

Minutes
HISTORIC RESOURCES BOARD MEETING
City Commission Room, City Hall
1101 Poyntz Avenue
Monday, March 28, 2022
4:00 p.m.

Member	Present	Absent
Kevin West	x	
Phil Anderson	X	
Jana Fallin, Chair	X	
Tom Hanson	X	
Troy Henningson		X
Tanner James	X	

Staff Present: Ben Chmiel, Planner; John Adam, Planner; Courtney Wise, Intern

Public Present: Linda Glasgow; Mel Borst; Roger Brown, Applicant; Kathryn Focke; Beth Bergsten; Abram Mertz; Logan Steiner, Applicant

1. MEETING OPENING

Fallin called the meeting to order at 4 p.m. Staff performed roll call and confirmed a quorum.

Anderson moved to approve the minutes from February 28, 2022. James seconded. Motion carried 4-0-1 (West having been absent).

2. MAJOR REVIEWS

2.1. Art and Light Museum. Action Required. Review proposal and determine if project meets the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Property.

Chmiel presented the staff report, briefly noting the history of the Sears building. The applicant has requested approval to allow interior alterations of an existing, non-contributing building, demolition of a non-contributing garage, and the construction of a new structure. Chmiel explained that the proposed new building would be located on the edge of the historic district and adjacent to structures of similar size and materials.

Staff recommended approval of the request to allow interior alterations of an existing, non-contributing building, demolition of a non-contributing garage, and the construction of a new structure based on the findings presented that the proposal met the Secretary of Interior’s Standards.

With no questions from the Board, Fallin opened the public hearing.

Linda Glasgow said the Manhattan and Riley Country Preservation Alliance recognized the concept of the Art and Light Museum as a generous investment towards a unique cultural enrichment experience within Manhattan. She explained that concern stemmed from fear of lasting consequences on the rest of the historic district. Glasgow stated that if the Art and Light Museum is welcomed into the district it should be because it meets the standards not as an exception.

Mel Borst said that the purpose of the Historic Resources Board was to set aside all factors except for the appropriateness of a proposed building. He explained that standard nine was in relation to size and massing. Borst said that the proposed building did not meet the expectations of the ninth standard. He said that a building in such a prominent location should work with and not against the district. Borst explained that the project was originally to stand alone but was then moved into the district. He said that no changes were made to attempt to fit into the historic district.

Roger Brown, the applicant, explained that infill on the edge of the historic district is not the same as an infill project in the middle of the historic district in terms of the standards. He displayed the visibility of the proposed museum from various locations within the district to demonstrate how little overall effect the building would have on the area. Brown presented a concept that led to the design. He explained the museum's intent was to be a digital immersive gallery.

West asked if there was any effort made to create a design that was more compatible with the district. Brown explained the changes that the design had undergone since the initial site was not feasible. He explained the volume of building shrunk largely when the location changed to make it more compatible within the district. Brown said he felt the design currently does meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

West asked if any thought towards more compatible exterior materials had taken place. He said he understood that the building would be located on the edge of the district but that there were newer buildings outside the district that were more compatible with the district than the proposed. Brown explained that the use of those buildings are very different, which allowed for different designs. He said that using the smooth limestone as the ground level façade was done purposely to correspond with the district.

Kathryn Focke said the design of the building does not fit within the historic district.

Fallin closed the public hearing.

Anderson said he wanted to support the City's recommendation to approve the project. Anderson moved to approve the proposal on the basis that it meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. West Seconded. The Board then deliberated.

West said he liked the design but not within the district. He said it looked like it would overtake the surrounding buildings.

James said the scale was not an issue in his opinion. He said the material was the issue. James said the metal paneling could easily change the character of the area. He stated he would like to see at least 40% of the materials be consistent with those found in the district.

Hanson said his concern stemmed from the size of the structure. He also mentioned that the metal paneling was reminiscent of a design era the City has tried hard to remove. Hanson expressed that outside the district the building would be fine, but there are standards to follow within the district.

Fallin said that coming from the arts background she is excited about this project. She said that while she loves Manhattan and the historic district this project would sit on the edge of the district and be a good introduction to Manhattan. Fallin said that the idea of more limestone would be appreciated as well. She said that the design shows progress in the area and Manhattan as a whole.

Hanson asked what would be located within the museum. Brown explained that the second and third floors would be gallery spaces for hanging art and sculptures. He said that the owners are providing their personal collections to display as well as new art being purchased for display. Brown said the digital art pieces will be constantly changing.

