



CITY OF PLAINFIELD
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
 515 WATCHUNG AVENUE, ROOM 202
 PLAINFIELD, NEW JERSEY 07060



Sharon Robinson-Briggs, Mayor

Sandra Gurshman, Chairwoman
 John Favazzo, Vice Chairman

Plainfield Historic Preservation Commission Regular Meeting Minutes
February 26, 2013, 7:30 PM, City Hall Library, 515 Watchung Avenue, Plainfield, New Jersey

Name, Class Designation (Term Duration)	1/22/13	2/26/13	3/19/13	4/23/13	5/28/13	6/25/13	7/23/13	8/27/13	9/24/13	10/22/13	11/19/13	12/17/13
Vice Chairman John Favazzo, Class A (5/10/10 - 12/31/13)	X	X										
Lawrence Ferrara, Class C (1/18/11 - 12/31/14)	X	X										
James Galvin, Alternate #1, Class A (1/3/13 - 12/31/14)	X	X										
Bill Garrett, Class B (2/3/12 - 12/31/15)	X											
Chairwoman Sandra Gurshman, Class B (1/18/11 - 12/31/14)	X	X										
Jan Jasper, Class C (1/3/13 - 12/31/16)	X	X										
Patricia Turner Kavanaugh, Class C (1/3/12 - 12/31/15)	X	X										
Elizabeth King, Class C (1/3/13 - 12/31/16)	X											
William Michelson, Class B (1/18/11 - 12/31/14)	X	X										
David Westlake, Class A (1/3/13 - 12/31/16)	X	X										
Alternate Member #2 VACANT (2-year term)												
HPC Consultant Gail Hunton		X										
HPC Secretary Scott Bauman	X	X										

Call to Order and Public Notice for Regular Meeting

Chairwoman Gurshman called the regular meeting of the Plainfield Historic Preservation Commission to order at 7:37 PM and read the following into the record: *“This is a regularly scheduled meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Plainfield, Union County, New Jersey. Adequate notice of this meeting has been given in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act in that a notice was published in the Courier News on January 4, 2013, and the notice of this meeting was posted in the City Clerk and Planning Division offices.”*

Adoption of January 22, 2013, Meeting Minutes

Mr. Michelson made a motion to approve the meeting minutes as presented. Ms. Turner Kavanaugh seconded the motion and the meeting minutes were approved unanimously by voice vote.

Unfinished Business

- HPC 12-19: 161-167 Crescent Avenue; Block 832, Lot 7: Crescent Area Historic District**
Applicant: Luis Windows /Owner: 165 Crescent Avenue, LLC

At the 1/22/13 Commission meeting, the above application was heard on an informal basis; at the end of the informal hearing, the owner was informed he could schedule his application for either 2/26/13, or 3/19/13.

Secretary Bauman informed the Commission that the owner requested that his application be scheduled for 3/19/13.

New Business

1. Certificate of Appropriateness: HPC 13-02: 111-115 Crescent Avenue; Block 832, Lot 15

Crescent Area Historic District / Applicant & Owner: Ray Tang, Crescent Property Investment

Secretary Bauman informed the Commission that the Applicant provided adequate notice to property owners within 200' of the subject and that the Commission has jurisdiction to hear the application.

Ray Tang of Crescent Property Investment (PO Box 236, Martinsville), and his architect Yuval Wellisch, RA (1020 Springfield Avenue, Mountainside) introduced themselves to the Commission. Mr. Wellisch informed the Commission that his client is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness to install a 6' high wooden dog eared privacy fence along the northern side yard property boundary, and a 6' high aluminum picket style fence between the building and the northern side property line. The aluminum picket style fence can be seen from the street. Illustrations of both fence styles, as well as the property survey showing the locations of each fence were provided in advance to the Commission in their meeting packet.

Mr. Michelson confirmed with the Applicant that in conjunction with landscape behind the proposed fence, the aluminum fence would not permit the backyard to be visible from the street; Mr. Tang understood and further stated that there will be no gate provided for either the aluminum or wooden privacy fence.

Chairwoman Gurshman opened the meeting to the public. No one from the public commented. Chairwoman Gurshman closed the public comment portion meeting. Ms. Turner Kavanaugh made a motion to approve the proposal as submitted. Mr. Michelson seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously by voice vote.

