



## Planning & Development Services

Boise City Hall, 2nd Floor  
150 N. Capitol Boulevard  
P. O. Box 500  
Boise, Idaho 83701-0500

Phone: 208/384-3830  
Fax: 208/384-3753  
TDD/TTY: 800/377-3529  
Website: [www.cityofboise.org/pds](http://www.cityofboise.org/pds)

# Historic Preservation Commission

## Worksession / Hearing Minutes of July 28, 2008

Commission Members Christopher Pooser, Chairman, Scott Chandler, Cathy Sewell, Barbara Dawson, Stephen Smith, Betsy McFadden

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

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### DRH08-00195 / Jana Repulski / 1411 N. 19th Street

Requests Historic Preservation approval to reopen the front porch, replace the existing roof structure, change the Dutch hip in the rear to a gable, extend the chimney and replace the rear stair railing on property located in R-1CH (Single Family Residential with Historic Overlay) zone. *(This item was deferred at the June 23, 2008 hearing and July 14, 2008 hearings.)*

JULIE ARCHAMBEAULT: Presented the staff report with a recommendation of approval of reopening the porch and changing the railing and denial of changing the roof or raising the chimney.

COMMISSIONER McFADDEN: Julie, on Page 1 of the summary, you note that demolition is okay. In the body of your report, only one of the Findings is met.

JULIE ARCHAMBEAULT: I am afraid that that is a typo. It should say that only one of the Findings has been met. The house can't meet landmark status. The demolition will adversely affect the District, and the replacement will have a negative affect.

COMMISSIONER McFADDEN: It met only one of the three?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON: The term change in the roof you spoke about where the overhang hit the windows and now it doesn't...wasn't there also a dormer to be added?

JULIE ARCHAMBEAULT: Yes. It would go from the hip roof to the gable. The reason to raise it up is to allow for livable space. If that isn't allowed, then none of the other things are allowed.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON: This is only a single story not a story and a half?

JULIE ARCHAMBEAULT: That might have been before we decided the 7 ft. attic space is required. There is some storage space up there.

TERESA SOBOTKA (Legal): To clarify that a little bit more it's not only the dormer, but they talk about a Dutch hip, rear window, a rear bay window and the chimney. Julie felt that because she was recommending denial of the roof that none of those...of course if you don't raise the roof you can't do any of those. If you do want to raise the roof you're going to have to look at all those other issues here or send her back to look at those other issues.

COMMISSIONER POOSER: The house next door looks like it will be similar as far as the height we are talking about.

JULIE ARCHAMBEAULT: This is a conversation that we have a lot...being congruous with ... looking like something that will be found in the District isn't the same as preserving the history of the District. Preserving the history of each house is different than making sure that they look like something in the District. This would not be historically accurate for this house.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON: This house is contributing...if these changes were to be made, would it still be contributing?

JULIE ARCHAMBEAULT: Yes, it would.

### SITE VISITS

Commissioners Smith, McFadden, Pooser, Chandler, Sewell and Dawson visited the site prior to the hearing.

AMY COOK (Applicant's Architect): No objections to site visits. I'm a little bit thrown for a loop by the typo on the first page. I was assuming that it was going to be fine to tear the roof off and that the big issue was at what height we're putting the roof back. It sounds like from Julie's statement that maybe that is the case. Maybe if the roof isn't as high or we understand the reason that the roof is this high that it makes this house an asset to the neighborhood and helps it fulfill two of the other Findings. With that in mind I'm going to try and explain how we arrived at this design and walk you through our rebuttal to Staff comments. First of all raising the roof is not simply arbitrary. Not necessarily just to get head height on the first floor. The existing roof structure is 2 x 4 rafters at 24 inches on center. It's not structurally adequate as it is. Mainly if we're going to use the space in the second floor we're going to have to put in new floor joists. I'm going to give you a sketch here.

CHAIRMAN POOSER: We'll mark the sketch of floor joists as Exhibit 1.

AMY COOK: If you see on sketch A, we're putting the new 9 ½ inch (*inaudible*) floor joists in at the existing bearing height of the roof. You can see that the corner of those joists stick up above where the roof is now. Getting any sort of floor space up here is going to be impossible without doing something else to the roof structure. On raising the roof structure as we show in sketch B, which is what we're proposing on the elevations that are shown or the other option is to go with a taller rafter...the (*inaudible*) line on sketch A is showing a 2 x 12 rafter. You can see that the 2 x 12 actually would hide the corner of those floor joists. Now with that option the peak of the roof would be lower than it is shown on the elevations. The issue there is we get into some problems on the head height on the stairs inside that access the second floor. I don't know exactly why the floor plan didn't make it into your package, but I've got the two new proposed floor plans here.

