



**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION OF THE
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF ANN ARBOR
Thursday, January 14, 2010.**

Commissioners Present: Sarah Wallace, Liza Rozmarek, Diane Giannola, Patrick McCauley, Robert White, Kristina Glusac and Ellen Ramsburgh (7)

Commissioners Absent: (0)

Staff Present: Jill Thacher, Planner and Historic District Coordinator (1)

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Wallace called the Regular Session to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Quorum satisfied.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: The Agenda was approved as presented.

A - HEARINGS

A-1 HDC10-004 – 217 NORTH INGALLS STREET - OFWHD

BACKGROUND: This two-story craftsman-style frame house has a hipped roof, wide slightly flared eaves, and four matching hipped roof dormers. The first floor has clapboard siding and the second floor, shingles. There is a full-width front porch with four round Doric columns supporting a plain, wide fascia and low hipped roof. The balustrade has turned spindles. The porch and building foundation are stone. The house first appears in the 1910 City Directory as the home of U of M physician and Professor R. Bishop Canfield. By 1949 it had been converted to office use, and then converted back to wholly residential in the late 1980s.

In April, 2008, the owner applied to the HDC for an egress window with a metal or Plexiglas railing surrounding the window well (HDC08-035). The owner withdrew the application after the agenda had been published but prior to the meeting in order come up with a design that better met the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Staff's recommendation on that application was denial, based largely on the prominent window well enclosure and lack of justification for an egress window on this primary elevation.

In this application, the owner originally requested a notice to proceed since not having a means of egress from the basement was a health and safety issue. Since the health and safety issue was basically self-created by building a multi-purpose room in the basement, and could be remedied by removing the room, staff's opinion was that the HDC should deny the notice to proceed request. On staff's advice, the owner revised her application to request a certificate of appropriateness.

LOCATION: West side of North Ingalls Street, one house south of Catherine Street.

APPLICATION: The applicant seeks HDC approval to remove an existing vinyl basement window on the north elevation near the front of the house and install an Andersen wood casement egress window with applied muntins to simulate the existing original basement windows found on other windows.

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STAFF FINDINGS:

1. The window proposed to be replaced is vinyl and non-original, and is the same width as the first floor window directly above it. The window appears in the application photos to be slightly wider than the original three-lite basement window next to it (under the fire escape), which indicates that the opening size was probably altered at some point in the past.
2. The house has a foundation and front porch made of stone that are character-defining features. The proposed casement egress window is wood, would fit within the width of the existing rough opening (34”), and the height of the rough opening would be doubled to 48” tall. The window well would be concrete, 39” wide, and extend 36” from the side of the house. The proposed well depth is 23”. Since the well is less than 30” deep, the building official is requiring a 4”x4” curb around the well instead of a railing (as proposed in the previous application).
3. Since a room in the basement is finished, either an egress window must be installed or the room must be removed. Egress windows are required in any finished space in the basement, like an office or bedroom, though not a laundry or storage room. The owner has supplied information on the other potential egress window locations in the basement. All but one other existing window seem impractical or implausible due to their locations behind a furnace, behind an egress stair, over a sink counter, and behind a washer/dryer. The other possible location is in the shower room on the same elevation near the rear of the building. That window appears to be an original wood window.
4. Staff feels that though the shower room window is a more appropriate location for an egress window since it is less visible from the street and sidewalk, the proposed multi-purpose room egress window is acceptable since the window proposed for replacement is not original and has probably already been widened, and the shower room window and opening are presumed to be original.

Owner/Address/Applicant: Lana Hawkins, 1910 Hill Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Review Committee: Commissioners McCauley and Rozmarek visited the site.

Commissioner McCauley - State that he basically agrees with the staff report. It is much more preferable to replace this. Replacing the replacement window was a much better choice than changing the original one.

Commissioner Giannola – Concurs with staff’s report and Commissioner McCauley.

J. Thacher – Added the following to her Staff Report: The applicant has applied to install false muntins. Sometimes these are not seen favorably, but I actually like this idea as it will blend the window well much better. I support that idea and if the Commission approves it, it might be a test case for future use, and we can see how it looks once it’s installed.

