

**CITY OF ST. LOUIS
CULTURAL RESOURCES OFFICE
PRESERVATION BOARD MINUTES
OCTOBER 23, 2017**

Board Members Present

Richard Callow – Chairman
Anthony Robinson
David Richardson
Mike Killeen
Randy Vines
Ald. Terry Kennedy

Cultural Resources Office Staff Present

Dan Krasnoff, Director
Jan Cameron, Preservation Administrator
Andrea Gagen, Preservation Planner
Bob Bettis, Preservation Planner
Adona Buford, Administrative Assistant

Legal Counsel

Barbara Birkicht

PRELIMINARY REVIEWS

A. 2017.1571 1215-17 DOLMAN STREET LAFAYETTE SQUARE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Owner/Applicant: Diversified Real Estate Corp. LLC – John Muller

RESIDENTIAL PLAN: Preliminary review to construct two new townhomes.

PROCEEDINGS: On October 23, 2017, the Preservation Board of the City of St. Louis met, pursuant to Ordinance #64689 of the City Code, to consider a preliminary application for the construction of a two two-story semi-detached townhouses in the Lafayette Square Local Historic District. The application was submitted by John Muller of Diversified Real Estate Group, LLC, the project developer.

Board members Richard Callow (Chair), Alderman Terry Kennedy, Mike Killeen, Anthony Robinson, David Richardson and Randy Vines were present for the testimony for this agenda item.

Jan Cameron of the Cultural Resources Office, made a presentation that examined the sections of City Ordinance #69112, which sets forth the standards for residential new construction in the Lafayette Square Local Historic District. Ms. Cameron summarized the proposal and showed images of the development site and the surrounding area. She presented photos of the Historic Model Example (HME) chosen for the project, and stated that while the new building deviated in certain

details from the elaborate HME, the project generally complied with Lafayette Square Historic District Standards, if the proportions of windows on the front façade are revised. She submitted into the record a letter from Suzanne Sessions and Philip Lamczyk, Co-Vice Presidents of the Lafayette Square Restoration Committee (LSRC) Development Committee that requested several changes, including double doors in place of single doors, in order for LSRC to support the project.

John Muller of Diversified Real Estate Group LLC, the project developer, testified on his own behalf. He said he had worked with the LSRC and had agreed to their recommendations. He stated that he had not seen a copy of the letter submitted into the record; Board Member Richardson provided him with a copy and he agreed to implement the additional requests.

Suzanne Sessions, Vice-President of the LSRC Development Committee, spoke in general support of the project. She expressed concern about the “cookie cutter” appearance of many new construction projects in the district and said that the Committee was in the process of revising the historic district standards. Ms. Sessions stated that the Committee had suggested the HME to Mr. Muller and he had been accommodating. She agreed that a front door design that was a single door fabricated to appear as a double door would be an acceptable compromise.

FINDINGS OF FACTS:

The Preservation Board found that:

- The proposed site for construction, 1215-17 Dolman Street, is located in the Lafayette Square Local Historic District.
- The applicant has proposed a Historic Model Example for the new building which has been approved by the Cultural Resources Office.
- The submitted design complies with most requirements for new construction in the Lafayette Square Historic District. There are small variations from the HME, most importantly front façade window sizes and proportions, which the developer has agreed to revise.
- The Lafayette Square Restoration Committee has requested additional changes to the design, which the developer also has agreed to implement.

BOARD DECISION:

It was the decision of the Preservation Board to grant preliminary approval for the construction of two semi-detached townhouses at 1215-17 Dolman Street, with the condition that the front fenestration be revised and the front façade design more closely follow the Historic

Model Example, including but not limited to the six points stated in the Lafayette Square Restoration Committee letter of October 24, 2017; and that final plans and exterior materials are reviewed and approved by the Cultural Resources Office.

Board Member David Richardson made the motion. The motion was seconded by Mr. Vines. The motion carried with five members voting in favor and none opposed.

B. 2017.1572 1817 LaSALLE STREET LAFAYETTE SQUARE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Owner/Applicant: Diversified Real Estate Corp. LLC – John Muller

RESIDENTIAL PLAN: Preliminary review to construct single-family residence.

