

October 3, 2018 Minutes

James: Struggled with materials, specifically with glass as a material. If we're talking about type of material, it needs to be in the same proportion and application as the referenced historic building. Historic building could be red brick and I don't want new build to be all red glass. Wants more bounds so that isn't okay. We never resolved what the "predominant material" is and whether glass/storefronts can be that predominant materials.

Maren: Solution – Make sure we talk about predominant building material, clarify that storefront isn't an option.

James: Matt last time was talking about midcentury and argued that glass and storefronts can be the predominant material. We did not resolve this. Opposes glass.

Karen: Do you think new material should match or is that you don't want glass?

James: I think my goal is coherency of block faces and I feel like the current language could be stressed too far. I care more about block face rather than whole building. I know that it is ultimately subjective. Some things meet proportionality and pattern, but might not be high quality. Millwork is expensive and outcome feels richer. Pressboard looks cheap. Richness of design is what we're looking for. Looking at the Cache addition, it looks good. They clearly spent a lot of money on it and doesn't detract from the historic building next door. I don't have an answer, but I feel like the door is too wide right now.

Karen: We can't regulate how much money someone spends on a building and some building materials that look awful can be more expensive than brick or stone. But the underlying issue is that we predicated this code section doesn't rely on replication of historic buildings—must allow for a building to be of its time and still be compatible. What you're suggesting is matching and more replication. We would be encouraging replication, no strong design statement, etc.

Jennifer: Do we fix this or address it with the façade details section?

Maren: We are so laser focused on our piece, I just want to remind us that the LUC is huge and our process is a small piece of it. And it's only a recommendation on top of everything else.

Jennifer: Coming from P&Z, it is helpful to have more details even if it is a recommendation. This could be the only exposure to Historic Preservation for some people, especially on P&Z. I wouldn't count on P&Z to know anything about HP. James, does façade details help you with making sure someone doesn't put all glass or all galvanized steel?

James: Yes, I suppose so. I'm not an architect, but I don't want the Highlands to happen here. I don't think the glass and concrete are compatible with the 100+ year old brick homes. The developers are making a lot of money, but I don't like that outcome. The historicity of Fort Collins should be protected.

Jennifer: For example, I don't think people can argue that they can meet solid to void with an all glass building even if they had "windows" framed in.

James: I think you're right—I just really wanted to bring up the issue and make sure we're avoiding that.

Jennifer: Will the process/role of LPC change?

Maren: No, LPC will still recommend to P&Z. We're trying to also strengthen our decision making about what is going to LPC versus staff sign off. We aren't changing the fundamental idea though.

Jennifer: That's very powerful. I've never heard anyone on this board disagree with LPC. I think that piece is really important. LPC understands these things and knows what it's supposed to mean. That makes me feel better.

Meg: My main concern is whether this works when we leave the downtown.

James: Can someone successfully sue to get a glass block building?

Jennifer: Sure, you can always sue. That's America. I'm trying to think though—I've been here for 20 years and I've never seen that happen here.

Maren: I don't know if it would be profitable to sue and that's probably not going to happen in Fort Collins. Moving on though, the one thing I've identified as an issue is that are the existing stepback requirements adequate for TOD (South of Prospect along Mason) and HMN?

Staff suggesting that we bring in massing and building articulation to address stepback and height so it respects the abutting historic. (General agreement among CAC)

Map of TOD and HMN.

Meg: Concerned about places like Scott apartments, across the gym. Immediately north of Scott apartment building on College (Locust and College according to James)

Karen: Interestingly enough, the Laurel School District is right there as well.

Meg: I'm concerned about whether our piece of the code is strong enough without the Downtown codes.

Maren: Yes and we'd like to explore that and make sure we agree that it is strong enough.

Meg: Take out the word Downtown and make it where it all for all zones for the stepback portion. The stepback on the building north of the Scott apartments doesn't seem to actually have a setback. Suppose we have a historic building that is 5 stories tall—do we want a stepback at the second story?

Karen: If we have a one or story buildings in the Laurel School District and across the alley, the new building won't stepback on alley face. We're thinking about a 6 story building, would a stepback work? So this, to me, where James's comment about an attorney could construe it is really important. We need more concrete rules.

Jennifer: proposing a height maximum next to historic buildings. Only way to meet massing piece of code.

James: Feels that across the alley setbacks is impeding on private property rights.

Karen: Let's talk about Book Ranch site—6 stories there.

James: Would a setback change your experience?

Meg: I think forced articulation is the most important, even along the alley should happen. Think of Uncommon and how flat it is along the alley. If we had articulation, specifically width articulation, it would make the biggest difference.

James: Are we discussing compatibility or impact of new build on designated building? Yes, it would help compatibility.

Meg: We need to go back to chart and see how it fits with this situation at Book Ranch.

Jennifer: We can regulate a setback. That's quantifiable.

Karen: As much as we would like to put character codes in Planning codes, we were told to put them in HP because HP is about protecting character.

Jennifer: Let's look at South College Heights. TOD goes down that far. A lot of them are probably individually eligible. So we can't just say Laurel School District, we must anticipate other districts.

Karen: Bigger question: if we're allowing a fairly tall building in this area (5 stories), does a setback make a difference?

Jennifer: So how does a setback work? How does it work in Downtown? (Karen explains Downtown codes)

James: Uncommon. It cost money to do these setbacks. How much difference does it make?

Karen: Feels Uncommon needed alley setbacks to make it more compatible.

Let's take it a step further: someone comes in with a large building like Uncommon and it abuts a historic building? Do our codes apply to the whole building or just one portion of the building?

Maren: Setback is the only piece of the code that only applies to a portion of a building. Everything else applies to the whole building.

Jennifer: feels alleys should have setbacks, but only if it doesn't create notches. We would want it to be the whole length of the building, not just the historic building piece. We either need to have it the whole way across or not at all because the notches don't make sense.

James: No rear lot setbacks or rear alley.

Meg: Needs clarification on side alley versus back alley. We need to define side alley.

James: Final comment, I need questions. I'm losing focus, not always sure what we're talking about.

Jennifer: You might not be able to answer this, but does staff feel like taking away single family review off the table you can do more good with that time?

Karen: People comply out of fear or misunderstanding.

Jennifer: wants a program set up for the proactive outreach BEFORE getting rid of demo/alt. If staff feels it will be better, I support getting rid of the single family review.