MINUTES
Landmarks Preservation Commission
Community and Economic Development Department

Date: May 9, 2007
Location: 728 St. Helens, Tacoma Municipal Building North, Room 16

Commission Members in Attendance:
Michael Fast, Chair – Arrived at 5:45
Roger Johnson, Vice-Chair
Greg Benton
Ross Buffington
Elizabeth Chambers
Ken House
Tim McDonald
Kathryn Longwell

Commission Members Absent:
Phillip Hill
Mark McIntire
Jonathan Phillips

Staff Present:
Martha Anderson
Reuben McKnight
Donna Bosinski

Others Present:
Todd and Paula Bond
Michael Sullivan, Artifacts Consulting
Eugenia Woo, Artifacts Consulting
Lea Armstrong
Glynis Casey, North Pacific Design

Vice-Chair Roger Johnson called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

1. ROLL CALL

2. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Excusal of Absences

Commissioner Jonathan Phillips was excused for his absence.

B. Minutes

The Minutes of April 11, 2007, were approved, as submitted.

3. NOMINATIONS – PRELIMINARY REVIEW

A. George R. Osgood Residence (407 North E Street)

The property on today’s agenda is nominated for the Tacoma Register of Historic Places.

Tacoma Register listing follows procedures defined in 13.07.050, and consists of a minimum of two separate Commission meetings. The initial meeting determines whether the property meets the threshold criteria in the ordinance for age and integrity. If the Commission finds that the age and integrity standards are met, then the Commission may move to have the nomination scheduled for a public hearing and comment period, at which the public may enter comments into the record for consideration. Following the comment period, the Commission may deliberate on the nomination for up to 45 days before recommending to City Council listing on the register, or denying the nomination.

The purpose of this review is to determine whether the nominated property meets the threshold criteria and should be scheduled for public testimony.

Mr. Reuben McKnight issued the staff report:

...
The George Osgood Residence is a Shingle style residence, constructed in 1893 and remodeled in 1903, and is a contributing structure in the Stadium-Seminary National Register Historic District. The original design of the home was by Albert Sutton; the subsequent remodel was designed by Carl Darmer.

The threshold criteria for Tacoma Register are listed at 13.07.040B(1), and include:

1. Property is at least 50 years old at the time of nomination; and
2. The property retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association such that it is able to convey its historical, cultural, or architectural significance.

The building appears to retain the character-defining elements of the Shingle style, as well as its design integrity.

Staff recommends scheduling the nomination for public testimony during a hearing on a date yet to be determined.

Mr. Bond reported that since he purchased the home approximately two years ago, he found that the home had been re-sided with 1965 shingles over the original siding, which was beyond repair and was replaced. The windows on the southeast elevation were replaced with new wood windows. The incorrect pillars were removed and the original pillars were restored and installed on the front porch. Electrical wiring was updated and the house was painted. The original staircase had been removed in order to transform the home into apartments. Fortunately, the Darmer staircase had been stored in the basement and subsequently was restored and reinstallaed.

Vice-Chair Johnson indicated that he had toured the home at the time it was for sale and was quite impressed with how much of the original detail had been retained in the dining room and front parlor. He indicated to Mr. Bond that he was delighted that the staircase had been restored.

There was a motion:

“I move that the Landmarks Preservation Commission accept the nomination to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places of 407 North E Street, to be forwarded for public hearing on a date, yet to be determined”.

Motion: McDonald  
Second: Benton  
Motion: Carried

Mr. McKnight stated that he would contact the applicant as soon as a public hearing date had been determined.

4. DESIGN REVIEW

A. Old Business

1. Broadway Local Improvement District

Mr. McKnight stated that he had been working with the Public Works division on the planter issue. He gave the Commission some background of the project, which will provide for roadway and streetscape improvements to:

- Market Street South 9th to South 7th Street
- St. Helens Street South 9th to Market Street
- Broadway from South 9th to South 2nd Street
- South 7th Street from Broadway to St. Helens Street

Portions of the project along east side of Broadway will intersect with the local Old City Hall Historic Special Review District. The Commission’s jurisdiction over this project includes the sidewalk area along Broadway, between 6th and 9th Streets.

