

City of Lake Forest
Historic Preservation Commission
Proceedings of the February 26, 2020 Meeting

A regular meeting of the Lake Forest Historic Preservation Commission was held on Wednesday, February 26, 2020, at 6:30 p.m., at the City of Lake Forest City Hall, 220 E. Deerpath, Lake Forest, Illinois.

Historic Preservation Commissioners present: Chairman Bruce Grieve and Commissioners Carol Gayle, Jan Gibson, Steve Lamontagne, Bill Redfield, Elizabeth Sperry and Wells Wheeler.

Commissioners absent: None

City staff present: Catherine Czerniak, Director of Community Development, Jennifer Baehr, Assistant Planner

1. Introduction of Commissioners and staff, overview of meeting procedures.

Chairman Grieve reviewed the meeting procedures followed by the Commission and asked the members of the Commission and staff to introduce themselves.

2. Consideration of the minutes of the January 22, 2020 meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission.

The minutes of the January 22, 2020 were approved with one correction as requested by Chairman Grieve.

3. Continued consideration of a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness approving the design aspects of a new condominium building and the conceptual landscape and hardscape plans. The building is phase three of the McKinley Road Redevelopment project. The development site is located on the east side of McKinley Road, east of the phase one and two buildings, between Deerpath and Westminster.

Property Owner: City of Lake Forest

Contract Purchaser: 361 Westminster LLC (Todd Altounian and Peter Witmer)

Project Representative: Peter Witmer, architect

Colleen Barkley, Mariani Landscape

Chairman Grieve asked the Commission for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest. Hearing none, he invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Mr. Witmer introduced the project. He stated that the design of the building was modified in response to the Commission's comments at the last meeting. He explained that the design team studied the massing and height of the building and design elements such as the bay windows and dormers. He stated that the

site plan changed slightly as a result of some minor changes to the building footprint. He added that the open space on the north and south ends of the building remain. He stated that since the last meeting, the building was simplified and elements of the buildings in the first two phases of the project, including quoins, metal railings and the stone cornice, are now incorporated into the design. He noted that the center mass of the building was modified to relate more closely to the form and architectural detailing of the two earlier buildings. He stated that the elevations were modified to present a cohesive design and similar level of detailing on all sides of the building. He explained that the east elevation has a recessed area in the center that breaks up the overall mass and scale of that elevation. He stated that the fenestration pattern on the east elevation was modified to achieve smaller and more residential proportions. He stated that the proposed exterior materials are the same as those used on the buildings in the earlier phases. He noted that the primary façade material is a dark colored, textured brick with an historic hand-made appearance. He stated that along the west elevation, the main entrance to the building was modified to appear more dominant to distinguish it from the entrances to the individual units. He noted that the porch columns on the north and south ends of the building have been modified and pulled closer to the building to break down the scale of the porches. He presented conceptual images of the proposed building from various points; from adjacent properties and the streetscape, including views from Deerpath through the Library parking lot. He clarified that the corner of the garage of the home that is located to the northeast of the proposed building is 15 feet from the property line, the closest point, and the proposed condominium building is 15 feet from the property line. He stated that as a result, there is a 30 foot separation between the two buildings at the closest points. He stated that a preliminary landscape plan is included in the Commission's packet adding that it is still developing and will require further discussions with the neighbors.

Ms. Barkley explained that the landscape concept for the overall site will follow the character of Lake Forest and complement the architecture of the buildings in all three phases. She stated that the landscape plan includes a variety of plantings of various sizes. She stated that the proposed foundation plantings around the third building are very similar to the plantings around the first building. She stated that shade trees are proposed, lining the street, to soften the scale of the buildings and enhance the pedestrian experience. She explained that the lawn on the north side of the building, fronting on Westminster, will be framed with ornamental plantings and shade trees. She noted that the existing spruce tree on the northeast side of the property will need to be removed to make the necessary drainage improvements. She stated that narrow, upright evergreens are proposed on the east side of the building to provide screening. She explained that the removal of some undesirable trees and buckthorn on the neighboring properties to the east, along with replacement plantings on those properties, is proposed subject to discussions with the neighbors. She explained that shade trees are proposed around the green space on the south side of the building to create a park-like setting.

