

CITY OF WEST CHICAGO

WHERE HISTORY & PROGRESS MEET

Approved 9/26/17

MINUTES

WEST CHICAGO HISTORICAL PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING AUGUST 29, 2017

Members Present:

Vincent Malina (Chairman)
Keith Letsche (Vice Chairman)
Rev. Bill Andrews
Kim MacPherson
Richard Vigsnes

Members Absent:

Jeanne Short

Staff:

Jeff Harris

Guests:

Gil Valenzuela
Robert Domingo
Andy Patel
Sarah Harms

1. Call to Order and establishment of a Quorum

A quorum was established. Commissioner Malina called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

2. Certificate of Appropriateness Review

A. C.O.A. 17-04 214 Main Street- Renacer Hair Salon- Sign

The applicant is proposing a total of 8 square feet of window signage. The proposed vinyl window sign is 19" x 60" (8 sq. ft. in area). The sign will be adhered to the exterior of the glass centered in one of the two large window panes. The storefront has two large window panes and a glass front door having a collective window area of 95 square feet. The commission's current policy is to allow a maximum of 20% of the total window space to be covered with signage, in this case is 19 square feet. The proposed window signage does comply with the Commission's 20% maximum coverage policy.

Commissioner Vincent Malina made a motion to approve as applied for stated this was straightforward. Commissioner Letsche seconded the motion. The motion carried with an all aye vote.

B. C.O.A. 17-18 110 Arbor Avenue- Arbor Liquors- Building Addition and Exterior Remodel

Mr. Patel, the contract purchaser of the property is seeking approval to construct an 840 square foot addition onto the south side of the existing building. Remodel the existing storefront so that the entire building will have a more modern look, and install new signage of the storefront. The addition will include a large walk-in cooler only accessible from the inside of the building. The addition will have an all brick exterior with a flat membrane roof pitched towards the rear (west side) of the building. A new masonry trash enclosure will be constructed adjacent to the building addition. Trash enclosure will have solid screen steel panel gates. Mr. Patel is also proposing 26 linear feet of 6 foot tall decorative metal fencing between the front of the trash enclosure and the

south property line for security purposes. The existing building will be refaced in the same brick as the addition as well as the 3 support columns for the roof overhang. Existing storefront doors will be replaced with typical glass pane commercial doors and three new larger sized windows will be installed between the two doors. Two new lantern style coach lights will be installed on the front (east side) of the building. In addition Mr. Patel will clean and seal the existing wood shake mansard roof.

Mr. Patel would like to replace the existing mansard roof mounted sign with a 25 square foot channel letter sign. Also install two 4' x 5' (20 sq. ft.) display cases on the front of the building addition. The display cases would be used to periodically rotate a display of merchandise and related advertising. Mr. Patel would like to hang a 2' x 2' neon sign from one of the storefront windows. City code allows for a maximum of 75 square feet of wall signage on the east façade. The collective are proposed is 69 square feet; therefore the proposed signage complies with the City Code. Mr. Patel will also be replacing the faces of the existing pole sign located in the northeast corner of the site.

This single story vernacular style commercial building was constructed in the 1950's and is considered a non-contributing structure to the Turner Junction Historic District. Significant alterations have been made the building, including the addition of the false gable roof, which further reduced its historical significance.

Jeff Harris received an email from a West Chicago resident Mr. Berry Burke. Mr. Burke asked that his email be read into the record. Mr. Burke was concerned that the exterior lighting would be on all night. The Commission asked if Mr. Patel would be agreeable to turning off the exterior lighting after business hours. Mr. Patel stated he had no issue complying with that request. LED lighting was discussed vs. neon lighting as it pertains to safety and reverse lit signage.

Commissioner Malina made motion to approve the C.O.A. request with the following conditions on the signage:

1. All illuminated signage shall be turned off after business hours and shall have dimmer capabilities to control the intensity.
2. The illumination shall be Code compliant.
3. The existing pole sign (currently has Budweiser logo), if changed in the future, would consider lighting it in a more old fashioned manner.

Commissioner Rev. Andrews seconded the motion and it passed with an all aye vote.

C. C.O.A. 17-19 146-148 W. Washington Street- Demolition, Doors, Railings, Siding, Fence, Patio, Accessibility Ramps, and Tuckpointing & Masonry Repair

The building owner, Sarah Harms of H & H Specialty LLC, is requesting approval of several aspects of the continued renovation of 146-148 W. Washington Street. Attachments as to the specific renovation work/detail (provided by owner) and supporting documentation related to the proposed improvements were provided at the meeting.

