

MINUTES

Valdosta Historic Preservation Commission

Valdosta City Hall Annex Multi-Purpose Room
300 North Lee Street, Valdosta, Georgia

December 6, 2021 5:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Dr. Alex Alvarez
Mr. Tommy Crane
Ms. Laura Yale

Dr. Harry Hamm
Ms. Celine Gladwin

MEMBERS ABSENT

Ms. Sandie Burkett
Ms. Sally Querin

STAFF PRESENT

Mr. Jeff Brammer
Ms. Lauren Hurley

VISITORS PRESENT

Alan Johnson
Vickie Everett
Calvin Burgman
Allen George
Bill Nijem
Chad McLeod

Kelley Saxon
John Courson
Tripp Talley
Nancy Warren
James Horton
Paige Dukes

I. Call to Order and Determination of Quorum

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Chairman Alvarez. It was determined that a quorum of members was present. Chairman Alvarez thanked everyone for coming and reminded audience members to please sign the attendance register.

II. Presentation on Lowndes County Courthouse Rehabilitation

Paige Dukes (Lowndes County Manager) and Chad McLeod (Engineer) approached the lectern to inform the Commission about the rehabilitation of the historic Lowndes County Courthouse. Ms. Dukes stated that the project has worked in conjunction with the Historical Society to recover and celebrate the history of the courthouse. She stated that there were periods of time where fantastic records were kept and there were other times with no records, and they have found records that do not seem to match what they have seen. She stated that that is sometimes the nature of restoration projects. The project is a \$9 million project funded through SPLOST 8, sales tax money, which will have a tremendous return on investment. Courthouse construction began in 1904 and was completed in 1905 for \$60,000, with many of the materials native to Georgia. She stated that the restoration is taking the interior and exterior to its original state. She stated that there will be no reproduction parts or things inappropriate to the era. She stated that the only space the project has creative freedom is in the basement.

The design for the basement is focused on function. She stated that during the 1970s and 1980s the basement served as a public restroom space during downtown events. Ms. Dukes continued that they would like to see a lounge and public restroom facilities there, with the courthouse available for receptions and events. The basement will have a turn-of-the-century train station feel. Upstairs, they have taken it back to the original walls. The second-floor courtroom is to remain a courtroom. State law mandates adequate space for high-profile court proceedings. Ms. Dukes stated that the courtroom could also host weddings. There is a catering kitchen to be put in for adequate service. Office spaces and training rooms will have their place, so that the courthouse may function as a workable space. Office spaces will house Main Street, the Tourism Authority, a County Community Development Coordinator, and the Public Information Office from the county. She stated that housing that staff will lead the courthouse to serve as a Regional Welcome Center, opening the downtown area for more pedestrian traffic.

There are ongoing remediation projects for asbestos removal, so no walk-through tours have been granted yet. The public will be provided access upon remediation. Ms. Dukes offered HPC members and restoration enthusiasts walk-throughs as soon as February. Mr. McLeod stated that they are finishing up interior demolitions,

and they will be working on construction drawings soon. The contractor is All State Construction, with Cauthan Construction. Construction is scheduled to begin in February or March and continue for one year.

Celine Gladwin (Architect on the project) presented a PowerPoint presentation as an overview of what has been done already. First, they did an existing conditions assessment looking at the building's historical context and architectural elements. The goal up until now has been to remove layers to reveal the true historic state. At the start of the project, the building was 3-D scanned inside and out. Ms. Gladwin stated that there were no original drawings of the building found. Before the project began, drawings were produced to represent its existing state to properly document the project. She stated that the building has been described as the most complex courthouse in Georgia because of the four domes on the four corners and the central tower.

In 1905, when the building was being constructed, the *Valdosta Daily Times* sent a reporter out in the yard to record daily construction. The building has four large columns made of granite pieces, which were put together with a pulley system. The columns are split into four pieces, each 35 inches in diameter and weighing 10,000 pounds. Ms. Gladwin stated that they are using two types of selective demolition. First was to figure out what was in the building; and then a thorough removal of all historic elements, excluding the elevator. Between the 1950s and 1970s, there were two major renovations: central heating and AC and ceiling tiles. There is a lot of original material behind drywall. The basement will serve as a public area for onsite and downtown events. Ms. Gladwin described the current basement as a place where offices have been added to accommodate certain office spaces. Renderings of the new basement space were shown on the PowerPoint.

There are 3 levels above the basement. The first floor is the main entry with spaces which supported court functions. The second floor holds the courtroom, which sits two stories high surrounded in a U-shape consisting of other rooms. The third floor has the same U-shaped office plan. The roof used to have red barrel clay tile, so the plan is to go back to the original roofing condition. The original windows were removed in the 1970s and replaced with aluminum store front windows. Plans are to take those back to the original windows, relying on old images and postcards to recreate the conditions. An example of the window renovation is on the second floor, some windows had a brick pier in the middle of the windows which was removed and replaced with store front windows. Those windows will now be taken back to the original configuration. Ms. Gladwin asked if anyone had questions.