Ms. Czerniak stated that this petition differs from the type of petition most often heard by the Commission. She noted however that other large development projects, the redevelopment of the former Municipal Services site and the hospital for example, are similar in that they involved review by multiple Boards and Commissions and had strong support from the City Council at the front end. She acknowledged that with complex projects, it can be difficult to delineate the specific role of each review body. She noted that even with single family lots, the Plan Commission and City Council are involved at the front end with the approval of the subdivision. She explained that this petition is part of a larger project that has been the subject of much study and discussion in recent years. She stated that in 2016, the Plan Commission spent considerable time discussing how the area located on the east side of McKinley Road, between Westminster and Deerpath, should be redeveloped. She explained that at the end of 2016, the Plan Commission forwarded a recommendation to the Council for approval of a Master Plan for the area. She noted that the Plan Commission considered various options before settling on the final Master Plan including, but not limited to, redevelopment of the area with office uses as permitted by the current zoning, a development concept similar to Market Square, and redevelopment of the area with residential uses. She stated that in January, 2017, the City Council approved the Master Plan for the area as recommended by the Plan Commission. She explained that the Master Plan presents direction, but not specifics, on how the area should be redeveloped. She stated that the Master Plan supports redevelopment of the area with multi-family residential uses, within walking distance to local restaurants and businesses, and directs future office and commercial development to the west side of the railroad tracks. She stated that the Master Plan anticipates up to four multi-family buildings in the overall area with underground parking, underground utilities and anticipates the development taking ownership of the alley which is currently the City's responsibility. She noted that the Council approvals recognize that the development will occur in phases. She reviewed that phase one of the development is completed, phase two is under construction, and the Plan Commission has conceptually reviewed the third phase which is now before the Historic Preservation Commission for review of the design aspects. She noted that the Plan Commission conceptually considered the third phase over the course of five meetings and after many revisions, conceptually determined that the site plan is consistent with the Master Plan and forwarded it to the Historic Preservation Commission for review and action. She explained that the property on which the third phase of the development is proposed currently remains in the City's ownership and a Purchase/Sale Agreement is in place between the City and the developer. She noted that the Agreement as approved by the City Council allows up to two buildings with a total of 14 units on the phase three parcel and requires underground parking for the residents. She noted that under the Agreement, the developer was responsible for demolition of the building formerly located on the site and the Agreement authorized the developer to use the City property as a construction staging area for phases one and two of the development. She

stated that the Plan Commission discussions focused on consistency with the previously approved Master Plan and achieving an appropriate transition from the higher intensity development to the west, to the single family homes to the east. She explained that the number of buildings, and the building form, evolved considerably through the course of the Plan Commission's public discussions. She noted that initially, two buildings were proposed, one, a duplex close to the Westminster streetscape, and the second, a larger multi-family building to the south, both as envisioned by the approved Master Plan. She noted that concern was expressed during the Plan Commission's discussions about the proximity of the duplex building to the streetscape, the sense of overall mass because both buildings read as a single structure, and the height of the buildings. She stated that as the Plan Commission discussions progressed, the duplex building was eliminated from the plan and the length of the multi-family building increased somewhat. She noted that the Plan Commission's purview does not extend to the design aspects of the buildings however, the Plan Commission is charged with ensuring that the building's siting and relationship to surrounding buildings is consistent with the approved Master Plan. She noted that two members of the Plan Commission previously served as members of the Historic Preservation Commission and Building Review Board. She noted that the concept for a mansard roof was suggested by one of those Plan Commission members as a way to reduce the appearance of the height of the building. She stated that based on discussions to date, the City Council is committed to seeing this property developed as the third phase of the larger multi-family residential development. She acknowledged that some have asked that the phase three parcel remain as open space and not be developed. She stated that the parcel is designated for development in the approved Master Plan. She added that the recently updated Parks Master Plan does not identify the need for an additional part in this area. She noted that Triangle Park and West Park are within walking distance of the site adding that there is green space in Market Square and on the south side of the Library. She explained that the City Council, based on extensive discussion by the Plan Commission, very carefully considered how the area should be redeveloped and determined that the area, including the phase three parcel, should be redeveloped with multi-family residential units. She noted that the intent is documented in an approved Master Plan and will be reflected in the updated Comprehensive Plan. She stated during that the Comprehensive Plan update will likely address the future of the McKinley Road street frontage to the north of Westminster as well. She reviewed that the Historic Preservation Commission is charged with reviewing the design aspects of the third phase of the McKinley Road Redevelopment because this parcel, unlike the parcels that were developed with the first two phases of the development, is located just inside the boundaries of the historic district. She stated that the Commission's purview includes the architectural design and detailing, the exterior materials, landscape, hardscape and exterior lighting. She added that the land use, that is, whether the site is used for multi-family development or something else, is not under the purview of the Commission. She stated that the role of the Commission is to review the design aspects of the project based on the 17 standards in the

