

MINUTES
TOWN OF FORT MILL
HISTORIC REVIEW BOARD
April 13th, 2021
Virtual Meeting
4:30 PM

Present: Chairman Louis Roman, David Booth, Megan Brinton, Scott Couchenour, Samantha Nifong,
Planning Director Penelope Karagounis, Senior Planner Alex Moore

Guests: Les Spencer, Terry Kountz

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Louis Roman called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Louis Roman entertained a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Couchenour made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 9th, 2021, meeting as presented. David Booth seconded the motion to approve the minutes. The minutes were then approved by a vote of 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Louis Roman opened the new business portion of the meeting by noting the contents of the agenda and the associated packet of information.

NEW BUSINESS ITEM ONE (1)

The first item on the agenda included a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for the replacement of windows at St. John's United Methodist Church. Mr. Les Spencer represented St. John's UMC.

Senior Planner Moore gave an overview of the COA request. He noted that the windows to be replaced were located within the church's education building as shown on the submitted drawings. The applicant's request for replacement was based on the deterioration of the current windows. This property is located within the Town of Fort Mill Historic District.

It is not located on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The property is zoned local commercial district. The church notes on their application that they would like to replace deteriorating windows within the education building.

This deterioration includes wood rot and flaking paint caused by condensation aggravated by the existence of storm windows. Additionally, the applicant indicates that the existing single thickness glass affords little, if any, sound attenuation.

So, the church would like to replace the existing windows with Pella 250 series vinyl units. These windows will incorporate the color, size, detail, and lite pattern which matches the existing windows by location. The glazing on the proposed windows will be insulated, clear glass. Thermal and acoustical performance will be improved.

Page 13 indicates that portion of the St. John's campus, the educational building, which will have new windows. Page 14 shows east and west elevation views of the building along with typical, existent window conditions. Page 15 illustrates the look of the replacement windows.

Pages 16 and 17 contain elevation views of those windows to be replaced. I would then note the historic district guidelines review on pages 6 and 7:

- **Section 3.23: Preserve the functional and decorative features of a historic window. Frames and sashes should be repaired and replaced, whenever conditions permit.** The applicant has indicated within this application that the existing wood windows are deteriorated in the form of wood rot and flaking. Thus, it seems that these windows cannot be repaired as a practical matter.
- **Section 3.24: Preserve the size and proportion of a historic window opening. Reducing an original opening to accommodate a smaller window or increasing it to receive a larger window is inappropriate. Preserve a distinctive window opening shape, such as an arched top.** The number of existing window openings are not being reduced. Additionally, the application materials indicate that the replacement windows will be appropriately sized for the existing openings.
- **Section 3.25: Preserve the historic ratio of window openings to solid wall on a primary façade.** The historic ratio of window openings is not being altered.
- **Section 3.26: Match a replacement window to the original in its design.** The replacement windows will be double hung just as the existing windows. The grille pattern of the replacement windows matches the existing windows with 6/6 and 4/4 patterns.
- **Section 3.27: In a replacement window, use materials that appear like the original. The materials that are being used will appear to be very similar to the existing windows.** See the page within this packet containing the window types, grille details, color, and pattern information. Though they are vinyl, the replacement windows do incorporate materials that appear very similar to the existent, original windows.
- **Section 3.28: Match, as closely as possible, the profile of the sash and its components to that of the original window.** The applicant has noted that the proposed replacement model will contain simulated divided lite design that creates shadows very similar to that of a true divided lite.
- **Section 3.29: Preserve the position, number, and arrangement of historic windows in a building wall.** The application indicates that there are no window openings proposed to be enclosed.
- **Recommendation:** The project as presented indicates that a total of 52 windows are being replaced. While the historic district design guidelines do state that vinyl replacement windows are not appropriate, the applicant has carefully chosen a window that very closely replicates the original, wooden ones. This is due to the design details which are incorporated into the respective Pella 250 series. Therefore, staff believes that there will be no discernable difference between the current windows and the proposed replacements. The new windows will additionally be much more efficient than the original windows and will meet the parameters of the 2009 Energy Conservation Code (IECC 2009). The IECC 2009 is a model code produced by the International Code Council (ICC). This document provides the foundation for the building code upon

which the Town of Fort Mill operates. Planning staff thus recommends that the HRB grant **APPROVAL** for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application as submitted.

Senior Planner Moore then asked if the HRB members had any questions or comments on this information.

Megan Brinton asked the age of the church educational building.

Les Spencer, representing St. John's UMC stated that the educational building was originally constructed in the late 1920s or early 1930s.

Ms. Brinton asked Mr. Spencer if the church had investigated repairing the windows.

Mr. Spencer stated that the church did not investigate repairing the windows due to the perceived advantages of replacing them.

Ms. Brinton asked Mr. Spencer if the church looked at the cost difference between replacing the existing windows with wood versus the vinyl product.

