay) zone.

JULIE ARCHAMBEAULT: Presented staff report with a recommendation of denial.

CHAIRMAN STEVENS: Is the vertical siding hardi-board as well?

JULIE ARCHAMBEAULT: Yes.

SITE RE-VISITS

COMMISSIONER BURRY: I did go by the site. I had gone by it with the other applications. I tried to envision the size of the new structure.

COMMISSIONER MCFADDEN: I did view the site. This being the second or third time. I tried to envision this design from both streets.

CHAIRMAN STEVENS: I have not revisited the site since the last time we had an application for this property.

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER: I tried to envision the massing of the project.

COMMISSIONER SEWELL: I did not visit the site.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON: I have been by the site numerous times. I did look at it specifically again.

TERESA SOBOTKA: Before he gets started I want to make sure the legal really reflects what is going on here. What I'm looking at says demolish the garage, move the house and construct an addition. The report is looking at it as a full demolition. I want to make sure everyone is on the same page.

CHAIRMAN STEVENS: I agree with you.

JULIE ARCHAMBEAULT: The application came in as a move but the legal and everything went out as a full demolition. The legal is the front page of your summary.

RON MILLER (Applicant's Fiancé): I don't have any objections. I would like to thank the Board for taking the time to review the project and to thank the neighbors. I am the applicant's fiancé. We would like to make the East End our permanent home. We have determined we would like to remodel 505 Logan and make it our home. We did not know what steps we should follow. We think the plan would be great for the property and an asset for the East End. It is one of the first ones you see. It has the misfortune of being located next to 507 Logan. We initially talked to Staff about renovating and adding on to 505 Logan. Staff was enthusiastic. Unfortunately it sits at the back of the lot and it would take up most of the backyard. Staff suggested that we add a basement. We are in the flood plain. We went to the Idaho Historic Society to see if we could find any pictures. We tried to remove it from contributing status but were denied. We worked with an architect for several months and came up with a design. Staff felt the designs were nice but that we should still try to get the contributing status removed. Hence we presented a second time to do that. The reasons that we cited in past for the front porch addition...the addition of a closet bump-out onto that front porch on the southwest side of the house is visible from the front of the house. The house was sided with vinyl. There is no old siding under there. We were denied by a vote of 4:3. That brings us to today. We've again talked with Staff and taken into consideration some of the homes on Logan and that general neighborhood and our architect has come up with a new plan. We would like to be able to build this house. It will require demolition of the front façade to move the home forward. I am a physical therapist, I don't build things.

- From my standpoint the Findings, as far as the three of five Findings we felt that the building, site or structure is not classified as contributory. It is on the list.
- The second criteria is that it can't meet National, State or Local criteria. It obviously does not do that.
- The next one is that the demolition of the building, object or site would not adversely affect the character of the District or adjacent properties. Redoing 505 Logan would enhance the character of that neighborhood.
- Rehabilitation would not be economically feasible. It would require a new roof, new wiring, HVAC, insulation, siding, windows, plumbing...basically rebuilding the entire house. If we took everything off and brought it up to standard there wouldn't much of anything left.

- Plans submitted. We could make changes to the windows for uniformity. We see a lot of houses with the similar style. I have a list of the architect's note if you would like to take a look at that. The notes are in regards to the setbacks.

CHAIRMAN STEVENS: Would you like to give us that information?

RON MILLER: Would you like for me to read them or just give them to you in paper form?

CHAIRMAN STEVENS: It would be best if you read them.

RON MILLER: Architect's notes: *Below is a summary of the design approach which identifies the design and site constraints along with other issues and explains the reasoning for the decisions that were made throughout the process.*

The site: The site itself per Ada County Assessor's Office is 50 ft. wide and 123 ft. deep. It is also a corner lot and therefore comprises an interior side yard as well as a street frontage side yard along Avenue D.

In today's world corner lots are generally surveyed and designed to be slightly larger than their neighboring lots simply because of the additional street side yard setback requirements. However, with the East End being a somewhat more established neighborhood and surveyed many years prior to this, this is not the case.

Therefore in my research of the East End lots that fall within the Historic District it is obvious that most if not all corner lots fall into the substandard lot classification as per the City of Boise's current Zoning Ordinance.

He refers to the drawings showing the setbacks for the current zoning code for lots zoned R-2H, front yard setback was 20 ft., and interior side yard setback was 5 ft., rear yard setback 15 ft. However, where it abuts an alley there is a zero setback. Side yard street frontage was 20 ft.

