

MINUTES

**HARRISBURG ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
January 8, 2024
THE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. CITY GOVERNMENT CENTER
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Trina Gribble, Chair
Bruce Henry, Deputy Codes Administrator/Vice Chair
April Rucker
Camille Bennett
Kent Hurst

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Geoffrey Knight, Planning Director
Don Styer, Assistant City Solicitor

OTHERS PRESENT: See Sign-In Sheet

CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 PM

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mrs. Gribble noted that Mr. Hurst had submitted minor edits to the October and November 2023 meeting minutes to the Board and Planning Bureau staff earlier that day. She asked whether there were changes from other Board members. Ms. Rucker moved, and Ms. Bennett seconded the motion, to Approve the minutes from the October 18, 2023 and November 6, 2023 meetings with the corrections noted by Mr. Hurst in an email to Planning Bureau staff. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (5-0).

OTHER BUSINESS:

1. Vote on Board positions

Mrs. Gribble asked whether the Board could move the vote on Board positions to the end of the meeting. Mr. Knight stated that he felt the Board could choose to do that if the felt comfortable with the cases being handled by the current Chair (Mrs. Gribble).

After discussion of the meeting schedule and potential relocation proposal, the Board returned to their vote on the Chair and Vice Chair positions for 2024. Mr. Styer stated that any Board member could nominate themselves or someone else and then the Board would vote on the nomination.

Ms. Rucker nominated Ms. Bennett for the Chair. Mr. Knight asked Ms. Bennett if she accepted the nomination; Mr. Styer noted that she would not have to accept and that she could not be forced to serve as Chair due to another member's nomination. She thanked Ms. Rucker for the nomination but stated that she did not want to serve in that role.

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Mrs. Gribble noted that she had already been serving as Chair and that she was willing to nominate herself to continue serving in that role; Mr. Henry seconded the motion. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (5-0).

Mr. Knight solicited nominations for the Vice Chair, noting that the duties were limited, although they would function in the role of Chair if that individual was not present or had to recuse themselves. Ms. Bennett nominated Mr. Henry for the position, and Ms. Rucker seconded the motion. Mr. Knight asked Mr. Henry if he was willing to serve in the role; he confirmed that he was. Mrs. Gribble asked whether Mr. Henry's role as the Deputy Codes Administrator prevented him from serving as the Chair; Mr. Styer reviewed the guiding regulations and confirmed that he could not find a provision that prevented any of the Board members from serving as either Chair or Vice Chair. Mrs. Gribble suggested that the motion include a condition that the City confirm Mr. Henry's eligibility to serve in the role. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (5-0).

Following the vote of Board positions, there was some general discussion about the history of the Allison Hill Municipal Historic District, and importance of reviewing projects within its boundaries. Ms. Rucker asked if property owners were aware of the designation of their properties. Mr. Knight noted that buyers and sellers of properties should be aware of any conditions or designations on their buildings and lots, stated that City staff tried to work closely with realtors and developers to ensure they had all the necessary information, and noted that he always encouraged anyone interested in buying properties that they should contact the City prior to finalizing any purchases. He noted that the City was working internally between departments to ensure that information was disseminated properly and that reviews of property transactions were coordinated between the appropriate departments to ensure buyers received all of the necessary information.

OLD BUSINESS:

- 1. 1161 Derry Street, filed by Mark Brown, to replace the decorative wooden headers on all the windows with steel and brick headers. This is an after-the-fact application.**
- 2. 1163 Derry Street, filed by Mark Brown, to replace the decorative wooden headers on all the windows with steel and brick headers; to replace the wooden sills with brick sills; to replace the rear porch with historic wooden railings and brackets with pressure-treated lumber; and to remove the historic metal fence enclosing the rear yard.**

The case was represented by Mark Brown & Eric Love with Able Property Management (the property owners), 94 Knight Court, Palmyra, PA 17078 (aka "the Applicants").

Mr. Knight suggested that the two applications be combined into a single review as it involved the same Applicants and the same issues under review. He gave a synopsis of the case report recommending the request be Approved with the following conditions:

1. The Applicant must reinstall the decorative wooden headers and the wooden sills around the windows at 1163 Derry Street; these historic elements were removed without the submittal of a Building Permit or City authorization, and the Applicant has provided no evidence for his statement that they are not original to the property or that they were replaced in the 1960s or

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1970s. It is likely they are original to the property and the Planning Bureau would have required the Applicant to repair or replace them in-kind if they have secured approval before commencing with the work. Even if the headers *are not* original to the building, the Secretary of the Interior's Standard #4 notes that changes which have "acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved."