The Commission expressed its appreciation of the renovations. With the exception of the handicap entrances and doors on the front of the building the majority of the renovations are not visible from the street.

Commissioner Malina made a motion to approve the C.O.A. with the one condition that a sample of the front door be approved by West Chicago Museum Director Sara Pahlen prior to its installation. Commissioner Letsche seconded the motion. It was granted with an all aye vote.

3. Certificate of Economic Hardship

A. 116 Galena Street – Carriage House - (continuation)

The current property owners, Gil & Edita Valenzuela are requesting approval of a Certificate of Economic Hardship to demolish the existing two-story detached garage at 116 Galena Street. This is a rental property for the Valenzuela's and has three distinct uses on-site; a single family residence, a commercial storefront, and the detached garage. The garage structure is more commonly known as the "carriage house" due to its historic use as a former horse stable and carriage garage. The City has been working with the Valenzuela's for several years in an attempt to adequately restore the deteriorated exterior of the carriage house so it complies with the City's building and property maintenance codes. In 2013 received C.O.A. approval in 2013 to replace the asphalt shingle roof and repair painting and all of the exterior wood trim, windows and doors on the carriage house. That work has been completed. The masonry exterior walls of the carriage house have fallen into disrepair and have been in a continuous state of deterioration for decades. Past attempts to restore the exterior have been made by previous property owners, but were done so using inappropriate materials and techniques resulting in the unsightly patchwork that now exists. The Valenzuela's have indicated that due to financial hardship they cannot afford to properly restore the exterior of the building as required.

The carriage house was constructed in the 1870's using a unique construction method of various stone materials. (i.e. limestone blocks, field stones, bricks, etc.) and timber supports held together with concrete and covered with a lime based masonry skim coat. This construction technique is no longer used; therefore restoration must be performed by a skilled tradesman familiar with this dated method. Restoration costs are typically expensive because of the skilled labor and specialized materials needed.

The carriage house is considered a contributing structure to the Turner Junction Historic District. In August of 2016 the Commission denied the Valenzuela's Certificate of Appropriateness (C.O.A 16-12) request to demolish the structure as that request was more appropriately suited for consideration as a Certificate of Economic Hardship do to financial constraints presented by the Valenzuela's.

Economic hardship shall be considered by the Commission based on 8 factors. Those factors as well as the facts pertaining to each of those factors were provided in the Agenda Item Summary. In February of 2017 the Commission did grant a delay with the owners to pursue other courses of action also outlined in the Agenda Item Summary.

The Valenzuela's presented preliminary improvement plans to reflect not only the exterior restoration of the carriage house, but also renovations to other components of the property. Renovations include converting the carriage house into a two-unit dwelling and an addition onto the commercial storefront.

Based on observation of the situation regarding the condition of the carriage house, City staff does not feel that the proposed renovation plans being presented by the owner currently represent a feasible alternative that could result in final action being taken by the Commission on the COEH request that would, in turn result in a situation that is beneficial for all parties involved.

After discussion of the proposed renovations commissioners made a determination that the proposal as presented needed to have more detail of the cost involved as well as research to the City Code that may be challenging to the interior design. The scope of the Historical Preservation Commission is the restoration of the exterior of the property. Commissioner Rev. Andrews suggested a timeline of the repairs. Mr. Harris also suggested review the action items from February 2017 as a Plan B if the interior renovations are not moved forward on. Commissioner Letsche made a motion to review a C.O.A. for repair at the September 26, 2017 meeting along with initial cost and timeline. Commissioner Malina seconded the motion and the motion carried with an all aye vote.

4. Preliminary Review

None.

5. Historic District Update

None.

6. Approval of Minutes

A. August 1, 2017

Commissioner Letsche motioned to approve minutes the August 1, 2017 minutes as presented. Commissioner Malina seconded the motion. The motion passed with one abstention.

7. Other Business

A. Appointment of Secretary

Jeff Harris opened up opportunity if any other Commission member would like to be the Commission's secretary. Jeanne Short had a conversation with Jeff and stated she would assist if no one else wanted the position. Commissioner Letsche made a motion to appoint Jeanne Short. Commissioner Vigsnes seconded the motion. The motion carried with an all aye vote.

8. Adjournment

Commissioner Malina made a motion to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Commissioner Letsche. The motion carried with an all aye vote. The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 p.m.