

Historic District Commission
December 15, 2022
Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Hauer called the meeting of the Historic District Commission to order at 6:01 p.m. on Thursday, December 15, 2022, at City Hall in the Council Chamber, 181 S. South Street of Gastonia, NC.

Present: Commissioners Camille Fox, Carol Hauer, Jeff Trepel, and Ed Starr

Absent: Commissioners Josh Hauser, James Henson, Chair Andi Eddlemon

Staff present: Charles Graham, Kim Wallis, Chrystal Howard, and Jalen Nash

ITEM 1a. Roll Call / Sound Check

Commissioner Hauer opened the meeting, conducted a roll call and declared a quorum.

ITEM 1b. Approval of October 27, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Starr made a motion to adopt the October 27, 2022 meeting minutes and Commissioner Fox seconded the motion. The motion passed (4-0).

Commissioner Hauer stated because of the quasi-judicial format of the hearings, persons wishing to speak and offer evidence are required by North Carolina law to be sworn in or affirmed. Ms. Howard administered the oath to Ms. Kim Wallis and others present who intended to speak.

Commissioner Hauer explained the procedure of the quasi-judicial meeting.

ITEM 2. Public Hearing – Certificate of Appropriateness (File # PLCA202200574)

- Blake Caulder
- 316 S. Chester Street
- Remove and replace two front doors

Commissioner Hauer opened the public hearing and recognized Ms. Kim Wallis, Senior Planner, for staff presentation. Ms. Wallis stated the Applicant's name, property location and the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) request to remove and replace two front doors and for the Commission to choose the replacement door style from the examples in the application. Ms. Wallis displayed the property/zoning map, read the property description, findings, and key elements and stated that there are other requests on the application that were approved by staff and at a subcommittee meeting. Ms. Wallis stated that the request to remove and replace the doors was denied by a subcommittee on November 7 due to the doors being a unique feature of the house and the district, regarding the evidence provided, and following the Design Principles and Standards with regards to doors. Ms. Wallis stated that the Design Standards indicated that replacement of entire windows or doors is to be considered only if repairs are not feasible and that peeling paint, high air infiltration, and sticking sash broken panes are all repairable conditions and don't necessitate replacements. Ms. Wallis stated that the denial by the subcommittee was appealed by the Applicant to the full Commission tonight. Ms. Wallis stated the Applicant is wanting to replace the two doors with two wood panel doors with window lites and requests that the Commission choose the replacement style from the examples provided in the application.

Ms. Wallis presented the Applicant's explanation for the reason for the request as follows: one of the doors had a piece added to the right side which makes the door not centered in the frame; the gap between the window on the left and the door frame is much smaller than the gap on the right side; it is very difficult to open the door with the handle as one can barely fit a hand around the handle as the handle is almost up against the doorframe- if one had a large hand one could get it stuck in between the handle and the frame when opening the door which is hazardous; the wood frame has been carved around the glass to install the handle which has made it very sharp and one could cut a hand on this when opening the door if not careful- this is a liability issue for the Applicant's business as this will be the client entrance. Ms. Wallis presented more photos showing what the Applicant stated. Ms. Wallis presented proposed replacement doors from which the Applicant would like the Commission to make a recommendation. Ms. Wallis stated the Applicant has more examples and read excerpts from the Design Standards.

Commissioner Trepel asked Ms. Wallis for the rationale of the subcommittee for rejecting the door removal and replacement. Ms. Wallis responded that the issues and photos presented into evidence at tonight's public hearing were not presented at the subcommittee meeting where the Applicant had only stated that there were layers of paint peeling off of the doors.

Commissioner Starr asked Ms. Wallis if the candlestick trim that exists on each side of the front doors will remain or will be removed. Ms. Wallis responded that this trim was approved to be

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removed during a previous HDC meeting. Commissioner Hauer mentioned that the Applicant will be saving the removed trim in case someone wants to use it.

Commissioner Hauer recognized Mr. Blake Caulder, 303 West Marion St., Shelby, NC. Mr. Caulder stated that when he initially sent the request to change the doors, he didn't have very close-up pictures of the existing doors and assumed that over time older doors have layers of paint built up. Brief discussion ensued over the issues with the doors that were presented earlier and whether they could be repaired. Mr. Caulder presented books showing several different styles of doors. Mr. Caulder stated that the HDC approved installing two half columns on the side of each of the doors and that the candlestick trim had been taken down. He stated he will not install the trim around the doors until he has approval to replace the doors in order for it to all be installed at one time. Mr. Caulder reiterated his request of the Commission to recommend a replacement door and discussed the timeframe on shipping different door options.

