

NORTH LITTLE ROCK HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

**506 Main Street
North Little Rock, Arkansas 72114
Telephone (501) 371-0755**

**MINUTES
NORTH LITTLE ROCK HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
November 9, 2023
506 Main Street
North Little Rock, AR
5:30 P.M.**

Commission Members Present:

**Tom Marr
Susan Markman
Charlie Hart**

Others Present:

**Sandra Taylor Smith, Director
Kelli Peters, Staff
Allen Engstrom
Rebecca Dalton
Mark Barton
Jeff Lewis
Antoinette Johnson**

Commission Members Absent:

**Debra Roberts
Mason Toms**

Commission Chairman Tom Marr called the meeting of the North Little Rock Historic District Commission to order on November 9, 2023 at 5:30 P.M., and quorum was established. Commissioners Mason Toms and Debra Roberts had excused absences.

CORRECTION AND ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Mr. Marr asked if Commissioners had read the minutes of the October 12, 2023 Historic District Commission meeting. Charlie Hart moved to approve the minutes of the October 12, 2023 HDC meeting as written. Susan Markman seconded the motion and it was approved 3-0 in roll call vote.

New Business:

A. 213 Melrose Cir. – Installation of 6 ft. privacy fence and storage building

Sandra Smith told the Commission that the applicant wants to build a 6 ft. privacy fence around the backyard, and install a pre-fab wood storage building next to the fence. Ms. Smith explained that the house is located on a pie-shaped lot. Tom Marr asked the applicants if they plan to stain or paint the storage building. They both indicated that they

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were flexible on the issue but they were under the impression that it would be stained, which was fine with the Commission.

Mr. Marr then opened up the discussion for public comment. There was none so he closed public comment. He then opened up the discussion for further comments/questions from the Commission. Susan Markman said that they had done a good job in their choice. She also asked the applicant to let them know about their experience with a pre-fab building, and they agreed to do that.

Mr. Marr asked for a motion to approve or deny the application. Susan Markman made a motion to approve the fence and storage building. Charlie Hart seconded the motion and it was approved 3-0 in a roll call vote.

B. 216 W. 4th St. – Build storage building at rear of house

Sandra Smith explained that the owner would like to build a storage building at the rear of the house. She then told Allen Engstrom, who was representing the property owner, that she would get with Hayden Finley and remind her that she needs to clear this with the easement coordinator at the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, since the property has a conservation easement attached to it. Ms. Smith then asked for clarification from Mr. Engstrom about whether or not this was going to be a pre-manufactured building; he stated that it would be built on site.

Tom Marr stated that the roof of the building would match the asphalt shingle roof on the house, shake siding in the gable ends that match the house, and stucco panels painted to match the house. Mr. Engstrom clarified that the panels would be painted to match the stucco on the house but would not necessarily *be* stucco. Mr. Engstrom stated that he didn't know what the material would be. Charlie Hart pointed out to the applicant that the material cannot be plywood, and that lap siding would be preferred. Mr. Marr then asked if the trim boards would be wood. Mr. Engstrom said that he assumed they would be. Mr. Engstrom then asked if they all understood the need for the building and they all said yes.

Mr. Marr asked for any comments or questions, from both the Commission and the public. There were none so he closed public comment. He then listed the work being requested: the trim would be painted wood and the flat panels will be a material painted to match the house. That leaves the only question to be the material that would be used on the siding. Kelli Peters then read a sentence from the staff report that stated that "the material used will be a wood siding, fish scales, and hardware that resemble the period of the house." Mr. Engstrom then called Hayden Finley to ask her what the siding material would be, and she answered that it be like a Hardie board siding. She also clarified that the trim boards will be wood.

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Tom Marr asked for a motion to approve or deny the application. Charlie Hart made a motion to approve the storage building. Susan Markman seconded the motion and it was approved 3-0 in a roll call vote.

C. 304 W. 7th St. – Renovation of house

Antoinette “Toni” Johnson explained the various aspects of the project. She first told about the owners, Mark & Paula Cardillo, who live in Florida but are looking forward to moving into Argenta. Mrs. Cardillo is originally from here and her sister lives here.