Dr. Hamm asked if they found any original light fixtures. Ms. Gladwin stated that there were very few intact. There are 5 original light fixtures. One of the original fixtures is a chandelier, now in the 2-story atrium outside the courtroom. A twin chandelier is in the United Methodist Church across the street. She continued that when the ceilings were added, most of the original light fixtures were removed. One surface mounted fixture was uncovered, and two pendant light fixtures were uncovered in the judge's chambers.

Ms. Dukes spoke up again stating that it is known that over the years with all the restorations, some of the original fixtures, hardware, doors, and furniture were taken out of the building and used elsewhere. It is also known that some of those items still exist in the community. She asked that if anyone has anything they know is original and historic to the building to contact them so that these items may be used in the restoration. She mentioned historic lawyers' tables were still there. She stated that some doors are known to have gone into downtown offices.

III. Review and Approval of Minutes

The November 1, 2021, draft minutes were reviewed by the Board. Mr. Crane made a motion to approve the minutes. Dr. Hamm seconded the motion, and it was called and carried unanimously (4-0 vote).

IV. Consideration of Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) Applications

A. HPC-2021-103: 218 West Hill Avenue:

Jeff Brammer presented the staff report for the case. The petitioner requests approval to make exterior renovations to convert a weekly motel to efficiency apartments. The property is located in the Local Historic District, but it is considered a non-contributing resource to the district. The property is

in Subarea III and zoned in the Community Commercial (C-C) zoning district. The property is a two-story, L-shaped, mid-century modern-styled roadside motel, consisting of 41 motel rooms and approximately 13,600 square feet. The façade features a two-story registration-manager's quarters with a butterfly-sun flap roof, abundant first- and second-story fixed glazing, and a decorative concrete block screen wall. There is also a 21'x16' wood and metal drive-in canopy entrance on the west elevation. Constructed circa 1964, the property features a concrete foundation, concrete block exterior cladding, and a flat roof with membrane system over most of the building, located behind the front office. The property's L-shaped plan surrounds a motor court-styled parking lot, with a filled-in former swimming pool area in the center. The property features dozens of first- and second-story motel rooms, most of which are approximately 250 square feet. The exterior of the individual rooms feature flush, red metal doors, tripartite window systems, and individual HVAC units for each room. To summarize, the project is to convert the existing motel to efficiency style apartments. Exterior changes are as listed: First, to demolish the canopy over the entranceway to provide improved access. Second, to pave over the filled-in former swimming pool area for additional parking spaces. Third, to replace motel room doors, if/as necessary, with like flush metal doors. Fourth, to replace motel room door hardware, if/as necessary with like hardware, i.e., locksets, hinges, thresholds, etc. Fifth, to replace the existing tripartite window systems with single pane fixed glazing. And, finally, to encase the metal railing posts on the first- and second-story room fronts with decorative wooden columns.

Supplied to the commissioners is a background on the Imperial 400 Motel chain. More than 100 Imperial 400 Motels were constructed in the early to mid-1960s. Based in California, the chain built properties nationwide, including here in Valdosta. The PowerPoint exhibits the pool area and the original canopy entrance extending across to the west side property line. Also, prominently displayed at the time was some contemporary signage. A 2007 satellite image shows half of the canopy overhang is already gone, as is the contemporary signage. The pool remains intact, at this time. But, sometime between 2007 and 2012, the swimming pool was filled in, to the state in which it exists today. Mr. Brammer showed a previous project of similar scope completed by the petitioners. Beforehand photographs show a motel conversion project recently undertaken in Adel. The changes are similar to what the petitioners have proposed for the project in Valdosta. Photographs depict new doors, new windows, and the railing posts covered by decorative columns to give the property a fresh, updated appearance. The parking lot also has been paved, and the office building has also been renovated. Interior rehabilitations aren't in the purview of HPC review. However, Mr. Brammer showed the Commission photographs of interior renovations and updates to some of the rooms at the motel in Adel. Staff acknowledged the appropriateness of the proposed project for the following reasons: First, the proposed project concerns a non-historic, non-contributing resource. Second, the design, scale, and materials of the project, appear compatible with district design guidelines concerning commercial rehabilitations. Third, the proposed exterior changes have no adverse impact upon the former Imperial 400 Motel's character-defining features—i.e., the butterfly-sun flap roof, the decorative screen wall, and the two-story, L-shaped, courtyard plan. Fourth, the more invasive exterior alterations (namely the demolition of the overhang & paving over the filled-in swimming pool) affect areas already previously altered. And finally, the applicant has successfully demonstrated a previous rehabilitation project of similar scope in Adel.