Commissioner Fox asked Mr. Caulder to present his favorite replacement door options. Commissioner Hauer asked Mr. Caulder if the second-floor door functioned correctly and if there would be any chance of switching it with the first-floor door. Mr. Caulder responded that the top door's handles are low and in order to be ADA compliant, code would require the door handles to be at a certain height.

Mr. Caulder presented examples to the Commission. Discussion ensued among the Commission and Mr. Caulder over the styles of the doors.

Mr. Caulder stated that in his initial application, the request was to paint the door white, however as the house was to be painted white, a subsequent application was approved by staff to paint the door black. In a third application, he requested to paint the house siding a taupe color, and this was approved at a subcommittee meeting. Mr. Caulder stated that since the house is going to be a taupe color and the trim painted white, he would request that the Commission consider approving the replacement doors be stained mahogany.

Discussion ensued among the Commissioners over the black iron railings on the first floor.

Commissioner Trepel asked Ms. Wallis if the current door is original and from when this structure was built in the 1890s. Ms. Wallis stated that she did not know.

Commissioner Hauer stated the possibility of saving the doors to be repurposed. Discussion ensued among the Commissioners.

Commissioner Trepel asked Mr. Caulder whether the replacement door that he presented as his favorite had a name or a code number. Mr. Caulder responded that this particular door is listed as Tucker door and trim 2134FRE(SG).

Commissioner Hauer asked the Commission if there are any other questions for Mr. Caulder. Commissioner Starr advised the Applicant to be careful with mahogany stains as they sometimes turn red. Mr. Caulder therefore requested a change of request from mahogany to a brown color.

Commissioner Trepel made a motion to approve the application to remove and replace the two front doors on the Condition that the replacement doors be Tucker door 22134FRE(SG) or a comparable door, and that the doors be stained in a walnut or similar finish, or black.

Commissioner Starr seconded the motion.

Commissioner Hauer asked if there is any discussion.

Commissioner Trepel discussed his reasoning behind the motion. Commissioner Starr stated that one reason he thinks these doors are not original to the house is the fact that the door has been added to one side, probably to adapt to that opening. Commissioner Starr stated he is in agreement with the original motion.

With no further discussion, Commissioner Hauer takes the vote. The motion is approved (4-0).

ITEM 3. Public Hearing – Certificate of Appropriateness (File # PLCA202200565)

- Richard Pollock
- 507 S. Chester Street
- Remove the tree near the carport

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Commissioner Hauer opened the public hearing and recognized Ms. Kim Wallis, Senior Planner, for staff presentation. Ms. Wallis stated the Applicant's name, property location, and the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) request to remove a tree near the carport. She displayed the property/zoning map, read the property description, and findings. Ms. Wallis read the Applicant's statements regarding the tree: it is scraping the top of the house and overhanging the carport structure; it is putting the house structure in peril if it were to fall; it has already suffered a broken limb that penetrated the roof in the past, leaking water internally and creating damage that needed to be repaired; and the property has several large canopy trees that will remain. Ms. Wallis stated that Robert Stroud, the Municipal Arborist assessed this tree on November 11th as follows: did not find the tree to be diseased or dead; found that the tree has a live crown and canopy with little or no evidence of tip dieback; did not see any evidence of disease or root rot near the trunk; found that ivy is covering the majority of the tree, and recommends removing it before any further assessment is made. Ms. Wallis presented a current photo of the property, an aerial photo of the tree, photos taken by staff and photos from the Applicant. Ms. Wallis read related excerpts from the Design Standards and the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). Ms. Wallis noted that the Applicant was not present.

Commissioner Fox asked Ms. Wallis about the different photos of the tree. Ms. Wallis explained why the tree looked different in the different sets of photos. Commissioner Fox stated that the tree does not look nearly close enough to damage the garage. Commissioner Trepel stated that he went by and looked at the tree, and it looks closer than it does in the photos. Discussion ensued among the Commissioners over the proximity of the tree.

Commissioner Fox stated that the limbs of the tree do not appear to be in the most recent photos.

Commissioner Trepel stated that the tree was completely covered by ivy.

Commissioner Fox stated that she does not feel like she can make a decision based on the evidence provided.

Discussion ensued among the Commissioners on the direction of the motion.

Commissioner Trepel moved that the Commission approve the application to remove the tree and that the Applicant is required to consult with Mr. Stroud for a replant of a decorative tree somewhere in the yard of this property.

Commissioner Fox seconded the motion.

