

**CITY OF ST. LOUIS  
CULTURAL RESOURCES OFFICE  
PRESERVATION BOARD MINUTES  
DECEMBER 14, 2015**

Board Members Present

Richard Callow - Chairman  
Alderman Terry Kennedy  
Nate Johnson  
Melanie Fathman  
David Richardson  
Mike Killeen

Legal Counsel

Barbara Birkicht

Cultural Resources Office Staff Present

Betsy Bradley, Director  
Jan Cameron, Preservation Administrator  
Andrea Gagen, Preservation Planner  
Bob Bettis, Preservation Planner  
Adona Buford, Administrative Assistant

Board Member Mike Killeen moved to approve the November 23, 2015 minutes. Hearing no objection, the minutes were approved. Mr. Richardson moved to accept the current agenda. Hearing no objection, the agenda was accepted.

**REPORT:** Report on recent DeSales Community Housing Corporation projects that the Preservation Board approved.

**PROCEEDINGS:** Tom Pickel of the DeSales Community Housing Corporation, made a presentation on projects recently approved by the Preservation Board.

**PRELIMINARY REVIEWS**

**A. 2015.1985 2115-31 HICKORY STREET LAFAYETTE SQUARE HISTORIC DISTRICT**

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Owner/Applicant: Jeffrey E. Smith Investment Company, LLC - William A. Markel

ACTION: Deferred

**B. 2015.2079 2861 LEMP AVENUE BENTON PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT**

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Owner/Applicant: Ronald D. Seabaugh

DEMOLITION PLAN: Preliminary review to construct a single-family house.

PROCEEDINGS: On December 14, 2015, the Preservation Board of the City of St. Louis met, pursuant to Ordinance #64689 of the City Code, to consider a Preliminary Application to construct a two-family house, at 2861 Lemp Avenue in the Benton Park Local Historic District. The owner submitted the application.

Board members Richard Callow (Chair), Mike Killeen, David Richardson, Nate Johnson, Alderman Terry Kennedy, and Melanie Fathman were present for the testimony for this agenda item.

Bob Bettis of the Cultural Resources Office made a presentation that examined the sections of City Ordinance #67175, which sets forth the standards for residential new construction in the Benton Park Local Historic District. He testified that the project was in compliance with the Standards.

Ron Seabaugh, the owner, was present but did not speak.

FINDINGS OF FACTS: The Preservation Board found that:

- the proposed site for the new construction is located in the Benton Park Local Historic District;
- the proposed design complies with all requirements for new construction in the Benton Park Historic District Standards and;
- final material choices have not been made, but the applicant intends to comply with the requirements of the Historic District Standards.

BOARD ACTION: It was the decision of the Preservation Board to approve the new construction with the stipulation that final plans and materials will be reviewed and approved by the Cultural Resources Office. The motion was made by Board Member Mike Killeen, which was seconded by Alderman Kennedy. The motion passed with all Board Members voting in favor and none opposed.

**NEW APPLICATION**

**C.      2015.1808      4207 BLAINE AVENUE      NORTH I-44 HISTORIC DISTRICT**

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Owner/Applicant: Botanical Heights Homes, LLC – Brent Crittenden

RESIDENTIAL PLAN:                      Building permit application to construct a single-family house.

PROCEEDINGS:                              On December 14, 2015, the Preservation Board of the City of St. Louis met, pursuant to Ordinance #64689 of the City Code, to consider a new application for a building permit to construct a single-family house, at 4207 Blaine Avenue in the North I-44 Local Historic District. The developer, Brent Crittenden submitted the permit.

Board members Richard Callow (Chair), Nate Johnson, Mike Killeen, David Richardson, Alderman Terry Kennedy, and Melanie Fathman were present for the testimony for this agenda item.

Bob Bettis of the Cultural Resources Office made a presentation that examined the sections of City Ordinance #60370, which sets forth the standards for residential new construction in the North I-44 Local Historic District. He testified that the project was in compliance with most of the Standards.

Sarah Gibson, the developer, spoke regarding the project.

FINDINGS OF FACTS:                      The Preservation Board found that:

- the construction site, 4207 Blaine, is located in the North I-44 Local Historic District;
- the proposed design complies with most of the requirements for new construction in the North I-44 District Standards, deviating from them in some architectural details and the material of the spandrel panels on the front elevation;
- On the whole, given its contemporary design, the project can be considered generally in compliance with the intent of the Standards;
- very similar designs for several infill buildings were approved by the Board in 2011; and that
- the proposed design is appropriate for the location. The block has a mix of different architectural styles that allow the new construction to fit well with the streetscape.

**BOARD ACTION:** It was the decision of the Preservation Board to approve the application for the new construction, with the stipulation that final plans and materials will be reviewed and approved by the Cultural Resources Office. The motion was made by Board Member Nate Johnson which was seconded by Alderman Kennedy. The motion passed with all Board Members voting in favor and none opposed.