This project was presented to the Landmarks Commission on June 22, 2005, for feedback. On November 8, 2006, the Commission approved the portions of the project intersecting the Old City Hall Historic District, with the provision that the proposed planter boxes be presented to the Commission for final approval. The Commission objected to the first proposal for reuse of the existing oval planter boxes on Broadway and St. Helens. The second proposal was not considered sympathetic to the character of the surrounding district.
On March 14, 2007, the Commission rejected a proposed planter as inappropriate to the District. Public Works staff and the Historic Preservation staff have coordinated to generate a new proposal.

The Public Works Department, following the Commission’s direction, has selected three options that are felt to be more in keeping with the historic character of the district. Of these, “Capstan” was the planter identified by Makers for its downtown streetscape design study in 2003. Capstan is also the preferred choice of staff.

It was determined that the finish of the Capstan will not be aggregate. Furthermore, it will be charcoal color.

Commissioner Greg Benton inquired if future planters in the downtown area will automatically default to this style for consistency purposes. Mr. McKnight replied that appropriate uniformity in that district is what would be ideal.

There was a motion:

“I move that the Landmarks Preservation Commission approve the installation of the Capstan planters, as presented by staff”.

Motion: Buffington
Second: McDonald
Motion: Carried

2. 747 St. Helens (Eldridge Hotel)

This is an amendment to the original proposal. The Eldridge Hotel is a City Landmark and is currently undergoing rehabilitation. On December 13, 2007, the Commission approved an exterior renovation of the building. At the time, the applicant requested feedback on the potential for relocating the front entry doors on the St. Helens façade.

Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation:

2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

This proposal does not alter the character defining features of the building and will not result in the loss of historic materials. The location of the entry way is not a significant element of the design of the façade; therefore, staff recommends approval.

Mr. McKnight stated that there will also be an additional element regarding the Broadway side of the building.

Mr. Sullivan introduced Ms. Armstrong, the owner of the building. He then proceeded to update the Commission on the latest conditions and/or findings of the project. Regarding the elevator, several officials confirmed that ADA requires accessibility; therefore, the solution would be to move the entry to the next bay. Where the existing door is located, he proposed to bring the bay flush, thereby eliminating the recess. One slight modification to the project: rather than having an exterior ramp, it was decided to level the threshold and the wheelchair access will be in through the northern entry. There will also be a slight step (grade change) coming up to the main double doors.

Regarding the Broadway elevation: Mr. Sullivan said that it was modified in the 1940’s to a Colonial-type style and framed out the entire front elevation. Originally, the plan was to put a roll-up garage door on the front right (north) bay and do a small storefront entry and leave the brick and marble in place. He explained that as they explored the wall, they found that the sandstone pilasters are intact. At the very top of the sign, there is a course of cut stone running horizontal, and a row of decorative dentals and some decorative moldings – all in stone. The main header running across the top of the doors is gone; therefore, they will re-construct the header and transom lights. They are in the process of exploratory demolition and will report back to the Commission as
soon as full disclosures of all possibilities are available. This side of the building is contributing, in part, to the National Historic District, Mr. Sullivan stated.

Commissioner Ross Buffington inquired if they were planning to reuse the existing black marble for the new entrance and bay on the St. Helens elevation. Mr. Sullivan indicated that they did not expect to have to purchase any new black marble, as the scale is approximately the same. However, in the event they run short of the marble, they found where they can obtain a good match.

Mr. McKnight reported that the Commission had been asked to amend the design review for the St. Helens side for the relocation of the entry. On the Broadway side, the applicant asked for approval and guidance for the rehabilitation – the removal of the non-historic brick and framing that is around the two entries.

Vice-Chair Johnson inquired if there was a motion.

