

MADISON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Regular Meeting – March 12, 2019

Attending: Madison Historic Preservation (“HPC”) members Co-Chairs Janet Foster and Mary Ellen Lenahan; Members Karen Jeisi, Chris Kellogg, David Luber, Jill Rhodes, John Solu and Carmine Toto; Commission Attorney Vincent Loughlin and Recording Secretary Laurie Hagerich. Absent: Member John Forte, Council Liaison Maureen Byrne.

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Foster at 7 pm. Ms. Lenahan announced the meeting was called in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. A motion was made, seconded and carried to go into Executive Session, at which time Commission Members and Attorney Loughlin went into Executive Session. At this time Attorney Loughlin explained the procedures and protocol to take place at the public meeting and the Executive Session was adjourned.

The meeting was continued at the Madison Presbyterian Church sanctuary to accommodate the large number of the public in attendance. Ms. Lenahan called the meeting to order as an open public meeting at 7:44 p.m.

The January 8, 2019 minutes were considered and, by unanimous consent, approved as written.

New Business:

Application for redevelopment of Madison Theater property at 14 Lincoln Place:

Mr. Loughlin summarized the Historic Preservation Ordinance, which requires a Certificate of Approval from HPC for demolition in an historic district and outlined protocols and time limits for all witnesses and public speakers. He noted that, per the Ordinance, after all testimony and discussion, HPC will then vote on demolition, and set conditions for the new building.

Mr. Peter Wolfson of Day Pitney, attorneys for property owner Saxum Real Estate, began by presenting background information, including that the property is a “contributing” structure in the Madison Civic and Commercial Historic District historical development. Applicant’s Plans

call for a new building 4 stories high, containing 24 living units, including 4 affordable housing units, as well as 2 ground floor retail spaces and a ground-floor space intended as a 91-seat replacement movie theater. He noted that as a result of two prior meetings with the HPC, efforts were made to make the new building harmonious with existing buildings in the commercial district.

The following were introduced into the record and marked as exhibits:

- Ex. A 2. Report of Applicant's Structural Engineer, Wayne Hostetler, of Thornton Tomasetti;
- Ex. B 2. Report of HPC's Structural Engineer, John McManus of McManus Design Group;
- Ex. A 1. Report of Applicant's Preservation Consultant, Robert Kornfeld of Thornton Tomasetti;
- Ex. A 3. Applicant's earlier structural report- the Persimmon Report
- Ex B 1. Report of HPC's Preservation Consultant, John Hatch of Clarke Caton Hintz.
- Ex. A 4. Powerpoint from Applicant's structural engineer, Mr. Hosteler;
- Ex. A 5. Applicant's model of proposed building
- Ex. A 6. Powerpoint of Applicant's architect, Jeff Gertler, of Gertler & Wentz Architects.

Mr. Loughlin swore in each witness before their testimony.

Mr. Anthony Rinaldi, principal of Saxum Real Estate, was sworn in as a witness and gave background information on his firm's ownership of the property and reasons they feel demolition and re-development is the best path forward. The HPC and the public were given an opportunity for questions after his presentation.

Next, Mr. Wayne Hostetler of, Applicant's Structural Engineer, testified about his report, inspection of the property and conclusion that the building is structurally compromised. Photos of various areas showing structural damage and deterioration were shown. Mr. Hostetler contended that the cost to rehabilitate the structure or adapt it to another use is not financially viable. There was opportunity for questions by HPC members, as well as by Mr. Hatch and the public.

Mr. John McManus, HPC's Structural Engineer, had questions for Mr. Hostetler and then proceeded to testify about his report and visual inspection of the property. His conclusion was that the building has been neglected and undergone deterioration over decades, resulting in various structural issues that would be very costly to correct.

Next, Mr. Jeff Gertler, Project Architect, gave a power-point presentation showing the newest design plans for the replacement building, taking into account comments and recommendations made by HPC in two previous informal meetings, in December 2017 and February 2018. Materials will include a reddish-tone brick on the 3 lower floors and buff colored brick on the top floor, matching the Post Office and Madison train station. Care was taken with the roof, cornices, windows, doors and rhythm of façade openings to be compatible with neighboring buildings.

Design modifications to the interior were also made, including space for a small theater on the first floor. Mr. Gertler feels the tenants in the upper floors will add energy, vitality and increased business for the merchants in the commercial district without adding to the carbon footprint.

HPC members and Mr. Hatch asked Mr. Gertler several questions and raised numerous concerns, including among them concerns that:

- The overall façade of the building looks like a factory or warehouse, which is not in keeping with Madison's non-industrial character;
- How does the scale and square footage of the building compare to other buildings in the Historic District;
- "Faux cornice" similar to those on other Madison buildings is not favored in historic building;
- Concern about visual impression of train passengers coming from the railroad station "tunnel" and the alignment of the center of the new building to correspond with the "tunnel".
- Suggestion that the 2 doors to the retail spaces be placed at the center of the front façade;
- The visual impact of the 4th floor of the building is a concern;
- Can the visual scale of the building be reduced;
- Difficulty in maintaining privacy with the large windows on the upper floors;

- Having entrance to movie theater on the Post Office side was favored and may provide opportunity to create a civic space in this area

At 11 pm it was agreed that the meeting would be continued on the next regular HPC meeting date, which is April 9, 2019, at 7:30 pm. There will be opportunity for further questions and public comments following continued testimony from Mr. Gertler. An extension of the 45-day time period for action on the application was agreed to between Mr. Loughlin and Mr. Wolfson.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 pm.

Laurie Hagerich, Recording Secretary