**APPEALS OF DENIALS**

**D. 2015.1473 2711-13 GRAVOIS AVENUE FOX PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT**

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Owner: St. Louis City Catholic Church Real Estate  
Applicant: Bellon Salvage & Rehabbing – Don Bellon

**DEMOLITION PLAN:** Appeal of a demolition permit application to demolish a three-story brick commercial building.

**PROCEEDINGS:** On December 14, 2015, the Preservation Board of the City of St. Louis met, pursuant to Ordinance #64689 of the City Code, as amended by Ordinance #64689, to consider an appeal of the Director's Denial of a building permit application to demolish a commercial building at 2711-13 Gravois Avenue.

This property is located in the Fox Park Local Historic District; the St. Francis de Sales National Register Historic District; and a Preservation Review District.

The property owner, St. Louis City Catholic Church Real Estate Corporation, submitted the appeal. Board members Richard Callow (Chair), Alderman Terry Kennedy Nate Johnson, Melanie Fathman, Mike Killeen and David Richardson were present for the testimony for this agenda item.

Cultural Resources Office Director Betsy Bradley reviewed the Demolition Review Criteria in Ordinances #64689 and #64832 and in the Fox Park Local Historic District Standards. She noted that this building is considered to be a High Merit building due to its age and prominent location in the historic districts. She described the condition of the building as Sound, as defined in Ordinance #64689. She noted the increased occupancy of commercial spaces on Gravois in the vicinity and the availability of the historic tax credits to support a rehabilitation project undertaken by a tax-

paying entity. She acknowledged that a full gut-rehabilitation project would be needed for this property. She also reported that the appellant submitted an estimated cost for “the basic requirements for again making this Property functional and in compliance with applicable building codes” to be \$1.2 million. She described the adverse effect the demolition would have on the urban design of the block, intersection, and historic district by eliminating the only extant building on the small block. Ms. Bradley noted the location of the building across the street from the St. Francis De Sales Church, a City Landmark, and the location of the exterior elevator entrance on its Lynch Street side, as well as the plan to construct a parking lot on the site to provide additional parking close to the accessible entrance.

Ms. Bradley stated that the Fox Park Historic District Standards allow for demolition of a building if the only feasible alternative would require the equivalent of total reconstruction; and noted that the building is currently unprotected from deterioration, particularly at the cornice level. In anticipation of the discussion of the Notice of Condemnation document issued by the Building Division, she stated that the inspection codes available for an inspector’s use are generic and do not define the condition of the property in detail; and that the Notice of Condemnation provides the option of repairing rather than removing the structure.

Historic

Ms. Bradley entered into the record certified copies of Ordinances #64689, as amended by #64925, and #64832; the Fox Park District Ordinance #66098; the Board agenda; and the PowerPoint presentation for this property. She also submitted correspondence received from Eric Wilkinson and Alderwoman Christine Ingrassia, which included attachments. Binders of information submitted by the appellant for review by Preservation Board members at the meeting were made available at this time and are part of the record.

Brandon Rothkopf, Associate General Counsel for the Archdiocese of St. Louis, represented the appellant. Mr. Rothkopf emphasized that the owner feels strongly that the building needs to be torn down and that two matters were most important to his client’s position: the condition of the building and economic hardship. He described the interior of the building as collapsing and that this condition should be taken into account in the consideration of the

building's condition and the cost to rehabilitate it, and referred to the cost estimate that was provided to the Board. He also presented the Notice of Condemnation to the Board, noting that inspection items included the use of the terms "Dangerous Structure" and "Damaged Structure" as major violations. Mr. Rothkopf stated that the need for more parking was due to the fact that the St. Francis de Sales Oratory has a regional draw for worshipers and that many of those required parking near an accessible entrance. In an answer to a question from Board Member Killeen regarding its availability for purchase, Mr. Rothkopf stated that he was not aware of the building ever being listed for sale and that he could not quote a price for it.

Ron Hampp, who prepared the Icon Contracting, Inc. cost estimate for the appellant, described the building as having structural defects, particularly in the rear half where he stated that floor joists have been cut and there is little lateral structural support. He also noted missing flooring and the narrowness and steepness of the existing staircases. Mr. Hampp stated that he had not prepared the estimate for a tax credit project and suggested that 15 to 20 percent should be added to the total cost of rehabilitation he had presented, because of additional costs required by the tax credit review, before the credits are estimated.

Alderwoman Christine Ingrassia appeared to oppose the appeal of the Director's Denial, and to state her opposition to the proposed demolition. She submitted into the record a letter to the Preservation Board opposing demolition and record and noted that she had been previously unaware of the appellant's need for more handicapped parking and even more parking in general. She stated that more than one developer had indicated to her that they were interested in the property and that she had submitted documentation of that interest with her letter. The Alderwoman suggested that the Church could donate the building to the City and asserted if it were available, that it would be redeveloped. Jenny Nolen, President of the Fox Park Neighborhood Association, appeared and testified that the organization would never support the demolition of the building and recommended that the owner sell or renovate it.