She said that the house has been through lots of different phases, and the Cardillos are planning to get it back to the way it looked originally, as close as they can, and get it livable again. They have restored the porch columns back to the Craftsman-era style they had been, they would like to put different windows on the front to match the style seen in a historic photo (also from the Craftman era), but the rest of the windows in the house will stay the same. They will not be building the garage or pergola, which are shown on the plans. They plan to keep the same footprint of the house. They will mainly be changing the kitchen, adding a rear porch and laundry room, and adding a few windows on the rear elevation.

Tom Marr added that this house is considered a vernacular style. It started out as a Colonial Revival style but during the Craftsman era, several changes were made to reflect that style, so the house is now a combination of the Colonial Revival and Craftsman styles.

Ms. Johnson said that they had discussed going all the way back to its likely Colonial Revival appearance, but after discussing it with Ralph Wilcox of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, they decided to taking it back to the Craftsman era since they had no visual proof of how it looked prior to that.

Jeff Lewis asked when the house had the fire and it was determined that it was in 2011. Sandra Smith said that after the fire the (then) owner found a set of 3 historic windows and put them in the house. Since then, a more recent owner put in all new wood windows, including the triple front windows. Kelli Peters read from the staff report which said “in June of 2001 there were repairs of siding, porch floor, and windows following a major fire, as well as installing turned posts on front porch.” Ms. Johnson said that she thinks there had been two fires. She thinks that it was after the second fire that they didn’t put the trim back on.

Ms. Johnson described the windows that they will put on the front, to replace the three windows currently there. The middle window will be wider than the two flanking it, and the pattern will match the Craftsman pattern of the single window on the porch seen in a historic photo.

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Mr. Marr added, for the new commissioners, that Ms. Smith has been fighting for quite some time to get this house restored. Mr. Hart stated that when he moved into his house around 2010 or 2011, which is next door, the house at 304 was just studs, with a new roof. They came in later and put on the new siding, and then later cut the holes for the windows, installed the windows and a new door. Ms. Johnson said that that may explain why the door doesn't match the porch. That's another reason why they want to completely take the porch apart and redo it. Mr. Hart added that they also took the top half of the brick columns down and put up "toothpicks" in place of them. They also extended the chimney, making it taller. Ms. Johnson added that they also changed the shape of the chimney. Jeff Lewis added that the chimney is leaning and needs a lot of work. Ms. Johnson told them that the chimney will be rebuilt with red brick, even though the original was buff brick, but since the brick columns on the front porch have been painted red brick, she thinks that this won't be an issue.

Ms. Smith asked if she can see the door in the photo. Ms. Johnson said that she can, and that the new door will be a similar style. The door has a $\frac{3}{4}$ window in the door. Ms. Smith reported that the door in the photo had been found on the curb and has since been used in another house in the district. Ms. Johnson added that they will also be restoring the transom over the front door. She said that the door that's on the house now is probably from Home Depot, but they're not keeping it. Mr. Hart added that it cost \$1700 because he saw the price when he salvaged some of the wood they had discarded. Ms. Johnson said that she doesn't think it's the same door, and that somebody may have taken that one back.

Mr. Marr said that when a previous owner did some work on the house is when the windows and rear porch were removed and sided over. Ms. Johnson said that the porch will added back to the rear, and windows will be added back, in addition to more windows in the kitchen area, because the kitchen is really dark. They will also be adding a new laundry room. Mr. Marr asked how the laundry room will be sided and Ms. Johnson answered that it will match the house. She believes that a pantry had been there before, where they intend to put the laundry room.

Ms. Smith reported that the Wojciechowski family had lived in several houses on that block.

Ms. Johnson reported that the rear porch will be paneled at the bottom and screened at the top. Mr. Hart asked where the back door will be located. Ms. Johnson answered that it will be located inside the rear porch.

She added that the owners, who currently live in Florida, are planning to rent the house to a long-term renter for about 5 years until they retire, then they will move here.