2. Certificate of Appropriateness: HPC 09-18: 226-232 Park Avenue; Block 245, Lot 8

North Avenue Historic District / Applicant and Owner: Next Step to Collins, LLC

Secretary Bauman informed the Commission that the Applicant provided adequate notice to property owners within 200' of the subject and that the Commission has jurisdiction to hear the application. The subject site is the Courier News / Frost Building. The original Certificate of Appropriateness was issued on 10/27/09, and amended on 9/18/12 to reflect changes as shown on the as-built elevation drawings.

Project Manager Gabe Bailer of Landmark Developers (675 Garfield Avenue, Jersey City), architect Jose Carballo (52 1st Street, Hackensack), and contractor Fernando Fernandez (675 Garfield Avenue, Jersey City) introduced themselves to the Commission. Mr. Bailer informed the Commission that he is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness to install two fabric awning canopies on the front façade of the building. Each awning is 3' in height, and has an overhang of 3' from the building façade. The vertical valence of each awning is 6". The bottom of each awning will be 8' above grade, and the top will be 11' above grade. Mr. Bailer said he was not sure about the signage and graphics that will be on each awning- that will be decided after tenants are occupying the first floor. Mr. Bailer said he is applying for the 20% federal income tax credit program for the rehabilitation of this building.

Mr. Galvin pointed out that there is an error in the scale of the awning and how it is mounted on the building. Mr. Westlake added that a side view of the awning would be helpful. Ms. Hunton said that this proposal would have to be approved by the National Park Service and Internal Revenue Service if the Applicant is seeking federal income tax credits- this caveat will be added to the Certificate of Appropriateness should the Commission decide to approve the proposal.

Chairwoman Gurshman opened the meeting to the public. April Stefel of 935 Madison Avenue asked about the dimension of the awning as compared to the width of the sidewalk. Mr. Fernandez said the sidewalk is 12' wide. Ms. Stefel said that the 3' wide awning would not be proportional to the 12' wide sidewalk, the proportions are not in scale with the building and a larger awning would be better. Ms. Stefel added that the plans would need to be correct if the Applicant is applying for the 20% federal income tax credit program. Mr. Fernandez said that Park Avenue is like a wind tunnel and even if the width of the awning is increased to 5' there would be a great risk of the awning becoming dislodged from the building. Chairwoman Gurshman closed the public comment portion meeting.

Ms. Hunton recommended that the Commission request from the Applicant a cross section of the proposed awning with corrected plans, and a cross section of the existing concrete canopy as well. After further discussion with the

Applicant, Mr. Michelson made a motion to carry the application to April 23, 2013, and that the Applicant shall submit revised plans prior to the meeting. Ms. Turner Kavanaugh seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously by voice vote.

**3. Certificate of Appropriateness: HPC 12-20: 134-136 North Avenue; Block 314, Lot 8
North Avenue Historic District / Applicant and Owner: 134-136 North Ave., LLC**

Secretary Bauman informed the Commission that the Applicant provided adequate notice to property owners within 200' of the subject and that the Commission has jurisdiction to hear the application.

Project Manager Gabe Bailer of Landmark Developers (675 Garfield Avenue, Jersey City), architect Jose Carballo (52 1st Street, Hackensack), and contractor Fernando Fernandez (675 Garfield Avenue, Jersey City) introduced themselves to the Commission. Mr. Bailer informed the Commission that he is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior façade renovation including: 1) cleaning all decorative panels and brackets, 2) repairing pre-cast window lintels and sills, 3) cleaning and repointing the brick façade, 4) installing a new fabric awning above the first floor, 5) installing two new wood frame / clear glass doors, 6) installing new brushed aluminum frame glass windows on the first floor storefront, and 7) installing new windows on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th floors.

Mr. Bailer apologized for the vinyl windows that were installed without permission. Mr. Fernandez added that it was a \$24,000 mistake and he made several suggestions for the Commission's consideration. Mr. Fernandez asked if he could paint the vinyl windows so that they would look like painted wood- this suggestion was not accepted by the Commission since paint doesn't adhere well to vinyl. Mr. Fernandez asked if he could replace the sashes on the window, keep the frame, and add wood molding / epoxy to encapsulate the vinyl- this suggestion was not accepted by the Commission since it would trap moisture. Mr. Fernandez said he could get wood sashes for \$12,000 rather than spring \$28,000 for new wood windows. Mr. Galvin explained that wood molding, epoxy, and metal trim all expand at a different rate when exposed to temperature shifts; the different expansion rates will break the epoxy bond and will create a moisture problem. The Commission reiterated that they want wood windows, the plans actually call for wood windows and that it is regrettable that the Applicant's contractor made a \$24,000 mistake.