2. The Applicant will provide the Planning Bureau with detailed elevation plans demonstrating the work proposed on all elevations of both buildings, so that the Bureau can ascertain whether any other work not included in the Applicant's current submission, such as work on the rear of 1161 Derry Street, can be reviewed for conformance with the Historic District Design Guidelines.
3. The Applicant will discuss options for the entrance on the side elevation with the Planning Bureau prior to installation; the Bureau would recommend a solid, paneled, wooden door.
4. The Applicant will ensure that railings for the rear porch and fire escape feature two x two spindles in a design discussed with and approved by the Planning Bureau.
5. The Applicant will be permitted to utilize the proposed Andersen 100 series once the headers and sills have been replaced, but must ensure the arched windows on the third floor are replaced in the same design.

Mrs. Gribble asked the Applicants whether the conditions in the Planning Bureau's case report were acceptable; they stated that when they first began work on the property, they weren't aware that the property was located in an historic district and that they weren't familiar with the architectural aspects of such properties. They noted that while they had done many projects in the city, they had never worked on one in an historic district. They apologized for the unpermitted work and stated that they intended on working with the Planning Bureau to ensure the appropriate changes were made.

The Applicants stated that some of the wooden headers were removed because the brick around them had been deteriorating, but stated that they could reconstruct the windows with steel headers faced with wood. They stated that the building had been deteriorating since before they purchased it, and that it required a significant number of repairs. They stated that since the work had been stopped, they'd been educating themselves on how to approach repairs to historic properties, and that they were willing to agree to the conditions to ensure the project could be completed in a timely manner. They stated that if the Board felt they should remove the fire escape in the rear of the property, they would be willing to do that. They also noted that there had previously been a low brick knee wall along the sidewalk on which the former fence was located, and that they were rebuilding the wall and they were sandblasting the fences before repainting and reinstalling them.

The Applicants reiterated that they had not done work on historic properties in the past and that they were not aware the property was historic when they began work. They also noted that they intended on doing the best job possible on the property and expressed hope that the surrounding neighborhood would be improved as well. They stated they did not want to invest so much money into the property that it would be prohibitive to tenants, noting that they did rent to Section 8 voucher holders. They Applicants also stated they wanted the property to be safe for prospective tenants.

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Mrs. Gribble asked whether there were any questions or comments from the other Board members. Ms. Bennett asked the Applicants whether they still had any of the original wooden framing elements; they confirmed that they had retained some of the pieces, and noted that some of the interior components might be in better condition and more useful for the facing elements. They also noted that they had some older hardwood from other jobs that they might be able to mill for the current property. The Applicants reiterated that they intended on installing steel headers on the interior, which would carry the load of the building façade and allow the wooden headers to face the steel as non-structural members.

Mrs. Gribble asked Mr. Henry what kind of documentation the Applicants would need to submit in order to install the steel header/wood facing as proposed. He asked the Applicants whether they had received a permit yet; Mr. Knight confirmed that he had the permit with the project file. The Applicants stated that they would request a framing inspection to insure their proposal was structurally sound. Mr. Henry concurred and stated that the Applicants should provide a complete set of plans for the Codes Bureau's review. Mrs. Gribble noted that one of the conditions in the case report was to provide detailed elevations, which would be important not only from a structural perspective but an historic and aesthetic one as well. The Applicants noted that there were products which could tie the brick façade into the wood framing.

Mr. Hurst stated that the discussion was fairly straightforward given that the Applicants had agreed to the conditions in the case report. He thanked the Applicants for taking on such a difficult project. They stated that they were happy to rehabilitate the property and hoped it would become a model for the neighborhood.

Mr. Hurst asked whether the project would be resubmitted for review before the Board once additional information, such as the proposed elevation plans, were submitted. Mr. Knight stated that if, upon review of the elevation plans, he noted aspects which were not historically appropriate or deviated significantly from the current appearance of the building, he would coordinate with the Applicants to find administratively approvable alternatives; he stated that if they were not able to identify such options, the project would be brought back before the Board. Mr. Knight stated that the goal was to work towards administratively approvable solutions. Mrs. Gribble stated that she felt the conditions in the case report gave enough flexibility to allow an expeditious review going forward.

Mr. Hurst moved, and Mr. Henry seconded the motion, to Approve with Staff Conditions. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (5-0).