There was a motion:

“I move that the Landmarks Preservation Commission approve the amendment to the design at 747 St. Helens to change the entry, as well as the proposed demolition work, removal of brick, existing storefront and entry – with the proviso that future design work on storefront replacements be brought back for review”.

Motion: Benton  
Second: Chambers  
Motion: Carried (One recusal)

B. New Business


The buildings at 1119-1121 Broadway are known as New York/Ted Brown Buildings and were designated City Landmarks in 2003, and are under the STV program through 2014. When originally designated as landmarks, the owners briefed the Commission on the intent to add additional floors to the existing structures. On January 10, 2007, the project team briefed the Commission and presented conceptual renderings of the proposed floors. On May 2, 2007, the ARC reviewed the proposal.

Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation:

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

The following are comments from the Architectural Review Committee meeting:

- The applicant stated that the intent of the design is to make the additional floors read as two separate buildings.
- The division between the old and the new structures is delineated by the use of a heavy cornice line that separates the old portion and new portion, as well as a material contrast (stucco versus brick), and an 8” offset behind the plane of the original façade.
- The applicant also wished to be exempted from the rooftop mechanical screening requirement.
- The windows are to be non-reflective/non-tinted glass set in metal frames and most likely non-operable.
- It was noted that the overall massing (five stories) is consistent with the period architecture of Tacoma’s downtown.
- The ARC preferred that the radiused portion at the center of the parapet be replaced with a non-radiused parapet.
The ARC recommended approval as above.

Mr. Stuart Young indicated the applicant’s intention to add two floors to the existing building. He presented some photographs, as well as drawings and plans. He explained that the mechanical equipment was to be relocated up to the roof, which would make it protrude approximately seven feet. Because it sets back ten or twelve feet, it should not be noticeable from the sidewalk. He said that they decided to paint the equipment to match the walls and, therefore, asked for an exemption from mechanical screening requirement. Mr. Young explained that option B contains a radius that attracted too much attention.

Vice-Chair Johnson inquired as to the reasoning of the ARC’s comment that the windows be non-reflective / non-tinted glass in metal frames. Mr. McKnight explained that the comment was so as to be clear that the windows would not be reflective or mirrored in order to be consistent with the existing windows.

There was a motion:

“I move that the Landmarks Preservation Commission approve the proposal for the addition of three stories, as proposed, finding that the project meets Secretary of the Interior’s Standards, numbers 9 and 10. Furthermore, that we exempt the building from the rooftop mechanical screening requirement and approve Option A (center of the parapet)”

Motion: Buffington
Second: McDonald
Motion: Carried

2. 917 Pacific Avenue (Provident Building)

Chair Michael Fast asked Mr. McKnight for the staff report, as follows:

The application is for exterior renovations of the Provident Building, which was built in 1903-04 for the Provident Life & Trust Company in the core of Tacoma’s historic central business district. The building was recently designated as a City Landmark and is currently undergoing rehabilitation. This application includes: repainting of exterior (already painted) brick; removal of non-historic storefronts and replacement with aluminum storefronts and wood doors sympathetic to the original configuration; removal of non-historic curved awning with new metal canopy; new externally lit sign areas (final sign details to be submitted for approval at a later date).

Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation:

6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

The original storefronts are no longer present and the proposed work will not alter historic elements of the building. The proposed renovation is more consistent with the original character of the building.

Staff recommends approval.

Ms. Eugenia Woo passed around samples of the newly-proposed color scheme. The proposed renovation does not replicate the original design, but rather in terms of proportion, scale, installation of the transom windows,
and having a recessed entrance. She stated that she was seeking approval from the Commission for the exterior paint of the storefront design and canopy.

Commissioner Benton inquired about the copper color on the underside of the canopies, and if the same color would be on the canopy face as well. Ms. Woo said that in the rendering, the architect showed it as copper, but it would actually be black on the canopy face.