With there being no further discussion, Commissioner Hauer called for the vote

The motion to approve the application with the condition of a replant is passed (4-0).

ITEM 4. Public Hearing – Certificate of Appropriateness (File # PLCA202200513)

- Adam Lynn
- 509 W. Eighth Avenue
- Construct new house addition

Commissioner Hauer opened the public hearing and recognized Ms. Kim Wallis, Senior Planner, for staff presentation. Ms. Wallis displayed the property/zoning map, read the property description, and findings. Ms. Wallis stated the following key elements of the addition: the addition will be 22' x 22' and 510 square feet; it will be a separate structure connected to the current home through a four-foot by an eight-foot, eight-inch hallway; the location is to the left of the house if facing from the street and the side yard; the siding will be vinyl to match the color and style of the siding on the current home, which is vinyl and light gray; the roof will be a gable roof to match the front gable and the existing house; the roof cover material will be Enviroshake composite roofing tiles to replicate natural weathered cedar roofing material and this style roof is proposed to be installed on the existing house as well; the window shutters will be 14.5" by 54.5" of copolymer louvered with woodgrain finish and router edge, painted red to match the existing house shutters; on the front elevation there will be one fiberglass paneled door with six lights similar in style to the one on the current house and painted red to match the existing door on the house; there will be two vinyl double hung windows, size and style to match the windows on the existing house (replacement windows with 8/8 sash); on the back elevation there will be one vinyl double hung window, the size, and style to match the house (replacement windows with 6/6 sash). Ms. Wallis stated the addition meets all zoning setbacks and addition requirements. Ms. Wallis presented pictures of the house from the front, the rear, and the left side elevation, and the site plan. Ms. Wallis stated that the addition will face Eighth Avenue. Ms.

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Wallis stated that the Applicant's backyard is in the 100-year floodplain. Ms. Wallis presented an aerial of Eighth Avenue indicating the parcel lines and dimensions of the property and the neighboring properties and indicated that most of the lots have a 52' wide lot sizes where the Applicant's property width is 104'. Ms. Wallis presented the following information regarding the addition: the floor plan; the roof plan; the rear elevation; the side elevation; the front elevation; the proposed windows; the proposed door; the cedar composite Enviroshake roof material; and the proposed louvered shutters. Ms. Wallis read related excerpts from the Design Principles and Standards and the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). Ms. Wallis stated that the Applicant is present.

Commissioner Trepel stated that the Applicant proposes to use vinyl siding, which the Design Standards disallow. Commissioner Trepel asked Ms. Wallis if there was precedent to approve vinyl siding when the existing structure, which the new addition will become part of, already has vinyl siding. Ms. Wallis responded that precedent has been found in a COA from 2008 to this effect.

Discussion ensued over the site plan.

Commissioner Fox stated her concerns over having both the existing house and the addition have a front door, ultimately having two front doors on the front elevation.

Commissioner Hauer recognized Adam Lynn, 509 W Eighth Avenue, Gastonia, NC 28052. Mr. Lynn stated that the addition is intended to be an in-law suit. He stated his parents were planning to build their final retirement home in Georgia, but they wanted a way to be able to visit the Applicant and stay regularly. Mr. Lynn stated the front door on the addition was to enable his parents to have their own space that will be connected to the Applicant's house through the hallway. He stated they had planned to just put the stone step pathway from the addition to the existing house, but that he was open to building a sidewalk between the doors if that's necessary.

Commissioner Hauer stated that steps to the entrance were not an issue but was wondering about an alternative idea for the plan to remove the proposed door on the front of the addition and install it on the side elevation. She stated the current plan looks like two houses with a hall in the middle.

Commissioner Trepel asked the Applicant if it was possible to move the proposed front door to the side elevation, which is devoid of windows. Mr. Lynn responded in the affirmative.

Commissioner Hauer recommended that the Applicant add another set of windows where the current proposed front door is located and move the entrance to the side elevation.

Commissioner Trepel asked Mr. Lynn whether there was a cherry tree on the left side of the house and asked what would happen to it. Mr. Lynn responded that there was and that it would need to be removed. Commissioner Trepel asked Mr. Lynn if he would be open to replanting another tree somewhere else in the yard and Mr. Lynn responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Lynn stated we wanted to build the addition farther back to line up with the back of the house however because it was in the 100-year floodplain, the cost to make that happen was going to just put it out of range.

Commissioner Hauer stated that the Commission might consider the proposed vinyl siding for the addition as it would give a consistent look with the existing house.

