

**Minutes**  
**HISTORIC RESOURCES BOARD**  
**Virtual Meeting**  
**Monday, March 23, 2020**  
**4:00 p.m.**

**Members Present:** Kevin West, Chair; Eileen Meyer, Vice-chair; Ann Kosch; Tom Hanson, Jana Fallin, Cameron Tross

**Members Absent:** Renee Erickson; Cameron Tross

**Staff Present:** Ben Chmiel, Planner; John Adam, Senior Planner

**Public Present:** Ben Burton and Heather Peterson, Applicants.

**1. MEETING OPENING**

West called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Staff performed roll and confirmed a quorum. West clarified that due to Covid-19 and the complications presented with the meeting being held via video conference, public comments would not be taken during the meeting, the meeting was still being broadcasted, and public comments were taken by staff prior to the deadline for the meeting. As requested by the City's legal counsel, Fallin moved to prohibit public comment due to circumstances caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Meyer seconded. Motion carried 5-0-0.

**2. MAJOR REVIEW**

Chmiel presented the proposal to rehabilitate and repurpose 120 North 4th Street (The Community House). He reminded the Board that the project was presented to the Board approximately a year prior for a preliminary assessment of a rehab and repurposing of the property. Chmiel described the history of the property and its physical characteristics, noting historic features of the interior and exterior. He then presented the details of the proposal, which was generally to comprehensively renovate and restore the building, converting it from a parks and rec facility with a gymnasium and classroom space to a mixed-use building with office space, community space, and apartments. Chmiel did an overview of the Secretary of the Interior Standards and how they related to the current proposal. He ultimately recommending approval of the project.

Meyer asked if the property owner intended to maintain historical information inside of the building. Ben Burton, the applicant, said he had identified a location for historical information. Burton said they had not decided on the content to be displayed but they would have it. Fallin asked what material the new front door would be made of. Burton said it would be an aluminum clad door system. West asked what materials the windows would be made of. Burton said the windows would be aluminum as well. Meyer asked how they intended to remove the lead-based paint. Burton said they only intended to remove paint on the east exterior and to his understanding, the paint did not contain lead. West asked if the applicant would test for lead paint just to be sure. Burton said they would find out the date the brick was painted then use that to determine a course of action.

Kosch asked if the project would receive state and federal tax incentives. Chmiel confirmed it was a tax credit project. She then asked what would happen with the ADA lift. Burton said they intended to reuse

the existing lift shaft and replace the inner equipment as to not make further modifications to the building. Kosch said she was concerned there could be issues with the project in the wake of the economic impact by Covid-19. She was also concerned that a disabled veteran would be unable to rent an apartment in a building that was previously reserved for veterans due to the building lacking ADA accessibility. West and Kosch said they had incomplete packets because they did not receive the tax application. Chmiel said it is not regular practice to provide that information in the actual application.

West asked how the public space would be utilized, pointing out that event space does not necessarily equate to public space. Burton said office, retail, food service are all possibilities for that space. West asked how many apartments and offices would be ADA compliant. Burton said none of the apartments would be ADA compliant. Peterson said all the offices would be ADA compliant. Peterson said due to the regulations they must follow to maintain the integrity of the historical building; they were unable to make the building more ADA compliant. West said he found that the lack of ADA accessibility to be problematic since the City of Manhattan was investing so into this project. Peterson said they were constrained by space and the intent to use existing walls, therefore, providing ADA accessibility would be very difficult. Burton also clarified that the contract with the City of Manhattan requires the property to stay on the historical registry, regardless of the owner of the property.

Meyer asked if the ADA entrance would be well lit and welcoming for individuals who utilize the ADA entrance. Burton said it would be well lit. Kosch said she would like to see more ADA accessibility as well. Fallin said she hoped the public space was made for rentals. Hanson said his only concern was parking since the property is surrounded by City owned parking. Burton said there is a parking lot behind the Hartford building that tenants could apply for a parking permit. West asked if any parking lot would be transferred to the building owner. Chmiel said only the property encompassing the building footprint would be transferred.

Chmiel read the public comments, which were submitted in writing ahead of the meeting. The first comments were from Kathy Dzewaltowski, which were read as follows.

*On pg. 4, it's mentioned that the building will be converted to mixed-use, including "community space," and later in the document on pg. 7, "event space" is also mentioned. Does "community space" mean space that will be accessible to the public, or does it mean "communal space," which the apartment residents and office users will share but not the public? "Event space" seems to refer to what is currently the gym. Will the event space be accessible/rentable by the public? As this building was originally a community space, if there are plans for a portion of the building to continue to be publicly accessible, that would seem to be important and appropriate. Also, there had been some previous discussion about including a panel/kiosk/display that would provide information about the building's history, which I couldn't find mentioned anywhere in this document. I would like to urge Historic Resources Board members to strongly encourage the developer to include historic information about the building, and perhaps placing the information in the community/event space would be the appropriate location for it.*

