

**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF JULY 1, 2015**  
Municipal Building Commission Room  
151 Martin, Birmingham, Michigan

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Minutes of the regular meeting of the Historic District Commission (“HDC”) held Wednesday, July 1, 2015. Chairman John Henke called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

**Present:** Chairman John Henke; Commission Members Keith Deyer, Natalia Dukas, Thomas Trapnell, Vice Chairperson Shelli Weisberg, Michael Willoughby;

**Absent:** Commission Member Mark Coir; Student Representatives Zoe Bowers, Patrick Rogers

**Administration:** Matthew Baka, Sr. Planner  
Carole Salutes, Recording Secretary

**07-28-15**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES  
HDC Minutes of June 17, 2015**

**Motion by Mr. Willoughby**

**Seconded by Mr. Deyer to approve the HDC Minutes of June 17, 2015 as revised.**

Mr. Deyer:

Page 4 - Place the fourth full paragraph right before Mr. Andrew Wachler's comments on page 3.

Chairman Henke:

Page 3 - Correct the spelling of Ms. Lauri Carbel's name and expand on her comments.

**Motion carried, 5-0.**

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Willoughby, Deyer, Dukas, Henke, Trapnell

Nays: None

Absent: Coir, Weisberg

As four affirmative votes are needed to pass a motion, Chairman Henke offered a one-time option to the petitioner to adjourn to the next meeting in the expectation

there would be seven commission members present. Mr. Biddison opted to go forward this evening.

**07-29-15**

**HISTORIC DESIGN REVIEW  
159 Pierce  
St. Clair Edison Building  
CBD Historic District**

Zoning: B-4 Business Residential

Background: The building is a two-story, multi-tenant contributing historic resource in the CBD Historic District. The building was designed by Birmingham Architect John H. Buckberrough in the Federal style in 1909. The construction was performed by Birmingham contractor, G. Wm Cary.

Originally, the building was the Edison Electric Company substation. The block of buildings was built with Colonial style stores based on Historic Williamsburg. The second story was added in 1950 when the building was cut in half laterally and raised to remove a large generator from the basement. At that time 6 ½ ft. were added to the height of the building.

Proposal: Mr. Baka provided details. The applicant proposes to remove the brick exterior of the building and clad it with a new limestone façade, add a new painted wood balcony with a powder coated steel railing and glass doors with wood frames to match the existing windows on the south side of the second floor front façade. The applicant also proposes to add four gas light fixtures; install a new navy Sunbrella canopy to replace the existing black canopy and replace all existing railings with new powder coated steel railings. Finally, the applicant is proposing to clean and paint the remaining elements of the exterior. The columns, window and door frames and new wood balcony are proposed to be painted SW 7021 "simple white". The existing main entrance door is proposed to be painted BM 2064-10 "bold blue." The existing dormers are proposed to be painted SW7643 "pussy willow".

**While the proposal is attractive, the Planning Division is of the opinion that removing the brick façade would clearly destroy historic materials as the current façade was in place at the time the building was designated. Standard number 9 of the U. S. Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation, states "New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property." Removing the existing brick would destroy the historic Federal style and the historic Williamsburg character of the building.**

Mr. Kevin Biddison, Architect for the petitioner, indicated that he understands the historic issues with the building. The Simon brothers, owners of the building, purchased it a number of years ago and have upgraded the inside. The brick on the outside is very rough looking in its appearance and they propose to remove that skin and add a balcony. Aside from that, everything will remain exactly as it is. New gas lights will replace the old electric lights. The railing will be updated. The overall intent is to alter the materials but not to change the general character of the building. It will be in keeping with the other structures along Pierce and the general Downtown area.

In response to Mr. Deyer, Mr. Biddison said the petitioners didn't propose to replace the brick because they like the look of the limestone. In their minds it is a little more of an upgrade material. Mr. Deyer didn't think the commission could approve the building without it being de-certified.

Mr. Willoughby was surprised the building was designated historic in the 1970s. He doesn't see anything historic about it, since they totally destroyed the original Edison building and then created this pseudo Williamsburg colonial. He feels the petitioners' primary recourse would be to challenge that and give themselves the freedom to do what they want to do. Chairman Henke added this commission's hands are tied now because of the designation. He noted the building owners have a history of asking for forgiveness rather than permission and it does not sit well with him when they come back and ask for another change to their building. He could not find an opinion letter that suggests the commission can approve a change in the material that completely clads the building.

Ms. Dukas agreed that re-cladding the building in limestone makes it look entirely different. Mr. Willoughby stated that to keep the historic designation they would be limited to brick and keeping the windows at the top with no balcony.

**Motion by Mr. Deyer  
Seconded by Ms. Dukas to postpone the Historic Design Review for 159  
Pierce, St. Clair Edison Building to August 5, 2015.**

**Motion carried, 5-0.**

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Deyer, Dukas, Henke, Trapnell, Willoughby

Nays: None

Absent: Coir, Weisberg

**07-30-15**

**PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSION  
HISTORIC DESIGN REVIEW  
189 W. Merrill**

**R + D Kitchen  
Shain Park Historic District**

Zoning: B-4 Business Residential

Proposal: Mr. Baka advised that the applicant is seeking approval to renovate the exterior of the one-story multi-tenant building. The property is a non-contributing resource in the Shain Park Historic District. The applicant proposes to renovate the building into a one-story bistro; build out to lot lines along the Merrill and Henrietta frontages, construct projecting overhangs on both frontages with a patio along Henrietta and outdoor seating with a railing on Merrill.