CHAIRMAN POOSER: We'll mark the floor plans as Exhibit 2.

AMY COOK: On the floor plans we tried to limit the amount of changes that we were going to make to lower floor falls to try to keep the integrity of the lower floor design of the house. In doing so we stacked the new stairway to the second floor above the existing stairway that goes into the basement. That works great space wise, cost wise; we don't have to move around a lot of walls. Unfortunately it doesn't bring those stairs up under the highest part of the roof so at the left hand side of those stairs the ceiling height is about 2" below the code minimum, which is why we wanted to lift this roof structure up so we can get clearance head height at the top of those stairs. Before proposing this attic space as the historic guidelines recommend. We looked at other avenues for addition. We looked at putting an addition on the back of the side, but we were already maxed out on lot coverage. We looked at putting an addition in the basement. There's an existing basement there. It's just one small room with ceiling height of just over 6 ft. The work involved in jacking up a stucco house and removing the existing basement slab and digging out a decent sized addition was going to be a lot more work than trying to pursue this attic space addition. I was really worried about the stucco on the house cracking as we jacked it up. There's also some concerns about getting decent in the basement because we can't put window wells along the south side except right at the front because we have a close proximity of the pop out on the south side where the walkway goes around to the back and there's no way we can put window wells on that side. There's stairs that access the rear entry. We can't put a window well there. There's a garage on the rear now, which is quite close so window wells on the west side were going to be forced to the north side. That left us just the north side which isn't a great option as far as light is concerned. The owner was worried about disturbing a row of very old rose bushes along the south property line that she shares with her neighbor. Any kind of basement addition that we were going to do there was most likely going to upset those rose bushes. I like to address some of the concerns that Julie has raised. One being the issue that additions have to be stepped back from the primary façade of the building. I'm not sure that this stipulation applies to us. I'm not sure at what point replacing a roof becomes an addition or just a replacement. I understand that with it being a little higher that maybe that kicks us in, but we're putting the roof back exactly as it is. We're matching the roof slope, we're matching the materials, we matching the eave condition,

we matching the bracket details, we're matching everything that the existing roof has, it just has to be a little higher for us to accommodate the second floor. The other comments related directly to the issue of the roof bearing and if it's okay to have a bit higher roof bearing. Julie's report claims that raising the roof would radically change the roof and that it would change the relationship between the roof and the building and primarily the new design does not reflect the style of the house or the character of the adjacent neighborhood. I'd like to argue that it does reflect the character of the adjacent neighborhood. I don't think the character of the house has changed at all. It's still a one story Arts & Crafts Bungalow. It's similar in height to the houses around it. The new roof matches the existing in everything except bearing height. We have been able to get the bearing height down a little bit and when we first did these elevations we hadn't run structure to the point where we could get them down to the lowest common denominator. We've been able to use 9 ½ inch joists and the design on the board shows a 12 inch joists and 12 inch rafters and we can actually use 2 x 6 rafters so the difference...if you look on your front elevation page on the proposed front elevation there's a dimension between the proposed peak of the roof and the existing peak of the roof. That was a worse case scenario because we hadn't run structure and we wanted to present to you what would potentially be the highest change...the biggest difference between the existing and the proposed. That dimension was 1 ft. 10 ⅝ inch higher than the existing ridge. The best case scenario with our new structure that we've run we would be 1 ft. 1 inch above the existing roof. The eave, which Julie was concerned about being so much above the existing windows, would be almost 4 inches. It would be 3 inches and ⅞ inches lower than it is currently shown. There are ways for us to create attic space without raising it. We've talked about the issue at the height of the stair. We could potentially block up a little bit under all of the rafters just 3 inches to get us the additional 2 inch clearance we need at the edge of the stair. I would prefer to defer this rather than to have it denied. I just want to say in closing this is not a landmark home, it's not on a corner lot. As Julie said at the beginning of her testimony the difference in the height is really not visible from the front. This is not a house that's on a corner lot and it's not a house that you'd be able to see the sides or the back very easily. I don't think the 11 inch increase in the roof bearing is going to be that readily apparent. The owner is here and I think she would like to say a couple of words and then I'll stand for questions.