PROCEEDINGS: On October 23, 2017, the Preservation Board of the City of St. Louis met, pursuant to Ordinance #64689 of the City Code, to consider a preliminary application for the construction of a two-story single-family house in the Lafayette Square Local Historic District. The application was submitted by John Muller of Diversified Real Estate Group, LLC, the project developer.

Board members Richard Callow (Chair), Alderman Terry Kennedy, Mike Killeen, Anthony Robinson, David Richardson and Randy Vines were present for the testimony for this agenda item.

Jan Cameron of the Cultural Resources Office, made a presentation that examined the sections of City Ordinance #69112, which sets forth the standards for residential new construction in the Lafayette Square Local Historic District. A letter in support of the project from Suzanne Sessions and Philip Lamczyk, Co-Vice Presidents of the Lafayette Square Development Committee, was submitted into the record. Ms. Cameron summarized the proposal and showed images of the development site and the surrounding area; and testified that the project complied with Lafayette Square Historic District Standards.

John Muller of Diversified Real Estate Group LLC, the project developer, testified on his own behalf.

FINDINGS OF FACTS: The Preservation Board found that:

- The proposed site for construction, 1817 LaSalle Street, is located in the Lafayette Square Local Historic District.
- The applicants have proposed a Historic Model Example for the new house which has been approved by the Cultural Resources Office.

- The design complies with all requirements for new construction in the Lafayette Square Historic District.

BOARD DECISION:

It was the decision of the Preservation Board to grant Preliminary Approval for the construction of a single-family house at 1817 LaSalle Street, with the stipulation that final plans and exterior materials are reviewed and approved by the Cultural Resources Office.

The motion was made by Board Member Mike Killeen. Mr. Vines seconded the motion. The motion carried with five members voting in favor and none opposed.

APPEALS OF DENIALS

**C. 2017.1074 7200-30 S. BROADWAY PRESERVATION REVIEW DISTRICT and
CARONDELET NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICT**

Owner/Applicant: Watkins 7200 LLC - James Dearing

DEMOLITION PLAN:

Appeal of a denial of a building permit application to demolish commercial buildings

PROCEEDINGS:

On October 23, 2017, the Preservation Board of the City of St. Louis met, pursuant to Ordinance #64689 of the City Code, to consider the appeal of the Director's denial of the demolition application for 7200-30 South Broadway, in the Central Carondelet National Register Historic District. The block is comprised of approximately nine buildings constructed from the mid-19th century through the early 20th century. All but one of the buildings is contributing to the National Register Historic District.

Jaymes Dearing, representing Watkins 7200 LLC, was the applicant for the demolition permit. Board members Richard Callow (Chair), Alderman Terry Kennedy, Mike Killeen, Anthony Robinson, David Richardson and Randy Vines were present for the testimony for this agenda item.

Ordinance #64689, Ordinance #64925 and Ordinance #64832 were submitted into the record by Daniel Krasnoff, Cultural Resources Director. In addition, a letter supporting the demolition from 11th Ward Alderwoman, Sarah Martin, was submitted into the record. Mr. Krasnoff summarized the staff recommendation, to uphold the

Director's denial, based upon the criteria for evaluation in Ordinance 64832, Section Five—Demolition. He stated that the Criteria described in Section Five of Ordinance 64832 are listed in order of importance: Regarding Criterion A—Redevelopment Plans, was not relevant because no redevelopment plan calls for the preservation or demolition of the buildings.

Regarding Criterion B—Architectural Quality, Mr. Krasnoff stated that the buildings are a significant representation of 19th and 20th century mixed-use structures and identified the buildings as Merit structures, though some could be considered High Merit. He further testified the ordinance states that demolition of High Merit, Merit or Qualifying buildings shall only be approved in unusual circumstances that are specifically identified, and that such unusual circumstances have not been shown.

Regarding Criterion C—Condition. Mr. Krasnoff said that sound buildings are defined in the ordinance as structures in which the visible portions of exterior walls and roofs can support their loads for six months or more, and that the buildings in question appear to be able to support their loads for that time-frame. Regarding Criterion D—Neighborhood Effect and Reuse Potential, Mr. Krasnoff said that the developer fully intended to rehabilitate the buildings when he purchased the property but has submitted evidence that the cost to reuse the buildings was much higher than he anticipated. Mr. Krasnoff also said that the developer has not explored the reuse potential of the individual structures, in a phased manner. In addition, he noted that there are economic tools, such as New Markets Tax Credits which had not been fully explored and did not submit any cost analysis which took into account these factors, in combination with all relevant, additional incentives.

