

MINUTES

Historic Preservation Code Review: Citizen Advisory Committee
June 7, 2017

Members Attending: Anita Rehner, Brian Cooke, Chris Aronson, Dave Dixon, James MacDowell, Jennifer Carpenter, Matt Robenalt, Meg Dunn, Per Hogestad, Sherry Albertson-Clark, Steve Schroyer

Staff: Karen McWilliams, Cassie Bumgarner, Maren Bzdek, Tom Leeson, Anna Simpkin

I. Project Coordination with Code Review project and Planning Projects

- The Planning Division is planning for its implementation of the policies within the recently adopted Downtown Plan and Old Town Neighborhoods Plan, and staff has identified overlap with the Historic Preservation Division's current Code Review project. Much of the overlap is related to the topic of development review and what constitutes compatible infill. To prevent citizen confusion and meeting overload, both divisions will be holding joint public events and related outreach.
- Additional public comment will be gathered throughout the review, by Clarion to develop its reports, and by the City through its public outreach efforts. The Code Review project website contains summary information for the public to access and comment upon, and will be updated frequently: <http://www.fcgov.com/historicpreservation/hp-code-advisory.php>.
- CAC members agreed that the July 12 CAC meeting with Clarion should be scheduled for 2 hours, from 11:30 until 1:30.

II. Review of Land Use Code, Section 3.4.7

- Maren discussed the various section of this code section, with pertains primarily to the review of new construction adjacent to designated and individually eligible historic properties.
- Highlights of her PowerPoint presentation (attached) are:
 - Adjacency is determined on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration the context, and the size, scale, visibility, etc. of the proposed development;
 - There was discussion about having specific metrics for determining the Area of Adjacency (AofA); comments included that clients want to know upfront the buildings they will be reviewed for compatibility with; that with a define AofA, there may be an important building just outside the area that is missed; that visual site lines could provide a good standard; and the need to identify the "sweet spot" between flexibility and predictability.
 - What information should be required for a determination of eligibility and effect, and who should provide it? Staff noted that it takes an average of 2+ hours per property to gather together the appropriate information. Staff was considering putting more of the burden on applicants to provide the information; CAC members noted that staff has greater experience in acquiring the information from the varied sources, and would need to review and evaluate the applicant's submittal for completion anyway, so there may not be a time savings.

- The rationale for having determinations of eligibility be valid for 5 years was discussed. It appears to be generally supported as an appropriate balance between having reviews more frequently, i.e., yearly, or less frequently, but is part of Clarion's review.
- The term "maximum extent feasible" is difficult to understand. Theoretically, anything is feasible – where do you draw the line? This is one of three related terms used throughout the Land Use Code, the others being "shall" and "extent reasonably feasible." Shall means the standard or criteria must be complied with, while extent reasonably feasible can be optional. The maximum extent feasible is a middle ground between the two. A CAC member suggested that, in order to provide the most predictability to clients, the city should determine what it wants and make these all "shalls."
- Ultimately, compliance with the terms shall, maximum extent feasible, and extent reasonably feasible, is determined by the decision maker (Planning and Zoning Board, Hearing Officer, or CDNS Director).
- In discussing 3.4.7(D), Reuse, Renovations, Alterations and Additions, the standards should be more closely linked to the standards in the Demolition/Alteration review, including the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.
- To help define compatibility in new construction, it was suggested that staff look into a menu, where those items deemed to be critical items are required, and beyond that the applicant could choose from a menu allowing a certain number of changes, i.e., "any three of the following..." What are the "critical items"?
- The question was raised whether the character we have is less pattern specific than we think, and what we like is really a more imperfect pattern? Example: None of the downtown blocks contain buildings that all have the same alignment of horizontal elements (cornices, windows, moldings, sign bands, etc.) and window patterns (size, height, number).
- In general, the existing criteria are confusing and difficult for developers to interpret.
- Pattern and proportion are critical to achieving compatibility, and should be added to criteria. Scale should also be added. A lot of compatibility can be achieved through, for example, scale of materials. It allows for more diverse and variable materials.
- It was noted on the case study of the Elizabeth Hotel how important color can be in achieving compatibility.
- The Uncommon case study generated commentary about the interface with transition areas.
- Union Restaurant was noted as a great example of achieving compatibility through a more abstract reference to historic design