

**BIRMINGHAM HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MAY 18, 2015**

Municipal Building Commission Room
151 Martin, Birmingham, Michigan

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Historic District Commission (“HDC”) held Wednesday, May 18, 2016. Chairman John Henke called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

Present: Chairman John Henke; Commission Members Mark Coir, Keith Deyer, Natalia Dukas (arrived at 7:05 p.m.), Thomas Trapnell, Vice-Chairperson Shelli Weisberg (left at 7:55 p.m.), Michael Willoughby

Absent: Student Representative Loreal Salter-Dodson

Administration: Matthew Baka, Sr. Planner
Carlos Jorge, Building Facilities
Leslie Pielack, Birmingham Museum Director
Carole Salutes, Recording Secretary

05-20-16

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES
HDC Minutes of April 20, 2016**

Motion by Ms. Weisberg

Seconded by Mr. Willoughby to approve the HDC Minutes of April 20, 2016 as presented.

Motion carried, 5-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Weisberg, Willoughby, Coir, Deyer, Henke Trapnell

Nays: None

Absent: Dukas

Chairman Henke cautioned the petitioners that the board is one member short this evening and they would need four affirmative votes to be approved. Therefore he offered the option to postpone to the next meeting without penalty in the hope all seven members would be present. The petitioners elected to proceed.

05-21-16

HISTORIC COURTESY REVIEW

**556 W. Maple Rd.
Allen House, Birmingham Historical Park
Mill Pond Historic District**

Zoning: PP Public Property

Proposal: Mr. Baka reported that the applicant proposes to replace the existing cedar shake siding on the building with James Hardie cedar-like shingles. The Historical Park and Museum is a City owned property and therefore is not required to obtain City approvals for exterior changes. However, as the property is designated historic, the Museum is appearing before the Historic District Commission ("HDC") for a courtesy review to seek input and guidance from the commission on the design of the installation. The Birmingham Museum Director, Leslie Pielack, has provided a report outlining the motivation and analysis involved in the consideration of this proposal. The report contains details on the history of the building, as well as details on the current condition of the siding. In addition, photos of the building from several eras and correspondence with the product supplier have been included with the report.

Mr. Baka said according to his research he found that James Hardie materials have been used on historic buildings, but not as often on the front. For this building it depends on how the committee feels about the look of the material as to whether it will be acceptable. It will be a lot more durable than cedar because it is pre-painted and can withstand freeze or thaw. The document on the use of alternative materials should go to the City Commission because apparently they are planning to do a budget review on it.

Design: The proposed material would be pre-painted and installed to replicate the existing appearance of the building as closely as possible.

Shawn with James Hardie passed around samples of the cedar shake and trim board. Chairman Henke did not think it is appropriate for this house. Shawn recommended using the Hardie trim on the corners as opposed to mitering them. Mitering is more labor intensive. Hardie comes with a 30 year warranty on the material. The paint has a 15 year warranty.

Chairman Henke stated that cedar siding is rated for 30 to 40 years as well, properly maintained. He questioned why the switch in materials. This board is under the Secretary of the Interior Standards and must ensure that applicants meet those standards. Now the Birmingham Historical Museum is asking to deviate from those standards.

Ms. Pielack advised the cedar siding on the building is past its life span. They have been repairing and repainting it pretty much every three years. This is beginning to be an extremely expensive process. They looked at this material

because it is used in some historic settings and it is similar to the Museum's existing profile.

The chairman inquired if due diligence was done to put cedar back on; and secondly if it was done, what is the cost comparison. Mr. Jorge said that preparing and painting the cedar is expensive and no matter how well it is prepared the paint is not holding. Hardie will cost probably \$80 thousand while cedar came to \$40 to \$50 thousand. They would be able to recover the investment in Hardie within five or six years. Ms. Pielack said the \$40 to \$50 thousand cost of the cedar is the cost of the material and not the preparation and painting. Mr. Jorge indicated the last time they painted it cost \$50 thousand.

Ms. Weisberg thought it would be difficult for this board to justify approving non-cedar on a historic building. Shawn said Hardie would offer a very strong aesthetic comparable. Chairman Henke advised the Cedar Shake and Shingle Association is a very good source that he recommended tapping. They can offer information on how to make sure that the prep and the paint is properly applied. The necessity to paint every three to five years is a paint product issue, not a material issue.

Discussion turned to the fact that the estimate to replace with cedar was for selective repair and replacement of existing cedar then and repainting the entire building. It was noted this committee should not let economics drive their decision.

Mr. Willoughby said there are ways to prepare the cedar so the paint will adhere longer. He agreed this is the historic building in Birmingham and to unwind that seems a little crazy to him. Chairman Henke noted that cedar is a maintenance issue on paint; but if it is properly applied and maintained, the longevity and life span of cedar versus Hardie isn't that different. With regard to trim, Mr. Willoughby said you can distinguish the difference between something that is historic or something that is new based on the thickness of the material. It is those little subtle things that make it historic. Chairman Henke said Hardie can mill and clean the product to make sure it is exact. Therefore he doesn't have as much of an issue with trim. Committee members agreed the corners have to be mitered.