Bill Nijem approached the lectern representing the applicant. He thanked Mr. Brammer for his thorough report and commented on the applicant's previous project in Adel exhibiting their ability to successfully complete the project to a high standard. He reiterated that it is a non-historic building, but points out that it holds value because of its unique appearance. Mr. Nijem informed the commission that this project must go before the Greater Lowndes Planning Commission (which recommended for approval), Zoning Board of Appeals for multiple variances, HPC for the aforementioned renovations, and City Council with GLPC recommendations for a conditional use permit. He asked the commissioners if they had questions.

Ms. Yale asked if the main structural changes would be the overhang and the pool, meaning the rest of the architectural features will remain true to the period in which it was built. Mr. Nijem stated that the building will be painted and spruced up and the pool resurfaced to allow for additional parking. If there are doors that are damaged or hardware that needs to be replaced that will happen and the windows are being replaced as well. Ms. Gladwin asked why it is necessary to remove the overhang. Mr. Nijem replied that the applicant is concerned about access because part of it has already been removed from the structure. It is tight fit to pull in from Hill Avenue. The main entrance will remain on Hill Avenue because there is a rolling gate at the other entrance on Oak Street. Ms. Gladwin asked if the canopy is the original canopy. Mr. Brammer stated that it is hard to tell if it is the original or not. What can be confirmed is that a portion of it is missing. He stated that the canopy is low, and it is doubtful if a firetruck could get under the canopy. Mr. Nijem stated that the canopy does block the sunlight coming into the glass office from the west. It was pointed out that it was originally a double lane canopy that now only covers one lane at the entrance because the concrete that held the posts for the missing canopy remains on the ground. Ms. Gladwin stated that it is unfortunate that the canopy is missing half its overhang because the bar that goes across the façade is a prominent design feature of the motel. She asked what kind of windows the applicant plans to replace the existing windows with because the current (and original) windows are framed in three sections. The applicant planned to replace the windows with a single paned window lacking muntins. Ms. Gladwin suggested replacing the windows with a storefront window with mullions to mimic the original window. Ms. Gladwin then asked about the encasing of the vertical metal railing with wood and why the applicant chose to do that. The applicant stated that they preferred the look of it to the metal railing. Ms. Gladwin recommended not doing the encasing with wood but rather simply repainting the metal railing. The applicants were open to that suggestion, and stated that they did that in the Adel renovation because of the wrought iron floral design of the railing.

With no one else in support or opposition of the case, the commission discussed. Mr. Burgman stated that the original canopy was longer existing because a tractor trailer tore off half of the overhang and that the gate was installed so that there was only one way in and one way out of the parking lot. Ms. Gladwin made a motion to approve the application with the following conditions. The window system needs to be replaced with the 3-section window to mimic what is existing windows; To not enclose the metal posts in wood; To maintain the canopy in its current configuration if structurally feasible OR modify the canopy to project 5 feet from the building at the same elevation. Ms. Yale seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous (4-0 vote).

B. HPC-2021-104: 706 3rd Avenue:

Mr. Brammer presented the staff report on the case. The petitioner requests approval to construct a new, attached and enclosed rear addition. The property is located in the Local Historic District, and it is considered a contributing resource to the district. Constructed circa 1917, the property is in Subarea II and zoned in the R-6 Single-Family Residential zoning district. The subject property is a one-story vernacular central hallway cottage with a concrete block foundation, horizontal clapboard siding, side gabled roof covered with pressed sheet metal, and a near full-length open front gabled verandah porch. The project is to construct a new, enclosed, rear addition. The addition features a concrete pier foundation, wood clapboard siding, 6-panel steel exterior door, and a pressed sheet metal shed-style roof. These materials are all similar to those used on the main residence and the non-historic addition.

The city marshals placed a stop order on the work and notified the petitioner to bring the project into compliance with the Local Historic District ordinance. For clarification, the applicant was given a permit for an addition in 2007, however, that work was never undertaken. That permit has long expired. The concrete block pier foundation, the sills, and the floor joists have all already been placed. Staff acknowledged the project complements the existing residence. First, the enclosed attached addition is placed to the rear of the residence and largely sheltered from view from the public right-of-way. Second, the size and scale of the addition do not appear to overshadow the existing historic

residence. And third, the design and materials of the enclosed addition appear compatible with the historic character of the existing residence. Staff recommended approval as proposed.

The applicant, Calvin Burgman, approached the lectern to speak in favor of the application. Mr. Burgman stated that the materials he has are donated. He has more tin being given to him and would like to replace the shingle portion of his roof with the tin as well as the aforementioned renovation plans. Ms. Gladwin confirmed that the shingle portion is only on one side of the roof and the rest of the roof is already tin. Mr. Burgman confirmed. He stated once he does the addition and the roof, he can finish painting the exterior of the house. Dr. Hamm stated that the windows do not appear to be original to the house. Mr. Burgman stated that when he was given the house 30 years ago from his mother, those windows were in the house.