Bob Palish, a building project manager for the Archdiocese, spoke to refute the assertion that the building was Sound, stating that its interior condition was terrible but offering no additional evidence. When asked by the Preservation Board Chair if he had read the definition of Sound under the applicable Ordinance, he said he had not. Responding to a question from the a Board Member, he indicated that there was no firm project construction timeline for the parking lot and that beyond securing the building, the Archdiocese had not invested in its upkeep, as the intention has always been to demolish it.

FINDINGS OF FACTS:

The Preservation Board found that:

- 2711-13 Gravois is an important contributing property in the Fox Park Local Historic District and the St. Francis de Sales National Register Historic district. It is considered to be a High Merit Building;
- the building is Sound, in terms of the Ordinance. A group of photographs with no captions submitted by the appellant show loss of ceiling and flooring materials, and some exposed floor joists, but no engineering report was submitted to indicate any degree of instability, as asserted by the appellant;
- the building displays deterioration at the wood cornice and eaves, which is at this point relatively minor;
- there is no evidence that the building would have to be completely reconstructed to be put back into use;
- the level of building occupancy nearby and the highly visible position of the property on Gravois Avenue contribute to the building's reuse potential;
- the property's location in a National Register historic district means that historic tax credits could be used to fund a rehabilitation project, if the property were owned by a tax-paying entity;
- the building is one of the oldest buildings in the immediate vicinity and has a prominent position in the streetscape. The loss of this building would have an impact on the small block it stands on and the blockfronts facing Gravois, particularly in integrity and density;
- the St Louis City Catholic Church Real Estate Corporation owns St. Francis de Sales Church and related parcels north across Lynch Street;
- the proposed use of the property should demolition be approved is to construct a parking lot close to the accessible

entrance to St. Francis de Sales Church. Parking is a use to be considered when a property adjoins or abuts an entity that needs more parking; this parcel does not meet that condition;

- the demolition review criteria of a redevelopment plan; adopted by ordinance and the consideration of an accessory structure are not applicable in this review;
- when the demolition review criteria are considered in their weighted order, as set forth in Ordinances #64689 and #64832, as passed by the St. Louis City Board of Aldermen, the Architectural quality of the building as “High Merit” is weighted more heavily than criteria that follow;
- as to the appellant’s assertion that the condition and economic hardship are the most critical factors to consider, other buildings that have been condemned and in comparable condition, requiring major rehabilitation, have been returned to use; and that
- Ordinance #64689 states that the demolition of buildings in several categories shall not be approved except in unusual circumstances that shall be expressly noted and no such circumstances have been identified.

**BOARD ACTION:**

After due consideration and after weighing each piece of evidence and making a determination of the credibility of the witnesses, the Board has made a determination as to the substance and credibility of the evidence and exhibits.

It was the decision of the Preservation Board to uphold the Director’s denial of the demolition application of 2711-13 Gravois, as it is Sound, High Merit. The motion was made by Board Member Melanie Fathman which was seconded by Mr. Johnson. The motion carried with five members voting in favor of it and no Board Members voting against it.

**E.      2015.1619      2601 OHIO AVENUE      FOX PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT**

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Owner/Applicant: Jay H. Sturgeon

RESIDENTIAL PLAN:      Appeal of a building permit application to retain paint and windows installed without a permit.

PROCEEDINGS:      On December 14, 2015, the Preservation Board of the City of St. Louis met, pursuant to Ordinance #64689 of the City Code, to



consider an appeal of the Director's Denial of a building permit application to retain paint on a previously unpainted brick building and to retain non-compliant windows, at 2601 Ohio Avenue in the Fox Park Local Historic District. The owner submitted the appeal.

Board members Richard Callow (Chair), Nate Johnson, Mike Killeen, David Richardson, Melanie Fathman, and Alderman Terry Kennedy were present for the testimony for this agenda item.

Bob Bettis of the Cultural Resources Office made a presentation that examined the sections of City Ordinance #66098, which sets forth the standards for residential rehabilitation in the Fox Park Local Historic District. He testified that the project was not in compliance as painting of unpainted masonry is not allowed under the Standards and that the new windows do not replicate the original appearance.

Mr. Bettis entered into the record certified copies of Ordinances #66098, #64689, as amended by #64925, the Board agenda and the PowerPoint presentation for 2601 Ohio Avenue.

Teresa Sackman, representing the owner, was present but did not speak on the item.

**FINDINGS OF FACTS:**

The Preservation Board found that:

- 2601 Ohio Avenue is located in the Fox Park Local Historic District;
- the unpainted brick was painted without a permit;
- the building was power-washed prior to painting and the face of the brick was damaged. Due to the damage done to the brick, the paint cannot be removed;
- the windows that were replaced without a building permit, did not replicate the building's original industrial sash; and that
- the owner proposed to repaint the building in a color close to the original masonry and will install a fixed transom system that will fully glaze the openings and present a commercial appearance.

**BOARD ACTION:**

It was the decision of the Preservation Board to overturn the Director's Denial of the building permit application per revised

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window plans and because the paint cannot be removed from the damaged brick. Board Member Kennedy made the motion, which was seconded by Board Member Johnson. The motion passed with all voting in favor of the motion.