Commissioner Starr asked the Applicant if he could tell the Commission more about the roof material as it is not a conventional shingle. Mr. Lynn responded that it does look like a conventional shingle however it is made out of stone which makes it last a whole lot longer than shingles. Mr. Lynn stated that he chose it for its longevity and hoped it would be acceptable to the Commission since it does look like traditional shingles.

Commissioner Fox asked the Applicant if he will be utilizing the new material on only the new addition or utilizing it also on the entire house. Mr. Lynn responded that the plan was to also re-roof the existing house with the proposed material, if it is approved by the Commission.

Commissioner Hauer asked the board if they have any specific suggestions to the Applicant about moving the door to the side or suggestions on the front of the addition. Discussion ensued among the Commission over the possibility of moving the new addition front door to the side and adding window(s) to the front elevation.

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Commissioner Trepel made a motion to approve the application on the conditions that 1) the new door currently shown to be in the front of the house be moved to the side elevation, 2) that the window shown currently on the front of the new addition be centered, and 3) given that the cherry tree on the side of the house will be removed, the Applicant plant a new equivalently sized tree in an appropriate place in the yard and consult with Robert Stroud about appropriate or optimal tree types.

Commissioner Starr seconded the motion.

With there being no further discussion, Commissioner Hauer called for the vote. The motion to approve the Application with Conditions is passed (4-0).

ITEM 5. Public Hearing – Certificate of Appropriateness (File # PLCA202200522)

- Jose Luna/Juan Giraldo
- 520 W Fifth Avenue
- Demolish most of damaged house and construct a new structure using the existing brick foundation.

Commissioner Hauer opened the public hearing and recognized Ms. Kim Wallis, Senior Planner, for staff presentation. Ms. Wallis stated the Applicant's name, property location, and the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) request to demolish most of the damaged house and construct a new structure using the existing brick foundation. She displayed the property/zoning map, read the property description, and findings. Ms. Wallis presented key elements of the request as follows: the City of Gastonia code enforcement administrators state that due to extensive damage to the property the City would consider the repairs to be over 50% of the tax value and would recommend demolition per the Applicant's proposal: proposed structure to be 35'8" wide x 56' long; new design is similar in design to existing house design; foundation will be utilizing existing brick foundation, painted white (flat exterior); exterior siding to be Arctic White HardiPlank Lap Siding with Cedarmill wood grain finish, 6" exposure; roof to be pewter gray algae resistant laminated high definition asphalt shingles; gutters to be white aluminum k- style gutters; foundation planting/shrubbery around all elevations as indicated in site plan; new trees as indicated in site plan; front elevation with front gable closed in porch/sunroom with short wall sided with 6" Arctic White Cedarmill HardiPlank lap siding; upper section porch to be either of glass or screened in (TBD by Commission), similar in design as existing house; upper columns to be wood, same width and design as existing house, painted white; base columns to be brick, same width and design as existing house, painted white; concrete front steps to be flanked by brick half walls, painted white; front door to be fiberglass classic craftsman style stained medium oak; right side elevation to have: eight (8) black painted clad wood double hung windows w/ natural interior & screen with 6/1 sash; four (4) outdoor black wall sconce light fixture, porch lantern for exterior with iron frame and clear glass shade, on either side of double windows; left side elevation to have four (4) black painted clad wood double hung windows w/ natural interior & screen with 6/1 sash, four (4) outdoor black wall sconce light fixture, porch lantern for exterior with iron frame and clear glass shade, on either side of double windows; rear elevation to have rear door to be fiberglass classic craftsman style stained medium oak, rear steps to be concrete and brick, painted white, three (3) black painted clad wood double hung windows w/ natural interior & screen with 6/1 sash, two (2) outdoor black wall sconce light fixture, porch lantern for exterior with iron frame and clear glass shade, on either side of windows. Ms. Wallis presented photographs of the house as it is currently, after being demolished by the tree. Ms. Wallis read related excerpts from the Design Standards and Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). Ms. Wallis stated the Applicant is present.

Commissioner Hauer stated she has a question about the black windows. Commissioner Hauer stated that the Commission is seeing more interest in them and unfortunately a house on W Fifth Avenue has black/charcoal window trim/grilles and that they are not in compliance with our COA. She stated she did not see that anywhere else in our neighborhoods and asked Ms. Wallis if there were other historic districts that allow black windows or does the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) have any opinion on those.