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. 104 Walnut Street, filed by Bradley Jones with Harristown Enterprises, Inc., to make exterior alterations to the property including: the replacement of windows with different pane configurations; replacement of the first-floor entry; enclosure of the rear yard with a wooden fence; and installation of a Juliet balcony on the second floor of the rear elevation.**

The case was represented by Bradley Jones with Harristown Enterprises, LLC (the developer and property owner), 320 Market Street, Suite 273E, Harrisburg, PA 17101; and Miranda O'Dell &

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Richard Gribble with By Design Consultants (the project architects), 1950 Market Street, Camp Hill, PA 17011 (aka “the Applicants”). Mrs. Gribble noted that her husband was one of the Applicants and that she would thus recuse herself from discussion regarding the project.

Mr. Knight suggested that the two applications be combined into a single review as it involved the same Applicants and the same issues under review. He gave a synopsis of the case report recommending the request be Approved with the following conditions:

1. The Applicant will retain the existing pane configuration for the windows on the front elevation.
2. The proposed fence will be no more than six feet in height; otherwise, the Applicant will receive approval of a requisite Variance application from the Zoning Hearing Board.
3. Any new wooden elements will be painted or stained within three months of installation.

Mrs. Gribble asked whether the current case and next case should be reviewed together since they were adjacent properties with similar proposed alterations; Mr. Knight stated that it would make sense and that he would defer to the Board. Mr. Hurst agreed and stated that he felt they should be reviewed together.

Mrs. Gribble noted that while the applications may be discussed together, the Board may want to vote on them separately. She also noted that the Applicants may wish to provide additional information regarding the proposals; they stated that the conditions in the Planning Bureau’s case report were acceptable. Mrs. Gribble recused herself from the discussion.

Mr. Henry assumed the role of Acting Chair; he asked Mr. Hurst if he had any questions or comments on the project. Mr. Hurst stated that the primary issues seemed to be the pane configuration of the windows on the front elevation, and asked the Applicants whether retaining the existing pane configuration was acceptable; they responded that it was. Mr. Hurst stated that he had no other questions.

Ms. Bennett noted that the proposal included the removal of the stairway to the second-floor porch on the rear elevation and asked why they were proposing to remove that access. The Applicants noted that the building would be separated into two apartments, and that they wanted to remove unwanted access between the units that the current stairway allowed to create more security for tenants of the units. Ms. Bennett asked whether two forms of egress were required for apartment buildings; the Applicants stated that they did not believe that two stairways were required for apartments on the first and second floors of buildings. They also noted that they preferred to keep the units separated for security reasons, and noted that retaining the stairway would mean that residents of the building could go between units.

Ms. Bennett noted that the Applicants were designing the building and the proposed alterations around their future tenants, and requested additional information on the intentions behind the project. The Applicants noted that they were establishing two apartments in each building, and confirmed that the interiors of each building would be fully rehabilitated; they noted that the original use of the properties was as residential uses.

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Mr. Knight noted that Mr. Henry could speak to the building code requirements, from his position as the Deputy Codes Administrator. Mr. Henry noted that a third-floor unit would require the provision of a rear fire escape and that a second-floor-only unit would not require the secondary egress; however, he expressed support for retaining the existing access stairs.

Mr. Knight asked Mr. Henry whether he wanted to call the vote. Mr. Styer clarified that because Mrs. Gribble had recused herself, three votes would be required to approve the project. He noted that that because there had been more discussion on one of the properties, he recommended the Board take separate votes on each application.

Mr. Hurst asked Mr. Styer to confirm that he wanted the Board to take two separate votes on the applications, stating that he didn't want to encounter the same issues [with partial approvals] that arose at the November 2023 HARB meeting. Mr. Styer noted the applications could be voted on simultaneously, but that because there seemed to be concerns about one of the properties, the Board might want to vote on them separately. He confirmed that because they were distinct applications, they could be voted on separately. Mr. Knight confirmed that they were separate applications.

Mr. Henry stated that he was going to call two votes because they were separate applications.

Ms. Rucker moved, and Mr. Hurst seconded the motion, to Approve with Staff Conditions. The motion was adopted by a majority vote (3-1; Mrs. Gribble was recused).

2. 106 Walnut Street, filed by Bradley Jones with Harristown Enterprises, Inc., to make exterior alterations to the property including: the replacement of windows with different pane configurations; installation of a new rear entry door and stairs; infill of a first-floor window in the rear; and enclosure of the rear yard with a wooden fence.