Anderson said that an art gallery does not need to look traditional. West said that the whole point of the district is preservation between styles and design to create consistency. Fallin said she agreed with that if it were to be on Poyntz Avenue, but it is around the corner and on the edge of the district.

James stated he had no issue with the form or the scale of the proposal. He explained that his issue stems from materiality. James said he would like to see 40% of the materials be consistent with the historic district and that it would be beneficial to see the metal paneling being proposed.

West explained his issues fell within standard nine as the size and scale will not fit within the historic district.

Chmiel restated the motion: that the Board finds the proposal meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for treatment of historic property as reviewed in accordance with KSA 75-2724. The Board then voted, and the motion failed 2–3 (James, West, and Hanson opposed).

- 2.2. 2015 Hunting (Clack House) Avenue Demolition.** Action Required. Review proposal and determine if the project meets the review factors of Chapter 26, Subsec. 26-9D-5E of the Manhattan Code of Ordinances and design guidelines of Ordinance No. 7544 for issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness. Presentation from Ben Chmiel, Planner.

Chmiel presented the staff report. The applicant has requested a certificate of appropriateness. Chmiel explained that the inground pool on the property was one of the first in Manhattan. He explained the project was to demolish a historic home in order to expand the neighboring parking lot.

City Administration recommended denial of the demolition permit associated with the demolition of the Clack House at 2015 Hunting Avenue.

Fallin asked if it was currently occupied. Chmiel said it was not.

Fallin opened the public hearing.

Beth Bergsten stated that she grew up in the neighborhood. She said that when she drives down the road, she wants to drive into her neighborhood rather than a parking lot.

Abram Mertz said that this house was occupied by the owner until they passed in 2020, in which all surrounding neighbors received letters that stated they could buy the property, but it must be bought as is. He explained that the current owners have yet to attempt to maintain the property. Mertz stated that during the past weekend the occupants of the neighboring fraternity parked in the front lawn of 2015 Hunting Avenue.

Linda Glasgow stated the Manhattan and Riley Country Preservation Alliance does not support demolition due to negligence and asks that the Board deny this request.

Mel Borst stated he supported the denial of this request. He explained that once the house is gone it cannot be replaced. Borst pointed out the negative effects on historic districts when demolition of a historic structure takes place.

Logan Steiner, applicant, approached the Board for questions.

West asked if the owner of the property had any ideas outside of tearing down the house. Steiner said from his knowledge the owners considered restoring the house but due to a significant mold issue they did not.

West asked if the owners considered reselling the home to someone willing to renovate. Steiner stated that the owner was a former member of the fraternity and wanted to do something that would benefit the current members rather than sell.

Hanson asked where the cost breakdown for renovation came from. Steiner said it was from a local service.

Fallin closed the public hearing.

West stated that there are several remedies that have not been considered to prevent demolition.

Anderson moved to deny approval of issuing a certificate of appropriateness for the demolition at 2015 Hunting Avenue as reviewed. James seconded.

Motion carried 5-0.

3. WORK SESSION

3.1. Riverfront Development. No action required. Presentation by Phil Anderson, with RiverfrontMHK, on soliciting HRB support for a Riverfront Redevelopment Plan.

Anderson recused himself from the Board.

Anderson introduced himself as a representative of Riverfront MHK development organization. Anderson told the history of Manhattan. He explained that the flood of 1903 changed the course of the Kansas River and the flood of 1908 changed the course of Blue River. Anderson stated that the flood of 1935 was rather dramatic since it flooded downtown and took down the wooden bridge. He explained that flood of 1951 was the most impactful. Anderson said that this flood covered downtown with six feet of water. He said that the levee system was the plan to prevent continued flooding, but it cut off access to the river.

Anderson referred to the comprehensive plan. He quoted sections related to quality of life and accessibility to places of recreation. Anderson read from the eight key objectives, outlining the ones correlated with quality of life.

Anderson said the potential that the river could offer is incredible. He said that during the time the city has been cut off from the river, it had been abused and neglected.

Anderson explained that other cities have created desirable environments surrounding the river access they have.

Anderson stated that Riverfront MHK wanted the opportunity to present their ideas to the City Commission. He said that once the group has the funding, they would need to work with the City to start the process.

West asked about the meeting schedule for the group. Anderson explained the timelines of meetings.

4. UPDATES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chmiel said the First Christian Church had been listed on the National Register.

5. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

First discussion on CIP and 2021 annual review.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Fallin adjourned the meeting at 5:50 pm. The next meeting will be held Monday, April 25, 2022.