Regarding Criterion E—Urban Design, Mr. Krasnoff said the demolition would have a catastrophic impact upon the historic character of the South Broadway commercial area by eliminating the only fully intact historic block on the east side of Broadway and creating a substantial void in the streetscape.

Regarding Criterion F—Proposed Subsequent Construction, Mr. Krasnoff read the written statement he received from the anticipated developers of the site into the record. He stated that the redevelopment proposal includes the construction of the building foundation, in-ground utilities, new sidewalks and street lighting; and

that once tenants have agreed to lease space the new structure(s) would be designed based upon their requirements. A drawing was also presented showing what the new development could look like. Mr. Krasnoff noted that the ordinance requires new construction to equal or exceed the contribution of structures to be demolished to the streetscape. He said the proposed redevelopment is entirely inadequate in comparison to the contribution of the existing buildings. Regarding Criterion G—Commonly Controlled Property, Mr. Krasnoff testified that it was not applicable to the proposed demolitions.

Regarding Criterion H—Accessory Structures, Mr. Krasnoff said the proposal is to demolish one contributing accessory structure and one non-contributing structure. He said the demolition of the contributing structure was not in accordance with the ordinance because it is a Merit building.

Mr. Krasnoff concluded his remarks by summarizing the primary reasons why the proposed demolitions are not in accordance with the criteria in Ordinance 64832: the buildings proposed for demolition are Merit structures; no unusual circumstances justifying the demolition have been shown; there is reason to believe that the structures have reuse potential; the demolitions would have a catastrophic impact upon the streetscape's urban design; and the proposed redevelopment does not equal or exceed the contribution to the streetscape in comparison to the existing buildings whose demolition is proposed.

Responding to a question from the Chair, Mr. Krasnoff said that there was a single permit encompassing the entire east side of the 72xx block of Broadway, not a separate permit for each building on the block.

Responding to a question from Board member Richardson, Mr. Krasnoff stated that none of the buildings met the criteria of the ordinance for demolition. Upon Mr. Richardson asking if any of the buildings had a redevelopment plan, Mr. Krasnoff said they did not. Mr. Richardson further inquired if Alderwoman Martin could have called for the demolition of the buildings in a redevelopment plan. Mr. Krasnoff said she could have.

Responding to another question from Mr. Richardson asking if all buildings on the block are Merit structures, Mr. Krasnoff said all were, except that perhaps the one story portion in the center of the row could be considered Qualifying. Upon Mr. Richardson asking if there

are unusual circumstances that could justify the demolition of any of the buildings, Mr. Krasnoff said there were not.

Responding to another questions from Mr. Richardson, inquiring if all the buildings in question were sound, in terms of the ordinance, Mr. Krasnoff said they are. Upon Mr. Richardson asking if there was evidence that any of the buildings could not be rehabilitated, Mr. Krasnoff said no such evidence had been provided.

Responding to another question from Mr. Richardson, Mr. Krasnoff reiterated that the demolition would surely have a catastrophic impact on the urban design of the area that individual demolitions would have a negative impact.

Responding to another question from Mr. Richardson asking if there was evidence that the new construction would equal or exceed the value of what was currently built, Mr. Krasnoff said there was no such evidence.

Responding to a question from Mr. Richardson if it was true that six of the criteria result in denial of the demolition; that one, Commonly Controlled Property, was not applicable, and that the Cultural Resources Office staff supported demolition of the non-contributing building, Mr. Krasnoff agreed.

Responding to a question from Board member Vines as to why all buildings were a single parcel, Mr. Krasnoff said the parcels were consolidated sometime between the 1920's and 1970's, most likely for Watkins Furniture and Fuel. However, staff found no precise date for when the block was consolidated.

Jaymes Dearing, who submitted the demolition permit, spoke in support of the appeal. He entered a number of documents outlining his expenses so far and his efforts to reuse the buildings. He spoke first about his activities upon purchasing the property: the buildings were condemned when he purchased them, with nuisance activity and junk in the buildings. He said he had formed an LLC and brought together a competent team to redevelop the property and conducted a substantial analysis of the development, including a cash flow analysis, realistic rent roll, pro-forma, sustainability study and demographic analysis. Mr. Dearing said he sought historic tax credits and obtained tax abatement to help subsidize the project, and that he had presented the project to two-dozen lenders and at least ten additional investors who were not interested.