Chair Fast asked if the anchoring of the canopy would require new drilling for the holes. Ms. Woo said that they will be using the existing holes for the anchoring.

Vice-Chair Johnson asked about the goose-neck lights that were depicted in one of the renderings. Ms. Woo indicated that the applicant will later return for the Commission’s approval of the signage and exterior lighting. She asked if the Commission recalled having previously approved goose-neck lighting. Mr. McKnight stated that there are several buildings along Pacific Avenue, in the University District, that have used that form of lighting, such as Taco Del Mar, Indocine, and Subway.

Ms. Woo indicated that, at the same time the applicant returns to the Commission for approval of lighting and signage, they would also broach the concept of a painted wall sign on the south wall of the building to read the name of the building, Provident.

There was a motion:

“I move that we, the Landmarks Preservation Commission, approve the restoration and removal of non-historic storefront materials at 917 Pacific Avenue”.

Motion: Johnson  
Second: Benton  
Motion: Carried (One recusal)

3. 715 North J Street (North Slope Historic District)

This item was moved to the end of the agenda, as the applicant was not present.

4. BOARD BRIEFINGS

A. 1401 North 5th Street (North Slope Historic District)

Mr. McKnight reported that this was a briefing on the proposed projects at the above address, which were part of a medical complex that originally consisted of two prominent residences in the North Slope Historic District. The owner of the buildings is proposing to remove the non-historic additions, which include the one-story office construction, so that a future owner may renovate the structures for reuse as historic single-family residences, along with a boundary line adjustment that would permit the construction of two new residences in the current location of the non-historic office additions.

This is a non-action briefing to present the project to the Commission and garner feedback. It is potentially scheduled for action on May 23, 2007.

Documents were presented to the Commissioners at the meeting by Glynis Casey, to include a background and history of the building, as well as the objective of the applicant for the future of the property.

Ms. Casey explained that the building was originally constructed as two, single-family residences in the early 1900’s. In the 1940’s, it was converted for use as a sanatorium. In the late 1960’s, it was remodeled with additions to operate as a retirement home for 55 to 78 people. In 1995, the property was subject to a conditional use permit to operate a pharmaceutical company to test new medications on humans. Over time, the research facility realized it was no longer appropriate for the neighborhood’s ability to accommodate the parking constraints and began to look for a different location. The current owners acquired an interest in the building in 2005. Since that time, they
decided that an alternative of removing the non-contributing portions of the building and restoring it to its original use would be the best way to preserve the historic nature of the North Slope.

The proposed demolition of the non-contributing additions would be the first step in the restoration process. The next step will be to establish four separate lots, which will create two new single-family residential building sites. In order to accomplish that, a boundary line adjustment will be necessary. Ms. Casey reported that an ongoing discussion point with the City is the boundary line adjustment and how the properties are oriented and where the entrance is located. She indicated that there is also a requirement regarding setbacks. As part of the design review, Ms. Casey indicated that they will be asking for a recommendation from the Commission regarding variances and/or the setback issues. If there is a boundary line adjustment, nonconforming lots will be created, unless a variance is approved.

Mr. McKnight was asked to clarify the discussions regarding the front-yard/side-yard, setback issue. At this time, the lots are conforming, as opposed to “legal non-conforming”; because the way they are oriented, there is an adequate setback for the front, on the side of the house – which was not historically the front of the house. The issue with the variance is that in order to do a boundary-line adjustment, in this case, it would appear to create a non-legal situation (a non-conforming lot). By creating a non-conforming status through a BLA would require a variance. The question of the Landmarks Preservation Commission’s role comes under the authority of HMR-SRD, which defines how the setbacks have to work. Where there is a conflict between the standards, as applied under the zoning, the LPC has the ability to waive the application of the standard, which would harm the character of the house or the building. In this case, it is not entirely clear and would require clarification from the Land-Use Administrator.