Code. She noted that since the last meeting, the petitioner made modifications to the elevations based on the Commission's comments and direction as described by Mr. Witmer.

Chairman Grieve invited questions from the Commission.

In response to questions from Commissioner Lamontagne, Mr. Witmer confirmed that a screened porch is proposed at the north end of the building, not a fully enclosed space. He confirmed that the number of windows on the east elevation was reduced since the last meeting.

In response to questions from Commissioner Wheeler, Mr. Witmer stated that on the west elevation, each ground floor unit has a separate entrance, a French door with sidelights. He clarified that the French door adjacent to the entrance to the elevator lobby serves as the emergency exit from the stairway.

In response to questions from Commissioner Sperry, Ms. Czerniak explained that the City Council Property and Public Lands Committee is responsible for considering the disposition of City owned property and making recommendations to the full Council. She noted that in this case, the site for the third phase of the McKinley Redevelopment is comprised of two tax parcels both of which are still owned by the City. She explained that as part of the earlier discussions of the Plan Commission and City Council about the Master Plan for redevelopment of the area, a decision was made to transfer a portion of the phase two parcel to the City to provide land for additional parking at the rear of the Library. She noted that the Master Plan also designated a portion of the phase three parcel as green space north of the Library. She stated that the rest of the City owned site, north of the green space, was designated for development with multi-family residential units as part of the larger redevelopment area. She stated that the City Council approached the developer and asked that the City-owned property be incorporated into the larger development with the goal of creating a cohesive residential area instead of allowing development to occur incrementally, parcel by parcel, without an overall plan. She noted that even prior to the Plan Commission's consideration of a Master Plan for this area, an Ad Hoc committee recommended that as property east of McKinley Road, across from the train station, became available for redevelopment, a cohesive multi-family residential development should be planned to bring activity close to the Central Business District. She confirmed that the third phase parcel falls within the City's local Historic District.

In response to questions from Commissioner Sperry, Mr. Witmer stated that the elevator is located in the center of the building and the elevator override is screened by the parapet walls. He stated that in addition to the parking under the building, nine parking spaces are available along the east-west street within the development and an additional three parking spaces will be provide on the north-south street. He added that the development is within walking distance of

the public parking lots for after-hours events. He confirmed that the green space at the south end of the phase three site will be available to the public. He stated that pets are permitted in the buildings. He stated that the preliminary grading and drainage plan was reviewed by the City Engineer.

In response to questions from Commissioner Gibson, Mr. Witmer stated that removing the third floor of the building and the square footage associated with it makes the project unfeasible.

In response to questions from Chairman Grieve, Mr. Witmer stated that the architectural details on the façades will be brick and stone. He confirmed that the massing model was modified to reflect the current design.

In response to questions from Commissioner Gayle, Ms. Czerniak reiterated that in early 2019, the plan that was presented to the Plan Commission included two separate buildings in the third phase. She stated that the Plan Commission was concerned about the overall mass of two buildings on the site and, as a result, the northernmost building, a duplex located near the Westminster street frontage, was removed from the plan and the footprint of the remaining condominium building got slightly larger. She confirmed that the building now proposed in the third phase is not as tall as the buildings in the earlier phases. She added that the proposed building steps down from three stories, to two stories, to a single story as the building approaches Westminster. She explained that with the reduced massing and height, the Plan Commission concluded that the phase three building provided an appropriate transition from the larger buildings and more intense development along McKinley Road, to the single family homes to the east and north. She added that the Plan Commission concluded that the significant front lawn area provided on the Westminster streetscape eased the transition to the single family neighborhood.