Ms. Wallis responded that she did reach out to SHPO and had contacted the NC Preservation list serve and presented the few responses she received. Ms. Wallis read the response from Greensboro: "some old-school painters say that the window sash was often stained or dyed a dark color to avoid paint buildup in windows that are hard to open". Ms. Wallis read the response from Winston Salem: "black sashes and trim can be historic and they believe Lincoln's cottage at the old soldier's home in DC has black muntins so that they visually recede". Ms. Wallis read the response from Historic England: "during the early 18th century, white or stone colored, which is white broken with yellow okra and a little black oil paint appeared to have been a popular finish for sash windows". Ms. Wallis stated that she will share the response from SHPO when she hears back from them.

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Commissioner Hauer stated that she is concerned about the precedent the Commission would be setting if they approved black windows and is not sure that they are appropriate for the historic district neighborhoods. Discussion ensued over the black windows.

Commissioner Fox stated she is concerned with the proposed closed-in porch and if that was something that was added to the original house. She asked if closed-in porches were appropriate for the York-Chester Historic District.

Discussion ensued among the Commissioners over the closed-in porch and the details of the proposal.

Commissioner Hauer recognized Jose Luna, 9308 Camberwell Rd, Mint Hill, NC 28207.

Commissioner Hauer asked the Applicant, Mr. Luna, to tell them more about the proposed ideas.

Mr. Luna stated that the proposed plan is to stay with the existing footprint and propose a new interior layout. He stated that the plan is for a simpler roof design instead of having the many roof lines of the original house which would elevate the cost of the new construction. Mr. Luna stated the finishes are very similar to the original house and that they are proposing changing the siding for a more traditional Hardie board lap siding comparable to some other properties around this neighborhood. Mr. Luna stated the foundation will be utilizing the existing foundation and keeping the same white color as the existing house. Mr. Luna stated he is amenable to removing the screened-in porch if necessary.

Commissioner Hauer asked if there are windows on the front elevation behind the screened-in porch.

Mr. Luna stated that he is proposing the same window layout that was on the house before the tree fell on the structure.

Commissioner Trepel asked Mr. Luna the following questions to which he responded in the affirmative: if he is the designer and if Mr. Giraldo is his client; if Mr. Giraldo and his family are going to live in the house; if Mr. Giraldo bought the property from the people who owned the destroyed house; if he thinks that Mr. Giraldo would be open to having an open porch. Mr. Luna stated they had some other plans before to extend a little bit of heated space and to make the porch heated, but it was not in the budget.

Commissioner Hauer stated that if Mr. Luna opens up the porch the Commissioners would need to see the proposed window layout. Commissioner Hauer asked Mr. Luna if he was planning to have windows. Mr. Luna responded he will modify the plans to have windows.

Commissioner Trepel asked Mr. Luna if the property has a driveway. Mr. Luna responded that there was a driveway on the left side of the house.

Commissioner Trepel asked Mr. Luna if the garage is a separate structure. Mr. Luna responded that it is a detached garage. Commissioner Trepel asked Mr. Luna if he would keep the garage. Mr. Luna responded that this is a discussion he needs to have with the property owner because the detached garage may be encroaching on the setback.

Commissioner Fox asked Mr. Luna if he would consider changing the proposed half wall. Mr. Luna responded that he was open changing it and proposing a different material, such as an open railing.

Discussion ensued among the Commissioners regarding the proposed half wall.

Commissioner Trepel asked Mr. Luna if he was going to keep the existing brick foundation white. Mr. Luna responded in the affirmative. Ms. Wallis stated the current foundation is white.

Discussion ensued over the possibility of changing the color of the brick foundation.

Discussion continued over the color palette of the proposed new home.

Commissioner Trepel asked Mr. Graham if the Applicant can begin demolition even if the application is denied. Mr. Graham responded in the affirmative.

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Commissioner Trepel moved to deny the application and request that the Applicant return with a new design for an open porch, consider other color options for the foundation, and submit the design for the windows behind the porch.

Commissioner Fox seconded the motion. With there being no further discussion, Commissioner Hauer called for the vote. The motion is passed (4-0).

ITEM 6. Other Business

Subcommittee Meeting, if needed: Ms. Wallis stated there is no subcommittee needed.

Approve the 2023 Meeting Schedule:

Commissioner Hauer motioned to accept the 2023 Historic District Commission Public Hearing Schedule. Commissioner Trepel seconded the motion. The motion to accept the 2023 Historic District Commission Public Hearing Schedule is approved (4-0).

Ms. Wallis stated that from now and going forward, the Chair of the HDC will need to sign Certificate of Appropriateness (COAs), as learned through the School of Government Preservation training

ITEM 7. Adjournment

There being no other business, Commissioner Hauer adjourned the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Jalen Nash, Planning Technician

Carol Hauer, Vice-Chair