

REPORT OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION / DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

Wednesday, February 1, 2017 – 4:00 PM

City Conference Room

1515 Strongs Avenue, Stevens Point, WI 54481

PRESENT: Chairperson Beveridge, Alderperson Ryan, Commissioner Siebert, Commissioner Scripps, Commissioner Baldischwiler, Commissioner Debauche, and Commissioner Woehr.

ALSO PRESENT: Associate Planner Kearns, Director Ostrowski, Noah Eschenbauch, Julie Birrenkott, Brian Elza, and Greg Wright.

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1. Approval of the report of the December 7, 2016 HP/DRC meeting.
2. Request from Greg Wright, representing the property owner, for design review to create a mural on the west façade of the building located at 925 Clark Street (Parcel ID 2408-32-2019-02).
3. Request from the City of Stevens Point for design review of exterior façade changes at Edgewater Manor, 1450 Water Street (Parcel ID 2408-32-2019-33).
4. Staff Update
5. Adjourn

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1. Approval of the report of the December 7, 2016 HP/DRC meeting.

**Motion by Commissioner Scripps to approve the report of the December 6, 2016 HP/DRC meeting; seconded by Commissioner Siebert.**

**Motion carried 5-0.**

2. Request from Greg Wright, representing the property owner, for design review to create a mural on the west façade of the building located at 925 Clark Street (Parcel ID 2408-32-2019-02).

Associate Planner Kearns explained that Greg Wright, applicant representing the property owner and Executive Director of CREATE Portage County, had inquired about having a mural done on the west façade of 925 Clark Street in collaboration with the Stevens Point Brewery. He noted that no designs had been submitted as they did not want to pursue artists if they first did not have approval from the commission to move forward. Mr. Kearns explained that while the design guidelines stated that unpainted masonry should not be painted, there was an existing section on the west façade masonry that had been previously painted. He referenced a historic photo showing the painted surface area, noting that the larger portion had been painted over the original signage, and that the smaller portion was now being used as a no parking sign.

Chairperson Beveridge asked when the original sign had been painted over.

Associate Planner Kearns stated that he was uncertain of the date, adding that the property owner, Noah Eschenbauch, had received a façade grant for improvements.

Noah Eschenbauch, owner of 925 Clark Street, stated that the sign had been painted over prior to the property's purchase. He also expanded on the façade grant, noting that the majority of the grant had been for the face of the building which had included windows, tuckpointing, entry doors, and other minimal items.

Director Ostrowski estimated that the no parking sign had been painted in 2009 or 2010.

Associate Planner Kearns reiterated that while the design guidelines stated that paint should not be applied to masonry that wasn't historically painted, there was existing paint, and that the removal of that existing paint could wreck the brick or historic sign with attempts to uncover it. He recommended approving the request for the mural in the location of the existing paint only with the conditions outlined within the staff report.

Chairperson Beveridge asked whether the no parking signs were of any value and if they were providing information that couldn't be accessed elsewhere.

Noah Eschenbauch was uncertain of its origin and stated that there weren't any designated parking spots in that lot. They also did not typically allow anyone to park on the side for the proposed mural. He didn't anticipate any issue with having the sign removed, adding that the Galaxy Comics and Games owner, Chris Randazzo, was vigilant in monitoring the parking lot.

Commissioner Siebert asked whether there were any thoughts or themes being proposed for the mural.

Greg Wright stated that they were looking to do something that would commemorate the 160<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Stevens Point Brewery, in addition to contributing to the growing downtown mural collection, noting that they were waiting for approval to move forward prior to sending out a call to artists. He reassured the commission that the concept would come back to the commission for final approval.

Aldersperson Ryan asked whether the area provided was satisfactory to what they had in mind, to which Julie Birrenkott noted that they would have to review the size internally and with the owner.

Aldersperson Ryan asked on the dimensions of the allotted space, to which Associate Planner Kearns estimated roughly 8 feet wide by 20 feet tall.

Greg Wright asked whether the right side could drop straight down for aesthetic purposes to create a uniform shape, rather than an irregular one, noting that he did understand they would be painting on a previously unpainted surface, however minimal.

Commissioner Scripps asked for clarification if any other murals had passed through the commission since the design review guidelines had been set, and if so, if they had been done on unpainted masonry.