Mr. Carballo described the dimensions of the proposed awning. Ms. Turner Kavanaugh asked if the storefront windows should be wood rather than aluminum; Ms. Hunton responded that the city's design guidelines approve metal finishes. Chairwoman Gurshman asked if pull down security screening / gates are proposed; Mr. Carballo said at this point none are proposed. Mr. Westlake pointed out to Mr. Carballo that if the awnings are 8'-10" as shown on the plans, then the plans are out of scale if the doors are 7' high as indicated by Mr. Carballo. Vice Chairman Favazzo informed Mr. Carballo to refer to page 41 of the city's design guidelines in order to understand the details that are needed for the storefront improvements. Mr. Michelson asked for a side view elevation in future submissions. Mr. Carballo asked what specifically does the Commission want; Vice Chairman Favazzo replied "draw what you intend to build". Mr. Westlake commented that the storefront system shows glass flush with the front elevation- it would be better if the glass were recessed a bit.

Ms. Hunton asked about the repointing process. Mr. Carballo responded that industrial standards will be followed. Mr. Galvin asked specifically how the mortar will be removed from the brick. Mr. Fernandez said the mortar will be removed by using a Makita grinder. Ms. Hunton said soft brick Type N or Type O mortar is needed; she further recommended to Mr. Carballo that he read National Park Service Preservation Brief 2: "Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Masonry Buildings". Mr. Fernandez said he has the tools to do the job and that he has done this type of work thousands of times, including buildings in New York City. Vice Chairman Favazzo asked Mr. Fernandez to give him 3 addresses of recent jobs in New York City that he can inspect. Mr. Fernandez agreed to provide Secretary Bauman with the addresses to pass along to Vice Chairman Favazzo.

Mr. Galvin asked Mr. Carballo about the cornices in the front and back of the building that are in need of repair; Mr. Carballo responded that they will be fixed. Mr. Galvin asked how they will be fixed- sheet metal, patching, re-fabrication? Mr. Carballo responded that repairs will be carried out by patching, fabricating, and caulking, whatever it takes.

Chairwoman Gurshman opened the meeting to the public. April Stefel of 935 Madison Avenue said that there are many pictures of North Avenue storefront photographs in the library. Ms. Stefel expressed concern over the proposed mortar and brick work- the National Park Service will be concerned about the mortar mix and repointing process. Ms. Stefel also stated that the color and shine of the aluminum frame is important- it should not shine; she recommended that the Applicant view the Plainfield Music Store façade for ideas. Chairwoman Gurshman closed the public comment portion meeting.

Ms. Hunton told Mr. Bailer that the Commission is like a primer to what you will get from the National Park Service- they will be asking for more detailed plans as well. Mr. Fernandez said if he installs wood window frames on the first floor he can't use insulated windows the thickness of the sash is 1 3/4" and the insulated windows are 2 1/4. Vice Chairman Favazzo asked for photographs of the window section with a tape measure included in the photograph to accurately describe the dimensions.

Mr. Michelson made a motion to carry the application to April 23, 2013, and that the Applicant shall submit revised plans to show the following: 1) cut sheet for wood window replacement, 2) more detail on sections of storefront, 3) mortar mix specifications, 4) masonry restoration plan, and 5) side view of awning. Ms. Turner Kavanaugh seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously by voice vote. Mr. Bailer asked if he could appear at the March 19 meeting to present wood windows to replace the vinyl windows; this request was granted unanimously by voice vote.

**4. Certificate of Appropriateness: HPC 12-21: 177-185 North Avenue; Block 313, Lot 12
North Avenue Historic District / Applicant and Owner: 175-177 North Ave., LLC**

Secretary Bauman informed the Commission that the Applicant provided adequate notice to property owners within 200' of the subject and that the Commission has jurisdiction to hear the application.