He testified that an appraiser had said the expenditure of \$3-4 million would yield a project worth \$1.2 million and the buildings were worth only \$150,000 in their current condition. Mr. Dearing further testified that the said the building was recently condemned again and submitted the condemnation document into the record.

Mr. Dearing then addressed the criteria in Ordinance 64832. Regarding Criteria A, Redevelopment Plan, he said there was no plan but there are other redevelopment activities ongoing in the neighborhood.

Regarding Criterion B, Significance, he agreed that these buildings are Merit structures.

Regarding Criteria C, Soundness, he said no one would buy a property if there was any uncertainty that it might stand for six months.

Regarding Criteria D, Neighborhood Effect and Reuse Potential, he said there is redevelopment taking place in the area, but, there also have been structures on Broadway that recently collapsed and the buildings under consideration are badly deteriorated. He said he spoke with US Bank CDC about New Markets Tax Credits but was told the project did not meet a \$4-\$5 million threshold to be eligible for such incentives. Mr. Dearing said he has suffered economic hardship and does not have the funds necessary to properly secure and maintain the buildings and to execute the project he would have to risk his entire financial portfolio and more.

Regarding Criterion E—Urban Design, Mr. Dearing said the two adjacent blocks to the south were already demolished and are owned by a railroad company who will want them to remain vacant. He said he has considered subdividing the block into three parcels. He concluded by saying the parcel is listed for sale and he has received much more interest from buyers since he applied for the demolition permit: the building is available on the MLS and he would welcome partners and is willing to “seller finance” the property’s redevelopment. Mr. Dearing said he has signed co-developer agreements for other historic buildings in Carondelet and would do so for the buildings in question also.

Responding to a question from Board member Richardson regarding an engineering report for these buildings, Mr. Dearing said there wasn’t one but he has thoroughly studied the buildings with competent contractors. He said he put a new roof, tuck-pointed and rebuilt the

rear wall on the south building but when the rear wall of the south building collapsed, that was the last straw in his efforts to redevelop the existing buildings.

Responding to a question from Board Member Vines regarding the costs of demolition, Mr. Dearing said it would cost \$150,000-\$250,000 to demolish the buildings. Upon Mr. Vines asking how long Mr. Dearing had owned the buildings and how their condition changed during that time, Mr. Dearing said he had owned the buildings for about four years and they have greatly deteriorated since he purchased them with more cracks and bulges in facades. Upon Mr. Vines further question, if there are specific reasons why the buildings may not stand for six months, Mr. Dearing said the rear wall of the south building had fallen and the north building has a bad bulge in it. Trains and trucks rattle the buildings and pieces are falling off the building. Upon Mr. Vines asking the cost to secure the buildings, Mr. Dearing replied that he has secured it through boarding but that there had been a number of break-ins to the property. He has tarped over roofs, but he maintained that it is futile until all new roofs and structural work is done. The roof repair cost is \$750,000, which he cannot afford "out of pocket."

Mr. Geoff Meese, who is a partner in the entity proposing to purchase the buildings from 7200 Watson, LLC, spoke in support of the appeal. He said he rehabilitated his house, which was built in the 19th century; and he is already working on a nearby development project in Carondelet. He outlined his experience as a contractor and developer and supplied references for those who have financed his projects. He said the stone basements of the buildings proposed for demolition are severely deteriorated; that the buildings are in a flood plain and the north building is bowing badly. He also stated that the vibrations from trains passing by are damaging to the buildings.

Mr. Meese testified he will put utilities in the back of the lot, pour foundations and install new sidewalks in his development efforts; he said that he has talked to many potential tenants and there is great interest in occupying new construction on the site of the proposed demolitions. In response to a question from the Chair, asking why he should not wait until tenants are secured to seek demolition, Mr. Meese said because the building was recently condemned. He said he envisioned "Airbnb" units above the commercial spaces in the new buildings.

Mr. Dearing approached the lectern and said he applied for the demolition permit. He said he prospective tenants who had signed letters of intent to occupy the rehabilitated buildings may be interested in occupying the new buildings.

In response to a question from Board member Richardson asking if Mr. Meese has a binding contract to purchase the property, Mr. Meese said he has a gentleman's agreement to buy the property.

