

City of Natchez
Preservation Commission Regular Meeting
Wednesday, March 10, 2021 5:15 p.m.
Council Chambers
115 S. Pearl Street
Natchez, MS 39120

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of Wednesday, March 10, 2021 was called to order by Chairperson Andy Sartin.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Andy Sartin, Chairperson
Marty Seibert, Vice-Chairperson
Leonardo Lang
Smokey Joe Frank
Shirley Petkovsek
Charles Hill
Mac Hazlip

Commissioners Absent: Liz Dantone
Frances Morris

Staff: Riccardo Giani, City Planner

MINUTES

Commissioner Seibert questioned whether the minutes from the November and December meetings have been approved. Mr. Giani stated that he thought they were approved in a previous meeting, however did not have the agenda from last meeting with him to confirm.

Motion: I move to defer the minutes from the January 2021 meeting and defer the minutes from the February meeting.

MOTION BY: Commissioner Seibert

SECOND BY: Commissioner Hazlip

In favor: ALL

Opposed: NONE

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT: None

PUBLIC HEARING APPLICATIONS: None

1. Application #NPC 21-17. Esther Carpenter, 215 South Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Street., Map #41-114B-67: Request 8' privacy fence in rear.

Mr. Giani gave staff findings

Background: The applicant is requesting approval for an 8' wooden privacy fence along the rear property line.

Staff Findings: According to the Natchez Design Guidelines fences and walls are a way to provide privacy, but also an ornate feature of a historic property when visible from the public right-of-way. The Guidelines also recommend that privacy fences should be no taller than 6' in height and located in the rear or side yards. Since the proposed fence is located at the rear of the property and not readily visible from the street, the proposed height should be allowed to provide for the desired privacy. Privacy fences and walls higher than 6' are featured in numerous locations around the Historic District.

The fence in question is composed of wooden boards, with a flat top, a common accepted fence style. Currently, the fence supports are shown to the outside. To comply with the fence design requirements and reflect historic fencing design, the "finished" side should face the outside. Planning staff recommends that the Commission require the applicant to install a second layer of flat topped fence boards to conceal the supporting members of the fence.

APPLICANT COMMENT: The applicant, Esther Carpenter, submitted a letter to the Commission for the record. The letter states:

Dear Commission:

I am writing concerning a request for a Certificate for Appropriateness which I made by application dated January 18, 2021.

Several Matters:

1. My husband Mark and I live at the old home known as The Elms. As with any gaining property, we do our best to maintain and preserve it and to improve it when we can. Along some of our property line between us and the back yards of residences which face State Street, is somewhat unsightly line of double fencing – an existing cyclone fence (chain link) which was later obscured on the State Street side by an gaining board fence. Neither of these two fences were installed by an owner of The Elms.
2. We decided that we wanted to put a new fence along the northern border of our property to screen out the existing fencing. We felt the addition of a section of new fence would improve the look of the area from both sides. I attached a copy of three photographs which show the area in question.

3. I knew from past experience that this type of construction requires a building permit and that, since the Elms is in the historic district, a Certificate of Appropriateness was needed. Along these lines, I consulted with Riccardo Giani and completed the application for the needed certificate. I have attached the completed application.
4. I explained to Mr. Giani our wished and completed the form with his help.
5. I submitted the form and paide the fee and was granted the needed permit.
6. We had the fence constructed as described in the application and subsequent permit. I have attached a copy of the permit as granted.

At this juncture, I understand that the Commission is now going to formally consider our application. As we followed the procedure as we knew it to be and provided the information requested along with the fee for the permit, we are hopeful that we will be able to keep the fence which was professionally constructed and of good quality, workmanship and appearance.

-Esther Carpenter Lowrey

PUBLIC COMMENT: Eric Junkin, Calvin Kimbro, and Alma Carpenter (Virtual), were present. Eric Junkin asked if this fence was considered a rear or side property fence. Mr. Giani stated that this fence is in the rear corner of the property line. Mr. Junkin stated that technically this fence is on the side.

Calvin Kimbro question the property lines and who owned the chain link fence. He suggested the removal of the fence because it was unsightly.

