

MINUTES
HISTORIC AND CULTURAL PRESERVATION BOARD SPECIAL MEETING
May 11, 2022

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Historic and Cultural Preservation Board of the City of Highland was called to order at 5:01 p.m. by Chair Bible at the Donahue Council Chambers, 27215 Base Line, Highland, California.

Present: Chair Patrick Sandford
 Member Colin Childs
 Member Tony Mauricio
 Member Gail Shelton

Absent: Vice Chair Pamela Bible

Staff Present: Lawrence Mainez, Community Development Director
 Kim Stater, Assistant Community Development Director
 Ash Syed, Associate Planner
 Matt Wirz, Building Official
 Shannon Wisniewski, Administrative Assistant III

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Member Mauricio.

COMMUNITY INPUT

None

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Minutes from the April 7, 2022 Special Meeting.

A MOTION was made by Member Shelton, seconded by Member Childs, to approve the minutes, as submitted. Motion carried, 4-0-1, with Vice Chair Bible being absent.

BUSINESS ITEM

2. Certificate of Appropriateness (COA 22-001) for the demolition and reconstruction of a 2,450 square foot structure commonly known as the "Old Bank Building" located in the Highland Historic District. (6956 Palm Avenue)

Associate Planner Syed presented the staff report.

Robert Lee, Representative stated the safe is on the other side of that masonry-built wall, and it is two floors tall. The basement level has a significant safe that has the entire vault that has arched ceilings and above that is another portion of the safe. We don't know if there's any steel masonry.

Assistant Community Development Director Stater asked is that a safe room? What are the interior dimensions?

Robert Lee stated downstairs in the basement was approximately 15 feet by 10 feet and then upstairs was about 6 by 6.

Member Shelton asked if there is any way to keep any part of that existing building, whether it's a facade on top. Is there a way to keep any part of that building?

Robert Lee stated unfortunately, that is the worst part is the exterior. In 1950 or 1960 they reinforced the masonry with shotcrete and to make that structurally sound, that's where all the cost comes in. I would love to be able to re utilize every portion, including the windows, but the windows in their condition don't meet the current energy standards.

Member Shelton asked how about inside? Is there a way to save some of the internal aspects of the building decorating?

Robert Lee stated I would love to keep the safe. That was not touched by any shotcrete, and we can use sonar and find out what kind of steel reinforcement is inside of those walls. I would also like to keep the light fixtures.

Member Childs asked what shotcrete is? This building appears to be brick.

Robert Lee stated it is essentially what they use when they construct a pool. That is the cement material on the inside of the pool for the walls. There is minor structural stability to that and they covered that beautiful brick with two inches of shotcrete. It is a constant maintenance, it cracks every movement, and it is less structurally sound than stucco.

Member Mauricio it looks like the previous owners were trying to aim for like an Adobe design.

Robert Lee stated I believe that's exactly what they were going for and shotcrete is also less expensive than stucco.

Community Development Director Mainez stated the architect that consulted on this building was the same one that worked on the Mission Inn in Riverside. It's aesthetic, but I think also to it's for stability and protection of the brick that may not have been engineered.

Member Mauricio stated where is everyone going to park?

Robert Lee stated I've talked to the owners about possibly purchasing a lot across the street that is vacant and utilizing it as off-street parking. The other option is on street parking. I am worried about the handicap spaces met as well as the path of travel.

Associate Planner Syed stated if you are open to the idea of a of a demolition and reconstruction. It doesn't necessarily have to be this if there's another design that you would like the Architect and the Applicant to put some thought into that works too.

Community Development Director Mainez stated this was built in 1904, it was brick and then it sounds like based upon what you've been told in the 50s, is when the shotcrete was put on.

Assistant Community Development Director Stater passed around a photo that showed the building with a horse and buggy. Dating from the early 1900's. The white exterior was already in place.

