

HISTORIC & ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMISSION MINUTES

FOR

THE TOWN OF DENTON

May 15, 2024

Historic Review Members:

Kathy Mackel*

Teresa Goss*

Marc Lacoste**

Barbara Martin*

Julie Quick*

*Those Present

**Excused

Visitors:

Dave Schmidt III (Attended Virtually)

Tyler Bledsoe

Recording:

David Renshaw, Senior Codes Enforcement Officer

George W. Bacorn, Jr., Chief of Police

PROCEEDINGS

Call to Order:

The Historic and Architectural Review Commission Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Mackel, at 6:00 p.m., on May 15, 2024, at the Denton Town Office, leading everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

This Meeting was made available to the public via Zoom Video Conferencing and access to the meeting was made available on the Town website.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes of the April 17, 2024, Historic and Architectural Review Commission Meeting were approved as submitted.

Other Old Business #1: None.

New Business #1 – Osprey River, LLC/404 Market Street: Tyler Bledsoe, Representative from Market Street Rentals, and Dave Schmidt III, Owner and Applicant, of 404 Market Street, submitted the attached application requesting approval to remove the bell tower.

Bell Tower: Mr. Schmidt is requesting approval to remove the bell tower from the top of the building due to structural issues and concerns about a safety hazard to the public.

Chairperson Mackel asked if he was aware he bought a building in the Historic District, and the realtor is obligated to inform buyers of that information prior to purchasing the property.

Mr. Schmidt stated he was not informed the building was located in the Historic District because he did not buy the property from a realtor. The Planning and Codes Department informed him that this property is in the Historic District.

Commissioner Quick requested information on the cost to restore the bell tower.

Mr. Schmidt responded Mr. Bledsoe would need to provide a quote for the restoration.

Chairperson Mackel asked if \$24,000, Twenty-four Thousand Dollars, was to restore the bell tower?

Mr. Bledsoe stated the cost was for the removal of the bell tower. The contractor has completed multiple projects in this building and stated the bell tower is not salvageable.

Commissioner Quick asked if the total amount covered the cost of removal and to cover the location of the bell tower.

Mr. Bledsoe stated it would but is unsure of the layout of the roof after removal. It may not be flush with the existing roof. The tower would be removed from the inside out to prevent more destruction to the building.

Vice Chairperson Goss asked if they were to approve the removal of the tower, what would it look like? No information was given to the Board to show their full construction plan.

Mr. Bledsoe stated all that would be left is the brick that connected to the tower. They do not have the exact drawing to show that information.

Vice Chairperson Goss stated she cannot give an answer without a visual or more information of what is planned after the removal of the tower.

Chairperson Mackel stated the Commission must abide by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation adopted by the State of Maryland and the Town of Denton. Information was found in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §36-67.

- The Historic character of the property must be retained and preserved.
- Avoid alterations and avoid removing historic materials or altering features that define the property.
- Preserving distinctive features.

Chairperson Mackel stated an email was forwarded to her from the Historical Society

originally from Julia Bledsoe. The Historical Society is a nonprofit organization administered by volunteers and is not related to the Historic and Architectural Review Commission. They do not make any decisions related to code enforcement or the Town. The email stated the condition of the interior of the building. The concern is with the structural issues along with the bell tower.

Mr. Bledsoe stated over time the condition has become worse. If they continue to prolong the construction, it will become a larger issue.

Mr. Schmidt stated when he purchased the building, he was not aware of the condition of the steeple. The inspection done prior to the purchase of the building did show any issues with moisture. After purchasing the building was when they realized water was coming in when it rained. The rain will accumulate in the steeple and over time it will leak into the unit below. That issue has been ongoing for the past year, and they have continued to repair it with patches and rubber roofing. How can they expect him to pay for such an expansive repair out of pocket when the removal alone is over twenty thousand dollars? This building provides affordable housing in Denton and currently has tenants.

Chairperson Mackel suggested the following grants:

1. The Maryland Historic Revitalization Tax Credit Program.
2. The Historic Property Redevelopment Program.
3. The Maryland Historic Preservation Capital Grant Program.

Chairperson Mackel explained there are grants available that will match half of the cost but there are many steps that will need to be taken to receive these grants. The application would have to be completed by the owner due to personal information. She also found information for residents and businesses in the Historic District that is not eligible for the

National Register of Historic Places that Mr. Schmidt could apply for. That would be grant number two and three that she listed. If they want to try and use the Maryland Historic Revitalization Tax Credit, she can assist with the application to be part of the National Register of Historic Designation. Over the years, the building has been compromised and the exterior has been changed. The Maryland Historic Trust Officials will visit the site to take photos for their opinions. This grant would pay up to fifty percent of the total cost of repairs.

Mr. Schmidt asked what happens if he does not have the other fifty percent for said repairs.

Mr. Bledsoe stated if they do not make the repairs, it has potential to cause more problems for the building. By repairing the Bell Tower, they will potentially need to include engineers, architects, and more professionals, exceeding the property value.

Mr. Schmidt stated the potential renovation will be over six figures, and the building is only worth about \$400,000, Four Hundred Thousand Dollars.

Mr. Bledsoe stated he is going to help preserve the building structure even though it will not look the same from the outside.

Vice Chairperson Goss stated the bell tower is part of the history of the Town, and they must follow the rules for the Historic District.

Chairperson Mackel stated the rules are given by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The Board has to comply with the rules of the Historic District and follow the guidelines provided.

Vice Chairperson Goss asked if there was access to the bell tower from the inside of the building.

Mr. Bledsoe explained there is a small trap door like an attic door.

Chairperson Mackel asked Mr. Renshaw, Senior Code Enforcement Officer, if they could replace the tower as a façade and not completely renovate the tower.

Mr. Renshaw stated it has already been modified and agrees it could be done in a unique way for the exterior. There are places in St. Michaels and Annapolis that have done the same to keep the aesthetics of the building.

Chairperson Mackel stated their goal is to sustain the historical look of the building.

Vice Chairperson Goss recommends capping off the top to close off the opening and adding four sides along with a roof to mimic what is currently there.

Mr. Bledsoe asked for clarification on the distinctive features.

Chairperson Mackel stated “distinctive features” comes from the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. The distinctive feature is the tower itself that is in question. The cedar shakes will be replaced and replicate the existing condition.

Vice Chairperson Goss noted there are several affordable items available that could be used to mimic the existing bell tower.

Mr. Bledsoe stated his only concern is to fix and close the gap in the building that is leaking.

Chairperson Mackel stated there is a cost that will go into the construction of the roof and rafter repair. She suggested Mr. Bledsoe and Mr. Schmidt discuss and provide photos and more information to show the Board the plan moving forward to retain the integrity of the building.

Mr. Renshaw stated other historic buildings have undergone this same process for roof repairs and replace with a façade tower to keep the integrity. Other grants may be available to help with the process.

Chairperson Mackel did not want to make a decision without giving the owner information and tools to help with the project. She would like them to come back with a plan to fix the issues and to maintain the integrity of the historic building.

Vice Chairperson Goss motioned to table the project pending further review and options on possible renovations.

Commissioner Quick seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. (4:0)

New Business #2 – Other: None.

Staff Item #1-Other: None.

Chairperson Mackel adjourned the meeting at 6:41 p.m.