Chairperson Beveridge stated that all murals had come through the commission, with some of them being painted directly onto the walls while others had been painted onto boards and then mounted.

Director Ostrowski stated that the latest mural had been done on the west façade of the Divepoint Scuba Paddle & Adventure Center, adding that it had been a great addition to the downtown area.

The proposed mural location, he continued, would also be a good addition to Clark Street as it was in a very visible location and it would be covering up paint and a no parking side on the façade.

Commissioner Woehr pointed out that the mural on the Divepoint Scuba building could only be seen when walking or if a driver looked into their rearview mirror since it was a one-way street. In comparison, the proposed mural location on Clark Street was in the entrance way to the city's downtown area. He expressed concern over the possible content of the mural, adding that he would rather it show historic significance and that it stay away from any sort of advertisement.

Commissioner Siebert also expressed concern in the content of the proposed mural. The fox mural on Divepoint Scuba, he stated, had been outside the realm of what the mural system was intended for, to portray the city's history. He asked that the mural remain in a format that told the story of the Stevens Point Brewery in order to keep in line with its historic context.

Greg Wright explained that the fox mural on Divepoint Scuba had been considered in order to push the conversation of having more public art focused murals downtown, adding that they had since received a great response to the fox mural. He explained that there was strong evidence to support the role of public art, especially in historic parts of a community, as it drew people into the area, thus providing economic value. Lastly, he noted it had been picked up by the Fort Collins Project, a national review of murals.

Chairperson Beveridge commented that they had been approving murals for a long time, and that the background in supporting them was clear. He reminded the commission that they were deciding on whether the location for the mural was acceptable.

**Motion by Commissioner Scripps to approve the request from Greg Wright, representing the property owner, for design review to create a mural on the west façade of the building located at 925 Clark Street (Parcel ID 2408-32-2019-02) subject to the following conditions:**

- 1. The mural design shall be submitted for review and approval before the Historic Preservation Design Review Commission.**
- 2. The paintable mural area shall not encroach into the unpainted brick and shall be confined to the space identified on the picture.**
- 3. Artwork shall incorporate history and shall not be a sign. Should text be used, its basis shall be solely based on historical relevance.**

**seconded by Commissioner Siebert.**

**Motion Carried 5-0.**



- 3. Request from the City of Stevens Point for design review of exterior façade changes at Edgewater Manor, 1450 Water Street (Parcel ID 2408-32-2019-33).**

Chairperson Beveridge asked whether any thought had gone into a method that could adhere the brick back onto the structure, to which Director Ostrowski stated that from a safety perspective, it would likely be better to with go with a full replacement rather than attempting to preserve the

brick. When the brick was put on, he explained, the back of the bricks had not been cleaned properly which had caused the mortar to fall down and plug the weep holes, which then prevented water from properly draining.

Director Ostrowski reminded the commission of the last meeting where they had discussed a potential concept in moving forward with the complete removal of the brick façade of Edgewater Manor and the replacement with brick and metal panels. During that meeting, it had been asked if the building could be done in a different material, or mostly a masonry material. One of the options would be to do a pewter brick that would run from the top of the building and come down in strips. This pewter brick would be offset with the proposed cream limestone masonry material, and the metal panels. The metal panels would also help to distinguish the fifth floor. The second option would be to keep the same grey or pewter brick between the windows while doing the rest of the face along the entire front edge of the building in the limestone.

Commissioner Siebert asked if they were getting away from red brick entirely.

Director Ostrowski confirmed that they were, and that they would be including the use of insulated metal panels. He passed out an example of the proposed metal panels and explained that the insulation on the exterior wall of Edgewater was very poor, and the removal and replacement of the façade would allow for the placement of insulation. Another concern was to limit the impact on the interior of the structure by trying to stay out of as many units as possible. He noted that they would have to go in them already in order to work on the windows. Ventilation, he noted, was available in the common areas, but not in the individual units.

Chairperson Beveridge commented that while they spoke about R- and U- values for measuring the resistance and rate of heat transfer, they did not provide any specific values.

Director Ostrowski stated that they would work with the architect to get that information once the specifics on materials were finalized. In the interim, they were trying to get approval from Historic Preservation, Plan Commission, and Common Council so they could move forward with the design and start the bidding process. He added that the fasteners on the façade were meant to be a temporary fix that would last up to two years, and that they had already exceeded that timeline.