Margaret Sellman, Public Speaker stated I live at 6936 Palm Avenue and I'm across the street. I have some questions because I have also been impacted. I see that it went from one story to two story, and I understand there's a basement because there were people renting in that building in 2003. Will this be a three-story building? Two stories above the basement, is that correct?

Associate Planner Syed stated from what the Applicant conveyed to me, it is a first floor and a second story.

Margaret Sellman asked if they're going to seal up the basement?

Robert Lee stated that is the current plan however, from comments that I've heard here, I'm going to be relaying back to the property owner about trying to keep this safe, because that is where a big portion of the safe and the historical significance of the safe is down in the basement.

Margaret Sellman asked how many people are going to be permitted inside the building at any point in time?

Building Official Matt Wirz stated that would be dependent on the occupancy that is chosen for this building. So, looking at the square footage, it would be about 20 people.

Margaret Sellman stated 20 people is a lot of parking and there is already an issue on Palm Avenue. So, what's the potential for parking issues? I would love to have that building fixed because it's an eyesore.

Member Mauricio asked is the main concern the parking and traffic?

Margaret Sellman stated yes, the parking and the type of people coming in.

William Lennick, Public Speaker stated I reside at 27268 Main Street. It's the 1910 mission craftsman diagonally from this building. Where is the utility going to go if there isn't a basement?

Robert Lee stated as far as the utilities they will put underground.

William Lennick stated the basement should be a utility room where people should not be and that is something I would suggest to the board as a consideration. There's no windows in the second floor. I am trying to understand how it's going to exist.

Robert Lee showed the proposed floor plan.

William Lennick stated they have two chimneys in the original buildings.

Associate Planner Syed stated I didn't receive elevations that showed the other two sides, so I'm not sure if they were incorporated in this design, but the Architect can probably provide some more detail.

Robert Lee stated this is the first I've heard of any type of chimney. If there were chimneys, I can certainly add them into the facade and the architectural, but this is the first I've heard of any chimneys.

William Lennick stated they should stay.

Chair Sandford stated we want this building to stay as original as possible. It's just the current standards and the standards from over 100 years ago are going to be changed, so it's hard to make the building exact same standards.

Board Members were looking at the photo number 2021-12-06-11-45-05.

Assistant Community Development Director Stater stated Ms. Sellman per her request and her inquiries, what we understand to be the future use of that building is probably a retail use. I don't think it's been 100% determined, so occupancy is kind of a two-prong question. Occupancy will be determined by the Building Official Matt Wirz, who is talking as far as what the occupant load can be to meet building and safety standards. When we look at parking, we use a square footage of the building for the use. So, if it's retail, one parking spaces required for every 250 square feet of usable area. This particular use if it was retail would require 12 parking spaces. There's zero parking on site because it separated ownership, with one from the south, which is probably one of the most unfortunate parts of this project. For it to be utilized properly in the future, it has no parking is it's now separated from the garage and doesn't have any of the parking that came with the garage, so I don't know if that was clear one of the early slides. The property is two different parcels where the building used to sit so the original bank is a separate parcel from the garage that was to the south. It doesn't have appropriate dimensions for two-way travel by a vehicle. If this project proceeds through the Historic Board, it will go to the Planning Commission and the Planning Commission would have to make the appropriate findings that almost 100% of the parking for this use, whatever it may be, can be provided on the street. We don't know the answer to that yet. For tonight, we are just dealing with kind of the historical aspects of should this building be demolished and reconstructed or not?

Margaret Sellman stated I really wanted to share my concerns for how many people are in there because they must have parking and then whoever is visiting them must have parking and we already have a parking issue.

Assistant Community Development Director Stater stated right now, we are looking at the materials, size and the dimensions reconstructed as it was, that's the first thing we need to look at. The second thing is, is the Applicants looking for wanting to reconstruct it partially. However, we want to make modifications and improvements and expand it, which falls under the standards for rehabilitation. So, you're looking at two standards at the same time, and you must as a board, decide if you're willing to make that transition from just reconstruction. If you even permit the demolition and the reconstruction of it, and in addition to the reconstruction, do you want to allow the rehabilitation, which would be the expansion.