The facade of the building is proposed to be Lauder Limestone; overhangs to have fascias with Douglas fir tongue and groove soffits. Windows and doors will have walnut frames and Starphire glass, sliding utilities door to be tongue and groove pucte with blackened steel diamond plate to 4 ft. above floor level and the window system will be steel in Hope's painted Ralph Lauren TH28 Surrey. Exterior patio floor on Henrietta to be flamed black granite. There will be new signage at the underside of the Merrill canopy at the main entry. Rooftop mechanical equipment will be screened with an extruded aluminum louver system painted Ralph Lauren TH28 Surrey.

Glazing Requirement: The Downtown Overlay standards 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 plans submitted do not indicate the percentage of glazing per the Ordinance requirement.

***The 70% glazing requirement must be provided or obtain a variance from the Board of Zoning Appeals ("BZA").***

Lighting: The applicant is proposing to install recessed lighting in the underside of the canopy, two (2) black alpine wall lights on each side of the service door and one (1) Mercer wall light in antique brass located in the patio area on the Henrietta side of the building. **The applicant must provide revised plans indicating the exact location of the recessed lights.**

Signage: The applicant is proposing a halo lit projecting sign mounted to the underside of the canopy. While the quality and appearance of the sign appear to be acceptable, the dimensions and placement of the sign violate several requirements of the Birmingham Sign Ordinance.

***The applicant must revise the sign proposal to comply with the Sign Ordinance or obtain the necessary variances from the BZA.***

Outdoor Dining: The applicant is proposing to provide two areas for outdoor dining. On the Merrill elevation the applicant is proposing to provide five (5) four (4) top tables for a total of twenty (20) seats in the public right-of-way. Rails surrounding the patio will be naval brass with fabric inset panels, Sunbrella Apline Green 5436. Umbrellas will be attached to the railing with Sunbrella Canvas Sunflower 5457-0000 canopies.

On the Henrietta elevation the outdoor patio is proposed to be recessed in the façade of the building on private property. The patio proposes to have three (3) four (4) top tables and three (3) booths. Umbrellas will be Centra 32 by Birdair with Preconstraint Buttercup 502-2166. The patio is proposed to be enclosed with two long black zinc planter boxes planted with Alpine Current.

Mr. Matias Lantz, Architect with Hillstone Restaurant Group, said they currently own about fifty restaurants nationwide. They aim for timeless design, modern classic quality, good proportions, transparency, and quality materials that stand the test of time. He showed a PowerPoint depicting some exterior photos of their other locations, along with the proposed floor plan and improvements to the interior and facade of the existing building. They propose to add 976 sq. ft. to the building, a 27% addition.

In response to Mr. Deyer, Mr. Lantz said a two-story concept would not be financially feasible for them. Mr. Baka noted the projecting sign is too large. A smaller sign or a facade mounted sign might comply more easily with the Ordinance.

Mr. Lantz spoke to the 70% glazing requirement. On the Merrill side they have 68%. They tried to maximize the glazing there. They looked at meeting the 70%, which means that on the kitchen side, since the kitchen is up against the street, the backside of the kitchen equipment would be visible. They didn't think that would be very attractive. Chairman Henke advised him to find another way. Mr. Baka said window variances is something the BZA has been giving out lately because the way the Ordinance is structured makes it very difficult to meet the requirement. On the Henrietta side, the applicant has a unique situation because there is no other place to put the trash and it is impossible to meet the Ordinance requirement. Mr. Lantz noted that right now they are at 39 to 40% because of the trash room. Mr. Baka said the way to approach the Henrietta side is to show they are meeting the intent of the Ordinance on three sides but on Henrietta there are not a lot of options because of the trash area.

It was discussed that exhaust fumes from the restaurant may affect residents of the Townsend Hotel. Chairman Henke predicted if they don't work it out either the Planning Board or this commission or both will get a letter.

Mr. Baka noted that the BZA prefers that applicants appear before this board and the Planning Board first so they can get the recommendations and find out if these boards are supportive of the proposal.

Mr. Lantz agreed to provide a revised signage proposal along with a glazing percentage. Chairman Henke proposed that they return to the HDC on August 5th, then go to the Planning Board on August 12th, and the BZA on September 8th.

Mr. Deyer liked the idea that a menu board is shown at the left of the entrance along Merrill. Other commission members approved as well.

**07-31-15**

## **MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

### **A. Staff Reports**

-- Administrative Approvals (none)

-- Violation Notices (none)

-- Demolition Applications

- 505 Westchester
- 1824 Holland
- 1424 Webster
- 1160 Davis
- 1188 Puritan
- 1824 Holland
- 1307 Webster
- 1950 Holland

### **B. Communications**

-- Commissioners' Comments (none)

**07-32-15**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

No further business being evident, the commissioners motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 p.m.

Matthew Baka  
Sr. Planner