JANA REPULSKI (Applicant): I have a letter from my neighbor on the south side of the house.

*"My name is Connie Weaver and I live at 1407 N. 19<sup>th</sup> Street next door to the property owned by Jana Repulski. Jana is seeking to remodel her home. I have seen the plans and think they are suitable and desirable for the neighborhood. She and her architect have taken great care to maintain and enhance the historic character of the home through the proposed remodel. I have lived in my home for the 31 years and I am glad to see that someone as young as Jana is interested in preserving the neighborhood. I hope you will approve the plans for the remodel as presented.*

I would like to follow that by stating that I have lived in the home for 12 years, since I moved to Boise. I care for my home a great deal, but I really want to regain the porch. I

would like to make the space that's there livable for myself as I go into some other phases of my life with a significant other and potential family. I would like to stay in the neighborhood and I can't imagine living anywhere else. I love the North End, the schools there and everything about the neighborhood. I really feel this will allow me to stay where I am at.

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER: You stated with some additional revisions, you could reduce it to 1 ft. 1 inch?

AMY COOK: We could get it down to 1 ft. 1 inch. Part of that reduction is because as we got a little deeper into the structure we could reduce the floor joists to 9 ½ so we lost some space there. Also we could go with 2 x 6 rafters which would work structurally. My concern there is getting enough insulation in that cathedraled space to make the REScheck work, but we'd be able to do it.

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER: If you do that what was the increase in the eave height compared to what it is now? Would that go up 1 ft. 1 inch also?

AMY COOK: No, it wouldn't go up 1 ft. 1 inch. Part of that increase is because the rafters are larger than the existing so that increase would be...that would be 2 x 6's sitting on top of the floor structure so that would be 9 ½ inches.

#### NO PUBLIC TESTIMONY

#### NO STAFF REBUTTAL

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER: Julie, in light of the comments by the applicant that what was referenced as a 2 ft. increase in height would be brought down to 9 ½ inches...does that mitigate your opinion at all as far as the change of how you approached this?

JULIE ARCHAMBEAULT: 9 ½ inches is certainly better than 24 inches. It's hard to say without a drawing, but it is a huge improvement. It's always sad to lose that much historic material, but 9 is better than 24.

CHAIRMAN POOSER: Ms. Cook, have you submitted drawings to Julie showing the new figures?

AMY COOK: No. There are so many different options. Do we bear on top of the floor structure? Is that going to be allowed? Do we try to bear on the existing roof plate and go with a larger rafter? Do we bear on the floor structure and go with a larger rafter so we can get insulation or do we go down to a 2 x 6. Is it a 2 x 10...is it a 2 x 8 and it's blocked up...there are a myriad of different options. My client doesn't want me to draw them all. I would be happy to work with Julie and try to get it down. The trade off is what's acceptable to historic that's going to give my client the most room on the second floor?

CHAIRMAN POOSER: In looking at all your different options what is the greatest height increase?

AMY COOK: The greatest height increase is what's in front of you. In fact that's even larger than it needs to be. There are 3 extra inches in the floor structure that we definitely don't need. There are 2 extra inches in the rafters that we really don't need.

CHAIRMAN POOSER: Worse case scenario for lack of a better description is 5 inches lower than what's stipulated.

AMY COOK: Right. It would be 1 ft. 5  $\frac{5}{8}$  inches.

CHAIRMAN POOSER: Same thing with the bearing height?

AMY COOK: The bearing height would be down to 9  $\frac{1}{2}$  inches higher than the existing.

CHAIRMAN POOSER: What was 2 ft. or 24 inches...

AMY COOK: It was never 2 ft. It was 1 ft. 10  $\frac{5}{8}$  inches. I think Julie was rounding up.

#### PUBLIC PORTION CLOSED

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER: The applicant is, for a variety of options, to work with Staff's objections on this and overall they could most likely come up with something that would overcome their objections completely. It would mitigate the situation enough that this could be approved. If we put a stipulation on it that if we were to approve this that if the eave height increased a maximum of 12 inches and preferably less that the increase in height would be minimal to what Staff is objecting to. With that in mind I think it would be reasonable...

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER MOVED TO APPROVE THE DEMOLITION ASSOCIATED WITH DRH08-00195 BECAUSE IT MEETS THREE OF THE FIVE FINDINGS. THOSE THREE BEING B, C, AND E. WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE PLANS THAT WOULD BE SUBMITTED AND APPROVED WOULD HAVE AN INCREASED EAVE HEIGHT NO MORE THEN 12 INCHES FROM THE EXISTING EAVE HEIGHT.

