

MINUTES

Valdosta Historic Preservation Commission

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

January 9, 2023 5:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Ms. Celine Gladwin
Dr. Harry Hamm
Ms. Sandie Burkett
Ms. Laura Yale
Ms. Sally Querin
Mr. Tommy Crane

MEMBERS ABSENT

Dr. Alex Alvarez

STAFF PRESENT

Mr. Jeff Brammer

VISITORS PRESENT

John Pritchett
Patricia Pritchett
Janet Carter
Vickie Everitte
Dustin Merriman
Jeff Hanson
AJ Ramirez
Alin Contreras

I. Call to Order and Determination of Quorum

The meeting was called to order at 5:33 p.m. by Vice Chairman Gladwin. It was determined that a quorum of members was present. Ms. Gladwin thanked everyone for coming and reminded audience members to sign the attendance register.

II. Review and Approval of Minutes

The December 5, 2022, draft minutes were reviewed by the Commission. Dr. Hamm noted a small grammatical correction. Mr. Crane motioned to approve the minutes. Dr. Hamm seconded the motion. It was called and carried 5-0.

III. Consideration of Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) Applications

- A. HPC-2022-144 — 108 South Patterson Street:** Mr. Brammer presents. The petitioner requests approval to remove and replace 17 exterior dormer windows. The existing dormer windows are double-hung, wood-framed, windows with 6/6 lite configuration. The petitioner proposes to replace them with single-hung, vinyl-framed, windows with similar 6/6 lite configuration.

Staff acknowledged the property is considered a non-contributing resource to the district. Staff also acknowledges the proposed window replacements are only for the roof-level portion of the property. However, staff finds the project conflicts with local historic district guidelines. The guidelines call for the retention of historic fabric, including windows. As vinyl-framed windows are considered incompatible with the historic district, staff recommends disapproval of the project as proposed. Staff recommends the petitioner replace the existing windows with in-kind materials.

Mr. Dustin Merriman, a representative with IDP South Patterson, owner of the building, spoke on behalf of the application. Mr. Merriman brought an example of the proposed window to show the Commission. He said that it will be hard to tell three stories up that the windows are vinyl. He stated that they do intend to retain the wood frames, but just place the vinyl windows within the existing casing. Mr. Merriman stated that there are different colors from which to choose.

Ms. Gladwin asked for clarification about the retention of the wood window casing. Mr. Merriman reiterated that they intended to keep the wood casing and sills, just replace the double-hung wood sashes and rails with single-hung vinyl systems. Ms. Gladwin asked if they applicant had considered installing clad wood windows. Mr. Merriman said they were trying to find the most cost-effective solution. Ms. Querin asked if the building was occupied. Mr. Merriman stated that the first and second floors have occupied office space. Mr. Crane asked for confirmation that they intended to use 6/6 lite configuration. Mr. Merriman confirmed.

There being no one else speaking either in favor or opposition, the Commission discussed. Dr. Hamm, Ms. Gladwin, and Ms. Querin all stated that they believed the height and limited visibility of the replacements from the street was an important mitigating factor. Dr. Hamm made a motion to approve the project as proposed. Ms. Burkett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (5-0 vote).

- B. HPC-2022-145 — 708 Hill Terrace:** Mr. Brammer presents. The petitioner requests approval to remove and replace 10 exterior windows and enclose a formerly existing open front porch. The petitioner proposes to replace 10, double-hung, wood-framed, windows with 6/6 lite configurations with single-hung, vinyl-framed, windows with 6/6 GBG SDL. The petitioner also proposes to enclose a 6'x5' open front porch with new wood siding and a new vinyl-framed window system. **NOTE:** The work is already mostly complete. The property was issued a stop work by the City Marshals and ordered to come into compliance.

Staff finds the project as proposed conflicts with district design guidelines. Historic windows should be retained, if possible, and/or replaced with in-kind materials. Front porches should not be enclosed with windows, glass, siding, or masonry. Per the guidelines, staff recommends the windows be replaced with in-kind materials and the front porch be rehabilitated to its previously existing form.

