

PARTIAL SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION
CITY OF SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA
Lower Level – Room 41, City Hall/Court House, 15 West Kellogg Boulevard
July 24, 2014

Present: Richard Dana, Robert Ferguson, Matt Hill, Renee Hutter, Michael Justin, Amy Meller, Steve Trimble, Diane Trout-Oertel

Absent: Barbara Bezat (excused), William Lightner (excused), Matt Mazanec (excused), David Riehle (excused), David Wagner (excused)

Staff Present: Christine Boulware, Bill Dermody, Renee Cohn, John Beaty

PUBLIC HEARING/DESIGN REVIEW

V.B. 1621 Summit Avenue, Summit Avenue West Heritage Preservation District, by Rich Laffin, Richard Laffin Architects, Inc., for a building permit to replace nine pairs of in-swing casement windows with new out-swing casement windows. **File #14-030** (Boulware, 266-6715)

Staff read aloud the report recommending denial of the proposal to replace nine pairs of in-swing casement windows with new out-swing casement windows.

Staff presented images of the property and windows provided by the applicant.

Commissioner Trout-Oertel inquired as to the style of the original storm windows; Ms. Boulware stated that the storm windows would have likely had a divided lite with a center bar.

Chair Dana requested confirmation that the application is in front of the Commission because staff could not approve the windows; Ms. Boulware confirmed.

Richard Laffin, the applicant, and Wendy Caucutt, the owner, were present to speak on behalf of the proposal.

Mr. Laffin discussed the aesthetics of the proposed windows regarding their relationship to the residence and the compliance with the guidelines.

Chair Dana inquired as to if there are any remaining historic storm windows for the windows in questions; Ms. Caucutt noted that there is only one remaining historic storm window on a piano window.

Commissioner Ferguson requested confirmation that the transom windows above the windows in question have historic storm windows; Mr. Laffin confirmed that there are remaining fixed storm windows.

Commissioner Trout-Oertel requested confirmation that there were likely storm windows on the windows in questions that aligned with the existing transom storm windows; Mr. Laffin confirmed.

Chair Dana inquired as to if there are any photos of the historic storm windows; Ms. Caucutt replied that there are none.

Mr. Laffin discussed the performance of the existing windows and described the potential increase in performance with the proposed new windows and described how additional insulation will be applied if the new windows are installed.

Commissioner Trout-Oertel noted the belief that the space between panes of glass is dead space, and does not cause convection; Mr. Laffin replied that it does cause convection.

Chair Dana inquired as to if more can be done to improve insulation in the space without accessing the mullion; Mr. Laffin replied that there is more that can be done and shared a personal story on the benefits of insulating in the mullion.

Commissioner Ferguson requested confirmation that Marvin windows no longer makes an insulating storm window; Mr. Laffin confirmed that they do not. Commissioner Ferguson noted that Pella does make an insulated storm windows; Mr. Laffin confirmed that Pella does.

Mr. Laffin discussed the cost comparison of repairing the windows to replacing the windows and noted that the repair costs less, but is not the intention for the client.

Ms. Caucutt discussed the safety concerns of the windows when they are open, and noted the temperature discomfort in the summer and winter seasons.

Commissioner Trout-Oertel noted that in-swing casement windows are a unique feature of the house; Ms. Caucutt noted that it is the volume of windows that is the issue and not the style.

Mr. Laffin noted that if the windows are allowed to come out that they may be available to the public for reuse.

Chair Dana inquired as to if there is an R-value or U-value difference with the Marvin in-swing windows; Mr. Laffin discussed the differences.

Commissioner Meller requested confirmation that the transom windows are completely fixed and if there is evidence that they were once operable; Ms. Caucutt confirmed that they are completely fixed and noted that they have been painted over and it is not clear if they were operable.

Commissioner Ferguson requested confirmation that the existing window sashes are warped; Ms. Caucutt stated that they are. Commissioner Ferguson noted that the staff report notes that there is not enough evidence of deterioration to support replacement, but that windows deteriorated beyond repair could be replaced in-kind; Ms. Caucutt and Mr. Laffin discussed the level to which the windows are warped and rotted.

Chair Dana inquired as to if Mr. Laffin believes there is evidence to overturn the finding that states that a replacement window shall be in the same style as the existing and support the installation of out-swing windows; Mr. Laffin discussed the safety concerns and maintenance conditions that support the replacement of the in-swing windows.

Ms. Caucutt noted that they are open to any window except for in-swing windows due to privacy and safety concerns.

Ms. Boulware noted that blinds or shades can be installed directly onto in-swing casement windows.

Commissioner Meller requested confirmation that the new windows will be set back into the frame approximately one and a half inches and discussed the inappropriate visual changes that this setback will cause in relation to the historic profile; Mr. Laffin confirmed and discussed the options for window and screen placement.

Commissioner Trout-Oertel requested that the reasons for replacing the windows be listed in order of priority; Ms. Caucutt replied that safety is their main reason for proposing replacement and that energy is the second. Commissioner Trout-Oertel noted that furniture can be placed to in a way in which to increase safety.

Staff read aloud a letter from the Summit Avenue Resident Preservation Association (SARPA) in support of the proposal to remove the storm windows, but not in support of installing out-swing windows.

Staff read aloud a letter from John Gaylord, a resident at 1617 Summit Avenue, in support of the proposal.

The public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Hutter moved to accept staff recommendation for denial based on staff findings; Commissioner Trimble seconded the motion.

Commissioner Hutter discussed the safety concerns and noted that they are temporary, but that change to the residence is not and does not comply with the guidelines.

Commissioner Hill inquired as to if the in-swing require review; Ms. Boulware responded that they are an exterior feature, as they are set in the window opening, and review is required.

Commissioner Trout-Oertel discussed the safety concerns and agreed with Commissioner Hutter that the proposal does not meet the design guidelines.

The motion passed 7-0.