Project Manager Gabe Bailer of Landmark Developers (675 Garfield Avenue, Jersey City), architect Jose Carballo (52 1st Street, Hackensack), and contractor Fernando Fernandez (675 Garfield Avenue, Jersey City) introduced themselves to the Commission. Mr. Bailer informed the Commission that he is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior façade renovation including: 1) cleaning all decorative panels and brackets, 2) repairing pre-cast window lintels and sills, 3) cleaning and repointing the brick façade, 4) installing a new fabric awning above the first floor, 5) installing two new wood frame / clear glass doors, 6) installing new brushed aluminum frame glass windows on the first floor storefront, and 7) installing new wood framed double hung windows on the 2nd and 3rd floors.

Mr. Bailer presented revised plans to be distributed; Mr. Bauman distributed the newly revised plans to the Commission. The revised drawings show two awnings, but the plans were not clear regarding whether there are two or three storefronts. Mr. Fernandez said there are three storefronts; Mr. Westlake responded if that is the case then five doors are needed- the plans are incorrect and need to be revised.

Chairwoman Gurshman opened the meeting to the public. No one from the public commented. Chairwoman Gurshman closed the public comment portion meeting. Mr. Michelson made a motion to carry the application to April 23, 2013, and that the Applicant shall submit revised plans prior to the meeting. Ms. Turner Kavanaugh seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously by voice vote.

**5. Certificate of Appropriateness: HPC 12-22: 200-212 Park Avenue; Block 245, Lot 7.01
North Avenue Historic District / Applicant and Owner: The Bank on Park, LLC**

Secretary Bauman informed the Commission that the Applicant provided adequate notice to property owners within 200' of the subject and that the Commission has jurisdiction to hear the application.

Project Manager Gabe Bailer of Landmark Developers (675 Garfield Avenue, Jersey City), architect Jose Carballo (52 1st Street, Hackensack), and contractor Fernando Fernandez (675 Garfield Avenue, Jersey City) introduced themselves to the Commission. Mr. Bailer informed the Commission that he is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior façade renovations, constructing a 5th story on the rooftop, and installing wall mounted signage with back lighting on the elevations fronting Park Avenue and West Second Street.

Mr. Carballo said that very little work is proposed to the exterior- cleaning the building's exterior, repairing / refurbishing all doors and windows. The proposed 5th floor rooftop lounge is a space that will serve as a pre- or post-function place to have a drink and enjoy the views. The addition will be more modern than the building itself- glass and metal fascia boards- it will be completely different from the building. To accompany the addition there will be a water feature- a 4 to 6 inch deep concrete pan to hold water; a structural engineer has reviewed the proposal and the building is capable of containing such a water feature. The addition is set back 31'-5" from the building edge, and there is a 4' high parapet. Given the height of the building and the setback of the addition, it can only be seen when one is over 150 feet away from the building.

Ms. Hunton asked Mr. Carballo if he has considered a green roof instead of a water feature; Mr. Carballo said he has not considered a green roof. Mr. Galvin felt the addition is too linear to go with the building. Mr. Bailer said this proposal will not be eligible for the 20% federal tax credit program. Mr. Westlake said he has no objection to the addition as it stands now. Mr. Galvin said he wants to see more detail- from North Avenue and Somerset Street one can see the addition, the plans submitted to the Commission are missing Second Street elevation drawings. Chairwoman Gurshman agreed that additional detail on the structure is required.

Chairwoman Gurshman asked about the proposed signage. Mr. Carballo said they haven't thought about signage yet- when tenants are in the building, the Applicant will return to the Commission. Ms. Hunton had questions about the glass canopy- what is the depth of the canopy; Mr. Carballo responded about 2 feet from the columns, and it is attached to the columns via brackets. Ms. Hunton requested drawings that are farther along; she recommended that the Commission refrain from taking action on the application at this time- the Applicant will need more details anyway before he bids out the work; the Commission is not asking for more from the Applicant than what he has to do anyway.

Chairwoman Gurshman opened the meeting to the public. Gerry Heydt of 915 Madison Avenue stated that she likes the addition and the play of the contemporary addition against the older building- it has an urban feel. April Stefel of 935 Madison Avenue said the addition was a great concept and that she wants to see more of the façade facing Park Avenue- the only place where one would see the addition coming up Somerset Street.

