

Harford County Historic Preservation Commission
Meeting Summary: Wednesday May 5th, 2021

Members Present: Carol Deibel (Chair)
Dan Coates (Co-Chair)
Christina Presberry
Phil McCall
Jackie Seneschal
Eric Polk

Members Absent: Dr. Iris Barnes

Staff: Jacob Bensen
Jon Leishman
Ed Maley (DPW-Capital Projects)
Hayden Anthony (Facilities & Operations)

Public: Laura Bianca-Pruett

Special Guest: Chris Jensen (Polt Design Group) and Arden McClune (Liriodendron Foundation)

Call to Order

The regular monthly meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was called to order at 7:00 PM.

Welcome

Ms. Deibel welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Review and Approval

[April 7th, 2021 Meeting Minutes](#)

There was one suggestion to approve the minutes with an amendment. Mr. Dan Coates moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Ms. Presberry seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Archeology Update

Mr. Coates reported that there is new work planned at the Joppa Historic district (HA-1385) for summer 2021. There will be HPC approval required.

Ms. Deibel and Ms. Seneschal noted that artifact from Joppa may be exhibited at this year's Historical Society of Harford County Annual Meeting, which will be held outside and not inside this year.

New Business

Certificates of Appropriateness

Mr. Bensen presented all three COA's using a PowerPoint presentation. They include two for the Liriodendron (HA-230) and one the McComas Institute (HA-307).

Mr. Bensen explained the plans for the Liriodendron Terrace Rehabilitation, which included replacement of the terrace deck, temporary removal and storage of the Balustrade, repair and potentially replacement of parts of the sandstone edge stone, and repointing of the Fieldstone foundation.

The Staff recommended approval with the condition that the HPC will review final selection of replacement materials before installation.

Mr. Maley noted that the County intends to have material samples provided to the HPC in the late summer or early fall, with the project scheduled to start and finish in November.

Mr. McCall asked if the terrazzo was the original material utilized at the house?

Ms. McClune stated that it looks similar in appearance to the original material.

Mr. Coates confirmed that the terrazzo is original.

Mr. Coates asked if the sandstone came from Dr. Kelly's quarry?

Ms. McClune stated that a member of the Liriodendron Foundation Board is investigating.

Mr. McCall mentioned that there is a stockpile of this type of stone in the DC area at Rock Creek Park from the Capitol Building rehabilitation.

Mr. Coates stated that one of the fireplaces in the mansion has a slab of original material from the quarry.

Ms. Deibel asked for the HPC to review the second COA application from the Liriodendron before voting.

Mr. Bensen presented the second COA application for Liriodendron, which included the installation of a new bluestone walkway and patio at the façade, exterior lighting/electrical improvements, and repair/replacement of shutters at the rear elevation.

Staff recommended approval of the project.

Ms. McClune stated that these improvements are to facilitate the property's usage as an event rental space, proceeds of which fund the upkeep of the mansion.

Ms. Seneschal asked about the wood type of the original shutters.

Ms. McClune said she was unsure of the exact type, but that the manufacturer recommended the wood selection for the new shutters.

Mr. Coates stated that he knows the company that originally made the shutters and that it might be Timberlane, the company selected for the replacement shutters. He will investigate further.

Mr. McCall stated that they might have to replace some stone, but it was clarified by Ms. McClune that the light fixtures embedded in the fieldstone at the mid-lawn steps would be replaced in-kind to avoid the need to patch the stonework. For the new fixtures at the other steps, she stated that they will require only a small hole to be drilled, rather than a large rectangle as was done with the existing rectangular fixtures.

Mr. McCall recommended that the holes for the new light fixtures and wiring be placed in the mortar joints to minimize the impact on the historic fieldstone. He noted that it may be possible to coordinate the installation with the repointing work at the Terrace. Ms. McClune states that she was unsure of the exact timeline of the project but will see if it is possible to coordinate with the repointing work.

Ms. Seneschal asked if there was any way to confirm Mr. Coates's statement that Timberlane was the same company that manufactured the original shutters. Further investigation is required, but Ms. McClune noted that it is possible that the equipment came from the original manufacturer, but it is actually a new company.

Ms. Seneschal asked for clarification regarding the location of the proposed electric receptacles. Ms. McClune clarified that two new quad receptacles and associated wiring are proposed for the side porches and that the existing dual receptacles will be upgraded to quad receptacles. Ms. Seneschal asked that this explanation be included in the approval of the COA.

Ms. Deibel thanked the applicants and asked for a motion to approve the Liriodendron Terrace Rehabilitation.

Ms. Seneschal moved to approve the proposed Terrace Rehabilitation, with the condition that the final material selection be reviewed and approved by the HPC prior to installation. The proposed undertaking meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standard for Rehabilitation Six by prioritizing repair over replacement of deteriorated historic features. Where repair is not possible, the new features will match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials.

Mr. Polk seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Ms. Deibel asked for a motion to approve the proposed new walkway/patio, lighting/electrical improvements, and shutter repair/replacement at Liriodendron.

Ms. Seneschal motioned to approve the proposed undertaking, with the clarification that the electrical improvements will include two new quad receptacles and associated wiring and the replacement of existing dual receptacles with quad receptacles. It was noted that the proposed new bluestone walkway/patio and the new light fixtures and electrical receptacles meets Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation Nine and Ten. This work will not destroy historic materials that characterize the property, will be differentiated from the old, and are compatible with the existing historic architecture. The proposed repair and, where needed, replacement of wood shutters at the rear elevation meets Secretary of the Interior's Standard Six by prioritizing repair over replacement of historic materials and, where needed, reproducing missing features with new features that match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities based on documented evidence (existing shutters).

