HUNTSVILLE HISTORICAL PRESERVATION COMMISSION

MINUTES

### February 12, 2018

The Huntsville Historic Preservation Commission met in the Conference Room on the 1st Floor of the Public Service Building located at 320 Fountain Circle on February 12, 2018. The members present were:

Mr. Mike Holbrook Ms. Sheree Holland

Ms. Drenda King Mr. Dennis Madsen

Mr. Jan Williams Mr. John Kvach

Mr. Peter Lowe

Also present at the meeting was Ms. Katie Stamps, Historic Preservation Consultant, and Ms. Sharon Mize, Recording Secretary. The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Mr. Mike Holbrook, Chairman. Mr. Holbrook introduced the Commission members and read the preamble of the HHPC.

**443 Newman Avenue – Mr. Carl Gleghorn for Ms. Sheree LeMon**

Mr. Gleghorn came back before the Commission to request an addition to the rear of the house, the addition of a brick garden wall and a picket fence, install a new driveway, install a small plunge pool, change previously requested roof color, and replace cedar shake siding in the portico and replace columns.

The new drawings show the roofline of the addition to be lower than first presented and will be no higher than the existing roofline, as requested by the Commission. The roofing material will be changed to Rustic Black in lieu of Black Walnut.

Mr. Gleghorn spoke with the Zoning Department and they said the plunge pool could be within five feet of the house and the proposed plunge pool will be located ten feet from the house. They decided not to erect a pergola on the back of the house. There will be a porte cochere erected.

On the front of the house the existing pediment has cedar shakes and Ms. LeMon wants to replace the ones which are damaged. She would also like to replace the columns to match the ones on the porte cochere and also add some cedar window boxes.

Mr. Madsen said he appreciated the changes made from the last application and it made a big difference from the south and the eastern side of the house. Mr. Gleghorn said the brick on the foundation of the addition will be painted to match the brick on the house foundation, which was previously painted. Mr. Lowe made the motion to approve the addition to the rear of the house as presented, the addition of a brick garden wall, erect a picket fence, install a new driveway, install a plunge pool, re-roof using architectural shingles in the color of Rustic Black, repair the cedar shake siding and replace the columns. Ms. King seconded the motion. The Commission voted unanimously to approve the motion.

**710 Holmes Avenue – Mr. Scott Wilson for Mr. John Jennings**

This structure is a non-contributing structure due to age. The request is to add an iron railing with a brick base on the front elevation, make side additions to include a sunroom, dining room, and a dormer, landscape wall with a pergola, install a swimming pool in the side yard, and add a rear terrace with a sloped roof.

Mr. Wilson said the Jennings just purchased the home and they want to compliment the other homes in the area. On the back of the house they want to raise the height of the back wall to get more light into the back of the home. They want to extend the terrace without a roof to connect to the back yard better.

They would like to add a swimming pool in the side yard in the empty lot adjacent to the house. The other option would be in the rear yard. They prefer to put the pool in the adjacent lot to have a better view of the pool and the children while they are in the pool. They would like to also extend the sunroom to open up in the summer time and enclose as usable space in the winter time. If the pool is placed in the adjacent lot the thought was they would need an attractive screen from the street to the pool. The proposed fence would be four feet from the sidewalk and would have some landscaping in front of it to soften the edge. The proposed privacy wall will be brick and six feet in height with a pergola on top making the total height of the wall ten feet. Mr. Kvach asked if the adjacent lot backed up to an alleyway. Mr. Wilson said that it does and they would extend the gate across the driveway to enclose the pool area.

Mr. Lowe asked Ms. Stamps why she would not recommend approving the proposal. Ms. Stamps said there are some issues which need to be addressed, including the scale of the addition and the wall. The left elevation is large but is subordinate to the existing roofline and is set back. The front wall is too tall, especially in the front area.

Mr. Holbrook said according to the guidelines, a brick fence which is six feet in height is not allowed at the street. Any six foot privacy fence needs to be at least midway of the house. Also, secondary elevations are not as critical when there is a house next door, but a vacant lot is more visible. The proposed addition is also Greek revival in style and does not match the style of the house, which is a modern Victorian. They would like to keep the styles similar. Mr. Madsen said the original structure was built to fit within the style of the district though it was not constructed until 1999.

Mr. Kvach asked if they could push the pool back and erect a wood privacy fence on the front elevation and set the brick wall further back to help soften the visual effect. Mr. Lowe said he did not see why they could not erect the brick wall off of the front porch. Mr. Holbrook said according to the guidelines that privacy fences should be midway of the property. Ms. Stamps said they thought they could set the pool back some.

Mr. Madsen said he is more concerned about the stylistic adherence. Mr. Williams said the fence would stick out at the front of the street and thought if it were pulled back would look better. That tall of a fence would break up the porch and the street line going down the street.