*On pg. 6, the document says a storage area will be created "next to the elevator." Is an elevator going to be installed? How will the shaft affect the other floors, where will access points be, where will the head house be located, etc.? Or, does "elevator" really mean the ADA lift? If it means the lift, then the language should reflect that.*

*On pg. 7, a sentence reads, "The entry door system and the east end of the building will be removed as well." I hope this is a poorly worded sentence and that the entire east wall of the building is not going to be removed.*

*The demolition notes on pg. 23 don't make it sound as if the east wall be demolished, but if more extensive demolition is proposed for the east exterior wall, then I would urge board members to further discuss this with the developer. How much of the east wall will be removed in the process of removing the existing east entry door and installing a new one? With the lift (elevator?) in the southeast corner, presumably the east exterior door replacement will continue to be wheelchair accessible (?).*

*Pg. 11 indicates that exterior signage on the east wall will be removed. Will there be signage that indicates the east entrance is ADA accessible? If so, where will the signage be placed? How will it be attached?*

*The document mentions replacing all of the building's windows with "new window[s] to match original historic style." Most likely, the original windows were wood. What material will the replacement windows be made of? Pg. 44 provides information about the style of the replacement windows but no information about the material.*

*Pg. 44 includes descriptions of the various types of new doors that will be installed. The exterior entrances, particularly the main entrance on the west side, are important because they are visible to the public and add to the building's character. The replacement main entry doors are described as matching the configuration of the original, but what about matching in style or materials? Most likely, the original main entry doors were wood. Is aluminum an acceptable replacement? A historical photo on pg. 3 and pg. 8 shows the doors had solid panels at the bottom. Sketches of the proposed main entry doors on the west indicate solid lower panels on two center doors, but the far left and right doors appear to be full glass. Will the far left and far right doors be full glass? Will the far left and far right doors be functioning doors or fixed glass panels? Barn doors are also mentioned as a type of door being installed in the apartments, which is probably not as critical since the apartments will not be public spaces, but this style of door is a rather contemporary style and has no connection to the original building.*

*On pg. 40, it's mentioned that the front exterior steps will be removed and replaced with concrete and matching configuration. It mentions the handrail will be removed. Will a new handrail be installed? If so, what will be its style and material?*

*The removal of peeling paint is mentioned for the east and south exterior walls. What method will be used to remove the peeling paint?*

Chmiel asked if the Board wanted to address any of the questions. Chmiel then read comments submitted by Linda Glasgow, which were read as follows.

*On page 5, I think the word "infill windows" actually means former windows that have been bricked in. I assume this is what architects call them, but in my mind, it's an odd turn of phrase. Will replacement windows be made using historically accurate materials?*

*On page 6, the word "elevator" is used. Is it an elevator or a lift? I understand that elevators are expensive. However, I'm not sure how reliable lifts are. They are often out of commission and I'm not sure why.*

*On page 8, I am wondering if black aluminum is the historically accurate material for the front door. If not, what was the original material? If black aluminum was not the original material, does it meet Secretary of Interior Standards?*

*On page 11, by what process will peeling paint be removed? I wonder why that side of the building was ever painted. I thought painting brick generally a bad idea. What sort of paint would be used to put a new coat on?*

*On page 11, I'm not familiar with the history of the Community House sign that is to be removed. Is that signage considered historic?*

*Regarding the barn-style rolling doors in apartments. They seem rather HGTV-trendy rather than historically appropriate.*

*Ben Burton contacted me some time ago about installing an historical panel. Then he told me he was turning his attentions to other projects for a while. I've not heard anything else. The building's history should not be lost or half-halfheartedly displayed in a relatively obscure location.*

West asked for clarification on the exterior signage. Peterson said they could probably add signage near the door. West asked why the doors will not be closer to the original of the building. Burton said the earlier images of the structure had doors more similar to the one they are proposing. West asked about removing the concrete stairs and replacing them with new concrete stairs and a new handrail. Peterson said the existing steps were crumbling and the handrail was a basic design. They did not believe it was historically relevant.

Speaking to the Board, West said he was unsure they were compliant with the first standard of the Secretary of the Interior. He said at a minimum, the office floor and first floor should be ADA compliant. He cited Kosch's concerns with a disabled veteran wanting to rent an apartment but unable to access it. Meyer agreed with the ADA concerns. She did find it positive to have more event spaces downtown that are not located within hotels. Kosch recommended a condition of approval that the historical panel be located in a publicly accessible location. Fallin said she agreed with Meyer and Kosch and would love to see some type of mural that reflected the buildings history.

Kosch moved that the proposal meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation as reviewed in accordance with K.S.A. 75-2724 and would not damage or destroy any historically significant property or historic character-defining features, with the condition that a historical panel (interpretive signage) depicting the history of the building be installed in a publicly accessible place. Meyer seconded. Motion carried 4-1-0, with West dissenting.

### **3. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned at 5:28pm with the next meeting to be held Monday, April 27, 2020.