If they were to remove the porches in order to become conforming and stabilize the building, would a future person coming in to renovate these buildings need to go through a variance process? Mr. McKnight stated that the answer is “not necessarily”, because the LPC’s ability to waive the front yard setback requirement to reconstruct the porch according to the original design would be in place.

Mr. McKnight said he conducted a staff walk-through recently and wondered whether there was original material left in the porches. He said that because the porch is all covered, he was unable to make that determination. His understanding is that the lots are currently conforming, so if there is a boundary-line adjustment and make it non-conforming, the variance required to make that happen, in which case the Commission may not have the authority to remove that because it is a creation of a non-conforming status. He stated that the Commission is within its authority to make recommendations on what they believe is the best course of action.

Commissioner Benton commented that he would recommend that the applicant determine how the buildings will be stabilized once the demolition (selective deconstruction) takes place. Ms. Casey appreciated that recommendation. Vice-Chair Johnson inquired how the owner proposed closing the “gaping holes” caused by demolition. Ms. Casey indicated uncertainty to that question. Mr. McKnight strongly recommended a site visit.

Chair Fast said that this briefing consisted of two issues: demolition of the additions, and whether or not the Commission has the purview to deal with the setback issues.

Commissioner Benton stated that he understood that it was not their intention to restore the buildings, but simply to stabilize and sell them to another party for restoration. His concern was that the stabilization (use of plywood) might become permanent. Commissioner McDonald stated that he had been working on this project for some time and, in some cases, it was unknown where openings were in the existing structures. He said that there was a chance that the siding will be found underneath the sheetrock, etc.; in which case, the damage would be quite minimal.

Mr. McKnight asked if the reason for the demolition of the non-contributing portions of the building was tied to the creation of new lots for the marketability of the property. Ms. Casey said that her employer, Rush Construction, constructs single-family homes, not historic renovation; therefore, they wanted to create an opportunity for someone interested in renovation/preservation of the historic building(s). “Instead of having two unsightly structures, there will be four beautiful homes.

There was a motion:

“I move that the Landmarks Preservation Commission’s ARC review the existing condition of the structure at 1401 North 5th Street, and report its findings and recommendations to the Commission”.

747 Market Street, Room 1036 · Tacoma, WA · 98402 · Phone (253) 591-5365 · Fax (253) 591-2002
Website: www.tacomaculture.org
Motion: Benton
Second: Chambers
Motion: Carried (One recusal)

Mr. McKnight asked for clarification on the motion. Chair Fast responded that the Commission will be working through the Architectural Review Committee regarding interim stabilization of the property and to advise on a plan and recommendation. The boundary-line adjustment and/or waiving the requirement for a variance for a side yard setback are issues yet to be determined. Mr. McKnight said it may be appropriate to seek advisement from the Land-Use Administrator for an interpretation of the Commission’s boundaries and purviews.

Commissioner Buffington stated that another task for the ARC would be to determine what exists at this time, and what impact changing the front yard to the back yard would be.

Mr. McKnight indicated that the only definition of the front yard and side yard setback is only for whether or not there is a conforming lot. In the future, if someone wanted to build a new front porch – when there was none there – they would ordinarily have to go through front yard setback waiver or a variance through the Land Use Administrator’s office. The Commission has, on several occasions, approved the waiver of the setback requirements where a missing feature is being replaced. In this case, the application is pursuing either a variance or waiver of the development standard, so that they can make the boundary-line adjustment without moving the front porch, as it currently exists on the building. If they were able to remove those, which are additions to the building, then they would not have a setback issue, at all. The variance for the BLA purpose, or the setback issue, would not (in the future) preclude the Commission from waiving setback standards, so someone could re-build a porch, Mr. McKnight said.

Ms. Casey: “Without a boundary-line adjustment, and without the creation of four lots, the project proposed is infeasible for our company and we will withdraw the application.”

Chair Fast clarified the Commission’s actions, which would be to defer the demolition and stabilization to the ARC, get a decision from the Land-Use Administrator whether or not HMR-SRD applies. He further asked for clarification from the City Attorney regarding this complex item.