Mr. Giani read an objection letter submitted from Alma Carpenter, 814 State Street:

“I strongly object to the building of this fence. A privacy fence is a fence that encloses one’s yard, yet this fence only encloses a very small section of land behind my own privacy fence. It is a stain on my backyard towering over my view. Furthermore, this fence was built on a National Landmark and does not comply with any codes governing said landmarks. I would like for the City and the NPC to impose civil and criminal penalties be imposed on Esther Carpenter and Rico Giani who broke the law by issuing permission for this fence to be built and I would like the fence taken down.”

STUDY SESSION: Chairperson Sartin stated that there is some precedent for 8’ fences in the district, and that they are reviewed by the Commission on a case-by-case bases. The Guidelines the Commission follows are not strict regulations but they are there to recommend appropriate practices in the Historic District.

Commissioner Seibert asked Mr. Giani why this was not initially submitted to the Commission. Mr. Giani stated that is hardly visible from the public right of way, it was composed of wooden and was in a historically appropriate design.

Chairperson Sartin suggested that the applicant use a fast climbing vine or other similar plant to lessen the effect of the fence on the neighbor. Commission Seibert agreed.

Commissioner Hazlip stated that the Commission should require that the finished side face the

Motion: I move to approve application #NPC 21-17, request for the construction of an 8' privacy fence, with the contingency that the applicant install a second layer of flat-topped fence to on the backside, finished like the front, to conceal the fence supports.

MOTION BY: Commissioner Mac Hazlip
SECOND BY: Commissioner Smokye Joe Frank
In favor: ALL
Opposed: NONE

2. Application #NPC 21-24. Fred Kent, 8 Ravenna Lane, Map #41-114D-42: New Construction – Storage Shed.

Mr. Giani gave staff findings.

Background: This property is within the Downriver Residential Historic District, known in the Landmarks Inventory as “Ravenna.” The applicant is not proposing any changes to the main house, but to add on to an existing garage.

Staff Findings: A 288 sq. ft. addition (23’ 9” by 12’ 8”) is proposed to an existing garage. The addition will be sided with brick to match the existing brick and mortar color. The garage’s existing doors are on the western elevation. There are two, six-over-six windows on the northern elevation. In reference to outbuildings within the District, the Natchez Design Guidelines state that, “The general criteria for repair, maintenance, and alteration of the outbuildings in the historic review district is the same as the main houses and structures in the district.” (pg. 108) Throughout the Guidelines, it is recommended that additions retain a consistency of materials, patterning, and be located on inconspicuous sides of the property.

The applicant is proposing to move the garage doors on the northern elevation, to provide better access to vehicles. The new garage doors will match the existing doors design. One of the two existing six-over-six windows on the northern elevation will be moved to the western elevation and will be accompanied by a new door. A wood framed, metal awning will be over the new single half glass, half wooden door. In the opinion of planning staff, the proposed addition to the existing outbuilding is in line with the Guidelines as it retains existing material and design consistency.

APPLICANT COMMENT: Johnny Waycaster, architect, was present to answer any questions. Mr. Waycaster stated that they are adding on to an existing garage, and rotating its features. The new placement of the garage doors will allow for easier access by the owner’s automobiles.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

Motion: I move to approve application #NPC 21-24, request for an addition to an existing garage, as submitted.

MOTION BY: Commissioner Seibert
SECOND BY: Commissioner Hill
In favor: ALL
Opposed: NONE

3. Application #NPC 21-33. Dick Thompson, 207 S. Commerce Street., Map #41-114B-2.1: Request for an exterior rear addition, two-story deck.

Mr. Giani gave staff findings.

Background: The applicant received conditional approval from the Preservation Commission (NPC 20-43) regarding the replacement of a roof, windows, and the front door. The applicant is continuously working with the Historic Natchez Foundation, staff, and the manufacturer to ensure the design accurately reflects what was originally present on the building.

The applicant is requesting approval at this meeting for the addition of a rear deck with a staircase. Additionally the applicant is requesting approval for a rear door, accessing the deck.

Staff Findings: When constructing a new porch or deck, without historical evidence of one existing prior, the Historic Natchez Design Guidelines recommend that, “one may be added if it compatible in design, scale, and material of the main structure and not visible from the public right of way.” The new wooden deck is in the rear of the structure and will be mostly concealed by an existing brick wall.

The applicant did not include information regarding handrail or spindles, but staff recommends that the applicant use a simple square spindle with a flat caprail around the outside perimeter of the deck and continued down the stairs. Spindles shall be spaced appropriately to reflect commonly seen and accepted spindle/handrail design within the District.