Commissioner Gayle acknowledged that land use is not the purview of the Commission and noted that much of the correspondence received by the Commission speaks to the proposed use of the land and the prior decision to develop the parcel for multi-family residential development.

Hearing no further questions from the Commission, Chairman Grieve invited the Commission to view the massing model and material samples provided by the petitioner.

The Commission stepped down from the dais to view the model.

The Commissioners returned to the dais and Chairman Grieve invited public testimony.

Doug Donovan, 373 Westminster, stated that he and his family are long-term Lake Forest residents. He stated that based on his review of the Historic Preservation

standards, in his opinion, it is not appropriate to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the third phase of the development as proposed. He stated that the review of the phase three building must consider the building's relationship to the single-family homes to the east. He pointed out that the corner of the proposed building is 15 feet from his property line. He added that the air conditioning units are located on the east side of the building, near the private areas of his home. He stated that the square footage of the proposed building is approximately 23,000 square feet, four times larger than the size of a single family home that would be allowed on the property. He stated that the height of the proposed building is 40 feet tall and not compatible with the single family homes nearby. He stated that he believes that with the grade change between his property and the development site, the building will appear to be over 40 feet tall when viewed from his property. He stated that the financial viability of the development is not an acceptable reason to disregard the Commission's standards. He expressed concern about the impact of the development to the value of his property. He stated that he is in conversation with the developer about the grading, drainage and landscape plans but noted that open issues remain. He stated that in his opinion, approval of the building at this time would be premature. He stated that a drainage plan was not completed when the building that was formerly located on the property was demolished. He stated that many truckloads of dirt were brought on to the phase one and two sites. He stated that his home was covered in dust and dirt during the construction. He reviewed the Commission's standards and stated that in his opinion, the proposed building does not comply with many of the standards particularly related to height, scale and compatibility with the surrounding development. He explained that when the Master Plan for the area was initially presented in 2016, a single family home or a duplex was contemplated on the north part of the phase three site. He stated that at that time, it was noted that a single family home or duplex on the north portion of the phase three site would be a good transition to the adjacent neighborhood and in keeping with the character of the street. He stated that if something different had been discussed at that time, he would have spoken up. He stated that drainage on to his property has been a problem since development in the area got underway. He stated that he hired his own engineer in an effort to see that the problem is properly addressed as the project goes forward. He thanked the Commission for hearing his concerns.

Chairman Grieve invited a response to Mr. Donovan's testimony from Mr. Witmer.

Mr. Witmer stated that he intends to continue to share the plans for drainage, grading and landscaping with the Donovan's. He noted that he has agreed to plant trees on their property to provide enhanced screening.

Ms. Czerniak stated that the City Engineer is aware of the drainage patterns in the area particularly the low grade of the Donovan's property in comparison to the surrounding area. She noted that the City Engineer is considering ways to improve the Donovan's current situation as a result of the proposed

development. She noted that the City Engineer has met with Mr. Donovan a few times to hear his concerns. She noted that the City Engineer required a temporary swale to be installed to help mitigate drainage impacts on the neighboring property during construction. She stated in order to achieve the optimum drainage plan, some existing trees will need to be removed. She stated that landscaping on and off of the development site is planned as part of the project.

Chairman Grieve invited additional public testimony.