When all these setbacks are applied to the lot one can see that it significantly reduces the ability to articulate a design or building elevation that is both aesthetically pleasing and renders interior space functional and maximizes allowable area that conforms to the setbacks. Even with the exception clause 11-04-14.03, Item 2.a. which reduces it from 20 ft. to 15 ft. for livable space it would effectively increase the building width to 30 ft. Taking into account the fact that Amy and Ron wish to maximize their floor space for the addition of a family some day it would essentially mean a long slender design and in our opinion would be detrimental to all parties concerned.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

NANCI CATALANO: My address is 503 Avenue E which is around the corner from the property. I want to speak to the historic significance. My parents bought my property in 1945. I grew up in this neighborhood. All of the homes on Logan were Bungalow type homes. I know the people that built this home. It was always set way back. It doesn't look anything like the

other homes. It was built by a couple that had one child and he was the assessor. We remodeled our home, we did more than remodel. We did a lot of demolition prior to the Historic District. We had a dirt basement. Some of the homes on Logan have a basement. This is a darling little home but not like other homes in the District. If you look at the brick home, it is across Avenue B. It was built in the 40's and has retained its original construction. This was a garage. They put an apartment above it and resided it. The little house that is boarded up was a tiny one room with one bathroom. Whatever Amy can do to the house on the corner would be an improvement. The one on the corner is original. The four on the same side as Amy's house are fairly original. There has been some remodeling. If you look at the two homes on the end, they really are not congruent with the neighborhood. I would say they don't have historic significance. Historically I have known all of these people. I have lived here off and on my whole life. I believe what she is doing would be an improvement to the neighborhood. The setback puts the house almost on the alley. As of today our wonderful alley was repaved back to the way it was in the 50's. The egress and access is improved. I have been here since 1945 so that is a lot of information. She has tried for well over a year and I think that anything that would enhance the block would be beneficial to the neighborhood.

CHAIRMAN STEVENS: Thank you for your information.

DON CATALANO: In addition to what my wife said, that house is completely unlivable. There is nothing you can do to make it better. They have a lot of money invested in the property. They are running around \$300,000 dollars. I would recommend just what they are proposing to do. If you have any changes you would like for them to make, I think they would be willing to accommodate that. They are trying to make something out of there that are livable. Going around on the inside of that house, the rooms are just not serviceable.

JULIE ARCHAMBEAULT: Just because the house doesn't look like other houses in the neighborhood doesn't mean it isn't contributing. It is a Minimal Traditional style. I haven't seen anything regarding economic feasibility. I would be more than willing to work with them to set up something showing that it is not economically feasible. We have different examples. When I communicated with the architect it was made clear that this wasn't going to be an option at this point.

APPLICANT REBUTTAL

RON MILLER: Staff has been helpful and friendly to us and we appreciate their time. The information we've had from the house is that they'd prefer us to move it forward and maintain that same structure the way it sits right now. It doesn't seem to be a feasible option for us to do that. To simply move that house forward and then build on the back. The investment in that would be too much for us. We wouldn't be able to do it as such. The option we have right now is to use the plan that we've come up with.

DON CATALANO: Is it not permissible to tear those other houses down?

CHAIRMAN STEVENS: We can't have that discussion in this hearing. You can ask Staff about our procedures and go ahead and visit them on the second floor of City Hall and they can have those discussions with you. It's not a yes or no answer.

PUBLIC PORTION CLOSED

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER: I am sympathetic to the applicant's situation. What we have in front of us is essentially an application to demolish what is there and we have to meet three out of the five Findings in front of us. Previously the applicant tried to change the status and that failed. At this point we are dealing with whether or not it is a contributing structure. There are four additional Findings which Staff has at this point said you meet one of and that is B. that it cannot meet the National, State or Local criteria for designation as a historical or architectural landmark so with that you have three others that you need to meet two of.

D. is the one regarding economic feasibility which at this point has not been addressed. That is one you could potentially address with Staff.

C. is subjective and part of it can be looked at in relationship to Finding E. for redevelopment of the property.

Looking at the plans that have been submitted...at this point I have the most difficulty with that as far as wanting to approve this simply because the massing, the design of what is proposed is not congruous in my mind. If you could come up with something that would fit better, you would have a much better chance meeting one of the other two criteria. Whether it be the economic one or possibly that the demolition would not adversely affect the character and that's subjective. You have a hill to climb here and it is not impossible to do but I would be much more comfortable with an approach that had a design of a structure that would be a little more fitting with the structures that are still original to the area. Certainly we would have to discount the structure that's directly across the street that's a remodeled garage or whatever it was typified at. I don't think the application has an insurmountable challenge but I don't believe what is presented in front of us is something that right now I can feel comfortable supporting because I don't believe the design is a design that is necessarily going to do what the Historic Preservation Commission is charged with as far as our obligation to the City.