The case was represented by Bradley Jones with Harristown Enterprises, LLC (the developer and property owner), 320 Market Street, Suite 273E, Harrisburg, PA 17101; and Miranda O'Dell & Richard Gribble with By Design Consultants (the project architects), 1950 Market Street, Camp Hill, PA 17011 (aka "the Applicants"). Mrs. Gribble noted that her husband was one of the Applicants and that she would thus recuse herself from discussion regarding the project.

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3. Any new wooden elements will be painted or stained within three months of installation.

Mrs. Gribble asked whether the current case and next case should be reviewed together since they were adjacent properties with similar proposed alterations; Mr. Knight stated that it would make sense and that he would defer to the Board. Mr. Hurst agreed and stated that he felt they should be reviewed together.

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Mrs. Gribble noted that while the applications may be discussed together, the Board may want to vote on them separately. She also noted that the Applicants may wish to provide additional information regarding the proposals; they stated that the conditions in the Planning Bureau's case report were acceptable. Mrs. Gribble recused herself from the discussion.

Mr. Henry assumed the role of Acting Chair; he asked Mr. Hurst if he had any questions or comments on the project. Mr. Hurst stated that the primary issues seemed to be the pane configuration of the windows on the front elevation, and asked the Applicants whether retaining the existing pane configuration was acceptable; they responded that it was. Mr. Hurst stated that he had no other questions.

Ms. Bennett noted that the proposal included the removal of the stairway to the second-floor porch on the rear elevation and asked why they were proposing to remove that access. The Applicants noted that the building would be separated into two apartments, and that they wanted to remove unwanted access between the units that the current stairway allowed to create more security for tenants of the units. Ms. Bennett asked whether two forms of egress were required for apartment buildings; the Applicants stated that they did not believe that two stairways were required for apartments on the first and second floors of buildings. They also noted that they preferred to keep the units separated for security reasons, and noted that retaining the stairway would mean that residents of the building could go between units.

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Mr. Knight asked Mr. Henry whether he wanted to call the vote. Mr. Styer clarified that because Mrs. Gribble had recused herself, three votes would be required to approve the project. He noted that that because there had been more discussion on one of the properties, he recommended the Board take separate votes on each application.

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Mr. Henry stated that he was going to call two votes because they were separate applications.

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Mr. Hurst moved, and Ms. Rucker seconded the motion, to Approve with Staff Conditions. The motion was adopted by a majority vote (3-1; Mrs. Gribble was recused).

- 3. 1322 North 3rd Street, filed by Terence Hanley with Calder Street Development, LLC, to make exterior alterations to the property including: removal of non-historic elements; the installation of divided-lite, fiberglass front entry doors and transoms to match existing recessed entrance; the installation of fiberglass storefront windows topped with wooden panels; installation of an ADA ramp on the front elevation; replacement of existing non-historic doors and windows on the rear façade with fiberglass doors and windows.**

The case was represented by Jennifer O’Neill with Calder Street Development, LLC (the property owner), 1338 Penn Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102; and Miranda O’Dell & Richard Gribble with By Design Consultants (the project architects), 1950 Market Street, Camp Hill, PA 17011 (aka “the Applicants”). Mrs. Gribble noted that her husband was one of the Applicants and that she would thus recuse herself from discussion regarding the project.

Mr. Knight gave a synopsis of the case report recommending the request be Approved with the following conditions:

1. The Applicant will submit an Easement Application, and receive approval from the City, for the proposed ADA ramp on the front elevation.
2. The Planning Bureau would recommend the use of metal railings for the new and reconstructed porches at the rear of the property to better blend in with the metal fire escape to which they will connect; if the Board grants approval for wooden railings, the Bureau would recommend they be painted black.

Mrs. Gribble asked the Applicants if they wanted to provide any additional information regarding the project; they stated that the conditions in the Planning Bureau’s case report were acceptable. Mrs. Gribble recused herself from the discussion.

Mr. Henry assumed the role of Acting Chair; he asked if any of the other Board members had any questions or comments on the project.

Ms. Bennett asked the Applicants to clarify the former use of the property. They noted that it had previously been a private club, and that while they were unsure of its original use, they assumed the first floor had been a commercial storefront when the property had been redeveloped as a private club. Mr. Knight noted that the property had previously been owned by the West End Republication Club.

Mr. Hurst stated that he had no questions.

Ms. Rucker stated that she had no questions.

Ms. Bennett asked the Applicants whether they would be developing residential units in the building; they confirmed that they would have three residential units on the upper floors. Ms.