Jim Opsitnik stated that he is speaking on behalf of the Lake Forest Preservation Foundation. He stated that the Foundation's role is to protect the historic and visual character of Lake Forest. He stated that the Foundation has reservations about the proposed third building. He stated that the mass and siting of the proposed building causes the overall McKinley Road Redevelopment to be overly dense resulting in a "packed-in" look. He stated that the Foundation recognizes that the design of the building was modified a number of times by the developer in an attempt to minimize the building's mass and the visual impact on Westminster however, he stated that as proposed, the design is not a good solution. He stated that the three-tiered mansard roof creates an unusual appearance and does not integrate well with the buildings in the earlier phases of the development. He stated that articulation of the west elevation and the stylized design is also inconsistent with the buildings in the earlier phases. He stated that because the architecture of the third building is essentially hidden from street view by the other two buildings, the aesthetic contribution of the third building is questionable. He stated that as proposed, the third building will appear as an entirely different development. He stated that overall, the massing of the three buildings in combination with the existing 333 Westminster building, will dominate the single-family neighborhood to the east. He added that the Foundation believes that the development as proposed is adverse to the historic character of the east Westminster streetscape. He stated that the Foundation suggests that the developer follow the original Master Plan, and construct two buildings on the phase three parcel, each with a smaller footprint than the single building now presented. He stated that more transitional green space on the site is preferred. He stated that alternatively, the footprint of the building now proposed could be reduced and the architecture modified to be more in keeping with the two earlier buildings to achieve an integrated development as envisioned by the Master Plan. He acknowledged that the overall development will have a different character than the Westminster historic area. He stated that the Foundation's preference is that the McKinley Road Redevelopment be restricted to the two buildings already approved with the City owned land preserved for a park or garden. He stated that this plan would alleviate the dominance of the development and provide a well-planned transition and buffer to the historic residential area along east Westminster. He commented that a small park on the site would connect with the Library to the Westminster streetscape and provide beauty and function for the residents in the area. He

stated that the Foundation recommends that no decisions be made on the proposed third phase of the development until the Comprehensive Plan update for the Central Business District is completed and the overall McKinley Road streetscape is discussed. He noted that the street between the first and second phases of the development is dangerously narrow and stated that he is unclear whether it is intended to be a one-way or two-way street. He stated that in his opinion, the City, as owner of the phase three parcel, has a conflict of interest because of the proposed sale of the property to the developers. He stated that beyond the revenues to be gained from the sale of the property, the City has a higher responsibility to all of the residents in the City not to diminish the inherent beauty and benefits of the Central Business District as a result of the overcrowding and massing that will result from the third phase as presented. He recognized that many of his concerns with the third phase as currently proposed are under the purview of the Plan Commission. He stated however that the third phase will appear massive in relation to the neighborhood to the east and in his opinion, is not appropriate for this particular site.

Chairman Grieve invited the petitioner to respond to public testimony.

In response to comments from Mr. Opsitnik, Mr. Witmer clarified that the road between the first and second phases of the development is a one-way street. He acknowledged that at this time, while construction is underway, the street is congested. He stated that the north/south street through the development will be three feet wider than the east/west street between the first and second phases.

Chairman Grieve invited additional public comment.

Marcy Kerr, Executive Director of the Lake Forest Preservation Foundation, thanked the Commission for the time and work they put in to maintain the City's historic character. She read a letter on behalf of Rommy Lopat, 410 Woodland Road. She stated that the letter was provided to the Commission in advance of the meeting and is included as part of the public record.

Hearing no further requests for public comment, Chairman Grieve reviewed that the project now before the Commission has evolved through an extensive process to date involving many people and input from various parties. He stated that the project is now before the Historic Preservation Commission for review based on the standards in the Historic Preservation Ordinance. He stated that one of the responsibilities of the Commission is to provide feedback to the petitioner and to the City on the overall design of the building. He reviewed that each member of the Commission has the opportunity to individually provide their view on whether the building is consistent with the standards and offer their view on the broader aspects of the project. He stated that those individual comments will be reflected as part of the public record. He reviewed that in the end, the Commission will need to come together as a whole and offer comments and a

decision as to whether or not the design aspects of the project meet the seventeen standards in the Code that the Commission is charged with applying.

Commissioner Lamontagne stated that in his opinion the site appears overbuilt with the building as proposed. He acknowledged however, that given the purview of the Historic Preservation Commission, the use of the property and the size of the building were determined through other processes. He stated that based on his review, the building appears to meet most of the standards which the Commission is charged with applying with the exception of the height and scale standards. He suggested that some aspects of the building could be further refined in an effort to address some of the concerns previously raised and to better satisfy the standards. He expressed concern about the comments made by Mr. Donovan and noted the importance of continued work to develop the engineering and landscape plans.