In response to a question from Board member Vines as to what would happen to the site if no tenants are secured, Mr. Meese said there is no demand for old derelict buildings.

In response to a question from Board member Killeen, asking about other sites where Mr. Meese could build his development, Mr. Meese said he has sought other sites without success.

Ms. Ruth Keenoy, testifying against the appeal, said she works in historic preservation and she supports the Cultural Resources recommendation. She said the developer's failure to complete his project is not justification to demolish the buildings.

In response to a question from Board member Richardson asking if the availability of three separate tax credits for rehabilitation would make it easier to phase redevelopment, Ms. Keenoy said it would.

Ni-Ni Harris spoke against the appeal. She said this is the only intact block on east side of South Broadway in Carondelet. She referenced the quality of the details in the buildings and that one of them probably dates from the Civil War period.

In response to a question from Board member Richardson asking if Ms. Harris was an architectural historian with particular expertise in the history of the Carondelet neighborhood, Ms. Harris said that is true. Upon Board member Richardson inquiring if all the buildings are Merit or High Merit and if the loss of the block would be catastrophic. Ms. Harris said that all the buildings are Merit or High Merit and that the loss of a single building would detract from the integrity of the block.

Andrew Weil, Executive Director of the Landmarks Association, spoke against the appeal. He expressed support for the Cultural Resources Office analysis of the demolition proposal. He noted that previous Aldermen for the area have supported the creation of National Register

Historic Districts, as cultural and economic assets. He said the proposed redevelopment is a collection of ideas, not a plan and that continued demolition will only make it more difficult to bring new development in the area to fruition. In conclusion, Mr. Weil suggested the developer of the new building would need a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers if this parcel is indeed in a flood plain.

In response to a question from Board member Richardson, Mr. Weil agreed that the buildings proposed for demolition are Merit or High Merit, and added that the loss of the block, particularly the commercial buildings, would be detrimental to the neighborhood. Upon Mr. Richardson asking if chapter 99 or chapter 100 redevelopment plans are in place for the block of buildings proposed for demolition, Mr. Weil said there are no such redevelopment plans but the aldermanic support for the National Register nominations is a certain kind of plan.

Brian Kolde spoke in opposition to the appeal. He said the area proposed for demolition is the most intact commercial block on the east side of the street and demolition of the buildings would be devastating.

Responding to previous testimony, Mr. Dearing confirmed that the site is not in a flood plain and that he had requested the zoning be changed from J: Industrial to F: Commercial. He said most of the east side of South Broadway in Carondelet is zoned Industrial or Unrestricted.

FINDINGS OF FACTS:

The Preservation Board found that:

- The preliminary review is being considered by the Preservation Board because it includes demolition of sound, Merit and High Merit buildings.
- The buildings at 7200-30 S. Broadway are located within the Central Carondelet National Register Historic District and a Preservation Revue District.
- The structures are Merit and High Merit buildings and, according to the ordinance, "shall not be approved except in unusual circumstances which shall be expressly noted."
- The buildings were constructed during the 19th and early 20th centuries.
- The buildings are Sound, in terms of the Ordinance.
- The owner has not provided evidence of the structural condition of each individual building that comprises the row.
- The developer has supplied cost estimates that show the rehabilitation cost to be substantial.

- While the developer has made a significant effort to consider using Historic Tax Credits, rehabilitation of the buildings is likely to be eligible for New Market Tax Credits, which the developer has not adequately considered.
- The proposed subsequent construction is speculative, with no time-frame for full construction.

BOARD DECISION:

It was the decision of the Preservation Board to uphold the Director's denial of the demolition proposal per Ordinance 64832. All the buildings are High Merit or Merit and the proposal fails to meet the requirements of Ordinance 64832, Criteria A, B, C, D, E, F, and H.

The motion was made by Board Member David Richardson. Mr. Vines seconded the motion. The motion carried with five members voting in favor and none opposed.

SPECIAL AGENDA ITEM

Nominations to the National Register of Historic Places

D.

ACTION:

Pruitt School – 1212 N. 22ND Street

It was the decision of the Preservation Board to direct the staff to prepare a report for the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office that the Pruitt School meets National Register Criterion C for Architecture. The motion was made by Board member David Richardson. Alderman Terry Kennedy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.