With no one else in support or opposition, Ms. Gladwin motioned to approve the application as submitted, with the addition of the tin roof replacement. Mr. Crane seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous (4-0 vote).

C. HPC-2021-108: 417 West Hill Avenue:

Mr. Brammer presented the staff report on the case. The petitioner requests approval to replace the existing asphalt shingle roof with a metal panel roof system. The property is in the Local Historic District, but it is considered a non-contributing resource to the district. Constructed circa 1978, the property is in Subarea III and zoned in the Commercial Highway zoning district. The property is a one-story retail store and warehouse totaling approximately 6,400 square feet. The 1,200 square foot front retail space features a concrete foundation, asymmetrical, brick storefront façade, and a low-pitched hipped roof covered with asphalt shingle roof. The 5,200 square foot warehouse space to the rear shares the same low-pitched asphalt shingle roofline with concrete block exterior cladding and moderately profiled concrete block buttresses.

The petitioner proposes to install a galvalume coated, steel purlin bearing rib roof system over top the existing asphalt shingle roof. This particular PBR roof system features galvalume coated panels, 3-feet in width, 10 to 12 feet in length, and 26-gauge panels. Mr. Brammer showed satellite imagery exhibiting neighboring properties with metal panel roof systems. He said corrugated and other metal panel roofing systems are common on commercial and industrial buildings, including buildings within the immediate area. Staff recommended approval of the replacement of the existing asphalt shingle roof with a metal panel roof as proposed.

The applicant, Allen George, spoke in favor of the application. He stated he wants to install the metal roof because it will last longer. With no questions for the applicant and no one else in support or opposition, Dr. Hamm made a motion to approve the application as submitted. Ms. Gladwin seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous (4-0 vote).

V. Consideration of Administrative Review and Approvals

Board members reviewed the Administrative Reviews for the month of November with no questions.

VI. Other Business

(A) Local Historic District Survey Update (Phase II) – Mr. Brammer stated that the on-the-ground survey was completed the week of November 15th. He provided the commissioners a copy of the map with the count of parcels and buildings supplied by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission to compare with the consultants number because it was considerably lower than that of the SGRC. The surveying company came back with 499 and the initial RFP reflected as many as 927 parcels and buildings. Matt Martin (City Planner) and Mr. Brammer met to ensure that the boundaries of the survey were accurate. The surveying company confirmed that the boundaries were the same, but that they did not survey the south side of Savannah Avenue and did not survey some properties on the opposite side of West Street,

which are in the historic district. Vacant lots and demolition accounted for much of the discrepancy. Mr. Brammer stated that there was probably much that was missed on the south side of Savannah Avenue and West Street, but the conversation confirmed that the bulk of all of the neighborhoods were covered.

(B) Main Street Façade Grant Program – Mr. Brammer stated that Main Street has resurrected their façade grant after coming into some money from a parking lot sale totaling approximately \$38,000. Main Street already has completed one matching grant to The Flower Gallery to improve the storefront and there is another one coming up soon. Projects may come before the Commission if there are considerable changes. Staff wanted to make the Commission aware.

(C) 2022 HPC Meeting Calendar – Commissioners were supplied a calendar for 2022 calendar year with tentative workshop dates. They looked over the schedule and voted to approve the schedule. Mr. Crane motioned to approve the minutes and Dr. Hamm seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous (4-0 vote).

VII. New Business

(A) New Business on the Floor – Nancy Warren approached the lectern to speak about the Deming house. She thanked everyone involved in the process of helping with the Deming house protection and sale. She stated that she became involved when Sally Querin spoke with her about the house at Bleu Café. Mr. Warren, James Horton, and Vickie Everett worked together to get the Deming House recognized on the official Georgia Trust Places in Peril list. She brought news that the Deming house is off the Places in Peril list and has been sold along with the three smaller houses in proximity. She also thanked Bob Smith and Vickie Everett for showing the house. She shared that the new owner found the Deming House while visiting Valdosta. He played football at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkansas and played against Valdosta State University. His wife was stationed briefly at Moody Air Force Base, so they are familiar with the area. On a recent visit, they were driving around looking for the stadium and came across the Deming house and called Ms. Warren. The owner lives in American Canyon, California, south of Napa. The family is settled in California for now, but have plans for the Deming house property. Ms. Warren read a statement from the owner saying, "The little houses will be restored for rent to Valdosta State faculty and the plan for the Deming house is to turn both floors into living room spaces with the dual function of being rented by floor or all together. The style and design will remain the same from a historical standpoint."

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairman Alvarez called for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Gladwin made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Crane seconded the motion. It was called and carried unanimously (4-0 vote). The meeting adjourned at 6:57 pm.

HPC Chairman



Date

1/4/22