Commissioner Redfield reviewed his long involvement with preservation efforts in the community and the significant efforts he and his wife undertook after buying a Howard Van Doren Shaw home to lovingly restore it. He stated that in his opinion, the development as proposed is out of character with Lake Forest.

Commissioner Gayle stated that the scale of the building does not appear to provide an appropriate transition to the single family homes to the east. She expressed appreciation for the architect's efforts and responsiveness to the Commissioner's previous comments. She thanked City staff for providing background on the overall project. She explained that independent of the architectural style and design elements of the building, she is opposed to the third phase of the project overall.

Commissioner Wheeler stated that the project does not appear to be appropriate for the site noting that it does not fit well into the context of the neighborhood. He commended the work the petitioner has put into the project. He stated that in his opinion, the concerns raised by the neighbors have not been given enough consideration.

Commissioner Sperry agreed with Commissioner Wheeler. She stated that in 2016, the Commission approved the demolition of the Quinlan coach house, which formerly occupied the site without an understanding of what was proposed for the site after demolition. She stated her hope that the Commission does not proceed in that manner in the future. She stated that she would not have voted to approve the demolition of the coach house if she understood at that time what was to be proposed for the site. She expressed concern that the proposed development was before the Plan Commission for extensive discussion and only before the Historic Preservation Commission twice in recent months. She stated that the building does not provide an appropriate transition between the higher density development to the west and the single family homes to the east. She stated that the Commission has a duty to safeguard the historic and visual

character of the City's Historic Districts. She stated that the site is one of a kind and urged the Commission to consider the seriousness of the decision.

Commissioner Gibson stated that she requested that consideration of the petition be postponed prior to the last meeting because materials were received late and because extensive consideration is warranted for the petition. She stated that the third building is shoe horned into the site. She stated that in her opinion, the project does not meet any of the standards in the Code which the Commission is charged with applying. She explained that she watched the Plan Commission meetings at which the project was discussed and was surprised to learn that early on, some of the members of the Plan Commission suggested that the site be saved for overflow parking for the Library and not be fully developed. She stated that the third building as proposed does not provide enough of a transition to the single family homes to the east. She stated that the existing grade change between the site and the Donovan's home is concerning. She explained that other municipalities in the area have height limitations within their Historic Districts and suggested that Lake Forest look at similar restrictions. She stated that she is not supportive of the petition.

Chairman Grieve explained that he went through the process of asking each member of the Commission to voice their overall comments on the project in an effort to understand the broad sense of the Commission. He reiterated that the Commission does not have purview over zoning setbacks, the land use or the number of units in the development. He reiterated however, that all of the Commission's comments will be included as part of the record and communicated to other parties as review of this project continues. He asked that now that each Commission has offered general comments, Commissioners now offer constructive comments that may help the petitioner in revisiting the design aspects of the building. He stated that it seems clear that the petitioner should revisit the transitional nature of the site and consider design modifications that could help ease the transition. He reviewed that when the demolition of the Coach House that was formerly located on the site was presented to the Commission it was noted that the site was under consideration as part of the larger redevelopment of the area. He acknowledged that no plans were set in stone at that time and the Commission was not asked to react to any concepts at that time because study of the larger area was still underway. He stated that in his opinion, the Commission very thoughtfully and thoroughly considered the request for approval of demolition of the structure. He added that the Commission ultimately supported the demolition because the Coach House was no longer associated with the main house and because it had undergone many alterations. He stated that when the demolition was approved, his sense was that the site would eventually be redeveloped perhaps in a way that would play off of the previous coach house which acted somewhat as a transitional piece. He stated that his impression of the Commission's comments on the current petition is that the main areas of concern are the setbacks and the building's massing. He invited comments from the Commission relating to the seventeen standards.

Commissioner Gibson stated that the fenestration pattern as presented is not respectful of the neighbors to the east. She pointed out that as proposed, there are a significant number of openings on the east elevation that will impact the neighbors. She stated that the roof shapes are contrived and do not appear cohesive. She commented that based on letters received from neighbors there does not appear to be sufficient parking provided on the site. She added that the street that extends through the development appears too narrow.