Mr. John Pritchett, property owner, spoke on behalf of the application. Mr. Pritchett stated that at the time he purchased the house, the building was not secure and the elements were causing interior damage. He said they made renovations to secure the house from the elements. Furthermore, he said he saw other houses in the neighborhood with vinyl windows and assumed that that was OK. He said he also was not told by the realtor or knew himself that the house was located in the Local Historic District. He said he and his wife, both retired, purchased the house with the intention of producing rental income.

Ms. Querin asked when the applicant purchased the home. Mr. Pritchett said he purchased the home not quite 10 years ago. Ms. Querin asked if the realtor explained to him that the house was within the Local Historic District. He said "No." Ms. Gladwin asked if any of the original windows remained on the property. Mr. Pritchett said that they "have some, but they're not functional." He said what remains is in poor condition. Dr. Hamm asked about the new enclosed room. Mr. Pritchett said that it is a utility room.

Ms. Pritchett asked about the status of other houses in the area having vinyl windows. Dr. Hamm said that is the case all over town. People doing things without permits, without approval. Alin Contreras, the contractor, answered some specific questions about materials used on the exterior. Mr. Contreras reiterated that the original windows have either been thrown away or are non-functioning. Ms. Querin asked Mr. Contreras how long he has been a local contractor. He said since 2000. She asked if he was familiar with the Local Historic District. He said he didn't realize the property was historic because of its poor condition. He said he was also not aware of the specific district boundaries.

Janet Carter, a neighbor, spoke in favor of the application. She said her back yard abuts the subject property. She said she welcomes the improvements to the property. Ms. Carter said she understands the Local Historic District, and that she has been before the HPC for improvements herself. She said it is a blessing to see people purchase houses in her neighborhood and work to rehabilitate them. She said she applauds Mr. Pritchett for trying to restore the property and make the neighborhood look better.

There being no one else speaking either in favor or opposition, the Commission discussed. Ms. Gladwin said she appreciated that the wood siding was being replaced with wood siding. She said this is a tough case because the work has already been done. Ms. Gladwin said she believed it was not feasible to remove all the improvements. She reiterated that vinyl windows are not appropriate for the Local Historic District. Ms. Gladwin said it's a shame the windows are gone, but she doesn't necessarily see a problem with the porch enclosure.

Ms. Querin made a suggestion to approve the application as proposed. However, Ms. Querin qualified her suggestion saying that although the HPC should not require the applicant to change anything already done, she wanted it known that future changes must receive prior approval. Dr. Hamm said the HPC recently heard a similar application and required that applicant to replace the front windows with wood-framed windows. Dr. Hamm said he believed wood windows could be located rather quickly (and inexpensively, i.e., used windows) and required to go on the front of the house. Dr. Hamm noted his comments as a suggestion.

Ms. Gladwin agreed that, ideally, if the front of the house could retain its fabric, that would be best. However, Mr. Crane noted that original façade has already been changed. Therefore, it's not possible to retain the original fabric regardless of what the applicant does.

Ms. Querin made a motion to approve the project as proposed. Ms. Burkett seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-1 (Dr. Hamm opposed).

- C. **HPC-2022-146 — 1611 North Patterson Street:** Applicant not in attendance. Dr. Hamm motioned to table the application. Ms. Yale seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

Staff learned shortly after meeting that the applicant withdrew the application shortly before the meeting.

IV. Consideration of Administrative Review and Approvals

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

V. Other Business

(A) **Local Historic District Survey Update (Phase II)** – Mr. Brammer stated that the City is still finalizing the grant completion report for the recently-completed Phase II Local Historic District Historic Resource Survey. Mr. Brammer said he expected to submit the grant paperwork to the Georgia SHPO soon for reimbursement.

(B) **Long-Term Preservation Planning (Phase III)** – Mr. Brammer stated that information concerning the 2023 CLG grant applications has been posted online by the Georgia SHPO. Application submittals are due February 1, 2023. Staff noted the City of Valdosta remains eligible to apply for funding based on its status as a "Certified Local Government."

Staff and HPC members discussed the Commission's role in drafting letters of support for the grant application. Staff provided HPC members with copies of their previous letters to use as templates for the new application. Staff said they would send a reminder to HPC members a week before the submittal is due.

VII. New Business

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business, Ms. Yale made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Crane seconded the motion. It was called and carried unanimously (6-0 vote). The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

HPC Chairman  _____

Date 2-7-23