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Mr. Hart asked for the location of the kitchen, and Ms. Johnson told him that it would be on the southwest corner of the house. The back will be the kitchen, laundry room, and the screened porch. Mr. Hart asked what the item next to the screened porch was on the plan and Ms. Johnson said that it was a deck. She added that the drawing includes a pergola which won't be built. Mr. Marr asked if they are proposing to put a railing on the deck but Ms. Johnson said that it depends on the height of the deck.

Mr. Hart asked what the floor of the front porch will be made of. Ms. Johnson said that it would be wood. Ms. Peters added that it needs to be wood tongue & groove. Mr. Hart added that it needs to be perpendicular to the house. Ms. Peters then read the portion of the staff report that pertains to the porch floor (32. J.). Ms. Johnson clarified that the porch flooring will be removed and new wood tongue & groove will be installed at its original height; the plywood ceiling will be removed and a new bead board ceiling will be installed.

Mr. Lewis asked if there are any requirements for replacement of the concrete steps on the front porch, since they are leaning. Ms. Peters stated "no brick." She added that if the porch floor is wood tongue & groove, the steps should be wood. The group added that they're made of concrete now. Ms. Peters clarified that wood steps would go more with the Colonial Revival era of the house but concrete steps would go more with the Craftsman era of the house, so since the house is a combination of the two styles, they really could go either way. The consensus was that they preferred concrete steps, which are fine.

Mr. Hart asked if they were going to fix the sidewalk. They answered yes. He then asked if they were going to keep the siding that's there. Mr. Lewis answered that most of it is still solid but there are areas where they're going to have to work on the (poor) workmanship. They'll have to consider the cost of that, though. There are big gaps at corners so it may end up being cheaper to start from scratch. The siding is only 11 years old but it has a bad paint job on it. He's concerned about how it would hold up long-term. Ms. Johnson added that the house feels solid when one is inside the house, even though it's charred and burned out. Mr. Lewis added that they will have to do about \$50,000 worth of foundation work, including adding 13 new foundation piers.

The group asked if the house is considered contributing or non-contributing to the district. Ms. Johnson stated that it's currently non-contributing but they've done all of the steps that were required in order to get it changed to contributing. She then explained the current process of making that change with the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program regarding the Rehabilitation Tax Credits program. They have submitted Part 1 but they haven't gotten that back yet. Mr. Marr stated that his office would now consider the house to be contributing. Ms. Smith added that it's officially considered contributing.

Mr. Marr opened the discussion up for public comment. There was none so he closed

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public comment. Ms. Smith added that for years they had fought to save a house on Melrose Circle that had constantly been threatened by Code Enforcement, and this house has had similar circumstances. Ms. Lewis reported that the current owners of this house purchased it about 3 years ago; they had had trouble a few times on getting proper financing due to market issues. Mr. Hart added that this is the last house that hasn't been restored by the Argenta CDC, but needs to be.

Mr. Marr asked if there were any questions from the Commission. There were none so he asked for a motion to approve or deny the application. Susan Markman made a motion to approve the application as submitted. Charlie Hart seconded the motion and it was approved 3-0 in a roll call vote.

Staff Report/Comments/Discussion:

Sandra Smith reported that all of the windows at 185 Melrose Circle have now been installed.

Charlie Hart asked if the windows at 304 W. 7th St. would have been allowed to remain because they're not on the front of the house. Tom Marr added that it's the kind of thing that can't be held against subsequent owners if it's not something that code non-compliant. He added that just because of the weird nature of the house, because it got Craftsmanized, it sort of makes sense that the windows aren't all the same. And historically, you can see that the window on the front was a Craftsman style. Kelli Peters added that the Beach House at 1820 Main St. in Little Rock is also a combination of styles in that it has large, Craftsman-style granite columns on the front porch. Ms. Smith said that her biggest concern is that the windows should be tall enough; Ms. Peters clarified that the middle window is wider than the two windows that flank it. Ms. Smith added that the nice windows in one of the photos were found by the previous owner who owned Hubcap Annie, but no one knows what happened to those windows.

After determining there was no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 6:37 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra Taylor Smith, Director