Mr. Spencer stated that he did not but that others did. Based on this he believed that the cost difference was as much as 50% to 100% more than the vinyl window product.

To Ms. Brinton's point of asking if the church had looked at non-vinyl products, Chairman Roman noted that he has found that there are manufactured windows in existence which will facilitate the replacement of wooden windows with a like, composite product costing roughly the same.

Ms. Brinton asked Mr. Spencer if the vinyl windows would contain less glass than the existing windows.

Mr. Spencer stated that he had not specifically looked at the amount of glass in the proposed windows versus the existing windows. He did note that the muntins on the replacement windows were nearly identical in size to the existing. Based on this, he surmised that the glazed window area on the replacement windows should also be nearly identical to the existing.

Chairman Roman then stated that moving directly to a vinyl replacement without having any other window models for comparison may set a bad precedent within the historic district. He stated that his thought on this was not generated to ignore the cost of replacement windows that would be incurred by the church, but rather to provide more information to the HRB in reaching a decision.

Scott Couchnour stated that he would make a motion to approve the request as submitted with the notation that the church could look at other options if they wished. Then the church could come back to HRB with that proposal with no application fee required.

This motion did not receive a second and therefore was not voted on.

Ms. Brinton stated that she would instead like to see other alternatives presented by the church, including repairing the windows, as well as the option of replacing with materials other than vinyl.

Chairman Roman asked the other HRB members if they agreed with Ms. Brinton's idea and they responded affirmatively.

Chairman Roman then indicated that the HRB wished to see a cost analysis prior to making a final recommendation on the windows. This analysis would indicate the price differences in vinyl, composite, and wood replacement windows.

Scott Couchnenour then made a motion to defer this item pending the applicant obtaining the information that the HRB requested.

Samantha Nifong seconded the motion.

The HRB then voted 5-0 in favor of the motion to defer this business item to a subsequent meeting.

NEW BUSINESS ITEM TWO (2)

The second item on the agenda included a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for the installation of new equipment on the existing playground at the First Baptist Church of Fort Mill. Mr. Terry Kountz represented First Baptist Church of Fort Mill.

Senior Planner Moore gave an overview of the COA request. This property is within the Town of Fort Mill Historic District and is located at 121 Monroe White Street. It is not located on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The church wishes to install new equipment on their existing playground.

The location of this playground is noted on page 23. Per the plans submitted, this playground consists of 1,410 square feet and has a perimeter of 148 feet (see page 29). The playground equipment is illustrated on page 26-28. Additionally, they will be replacing the existing fence around the playground. The new fence is proposed to be black aluminum.

So, the historic district guidelines which will apply in this instance are those for historic, civic, office, industrial, institutional buildings. These are found in Section 3.82 and are found on page 22 within the agenda information.

This guideline notes that properties within the town's historic district include both buildings and the surrounding grounds. All such additions should preserve the key character-defining features that are important in defining the traditional setting of the historic property.

Senior Planner Moore noted that the existing church playground fits very well within the traditional setting of this property as well as into the overall historic district. The new playground equipment as proposed will serve to enhance the existing playground.

Moore then stated that Planning Staff recommends that HRB grant approval for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the addition of the playground equipment at 121 Monroe White Street as presented within this application.

Senior Planner Moore then asked if the HRB members had any questions or comments on this information.

David Booth asked if the proposal was only an update and replacement of what was already in place.

Senior Planner Moore replied that this was correct.

Megan Brinton asked if there was a chain link fence in place currently.

Terry Kountz replied that this was correct. He added that the older playground equipment that was in place was an Eagle Scout project consisting of a wooden structure. He noted that this was beginning to deteriorate and needed to be replaced.

Ms. Brinton stated that she was ok with the proposal and that she liked the look of the proposed aluminum fence and that this would be an upgrade. She also noted that the purpose of the space was not being changed in that there was already a playground at this location.

David Booth then made a motion to approve the COA application as presented.

Megan Brinton seconded the motion.

Chairman Roman asked if there were any further discussions. There being none he asked all those in favor of approving the COA application as presented to signify by saying "aye."

The HRB then voted 5-0 to approve the application as presented.

Chairman Roman then asked the HRB if anyone had any other items to discuss before adjournment.

There being none, Chairman Roman then noted that he had one comment. He went on to state that HRB members were free to speak with citizens about matters that were discussed publicly in HRB meetings. However, members shall not communicate individually on behalf of the HRB within a public forum, whether this be online or otherwise. Rather, when deemed necessary, at the direction of the chairperson, and after consultation with appropriate Town of Fort Mill personnel, suitable messaging will be developed and published publicly. This is to avoid any confusion on the part of citizens and the public due incomplete or inaccurate information due to improper messaging.

There being no other business the meeting adjourned at 5:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Alex J. Moore, AICP
Senior Planner
May 5th, 2021