Chairwoman Gurshman closed the public comment portion meeting. Mr. Bailer said this project is on the back burner and other projects are a priority. Mr. Michelson made a motion to carry the application to April 23, 2013, and that the Applicant shall submit more developed plans prior to the meeting. Ms. Turner Kavanaugh seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Committee Reports / Staff Report

1. Architectural Review / Minor Application Review Committee

A. Landscape and Walkway Improvements to City Hall facing Watchung Avenue: Carried to 3/19/13

2. Community Outreach / Historic Preservation Awareness Committee

A. Postcard notifying owners in historic districts / locally designated historic sites: working on final draft, and waiting for comments from city officials. Recommendations include having a Spanish version of the post card available on the Commission's website.

B. Sleepy Hollow Realtors newsletter insert: final draft approved; insert to be in future newsletter.

C. Revisions to City's Certificate of Compliance to reflect historic district / landmark status: no update.

3. Ordinance Revision Committee: no news to report.

4. **2013 Certified Local Government No Match Grant**: the Spanish translation of the city's Design Guidelines is not a project that is big enough to justify a \$9,000 grant. The Commission will explore other grant sources such as the New Jersey Historical Commission, or the City Cultural and Heritage Commission.

5. **Replacement of Green Brook Park Pedestrian Bridge- Green Brook Park Historic District**

- **Background:** In June and October, the City informed Union County and the SHPO that Planning Board review and Historic Preservation Commission review is required for this project. In November, the County's consulting engineer Neglia Associates sent plans to Langan Engineering- the City's consulting engineer- to coordinate the bridge design with the NJDEP design standards for the Green Brook Walkway. Langan Engineering reviewed the plan and provided comments in December 2012. In January 2013, HPC Consultant Gail Hunton spoke to Union County Engineering Department (Paul Leso) about Langan's comments. The discussion focused on a wooden footbridge on sheet 29.02; the design does not meet AASHTO requirements and the County cited concerns over the durability and maintenance of timber bridges. Ms. Hunton agreed to prepare a letter for Union County citing the durability of timber bridges.
- **Update:** April Stefel of 935 Madison Avenue said the County has all of the plans and the specifications for all of the bridges are included in the plans. The question of who should present the plans- the City or the County- was discussed. Ms. Stefel cited 3 bridge locations in the original plans and requested that the HPC make sure that the bridge locations remain the same.

6. **Replacement of Pemberton Avenue Culvert PL-75: Cedar Brook Park Historic District**

- **Background:** Ms. Hunton heard from the State Historic Preservation Office that Union County's consulting engineer agreed to make revisions to the culvert design- these revised plans have not yet been received by the City or the State Historic Preservation Office. Mr. Bauman will follow up with the County. The City and County are discussing the possibility of sharing the cost of the new culvert design by further sharing the costs associated with non-related roadway paving projects.
- **Update:** no new news.

7. **Properties in Historic Districts / Historic Sites with Code / Maintenance Violations**

- Mr. Bauman referred Commission members to the meeting packet which lists the properties of interest.

Discussion

Mr. Stephen Carson of 827 3rd Place introduced himself and said he was recently cited by the Zoning Officer for removing wood frame windows and installing vinyl windows at 827 3rd Place. The window removal / replacement took place in November / December 2012; he said he was told by the Building Department that no permits were needed; he began work on Friday and on Saturday morning the police told him to stop work. Mr. Carson has applied for a Certificate of Appropriateness but expressed frustration that he financed this work using a FHA 203K Renovation Loan and he is behind schedule already- there are a total of 32 windows, and 21 have already been installed- the rest are in storage.

Chairwoman Gurshman told Mr. Carson that since 2002 a Certificate of Appropriateness is needed for the replacement of windows even for same size windows. A building permit is needed only if there is a change in window size. After further discussion, three Commission members agreed to visit the site to determine which windows can be seen from the street and will inform Mr. Carson on the extent of work that requires issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Adjournment of Regular Meeting

There being no further business, Mr. Michelson made a motion for adjournment, seconded by Mr. Galvin, all voted in favor, none opposed. The meeting adjourned at 10:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Bauman

Scott Bauman, AICP, PP
Principal Planner / HPC Secretary, Plainfield Planning Division
Prepared: April 17, 2013
HPC Approved: April 23, 2013