Ms. Pielack summed up the committee's remarks as being that they would recommend against using the Hardie product and instead repairing and replacing what needs replacing and repainting and continuing their maintenance cycle the best they can. Maybe the wood trim would not need to be replaced with wood trim. Ms. Weisberg's concern was that the committee doesn't do something they would not do on an existing residence.

Mr. Willoughby noted that to his eye the Hardie Plank straight cut cedar is so precisely machine made that there is a crisp line row after row. There is a human

element to the individual cedar shakes nailed to the wall, which is what the Allen House currently has, and the little variation is what he doesn't want to lose. That is why he is a proponent of replacing cedar with cedar on the shakes, but he is willing to bend a little bit on the straight board trim.

Mr. Deyer said the Museum is the premier house based on its location, and it seems if anyone should go the extra mile and try to make it as authentic as possible it would be the Museum. Ms. Pielack replied they wanted to investigate the practical implications of what they are facing before taking any forward steps. She pointed out the residence has been rehabilitated and it has a completely different use now. It no longer looks like it did in 1928. So she thinks the Museum is a special case because yes, it is a historic district but it is not a historic residence anymore.

Ms. Dukas said they are talking about something that can be touched and felt. Seen close up the difference in material can be understood. In closing Ms. Pielack thanked the committee for their time.

05-22-16

FINAL HISTORIC SIGN/DESIGN REVIEW
100 Townsend St.
Corner Bar

Zoning: B-4 Business Residential

Proposal: The applicant is seeking approval to renovate the north and east exterior of the 100 Townsend St. building. The applicant has indicated that the former Corner Bar establishment will be remodeled into a private dining and meeting venue.

Façade work: The applicant proposes to remove the revolving door and adjoining staircase located at the corner of Pierce St. and Merrill St. and replace it with three (3) windows; add three (3) new windows above the existing metal entrance canopy; build out the entrance with 30 sq. ft. of matching limestone to align with existing curved building corner frontage; replace wood framed windows on north elevation adjacent to entrance with two (2) windows; replace existing wood doors at north elevation with two (2) new brass doors; insert two (2) topiary plants on both sides of brass entry door; build a limestone border around the new brass entry door; replace the turquoise fabric awning above the north elevation door with a 6 in. tall metal canopy; paint both the existing and proposed metal canopies with Benjamin Moore "Gray" 2121-10; install 8 in. applied brushed stainless steel letters along the canopies at the corner entrance; and replace fabric on all existing awnings with Sunbrella Charcoal Tweed.

The applicant has not provided the materials or exact color of the proposed windows. The submitted plans also do not indicate the length, width, or mounting height of proposed metal awning. The applicant must provide this information.

Glazing Requirement: The Downtown Overlay standards, per Article 3, Section 3.04, (E.4) of the Zoning Ordinance, require that all buildings must have a minimum of 70% glazing on the first floor between 1 and 8 ft. above grade and a maximum of 35% glazing on all upper floors. The applicant plans to replace the existing revolving door. The submitted plans do not indicate the required percentage of glazing for the first floor. However, the existing glazing has been grandfathered in and will not be reduced with the alterations as proposed in the submitted plans, and therefore will be permitted.

Signage: The applicant is proposing an 8 in. tall, 19 ft. 6 in. long, brushed stainless steel name letter sign along the existing canopy. The sign will display "THE TOWNSEND HOTEL" to match the north main entrance sign. The proposed sign will be 13 sq. ft. in area in accordance with Article 1, Section 1.05, Table B of the Sign Ordinance.

Mr. Victor Saroki, Architect, was present with Mr. Steven Kalczynski, General Manager of the Townsend Hotel. Mr. Saroki said his firm has enjoyed their long history with the Townsend Hotel over the years. The time has come for the Corner Bar to move on and be converted to private seating for small functions. It is a small independent space that does not have interior access through the hotel. Part of the goal of using the space is to make it multi-functional. The curb cut-out comes in front of the proposed new entry and can support the valet operation there. The entry is meant to be modest but somewhat classic and elegant. The space will be similar in finishes to the Rugby Grill and have a capacity of about 100 people. The structural canopies will be changed from turquoise to a warm grey. He passed around the materials and colors.

**Motion by Mr. Willoughby
Seconded by Mr. Coir to approve the Final Historic Sign/Design Review for
100 Townsend St., Corner Bar, as submitted.**

There were no comments from the public on the motion at 7:58 p.m.

Motion carried, 6-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Willoughby, Coir, Deyer, Dukas, Henke, Trapnell

Nays: None

Absent: Weisberg

05-23-16

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. Staff Reports

- Administrative Approvals
 - 230 Merrill, Sweet Thing - One wall sign and one ground sign.
- Violation Notices (none)
- Demolition Applications
 - 1375 Webster
 - 908 Davis
 - 1567 Cole

B. Communications

- Commissioners' Comments (none)

05-24-16

ADJOURNMENT

No further business being evident, the commissioners motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8 p.m.

Matthew Baka
Sr. Planner