Chairperson Beveridge asked if they would be able to insulate everything or just behind the metal panels, to which Director Ostrowski confirmed behind the metal panels and brick so long as they install the thin brick.

Chairperson Beveridge asked whether it was a standard brick.

Director Ostrowski stated that the brick itself was a thin brick, and once placed, there would be a gap behind it to allow for airflow to infiltrate it if water happened to get behind it, as well as being able to add insulation.

Commissioner Siebert commented that it was a nice design, but expressed concern in maintaining the type of material and color for the historic district.

Associate Planner Kearns stated that it was a unique building because the brick was in such a deteriorated shape and that the options to maintain the existing brick were very limited. When the façade is removed, he explained, its removing any architectural characterizes that were associated

with that façade and essentially a new façade would be like starting with a shell or a new building. The existing façade is very simple, and in reviewing the design guidelines, could be seen as an existing building because the façade would be completely removed. On the other hand, he continued, it could also be seen as new construction, and if it were to be rebuilt exactly how it is right now with new materials, he questioned whether they would be creating a false historic appearance. When reviewing the project, he found that the proposed materials were used in the late 70s and early 80s, around the time of initial construction. While the insulated metal panels may not have been found in that era, exterior metal finishes on big structures were prevalent. Completely removing the façade wouldn't lessen the historic significance of the district or the building.

Commissioner Siebert asked if the existing façade was regular brick, to which Director Ostrowski confirmed it is a full brick.

Commissioner Siebert asked if the brick itself was the issue.

Director Ostrowski explained that the backside of the bricks had not been cleared of mortar, and that the mortar had since crumbled and fallen down, plugging the weep hole systems within the building. Since the weep hole systems had been plugged, it didn't allow water to drain out of the building which resulted in a continuous freeze and thaw cycle behind the brick.

Commissioner Siebert asked for clarification if the bricks themselves were damaged, and if so, could they just not redo the inside of them to accommodate the replacement.

Director Ostrowski stated that in terms of taking off the entire façade and cleaning the bricks, it would be a very costly project due to the size of the building. Had it been just a portion of the façade, then there would have been no issue in repairing the bricks. However, with the entire façade in need of removal, it could be considered a new project.

Commissioner Debauche agreed with Commissioner Siebert in using red brick. He asked if there would be a large difference between the textured or flat metal panels, to which Director Ostrowski confirmed that there were several options to choose from.

Commissioner Scripps expressed her inclination for approving the project, explaining that she did not see Edgewater as a historic building when taking into consideration the requirements for the national registry. If the metal panels were considered an appropriate material for the time period, she didn't see how it would be wrecking any historic integrity there may be.

Commissioner Woehr agreed with Commissioner Scripps and referenced several surrounding structures to support the case, such as the paper mill and the County Annex Building. He stated that rendering 1 within the presentation was more interesting architecturally than rendering 2, but that rendering 2 reminded him of a pier at low tide.

Commissioner Debauche stated that the limestone or light grey material was not seen around town very often, and as a gesture to the existing building, red brick would be more appropriate. However, he agreed that it was visually more of an improvement.

Associate Planner Kearns agreed that even with new buildings, you would want to ensure that it fit into the character of the area. With this project, he explained, the façade materials being proposed

fit within the character of the area. While they may be thin brick, thin stone, and insulated metals panels, from the exterior it would reassemble a building constructed in a similar era.

Director Ostrowski explained that one of the main comments from the 2012 Housing Study, was that Edgewater looked like public housing. It was seen as a reason why there was such a high vacancy rate so the goal was to differentiate the building from an era of public housing construction. Referring back to the last meeting, he reminded the commission that they had also discussed potential signage for the building's front façade. The sign would be mainly type and silver, with a backlit halo lighting. It would make for a nice feature, he concluded.

Commissioner Scripps asked if the proposed signage was within the approved guidelines for signage downtown.

Director Ostrowski stated that a similar sign would be what Shopko currently has on their building along Centerpoint Drive, only that their sign was brown or black with a soft halo glow.

Commissioner Woehr asked if the lighting would be bright, to which Director Ostrowski stated that it would be a subtle glow.

Commissioner Woehr expressed in inclination for rendering option 1.

