

CHARLESTON HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION

February 17, 2022

City Service Center Conference Room – 915 Quarrier Street

Members Present

Billy Joe Peyton, Chairman
Ken Sullivan
Lisa Fischer-Casto

Members Absent

Adam Krason

Staff Present

Lori Brannon
Dan Vriendt

Call to Order: Billy Joe Peyton

Hannah Vriendt

Gary Thompson – COA-21-0214

Brian Lowe – St. Albans Windows – COA 21-0214

George Sitler – COA-22-0215

Jason Pickens – COA-22-0215

COA-21-0214

(continued from 1/20/2022)

Application of St. Albans Windows on behalf of Gary Thompson requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness in order to replace two window in the attic on the property located at **1608 Quarrier Street**.

Applicant, Gary Thompson, and Brian Lowe with St. Albans Windows presented the request for COA-21-0214. Mr. Thompson is wanting to replace two windows in the attic of his residence, one of which has no glass at all. All the windows are all old wood sash windows.

Brian Lowe proposed the replacement be vinyl windows with SDL simulated divided light grids inside and outside, since the windows are not on the front of the building.

Billy Joe referred to the Planning Department's analysis, noting that there is a provision that requires primary facades replacement windows should match the original in material, size, shape and configuration. Billy Joe further mentioned that, because 1608 Quarrier Street is a corner lot, both sides are exposed.

Gary Thompson acknowledged he read the regulations for the CHLC and was aware of the aforementioned provision. He further stated that Franklin Avenue, on the other side of the house, was nothing more than an alley. Two windows on the right side of his house are original windows and the two in the master bedroom are not. The windows on the porch are vinyl replacement windows. The two windows on the second floor are replacement windows. The window beside the garage is also a replacement window.

Brian Lowe said the lead time on the wooden windows are 6 to 7 months.

Billy Joe inquired as to the price difference between the wood windows and the vinyl windows. Gary Thompson said the estimate on the vinyl windows were \$800 each, material and installation. The wood windows were approximately \$1,200.0 each, material and installation.

Billy Joe mentioned that what often happens with the vinyl replacements is that the original frame remains in place and the vinyl is an insert inside which gives you a smaller profile and smaller window size.

Brian Lowe stated it would be the same thing with the Lincoln wood windows, which are basically pocket windows which sit inside the existing frame. According to Mr. Lowe's measurements, the difference between the original wood windows and vinyl windows was 1 ¼".

Ken Sullivan suggested denying the vinyl windows and propose within the same motion that the applicant come back to the Committee for wood windows. Lori told Ken that was completely up to the Commission or, the wood windows could be approved today and the permit could be granted when they bring in the wood windows.

Lisa Fischer-Casto questioned whether the windows would be the same size. Brian Lowe responded that they are very close to the same size. Lisa Fischer-Casto mentioned that it is the second time the Commission has had this issue. The first time the applicant did not show up. Mr. Thompson said he did not receive a notification last month and would not have been able to be at the meeting anyway due to COVID-19. When the issue came before the Commission in December, Mr. Thompson was on vacation. Lisa Fischer-Casto said the point she was trying to make is, why did the applicant not have the windows with him now.

Mr. Thompson is concerned over the possibility of the wood windows being denied because of an inch or so of lack of transparency and being stuck with the unacceptable window.

Billy Joe suggested repairing the existing windows, with the storm on the inside which is typically done in this situation. Although, it can be hard to find someone local that does that type of work. Lori referenced a list of contractors in the design guidelines, but she didn't know of anyone who was doing that specific work now.

Mr. Thompson also mentioned the fact that replacing the windows within the original frame could be difficult because both the wood frames and windows have shrunk over time. Otherwise, the glass would have stayed inside the tracks.

Billy Joe stated that the commission has existed since 2007. Prior to that, there was an East End Review Board, which was organized in the 1980's. The city is now 30+ years into being one of the largest urban historic districts in the state of West Virginia, representing every variety of architecture that was built in the United States between 1870's and 1930's. The mission of this Commission is to ensure that, when the next generation becomes residents within the historical district, the homes will have not been altered to the extent that the area loses its historical

district designation. Houses within the historic district have a higher property value. The design review has maintained the integrity of the district and the aesthetic nature of the district intact. The Commission understands the inconvenience and cost associated with following the design reviews, but it is imperative to uphold the mission of this district.

Mr. Thompson's response was that these are homes, not museums. Billy Joe said he recognized that fact and encouraged Mr. Thompson to read the nation register to gain further understanding. The rules are made by the National Park Service, not the CHLC.

Brian Lowe asked that, by going with wood windows with aluminum cladding and external divided light grids, would they still require they stay with the original glass size. Ken Sullivan said that was not part of the motion and that it was yet to be determined. Brian Lowe will email Lori Brannon with the glass size.