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Rucker asked the Applicants what would occupy the first floor; the Applicant confirmed that it would be a retail storefront, noting that the intended on continuing the mixed-use nature of the block.

Ms. Rucker moved, and Mr. Hurst seconded the motion, to Approve with Staff Conditions. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (4-0).

OTHER BUSINESS:

2. 2024 Meeting Schedule discussion

Mr. Knight informed the Board that during the meeting the following night [note: January 9, 2024], City Council would potentially be voting to change the day of their regularly-scheduled meetings from Tuesdays to Mondays.

Mr. Hurst asked why the City Council was intending on changing the dates of their regular meetings. Mr. Styer state that councilmembers wanted to be able to attend Harrisburg School Board meetings, which were held on the same day.

Mr. Knight noted that the potential change gave the Board two options: they could choose to meet on the same day, but in a different location, such as the Basement Suite or the EOC, or they could choose to reschedule the day that they met. He noted that each option had drawbacks. If the location of the meeting was changed, it would involve more time and effort from Planning Bureau staff to set up for each meeting, and the alternative locations were less accommodating than the City Council Chambers, whereas changing the day of the meeting would potentially impact Board members' availability and would involve more scheduling rearrangements when City Council meetings were moved to Tuesdays due to a holiday on Monday. Mr. Knight noted that if the Board elected to change the day of the week, they would still be able to meet in City Council Chambers. He asked the Board which option they preferred.

Ms. Bennett expressed her opposition to City Council's proposal and stated that she was against the option of changing the meeting date because her personal schedule could not be moved around. She stated that she'd prefer to move back to the EOC; Mr. Knight stated that the Board could choose that option, but noted that it would involve a lot of rearranging furniture and equipment in that room since it was the Police Bureau's training area. Ms. Rucker concurred and stated that Mondays were the best meeting days for her schedule as well.

Mrs. Gribble stated that she was able to move her schedule based on what the Board decided, but concurred that meetings on Mondays were the preferable option. Mr. Hurst and Mr. Henry agreed that it would be preferable to retain the same date and meet in a different location.

Mrs. Gribble noted that the issue introduced an opportunity to discuss another issue, specifically increasing the use of more audiovisual capabilities during meetings. She stated that she felt the current format was a bit outdated and expressed interest in using the flat screen TVs recently installed in City Council Chambers to enhance the discussion of projects during their meetings. Mrs. Gribble stated that she felt it would better engage the public; she asked whether it was possible to include that capability in the basement space. Mr. Knight agreed that it would improve the

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meetings and noted that they could at least get a digital projector for upcoming meetings and that he would coordinate with the IT Department to expand AV capabilities for the basement suite.

Mr. Hurst asked whether it would be possible to allow remote access to meetings for Board members and the general public, noting that it had been done during the COVID pandemic; he noted that he would have preferred to join the current meeting remotely as he was dealing with a slight illness. Mr. Knight noted that City Council has passed legislation supporting remote access to meetings, but that there were logistical and staffing issues with getting the operation set up and managed during a meeting; he directed the inquiry to Mr. Styer.

Mr. Styer asked whether the was referring to Board members or the public; Mr. Hurst noted that his question was intended for Board members but could apply to the public as well. Mrs. Gribble noted that it would be especially relevant for the Board to meet quorum since there were only five members. Mr. Styer stated that members needed to be physically present to establish a quorum and that remote access would not address that issue. He noted that while Board members could attend meetings and vote remotely, a quorum could only be established by the physical presence of members.

Mr. Knight noted that in order to livestream the meetings in the same way the Planning Commission and Zoning Hearing Board meetings were, they would need to get cameras and microphones installed in the basement suite; he noted that he wasn't sure if there was money in the City's current budget to fund such work, and that it might need to be planned for the 2025 budget. Mr. Hurst noted that if such proposals could increase the accessibility of the meetings.

Mr. Styer noted that the Board might be able to generate action on the request by proposing amendments to the by-laws governing the Board that City Council would have to consider, although he noted that he wasn't sure how they would act on such a request. Mr. Knight noted that a proposal to increase the AV capabilities of the space may actually be in the works, and stated that he would inquire about the issue with IT.

Ms. Bennett stated that she thought the current method of having digital packets online and hard copy packets for Board members in attendance was sufficient.

ADJOURNMENT: 6:58 PM

Mr. Henry moved, and Mr. Hurst seconded the motion, to adjourn. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (5-0).