COMMISSIONER McFADDEN SECONDED THE MOTION.

COMMISSIONER SEWELL: In regard to the demolition and the roof I think the question here is whether the demolition of the historic integrity carries more weight than what the proposed project is as far as the roof. The Commission or at least members agree that the replacement roof certainly seems compatible and congruous with what's found in and around the area. I know that we've seen other applications like this come across where people have requested raising that roof trying to get more space. I'll just

throw that out there and perhaps the Commission can weigh in on that on some other discussions.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON: I do remember several applications where there was a shed dormer put on and it didn't make that much of a difference from the street.

COMMISSIONER POOSER: We are putting a limit on the eave height, is that the right height to put a limit on? I agree with the intention and I understand the applicant can work with it.

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER: I think that with having staff review it, with everything, the slope of the roof being kept consistent then we are fine.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON: At this point the chimney issue would come into play, would it not?

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER: At this point we are only discussing the demolition. We could address the chimney at later time.

CHAIRMAN POOSER: In response to Commissioner Sewell's comment....it focuses on Item C, Demolition of the building object, site or structure would not adversely affect the character of the District and whether or not we're interjecting what is going to be replaced in making that determination when that is really reserved for the last item of the demolition.

COMMISSIONER SEWELL: Partly it's a position maybe as a whole for the Commission. Julie touched on whether or not what's important in our District is to retain historic integrity meaning the structure itself or to create a district that allows changes that seem congruous and compatible with the rest of the area even though it's not true to the historic integrity. That's just talking about inches here, but if we're letting the roof go what's another 4 inches...6 inches...if the rest of it is compatible as far as the eave and that are congruous. It's just an overall question because this does continue to come up as far as hearing applicants trying to increase the height of a structure but based on our existing guidelines any additions and that need to either match or be less than the existing ridge.

COMMISSIONER McFADDEN: Commissioner Sewell is right that we've had that discussion on a lot of different projects and I don't know how to say exactly what I'm going to say here except that it seems like we have kind of come to the conclusion that we have to look at it on pretty much a case by case basis and it seems like some of these homes come in when they're raising the roof and the massing and such...it's just way over the top and then others...like I feel the application in front of us doesn't seem like...even though it is going up a little bit it doesn't seem like it so I guess in that case it's back to the whole black and white...I guess that's why we have a Commission because there's no one answer for every application.

CHAIRMAN POOSER: I agree with those comments.

COMMISSIONER SMITH MOVED WITH A SUBSTITUTE MOTION THAT THE COMMISSION APPROVE IN WHOLE DRH08-00195 AND OVERRULE THE STAFF'S DENIAL ON CHANGING THE ROOF AND RAISING THE CHIMNEY.

CHAIRMAN POOSER: I think we need to take up the demolition first as a separate item and then we need to take up rather or not we're going to approve the actual change.

COMMISSIONER SMITH: Motion withdrawn.

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER: To achieve what Commissioner Smith is trying to achieve we would have to do a substitute motion that would not include the condition that was placed on the motion there because otherwise we end up approving something with a condition that we may or may not approve later depending on...then we're back to the fact that we haven't got a demolition approved. If we want to make a substitute motion that doesn't have that condition in it that might be appropriate if you want.

CHAIRMAN POOSER: The substitute motion is to the proposed demolition having met b., c. and e. with no conditions.

COMMISSIONER SMITH: I so move.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION DIES DUE TO LACK OF SECOND.

CHAIRMAN POOSER: Is there any question on the first motion.

NO COMMISSION RESPONSE.

ROLL CALL VOTE 6:0. MOTION CARRIES.

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER MOVED TO APPROVE DRH08-00195 AS PRESENTED WITH THE CONDITION THAT DRAWINGS BE RESUBMITTED TO STAFF THAT SHOW THE EAVE HEIGHT NO MORE THAN 12 INCHES HIGHER THAN THE EXISTING EAVE HEIGHT AND WOULD ALLOW FOR THE INCREASED HEIGHT OF THE CHIMNEY AND THE OTHER CHANGES SO NOTED IN THE APPLICATION.

COMMISSIONER SMITH SECONDED THE MOTION.

ROLL CALL VOTE 6:0. MOTION CARRIES.