MOTION AND VOTE

The motion was made by Ken Sullivan, seconded by Lisa Fischer-Casto and unanimously passed by the Commission to deny the vinyl windows, but approve Staff's recommendation for wood windows with aluminum cladding with the condition that the size of the openings is not altered and transparency is not reduced.

COA-22-0215

Application of WV Demolition Inc. on behalf of George Sitler requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness in order to demolish a vacant contributing structure on the property located at **1404 Virginia Street, East.**

George Sitler and Jason Dickens with WV Demolition Inc. were asked to present the request for COA-22-0215 to the Commission. Billy Joe noted that the structure had suffered two fires in the last 2 ½ years. Lori referred to incident reports in the package.

George Sitler informed the commission that the first fire occurred while the building was owned by 501 King Street, LLC. An absentee landowner took it over after John King passed, dividing the structure into 8 rental units. The fire began in one of the basement units. The second fire occurred after the building was forced to be vacated due to the first fire by someone from the homeless population who entered the property to try and start a fire in a fireplace. The property has been neglected since the first fire.

Mr. Sitler and his wife purchased the residence at 1400 Virginia Street, East. Mr. Sitler wanted to know, before investing more in their residence at 1400 Virginia Street, East, would they continue to battle the endless stream of homeless drug addicts. Mr. Sitler has reboarded the house where it has been boarded by the city at least 3 times due to homeless individuals entering the structure. He also boarded the back entry to prevent them from entering from the back.

Mr. Sitler said he and his wife did not intend to replace that structure, but increase the lot size at 1400 Virginia Street, East. They do not have off street parking at 1400. The Sitlers would like to use the property at 1404 for off street parking. The Sitlers have the property at 1404 Virginia Street, East under contract with the current owner and they are scheduled to close two weeks from February 17, 2022. It's a contingent contract. The Sitlers will be spending a lot of money on their primary residence.

Mr. Sitler stated that the structure at 1404 Virginia Street East was intact. There was substantial damage to the rafters.

Ken Sullivan asked about the roof on the structure at 1404. Mr. Sitler said the roof had been replaced. It is an asphalt shingle roof.

The house at 1404 Virginia Street, East is at the entrance of the historic district. Mr. Sitler's plans are to leave the lot empty. Buildings in the historic district cannot be torn down for the purpose of increasing the size of an adjacent lot.

Ken Sullivan asked Lori, if the lot were vacant and the current owner or future owner wanted to build on the lot, what would apply. Lori said the section in the guidelines that covers new construction and additions requires that the new construction or addition would match the area in terms of the rhythm and scale of the lot of the neighborhood, subject to approval.

Mr. Sitler would fill the basement of the structure at 1404 Virginia Street, East with clean fill.

Billy Joe said \$500,000 rehab cost was expensive and asked Mr. Sitler if he had thought of going into partnership with someone to do this work. Mr. Sitler said he had no plans of doing any more than demolishing the structure.

Lori explained the 90-day demolition delay and that it was a window of opportunity to contact SHIPO about tax credits and development grants and explore those opportunities before demolishing the structure.

Mr. Sitler indicated he had contacted SHIPO. He indicated there was a long waiting list for tax credits and the tax credits were not beneficial to him.

MOTION AND VOTE

The motion was made by Ken Sullivan, seconded by Lisa Fischer-Casto and unanimously approved in favor of the Staff's recommendation to institute the 90-day stay.

Lisa Fischer-Casto asked Mr. Sitler if 90 days would change anything from his perspective. He replied that it would in that they have made an offer and received an acceptance and contract that has been extended through March 11. The closing is contingent on the issuance of a permit on March 4. The deal will fall through.

Billy Joe asked Mr. Sitler if someone would come forward in the next 90 days and offer to acquire it for rehabilitation, is that would be a possibility. Mr. Sitler said it is a possibility. The lots in this area are not intended to be double or triple size.

MOTION AND VOTE

The motion was made by Ken Sullivan, seconded by Lisa Fischer-Casto and unanimously approved to table the aforementioned motion for a 90-day stay and to meet again on March 3, 2021 to give an interested party time to pursue the purchase of this house.

Report on Minor Work Permits

104 Bradford Street: Chimney caps

1583 Quarrier Street: Install full glass storm door.

Project Updates

Ruffner RFQ

Luna Park Historic District signs installed

5-Corners Update

Enforcements:

108 Elizabeth Street – Compliance Agreement

1520 Kanawha Boulevard - Zoning Officer Site Visit

Approval of Minutes of the January 20, 2022 Meeting

On the motion of Lisa Fischer-Casto, seconded by Ken Sullivan, the Commission unanimously approved the minutes.

Adjournment