Mr. Holbrook said it would be a huge mistake for the neighborhood if they are allowed to construct such a tall structure so close to the street and in front of the porch lines. It should be set much further back and it is a structure, not just a fence. Mr. Lowe asked if they put the brick wall at the edge of the porch and bring the pergola back to the south would that be acceptable. Mr. Wilson asked if they would consider moving the brick fence back to the spot level with the front porch and let the privacy wall project three feet and give some balance there.

Mr. Wilson asked if the problem was the material of the proposed fence or that it was too tall. Mr. Holbrook explained the guidelines will not allow the fence to be so close to the street and it is too tall but the materials were acceptable. He said if the fence was moved further back to at least midway of the side elevation, it would be more acceptable but the Commission would be making a lot of compromises and setting precedents if it is approved.

Mr. Madsen said they appreciated the aesthetic view but there are some firm regulations on how high the fence can be and the materials which can be used on a front elevation. If the fence were in the rear yard then there is more flexibility on the height and materials. Ms. Stamps said taller fences are allowed if the property backs up to a commercial property, but not in a residential section.

Mr. Wilson asked if they would be acceptable for them to erect a pergola if it were not so tall. They would erect the six foot brick fence and then erect a pergola nine feet in height. The pergola would have vines growing on it to soften the area. Mr. Holbrook said a six foot fence that far forward would be pushing the envelope with what the guidelines say. Many of the things reflected in the guidelines is a result of bad decisions made previously by the Commission. The current guidelines are a little less flexible with walls and fences. Mr. Williams said pulling the fence back would complement the neighborhood.

Mr. Lowe made the motion to approve the wrought iron railing fence with a brick column base in the front yard and Mr. Madsen seconded the motion. Mr. Wilson said he thought the brick would be a rustic brick. Mr. Holbrook said they would need to see the brick to approve it. They could approve it in principle and they need to know the height of the fence and the materials. Mr. Jennings asked if they could erect a fence like they had at their previous house. He asked if the fence could be approved at staff level. Mr. Holbrook said that fence would be approved but they would need to see the brick selection.

Mr. Kvach asked if they could attach the six foot fence to the house so it would no longer be considered a fence, but an extension of the front porch. It would have a roof line which extends off and would actually be a part of the house. Ms. Stamps said she was concerned how it would look from a design standpoint. Mr. Wilson said they could do that and put a gate between.

Mr. Holbrook said the motion on the floor is for conceptual approval and they would need to come back with the brick selection. The Commission voted unanimously for conceptual approval for the wrought iron fence with a brick column base.

Item #2 is the sunroom, dining room and dormer addition. All of these will tie together with the other items. Mr. Lowe said the massing of the addition is not a problem. Mr. Madsen said the style of the addition does not match the style of the house. The front is more Victorian style and the proposed addition is Greek revival style. Mr. Lowe said they need to know if the massing is an issue before they come back with their plans. Mr. Holbrook said that was a good point. Another element which needs to be addressed is the roof and the brackets. Although most of it is on the back of the house, they would like to see the styles match the existing house. Ms. Stamps said she thought they should simplify the design because the original structure is more clean lines and simple and things need to be kept consistent.

Mr. Lowe made the motion to approve the rear terrace as presented. Mr. Kvach seconded the motion and the Commission voted unanimously to approve the rear terrace.

When they come back before the Commission they will need to simplify their design for the addition; come back with more details for the wrought iron fence; come back with changes to the brick fence, pergola and pool.

**702 Randolph Avenue – Ms. Jamie Stockton**

Ms. Stockton asked to make repairs and paint the house, including the brick. The paint colors selected are Benjamin Moore Ashley Gray, Revere Pewter and China White. The repairs include patching stucco and doing some repairs to the chimney. This house has been a rental property since the 1980’s. A long time ago this house was used as a dance studio.

Mr. Madsen said they are fine with the paint and the colors selected but are not okay with painting the brick. Ms. Stockton said she drove around the neighborhood and more of the houses have painted brick than do not. She said her house is in the minority. Mr. Madsen said that made her house special. Mr. Holbrook commented that was a good thing. Mr. Lowe said it would look out of place without painted brick.

Mr. Lowe made the motion to approve her request to make repairs and paint the house, including the brick since most of the houses in her neighborhood have painted brick. There was no second to the motion. Ms. King said she agreed the brick should remain unpainted because it sets a precedent if the brick was allowed to be painted. Mr. Kvach said it would also be easier to maintain if it is left unpainted.

Mr. Madsen made the motion to repair and paint the external surfaces of the house, but do not paint the brick and Mr. Lowe made a second to the motion.

Mr. Trey Propst made the comment he thought the brick would look better if it were painted. The Commission voted unanimously to approve the motion.