In response to questions from Commissioner Sperry, Ms. Czerniak confirmed that the phase three parcel is still owned by the City. She stated that if the sale to the developer does not occur, the City Council will determine how to proceed. She stated that careful deliberation has occurred about the future of this area and a decision was made to support redevelopment of the area to bring increased residential density close to the Central Business District. She stated that the planned housing is intended to fill a gap that exists in the Lake Forest market and noted that there is great interest in the units.

Commissioner Sperry stated that there are currently 47 condominium units on the market in Lake Forest adding that there is no lack of supply of this type of housing. She stated that the housing market has over a six-month inventory. She added that half of the new condominiums in the Kelmscott development are still for sale adding that the second condominium building in the Amberley Woods development has been put on hold and is in the process of changing ownership. She stated that she wants to make sure that the public is correctly informed adding that in her opinion, as a real estate professional, the City's assessment that there is a need for more multi-family condominium buildings is not appear correct. She stated that in her opinion, the massing and scale of the building is disproportionate to the single family homes immediately to the east and to the Library. She referenced Mr. Donovan's testimony at the December Plan Commission meeting and questioned whether it is fair, just or neighborly to proceed with the development given the relationship of the massing and scale of the building in relation to his property.

Commissioner Wheeler observed that the ceiling heights in the units are tall and questioned whether the building could be compressed to reduce the overall height. He observed that the architectural style as proposed appears to be a combination of the Georgian and Second Empire styles. He stated that in his opinion, the building needs to be refined to reflect a single architectural style. He suggested that the proportions of the mansard roof be revisited adding that too many elements are incorporated into the design and suggested further simplification. He stated that continued efforts should be made to address the concerns of the neighbors.

Commissioner Gayle stated that the homes across the street on Westminster are also within the context of the proposed building and should be considered. She

agreed with comments made by Commissioners Gibson and Sperry about the scale of the building in relation to the size of the site. She expressed reservations about the mansard roof, adding that it does not hide the fact that it is in fact a three story building. She encouraged the petitioner to move in the direction of the Georgian architectural style to match the two earlier buildings.

Commissioner Redfield agreed with Commissioner Sperry's comments regarding the real estate market.

In response to questions from Commissioner Lamontagne, Ms. Czerniak clarified that the two earlier phases are not located within the Historic District and were reviewed by the Building Review Board rather than the Historic Preservation Commission.

Commissioner Lamontagne agreed with Commissioner Gibson's comments about the fenestration of the building. He recognized that the Master Plan allows for up to 14 units on the phase three parcel and observed that decision appears to be an inherent flaw in relation to the size of the site and the nature of the surrounding homes. He stated concern about the location of the air conditioning units in relation to the adjacent homes. He expressed concern that the headlights of cars moving down the ramp to the underground parking garage may impact the neighbor's home. He stated that the plans need further study and refinement taking into consideration the neighbors' concerns.

Chairman Grieve summarized the Commission's comments noting that the Commission's comments appear to tie back to aspects outside of the purview of the Commission like setbacks and overall building size. He added that from a process standpoint it does not make sense to have the petitioner continue to make changes to the design aspects of the building when the overall siting and massing are the focus of the concerns. He asked that all the Commission's comments be forwarded to the other decision makers as review of this project continues.

In response to questions from Chairman Grieve, Ms. Czerniak suggested that if the Commission is not supportive of the petition and if further modifications to the design aspects of the project are not likely to change the Commission's position, then voting on the petition may be more appropriate than a continuation. She confirmed that the record of the Commission's comments and discussion will be provided to the Plan Commission as that body continues to consider the petition and make a recommendation to the City Council. She stated that the City Council will consider the deliberations of both the Plan Commission and the Historic Preservation Commission before taking any action on the petition.

Chairman Grieve invited a motion.

Commissioner Wheeler made a motion to deny the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness based on the deliberations of the Commission.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and approved by a vote of 7 to 0 based on the comments previously offered by the Commissioners.

OTHER ITEMS

8. Opportunity for the public to address the Historic Preservation Commission on non-agenda items.

No testimony on non-agenda items was presented to the Commission.

9. Additional information from staff.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Baehr
Assistant Planner