Member Mauricio asked what's the time frame on this?

Assistant Community Development Director Stater stated the faster the better for the Applicant so they can decide how to proceed. Tonight, is a Certificate of Appropriateness, which is exactly what we've been talking about. If you were to say no, no matter what the price is, we're looking at strictly from historic preservation. We want you to structurally improve it, we want it to be rehabbed to the original building.

Member Childs stated we stick strongly to the rehabilitation standards and guidelines, and those are clear to us. As Kim has said, we have the option of reconstructing fully or partially. These standards themselves are very clear. The character of the property shall be retained and preserved. Removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize the property shall be avoided. Those are some very, very strict guidelines. We have so few historic buildings in California. We break them and destroy them. No matter what decision is made, there are going to be financial impacts and to help us to preserve these old buildings and to maintain the character of things like this there are several different avenues that a homeowner and business owner can go through. There's a federal historic preservation tax incentive, that the owner can apply to, which will give them roughly a 20% income tax credit to rehabilitate a building that is of economic and potential income revenue. The state of California also has something called the certified California tax incentive, so this works in conjunction with the Federal Historic Preservation Tax incentive as well and it has been funded this year. The third thing, which one of our stakeholders today mentioned was something called the Mills Act. As soon as the property is registered to be part of the Mills Act, all property taxes or a lot of property taxes are defrayed on that property to maintain the historic integrity. If you were going to pay \$10,000 in tax, you would probably only pay \$2,000 and \$8,000 would be used to preserve your property and maintain.

Chair Sandford stated it is most troubling that we're talking about getting rid of a safe that was built 118 years ago, so I understand that it's going to be expensive to try to bring it back to a building of value. What I'm seeing here tonight is we're talking about doing away with the basement and just having two floors.

Associate Planner Syed stated these plans are just their initial idea of what they would like to propose. Based on our discussion about potentially saving the basement and the safe these elevations look acceptable, for example. I would like to see a rendition where we keep that basement floor and a floor plan that has three levels.

Member Mauricio stated it is technically two floors, and I would like to keep the safe. I think the keeping somewhat of the facade, if it's structurally feasible, then we can move forward with that and the safe.

Member Shelton stated I would agree.

Chair Sandford stated we want the safe maintained as part of the building because near as I could tell from what the concept as I understand it, it's going to require a flat, heavy floor. It won't be a bank building anymore.

Associate Planner Syed stated the photo the members are looking at is 2021-12-06-10-34-34 and we want to keep that same look since it's a historic building.

Assistant Community Development Director Stater stated it would be reconstruction to maintain the northerly and the easterly facades including the parapets and I'd like to make sure that we understand your concurrence to add a second story from ground level, so, basement is a ground level and then a second story that you are giving them direction to. Let's proceed with that modification, which would be the rehabilitation part, yes?

All 4 Board Members agreed with Assistant Community Development Director Stater.

Member Childs stated would it make sense to have them more full windows? So that they're fully glass all the way. If this is going to be office space, privacy is probably not that big a deal anyway.

Robert Lee stated I was trying to replicate the arch without having just solid walls of glass. Once we have the walls glass, we run into a Title 24 issue and trying to make that, it turns the building into a greenhouse essentially.

Member Mauricio stated I am ok with the small window already there, because I am thinking of the heat.

Assistant Community Development Director Stater stated you have to make a motion to continue the meeting to a date specific.

A MOTION was made by Chair Sandford, seconded by Member Childs, to continue this item to June 2, 2022. Motion carried, 4-0-1, with Vice Chair Bible being absent.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Chair Sandford declared the meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Submitted by:

Approved by:

Camille Goritz, Administrative Assistant III

Patrick Sandford, Chair