Ms. Presberry seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Bensen presented the McComas Institute Exterior Rehabilitation Project, which included restoration of the building's wood siding, wood windows, and wood cupola, and the installation of a new historically appropriate door at the rear entrance and in-kind replacement of the wood railing at the front entrance. He noted that the work was approved by the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) which holds an easement on the building and that the work is completed. Staff recommended approval of the undertaking.

Ms. Seneschal mentioned that she recalled Mr. Thornton had previously informed the HPC that the Hosanna Community House had purchased the McComas Institute and Zion Church. She then expressed her concern that this application was the second this year to be submitted after the project was completed. She noted that she did, however, approve of the work completed.

Mr. Bensen said he could not answer the question at this time.

Ms. Deibel stated that it the owners of properties that are County Landmarks and under MHT easements may believe only approval from MHT is required. She also stated that "we should be proactive and not reactive on this matter," asking that Mr. Bensen contact MHT and speak with their easement administrator regarding this issue.

Ms. Seneschal asked if there was a building permit required for this project. Mr. Bensen stated that no building permit was needed for the work completed, which is why the project was not flagged for HPC review.

Ms. Seneschal stated that this property is close to, but not within, the development envelope; highlighting the importance of its preservation.

Ms. Deibel asked for a motion to approve the McComas Institute Restoration.

Ms. Seneschal motioned to approve the COA, noting that the proposed undertaking meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standard for Rehabilitation Six by prioritizing repair over replacement of deteriorated

historic features and, where necessary, replacing in-kind with materials that match the existing in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials.

Mr. Coates seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Other Business

Mr. Bensen presented the County's planned activities for this year's Historic Preservation Month, noting that they would again be limited by the Pandemic. He stated that staff anticipates a mid-May release date for the 2021 Historic Preservation Awards videos, which will be posted online and shared via a press release and social media.

Mr. Bensen stated that he will be doing a Historical Society presentation on May 11th from 12:30-1:30.

Ms. Seneschal stated that several folks have already registered. Ms. Deibel noted that Mr. Bensen's presentation will be posted to YouTube also.

Ms. Seneschal requested that Mr. Bensen confirm the Awards videos release date before May 11th so that he can share that information during his presentation.

Harford Heritage Committee (Harford 250) Update

Ms. Seneschal updated the HPC on the activities of the Harford Heritage Committee's preparations for the Harford 250 celebration in 2023. She stated that a logo for Harford 250 has been selected and the winning entry will be presented an award at Bel Air Town Hall on June 21st. A website and memoir program is ongoing.

Ms. Deibel stated that Mr. Coates is assisting in the planning of a public archeology project in Joppatowne in 2023. She has recently met with Maryland House representatives and confirmed their participation in the celebration.

Ms. Seneschal mentioned their plan to do driving tours and bike tours for certain County Landmarks and other historic sites. She stated she would like to develop an app or a brochure that helps with this. The HPC would rely on Harford County Planning for this.

Mr. Leishman mentioned that HPC can collaborate with Harford County Planning and the Bike and Pedestrian Plan to make this happen and find a safe route that county residents or tourists can ride on to accomplish this tour.

Administrative Business

Harford County Historic Preservation Survey App

Mr. Bensen presented an update on the MIHP Inventory. He noted that it has been discovered that the County Landmark Dembytown Church does not have a survey form on file. He also mentioned that Harford County Planning and Zoning is hiring a new Planner I to primarily assist in Historical Preservation work. Ms. Deibel stated that that was great news because Mr. Bensen has “a lot on his plate.” She also mentioned that Janet Davis likely did the survey on the Dembytown Church.

Mr. Coates asked the timeframe for this Dembytown survey?

Mr. Bensen stated he believed it was likely surveyed in the early 1990’s if a survey was completed.

Historic Preservation Design Guidelines Project Update

Mr. Bensen updated the HPC on the status of the Design Guidelines project. Ms. Deibel noted that there will be a delay in returning the draft to the HPC, as addressing the comments from MHT are ongoing. Ms. Seneschal stated that MHT wanted expanded sections on historic districts and new construction. She asked if Mr. Bensen knew if a second public hearing will be required? Mr. Bensen will confirm.

Ms. Seneschal asked if the HPC could “test run” the guidelines using one of the previously approved COA applications. Mr. Bensen and the HPC members discussed how the COA for the Liriodendron Terrace Restoration and the Liriodendron new walkway/patio would be reviewed using the draft Guidelines. It was determined that the walkway/patio was not sufficiently covered by the Guidelines. Mr. Bensen will send a comment to the consultant asking for a revision to address this issue.

Public Comments

Ms. Deibel asked if there was anyone outside the commission in the meeting. Mr. Bensen replied and said Ms. Laura Bianca-Pruett was in the audience. The HPC members greeted Ms. Bianca-Pruett

Ms. Deibel asked if there were any comments from the public.

Mr. Bensen stated that Mr. James Chrismer of Bel Air submitted a comment questioning whether the HPC would be able to recognize the late Mr. James “Capt’n Jim” McMahan Jr. for his preservation work, including service on the Liriodendron Foundation Board and donation of his father’s photograph collection to the Historical Society. The HPC discussed the topic and decided that the proposed recognition of Mr. McMahan by the Harford County Council was more appropriate at this time. The HPC noted that Mr. Chrismer could submit an application recognizing the McMahan family at the next Historic Preservation Awards in 2023.

Adjourn

Ms. Deibel asked to for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Seneschal motioned to adjourn. It was seconded by Mr. McCall. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting ended at 8:35 PM.