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER MOVED TO DENIAL OF THE DEMOLITION REQUEST FOR DRH08-0100 AGREEING WITH STAFF THAT THE APPLICANT HAS ONLY MET ONE OF THE FIVE FINDINGS.

COMMISSIONER BURRY SECONDED THE MOTION.

COMMISSIONER SEWELL: I tend to agree with Commissioner Chandler. I do find that the demolition request...as far as the adverse effect on the District when viewed with the proposed plans is an easier one for the applicant to achieve. I believe Staff's suggestions on reducing the impact are appropriate. The roof forms and the overall massing of it does seem something that is found in the District and within our own guidelines for the East End District. I am going to support the application. I think it is much closer to an approval rather than a hard denial.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON: We have certain guidelines that we have to follow. We have to be consistent in our decision making process. I believe we are almost there. I believe given the right design it has a very good chance of moving forward.

CHAIRMAN STEVENS: There are a number of issues that Staff did a good job of calling out. Only one is the demolition issue. We have an issue with lot coverage, setbacks and then some issues with the design. The form is basically fine. The windows need to be changed and the vertical siding needs to be changed. I have a problem with tearing down a 1940's house. People like to live in these neighborhoods because of the diversity of the neighborhoods. This may not be the prettiest house on the block, but I think it is a nice modest house. It would be a disservice to tear it down just because it isn't big. It is important to maintain affordable housing in this neighborhood simply because it has changed into a neighborhood for the well off. I'll be supporting the motion.

COMMISSIONER BURRY: I agree. You could make all of the concerns applicable for the bulk of the homes in the North and East Ends. A lot of them aren't functional. They are charming, affordable and the place people want to live...not just to tear it down but except it like it is.

COMMISSIONER SEWELL: I would like to make an additional comment in regard to affordability. These houses and this one in particular may be affordable, but that doesn't necessarily make them livable. There's probably, as has been stated by the applicant, a significant amount of work that would be required to bring this house up to code and modern contemporary use standards. We should at least be mindful of that.

CHAIRMAN STEVENS: Then we have a lot of code work to do in our Districts because I think every house is that case. We may to agree to disagree.

TERESA SOBOTKA: Assuming you agree with Staff that you aren't going to approve the demolition, assuming they would appeal to City Council and City Council approves the demolition, please make a clear record that says you would want them to come back here for approval on the new design.

CHAIRMAN STEVENS: From what I can tell the Commissioners agree with Staff's report. I don't understand your question.

JULIE ARCHAMBEAULT: I think Legal wants a separate motion for the demolition and the design.

TERESA SOBOTKA: That's correct.

CHAIRMAN STEVENS: If I am correct you made a motion to deny the demolition.

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER: I think the comments by the other Commissioner's have covered everything.

ROLL CALL 6:0. MOTION CARRIES.

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER AS ADVISED BY COUNCIL TO MOVE THAT IN THE EVENT THAT A DEMOLITION IS ALLOWED TO PROCEED, THAT THE PLANS AS SUBMITTED TO US ARE NOT APPROVABLE BASED ON LOT COVERAGE AND THE APPLICANT SHOULD COME BACK WITH A PROPOSAL THAT MEETS THESE REQUIREMENTS.

COMMISSIONER BURRY SECONDED THE MOTION.

CHAIRMAN STEVENS: I am planning to support the motion. Staff did a great job, if you look at Page 26 of the packet, there is a comment regarding the adjacent properties and Staff did a good job analyzing how this departs from surrounding structures.

COMMISSIONER SEWELL: Some of the criteria or Findings that Staff had...the overall roof forms, gable and porch are ones found in the East End Historic District. The windows overall are appropriate. The window pattern may be questionable. The overall solid void is consistent with the neighborhood and surrounding houses. I don't have a problem with the siding. The lot coverage is an issue.

CHAIRMAN STEVENS: I also want bring attention to the comment Staff had regarding the gable forms which really aren't dormers. I agree that isn't appropriate and is incongruous with the District.

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER: As much as it may sound that we are beating you up, I know there are many of us that would be happy to approve a good design.

ROLL CALL 6:0. MOTION CARRIES.