Applicant Presentation:

Lana Hawkins, owner and petitioner for this application was present to speak on behalf of the appeal. She stated that if this window is approved, she will do the best job that she can to make it look as though it belongs with the house. She then expounded on how she would do this.

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Questions of the Applicant by the Commission:

Commissioner Glusac – What will the window well be made out of? (L. Hawkins – Poured concrete. It will all be formed and poured.)

Commissioner Ramsburgh – I went by the site today and noticed that this has quite a depth on this window, so the new window will be recessed as the others are? (Yes.) Did you consider that it might be more appropriate to move that original window to the back of the house and put the other in its place? (I would still need an egress window, so it would still have to be replaced).

Audience Participation: None.

Discussion by the Commission:

Commissioner Glusac – I have a comment. Looking at the plan, it seems that the new curb/surround is going to be directly next to an asphalt driveway? It's only a four inch curb, and I don't think that this will last. From a construction standpoint, this won't be durable. It's just asking for a car wheel to go up over it. The owner might want to consider doing something different.

L. Hawkins – Stated that she was going to get some boulders/rocks to place in front of that.

Commissioner McCauley – Stated that due to the dimensions of that and the fire escape, you would probably have to hit the fire escape with a wheel before this would hit the curb at the window.

MOTION

Moved by Commissioner Giannola, Seconded by Commissioner White, **“That the Commission approve the application at 217 North Ingalls Street, a contributing property in the Old Fourth Ward Historic District, to replace a vinyl basement window with a wood casement egress window in a larger opening, as proposed. The proposed work is compatible in exterior design, arrangement, texture, material and relationship to the rest of the building and the surrounding area and meets *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, in particular standards 1, 2, 5, and 9, and the guidelines for windows and health and safety.”**

On a Voice Vote – MOTION PASSED – UNANIMOUS (Application Approved)

B - OLD BUSINESS – None

C - NEW BUSINESS

C-1 Staff approvals list additions

J. Thacher – I had a request to add lighting to an appeal last month – a sign. They said that they forgot to get lighting approved. I've had this request before. It's a bit more painful for people to come to the HDC for this, and we would like to add this to the staff approvals list.

155 **MOTION**

156 Moved by Commissioner Wallace, Seconded by Commissioner White “**To approve the**
157 **addition of the following to the staff approvals list: Installation of external lighting**
158 **on signs provided that this meets the Historic District Guidelines”**

160 **On a Voice Vote – MOTION TO APPROVE – PASSED - UNANIMOUS**

162 **AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION – GENERAL** (Limited to 3 Minutes per Speaker) – None.

164 **D - APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

165 **D-1** Draft minutes of the August 13, 2009 Regular Session

166 Without objection, the Draft minutes of the August 13, 2009 Regular Session were
167 approved as presented.

168 **E - REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS** – None.

172 **F - ASSIGNMENTS**

173 **F-1** Commissioners Glusac and Rozmarek – Monday, February 8th, 2010 for the
174 February 11th 2010 Regular Session at 12:00 noon.

175 **G - STAFF ACTIVITIES REPORT**

176 **G-1** November and December of 2009 were submitted to the Commission combined.

177 **H - CONCERNS OF COMMISSIONERS**

178 Commissioner Ramsburgh – Questioned whether the increased fees have affected whether or
179 not there are low applications at the last three meetings?

180 J. Thacher – Stated that there are already four applications for the next meeting, and that this is
181 probably more seasonal than anything, but it’s most likely a combination of factors.

182 Commissioner Ramsburgh – Will there be a retreat scheduled for this year?

183 J. Thacher – Yes. A retreat will be on the next month’s meeting list to pick a date.

184 **I - COMMUNICATIONS**

185 **ADJOURNMENT**

186 *The Meeting was adjourned at 7:27 p.m. without objection.*

187 ***A Working session followed the conclusion of the Regular Session.**

188 **SUBMITTED BY: Brenda Acquaviva, Administrative Service Specialist V, Planning and**
189 **Development Services.**