**701 Clinton Avenue – Aaron & Shannon Hase**

The request of this application is to repair the wood siding, paint the exterior, and shutters to a side door and erect a fence. The Hase’s have done some research on the history of the house and the paint colors which would have been used at that time. The paint colors they have selected are Harwood Putty for the body and Mopboard Black for the trim including the window trim, and door trim. The garage doors will be painted in the black as well as the front door of the house. There were shutters on the side entrance door at one time and they would like to add them back. The shutters will be operable and will be painted black. They would like a three foot picket fence erected in the front and side and a six foot privacy fence in the rear yard.

Mr. Lowe said the pickets on the fence in the front yard appear to be too far apart. Mr. Hase said they will erect a narrow fence and they want to match the fence next door. Mr. Hase said they want to match the height of the fence next door. Mr. Holbrook said it does not need to be higher than 36”. He suggested they put a newel there to help distinguish between the fences.

Mr. Lowe made the motion to approve repairing the wood siding, paint the exterior using the colors of Benjamin Moore Harwood Putty and Mopboard Black, add shutters to the side door and erect a wood picket fence in the front and side yards with the pickets being the proper width apart, and a six foot wood privacy fence in the rear yard. Mr. Kvach seconded the motion. Mr. Hase asked if they could mirror the height of the fence next door. Mr. Holbrook said it does not need to exceed the height in the guidelines and they need to add a newel to distinguish between the two fences.

Ms. Stamps said they received a letter from Blake and Jan Dorning, who live at 104 White Street and they are concerned about the fence. They renovated their home some years ago and noticed on the diagrams submitted for the application at 701 Clinton Avenue does not reflect the addition to their home. The garage at 701 Clinton is located very close to their property line. Mr. Dorning asked that the homeowners contact him before they construct any fences. Mr. Hase said their letter was inaccurate. Ms. Stamps said she spoke with Mr. Cunningham and the Zoning Department and fences are allowed to be placed directly on property lines. Mr. Hase said they would set it back an inch to be sure the fence is fully on their property. The Commission voted unanimously to approve the motion.

**Old Business:**

Mr. Williams made the motion to approve the minutes as written from the January 8th meeting and Mr. Madsen seconded the motion. The Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

**New Business:**

Ms. Stamps updated the Commission regarding the McThornmor survey. David Schneider was selected to do the survey and contract is now in the Legal Department for review. The Alabama National Register Committee meets twice a year and they are hoping to have the information to them by the September meeting. Councilman Kling is working on getting a historical marker and the street signs to go along with getting the neighborhood on the National Register.

Ms. Stamps sent out some proposed changes to the ordinances. She would like the Commission to discuss the changes they would like to make in the near future. Some of the changes she would like to see are a penalty imposed on people who do changes without permission and a list of things which can be approved by staff without coming before the Commission.

The Certified Local Grants are coming up in the very near future from the Alabama State Historical Commission. Typically we use these grant funds to get neighborhoods surveyed. One of the projects they will be pursuing will be the Edmonton Heights neighborhood. The survey will have to be done first to see if it is eligible for the National Register. If it is eligible they will apply for another grant to get the survey done to get the neighborhood on the register. Another district for consideration is the Medical District. The hope is they will have a better idea of the historic value of their community. Also, Mr. Madsen has been working with Zoning to see what kind of regulations they could enforce to keep the houses from being demolished.

Mr. Kvach said he is concerned about the Lowe Mill neighborhood as well. It is not a locally designated area and there are some changes going on which are concerning. There will be a bunch of investors from Atlanta and Nashville who will come in and buy the properties. Mr. Holbrook asked if the zoning was changed in Lowe Mill and Mr. Madsen said there were a few targeted areas changed to C6. Ms. Stamps asked if they would prefer to put the grant money toward the Medical District over Lowe Mill. She said they could apply for more funding to see if they could get more but she doubted they would be able to.

Two other opportunities are coming up which are sponsored by Historic Huntsville Foundation in conjunction with the upcoming Bicentennial. This would include a walking tour of Bicentennial houses and to produce a series of coloring books of historic homes illustrated by local artists and will be provided on-line and distributed to schools.

It was discussed that Merrimack, Lowe Mill and Dallas Mill are on the National Register and would possibly like to be recognized as a local historic district. Ms. Stamps said the homeowners of the districts are the ones who have to organize and begin the process of becoming a local district. She would need a contact person for each of the districts to get the ball rolling.

May is preservation month and Ms. Stamps will be giving them information about it at a later date. They are discussing setting up a monthly or a quarterly historic education for the community. Mr. Kvach said he does training with his Historic Preservation class which is simple. They do a workshop at the records room to do a deed search and also get them involved in genealogy. Ms. Stamps said there is a genealogy conference coming to Huntsville in August, which would also be an option for continued education.

Dr. Lee said he would like to see A & M historic buildings included in the coloring books which will be put together for the Bicentennial. Ms. Stamps said those conversations are happening.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dennis Madsen

Manager of Urban and Long Range

Planning