Commissioner Baldischwiler commented that both rendering options were good, and that the colors were nicely contrasted. He agreed with Commissioner Scripps in that he didn't see the building as being historic as the era of construction was not too far off, noting the bunker design for construction.

Commissioner Siebert stated that if that design was popular at that time, then it would become the historic design of that time. He referenced the humanities building as an example.

Commissioner Scripps commented that she preferred a benchmark since at a certain time, a structure may not be historic.

Associate Planner Kearns explained that the design guidelines identified a contributing building versus a noncontributing building, and that there could be different levels of how contributing a building could be in a district. In regards to Edgewater, it had high visibility, it was along the riverfront, had nothing surrounding it, and it could be argued that it was a substantial contributing building in the district. However, the historical relevance could be argued in that regard as well.

Commissioner Siebert asked if they had looked into using a red brick rather than a pewter brick.

Director Ostrowski stated that they would have to look at potential color schemes. He reiterated that they were trying to get rid of the public housing era and design, noting again the previous vacancy rate and that the new façade could provide a clean looking building. While he understood the concerns of keeping with the feel of 1980s construction, the removal of the façade would change the entire character of the building regardless, and the goal was to make the building more marketable and attractive. He added that the city was committed to putting on a brick façade with masonry materials rather than to put up cheaper material such as vinyl siding. He referenced the new Mid-State building as an example of a building that had a monotonous façade prior to the remodel.

Aldersperson Ryan asked for clarification on rendering option 1 and 2.

Director Ostrowski explained that both options were dark pewter brick. The difference between the two options was in keeping the sandstone or keeping the brick in the middle. He personally preferred the additional material and color in order to add additional elements to the building.

Chairperson Beveridge asked if there a reason for the band across the fifth floor, to which Director Ostrowski stated that it added another element to the building, as well as differentiated the fifth floor.

Commissioner Siebert asked if the band would go all the way around the building, to which Director Ostrowski confirmed that it would.

Aldersperson Ryan asked if they would have a chance to review the front choice for the signage, to which Director Ostrowski confirmed that the design would come back for review.

Aldersperson Ryan asked if they had to provide a color choice for the metal strip along the fifth floor right away.

Director Ostrowski asked if there was a preference, to which Aldersperson Ryan stated that something natural that would blend in would be preferable.

Director Ostrowski stated that they would probably stay within the grey or cream color family, noting that it would be a complimentary choice.

**Motion by Aldersperson Ryan to approve the request from the City of Stevens Point for design review of exterior façade changes at Edgewater Manor, 1450 Water Street (Parcel ID 2408-32-2019-33) subject to the following conditions:**

- 1. Final masonry and metal colors, design, and specifics shall be submitted to the chairperson and designated agent for review and approval.**
- 2. Building signage shall be reviewed and approved by the Historic Preservation / Design Review Commission.**
- 3. Applicable building permits shall be obtained.**

**seconded by Commissioner Baldischwiler.**

**Motion Carried 3-2, with Commissioner Siebert and Chairperson Beveridge voting in the negative.**

#### 4. Staff Update

Director Ostrowski stated that Jerry's Auto at 1105 Second Street had been razed in the middle of January after extensive fire damage had occurred in November of 2016, noting that there had also been asbestos removal.

Commissioner Siebert asked what had been the cause of the fire, to which Director Ostrowski stated that it was uncertain.

Commissioner Siebert asked whether the Belke Lumber property at 1013 Second Street was within the historic district.

Director Ostrowski confirmed that it was and explained that the property contained the main lumber factory, a metal shed, two smaller wood storage buildings, and the main residence. He also

added that the house and storage buildings would be very challenging to save, and that the main building's structural integrity was uncertain. Even so, there could be significant uses for it.

Commissioner Woehr asked whether the original machinery was still present within the factory, and if so, could they be saved and handed over to the Portage County Historical Society.

Director Ostrowski confirmed that the machinery was still present, and that it could be used as part of the design for a future use were they not to sell it.

Commissioner Siebert asked what the issue was with the residence, to which Director Ostrowski stated that it needed a lot of work, in addition to being both vacant and a nonconforming use.

Commissioner Siebert asked whether the house would have to be removed, to which Director Ostrowski stated that it did not have to be removed, and that it just made it a bit challenging to work with depending on a future use.

5. Adjourn.

**Meeting adjourned at 4:46 PM.**