Mr. McKnight tentatively scheduled an ARC site visit for May 16, 2007, at 5:00 p.m.

3. DESIGN REVIEW - 715 North J Street (North Slope Historic District)

This item was held from its original agenda order, so as to give the applicant ample time to represent their interest. At approximately 6:45 p.m., Chair Fast inquired if the applicant was present. Determining that the applicant was not available for questions, Commissioner Buffington inquired if this was a retro-active request for design review. Mr. McKnight affirmed that that was the case. Commissioner McDonald stated that he would rather have the applicant available to answer any questions, under the circumstances.

There was a motion:

“I move that we, the Landmarks Preservation Commission, defer the retro-active design review of 715 North J Street, until such a time as the applicant can be present to answer any questions regarding the application”.

Motion: McDonald
Second: Buffington
Motion: Carried unanimously

Mr. McKnight indicated that he would notify the applicant of the Commission’s decision.

5. CHAIR COMMENTS

Chair Fast indicated that he had received a letter from Lynne Martin regarding a project currently underway in the North Slope Historic District. Mr. McKnight stated that he had passed the correspondence to Chair Fast for informational purposes. He further stated that he had investigated the subject property (North 6th and M Streets), and discovered that it was not a contributing property and, if fact, is actually a 1962 apartment building and is not part of the district’s contributing inventory. As such, it is not subject to design review of this Commission.
Chair Fast asked if Mr. McKnight would draft a letter to inform the complainant of his findings.

Commissioner Longwell stated that she has had some residents complain to her about this project as well. She indicated to those residents that this Commission did not have jurisdiction over that particular project and; furthermore, suggested to them that they could possibly contact the owner of the apartment building regarding their opinions.

Mr. McKnight asked for a motion to draft a reply to Lynne Martin on the Commission’s behalf.

There was a motion:

“I move that we, the Landmarks Preservation Commission, draft a letter to Lynne Martin, and copy it to the North Slope Historic District Committee indicating that the subject property is not within the Commission’s jurisdiction”.

Motion: McDonald
Second: Johnson
Motion: Carried

Chair Fast informed the Commission of several letters written to the State of Washington legislatures regarding support and funding on behalf of Metro Parks Tacoma’s request for the reconstruction of two historic structures at Fort Nisqually Living History Museum.

There was a motion:

“I move that we, the Landmarks Preservation Commission, support Metro Parks Tacoma’s request for funding by way of writing letters of support to Washington State Legislatures indicating our support”.

Motion: Buffington
Second: Benton
Motion: Carried

6. BOARD BUSINESS/PRESERVATION PLANNING

Commissioner Buffington wanted to remind the Commission of the Walking Tour of the Historic Churches on Sunday, Mother’s Day, May 13, 2007, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. He urged the Commissioners to pass out the flyers in order to generate more interest in this year’s event.

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Mr. McKnight shared the new City Council procedures and scheduling regarding items such as Special Tax Valuations and Landmarks Nominations, etc. He said that the new scheduling requires the tightening of operations because there will be timing issues. He stated that he was in the process of developing a yearly schedule/timeline for the Commission which will show when Board elections should take place, etc. He asked for the formation of a Schedule Committee to assist with the establishment of a Master Schedule. He has several recommendations, such as a quarterly nomination schedule, rather than accepting and nominating individually throughout the year.

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Mr. McKnight also made the following announcements:

- A Certificate of Appreciation was issued to The Landmarks Preservation Commission on behalf of Mayor Baarsma and the City Council.
- Application to the City of Spokane’s Historic Preservation office to fund an APC Camp Commissioner training in Tacoma for 2008. The grant application has been approved by the City.
- Mr. and Mrs. Brady have filed an appeal with the Hearing Examiner. The hearing is slated for June 2007. The City’s legal department is involved as well.

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The meeting adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

Submitted as True and Correct:

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Reuben McKnight, Historic Preservation Officer