A 15-panel, modern “French door” was installed on the rear prior to the application. When replacing a door, the Guidelines recommend that the replacement “be based on historical evidence or the architectural style of the building.” (pg. 54) Had the applicant asked for recommendations prior to purchasing and installing the modern door, staff with the help of HNF would have suggested a more appropriate design.

APPLICANT COMMENT: Dick Thompson was present virtually via teleconference. He stated that this is the second renovation of two projects for two “sister” houses, both were in a dilapidated state. He plans to add a fire escape to the back with wooden staircase.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

STUDY SESSION: Commissioner Seibert confirmed with the applicant that the cinderblock addition to the rear was not original. The applicant intends to keep the stucco coating to match historical materials.

Commissioner Seibert asked the applicant if an awning or roof was proposed over the rear fire escape. Mr. Thompson stated that nothing is proposed as of yet.

Commissioner Hazlip commented that the door that is currently installed on the rear is not appropriate for the historic district, however it is on the rear and not visible from the public right of way.

Carter Burns, HNF, commented that he agrees with Commissioner Hazlip's door comment, however it is hard to say what kind of door would look right for a cinderblock addition. Chairperson Sartin added that the rear door will likely blend in with the stucco treatment on the cinderblock, making it not visible or detrimental to the overall design.

Motion: I move to approve application #NPC 21-33, request for the exterior addition and alterations with the following condition:

- Applicant will coordinate with staff and HNF to oversee design of rear fire escape to ensure handrails are appropriate.

MOTION BY: Commissioner Hazlip

SECOND BY: Commissioner Seibert

In favor: ALL

Opposed: NONE

4. Application #NPC 21-35, High Street Properties, LLC, 207 High Street., Map #41-111B-27: Request to install roof over existing deck.

Mr. Giani gave staff findings.

Background: The applicant is requesting approval to construct a 20' by 20' shed style roof over an existing front porch. The applicant received approval to construct the porch in 2017 (NPC 17-18).

Staff Findings: The applicant is proposing a wooden framed roof to match the existing natural wood color of the porch. The two (2) existing corner porch posts will be replaced by taller posts to support the proposed roof. There will be two additional posts added on the façade to further support the roof. A fascia board will run along the sides of the roof. The roof will be composed of a 5-V Crimp metal roof, a common material used for single slope roofs within the District. The applicant is open to suggestions regarding the color of the metal roof.

The building's design is mid-20th century warehouse, and does not have significant architectural features that would be negatively affected by the construction of this roof. The building features a couple of wooden add-ons in the form of the existing deck and a wooden stairway/landing further down Canal Street

APPLICANT COMMENT: Pat Miller was present to answer any questions. He stated that the support beams shown on the plans will not be there, that was a mistake on the rendering. There will only be two support posts on the outside posts of the porch.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

STUDY SESSION: Commissioner Seibert asked if the wood will be painted or left natural. Mr. Miller stated that he intends to treat the wood and leave it natural to try to match the color of the existing porch.

Commissioner Sartin asked what the roof slope will be. The applicant stated that the application states 4 on 12, however that may be too steep. Their intent is to construct the shed style roof at the existing roof line to not obscure the existing sign.

Commissioner Sartin asked what the color of the metal roof will be. Mr. Miller stated that he was looking at a dark brown or to leave it in the galvanized color.

Commissioner Seibert asked Commissioner Sartin what his recommendation would be for the roof slope, if 4 on 12 was too steep. Commissioner Sartin recommended a 2 on 12 or 2.5 on 12, however this is a rough recommendation.

Motion: I move to approve application #NPC 21-35, request to install a roof over the existing deck with the following condition:

- Roof will have a slope of 2 on 12 or 2.5 on 12. If this does not work, the application must come back to the Commission.

MOTION BY: Commissioner Seibert
SECOND BY: Commissioner Hazlip
In favor: ALL
Opposed: NONE

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion: I move to adjourn the Preservation Commission meeting of March 10, 2021.

MOTION BY: Commissioner Seibert
SECOND BY: Commissioner Hazlip
All in favor: ALL
None opposed: NONE

MEETING ADJOURNED

APPROVED: _____

Date: _____

ATTEST: _____

Date: _____