



CITY OF PALATKA HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD MINUTES September 5, 2013 Meeting

The Historic Preservation Board meeting was called to order by Chairperson Roberta Correa at 4:00 pm. Other members present included, Lynda Little Crabill, Gary Graffweg, Laura Schoenberger, Larry Beaton and Robert Goodwin. The following members were absent: Elizabeth vanRensburg, and Gilbert Evans Jr. Staff present: Planning Director Thad Crowe and Recording Secretary Deena McCamey.

MINUTES- Motion made by Mr. Graffweg to approve the July 9, 2013 minutes with minor corrections, seconded by Ms. Crabill. All present voted affirmative, motion passed.

APPEALS PROCEDURE- Chairperson Correa read the appeals procedures.

OLD BUSINESS- None

NEW BUSINESS-

Chairperson Correa reversed the order of the agenda, stating that item B would probably go more quickly.

B) Case: 13-39
Address: 210 S 4th St
Parcel Number: 42-10-27-6850-0250-0020
Applicant: St. Monica Catholic Church Diocese
Request: **(after the fact)** Certificate of Appropriateness for construction of new office building.

Mr. Crowe said this case was a little confusing. It involved the new construction of a modular building that came before the Board in 2005. The request was denied on the basis of incompatibility because of the lack of windows. This request then was approved at another meeting with the conditions that the windows would be wood clad and two-over-two or six-over-two and that any type of brick chimney be included on the building. However the building official at the time issued a permit without consulting the (previous) planning director regarding approved conditions. The error was discovered when the Applicant came in to pull a permit for repairing the building. This structure was constructed with one-over-one windows instead of the originally-approved window type. Mr. Crowe said with new construction the Secretary of Interior Standards discourages both buildings that are not with keeping of that neighborhood and "fake history." He believed the appearance of the building approaches the goal of fitting in and being compatible without mimicking an historic building. For this reason he recommended an after-the-fact approval. Technically if the board wanted to be very precise they could

request the windows be replaced with the originally approved windows. He said that would be a little extreme because one over one window is typical in the South Historic District.

Ms. Crabill said at that time she and Mr. Beaton were the only board members who are still on this board. She said they did vary a little bit from what was approved at that time.

Chairperson Correa asked if this after the fact request was just for the windows or the porch. Mr. Crowe said it was for the whole house, recommending approval for its current condition.

Motion made by Mr. Graffweg to approve the request, seconded by Mr. Beaton. All present voted affirmative, motion passed.

- A) Case:** 13-38
- Address:** 205 S 3rd St.
- Parcel Number:** 42-10-27-6850-0120-0062
- Applicant:** First Presbyterian Church of Palatka
- Request:** Certificate of Appropriateness to Demolish Apartment Building

Mr. Crowe began a power point presentation by showing the location of the existing and proposed buildings on Church property along S. 2nd St., S. 3rd St., and “short” Laurel St. He said according to the Putnam County Property Appraiser’s office the apartment building was constructed in 1947. It has the characteristics of the Art Moderne or Streamline architectural style, which followed the Art Deco design style that emerged during the 1920s. He said common characteristics of Art Moderne included horizontal orientation, rounded edges, corner windows, and glass block, smooth exterior wall surfaces, usually stucco (smooth plaster finish), flat roofs, and subdued colors. He said this building does not represent the Art Deco style as represented by the Applicant. The Art Deco style is represented by the Chrysler Building, Miami Beach’s South Beach buildings and locally by the Larimer Building. He said the Art Moderne style was a reaction against the more ornate Art Deco movement. He said the 1981 cultural resource survey did not recognize this type of structure as being historical. This was due to a National Register policy, still in place, that excludes eligibility for the National Register if a building is not over 50 years old. He said that since the building is now 66 years old it would qualify for the National Register and would be considered to be a contributing building within the South Historic local historic district. He added that the Art Moderne style has become much more appreciated since the time of the 1981 survey.

Mr. Crowe told the board members they are obliged to consider specific criteria when looking at demolition of historic buildings both from the Comprehensive Plan and the Municipal Code (Historic Preservation Ordinance). A Comprehensive Plan policy simply calls for the City to protect historic resources such as this building. Another Plan policy and also a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) criterion encourage the adaptive reuse of historic buildings. He stated that this building was not conducive for adaptive reuse due to the expense of converting it from residential to commercial use. A third Plan policy and COA criterion calls for avoidance of detrimental impacts to the historic district. Staff believes that detrimental impacts would include the loss of any historic building, the loss of the continuity of the historic structures along S. 3rd Street (which are very visible due to the higher traffic

flow along this street), and the loss of the only Art Modern structure in the district (and possibly the City).

There is also a COA criterion intended to provide reasonable justice and equity for a property owner wishing to demolish a historic building. The Church cited this criterion in their application, noting that the Church property could not accommodate the two proposed buildings (Family Services Building and Classroom Building) and retain the apartment building at the same time.

Mr. Crowe then showed three development alternatives presented by the Church. He said that at the request of Staff the Applicant presented alternative development scenarios that showed retention of the apartment building. The preferred Option 1 removes the apartments and places the Family Services Building and a small parking lot along S. 3rd St. Option 3 keeps the apartment building and places a narrow Family Services Building just south of it, along Laurel St. He said this option did not allow for the additional classrooms and gymnasium that were desired by the Church. The Applicant indicated this option would only satisfy 5 to 10% of the Church's needs. Staff agreed that this option would limit the Church's needs in a way that denies reasonable justice and equity. Option 2 also retains the apartment building and locates the Family Services Building to the rear/east of the apartment building. The Applicant's presentation showed a comparison between the preferred design Option 1 and Option 2 – this indicated that Option 2 provided the same level of need for the Family Services seating and dinner seating, kitchen, and bathrooms; while meeting 40% of the need for classroom space and 46% for storage/mechanical space. The Applicant had indicated that Option 2 met 82% of the overall needs for the Church. He said there was some question as to why Option 2 could not have been pursued further. If the overall property were in a blank slate, it would be acceptable to allow and in fact encourage the preferred design option. He said that to balance the consideration of reasonable justice and equity with the preservation of the historic structure some reasonable accommodation should be pursued. This position is based on the finding that the apartment building is a contributing historic resource and is a good example of a recognized historic architectural style, and its loss would therefore be a detriment to the historic district.

Mr. Crowe said there were other alternative designs that could preserve the apartment building, including a wing from the Option 2 Family Services Building that extends either south toward Laurel St. or north for the desired classroom and storage/mechanical space. He said this was particularly true if the dentist office property was included with this design, as it was included with the preferred design Option 1. There was also additional space on the site along Laurel St. toward S. 3rd St. to provide for the courtyard shown on the preferred design option, or the courtyard could occupy the dentist office space. While these alternative designs may not have been the ideal design scenario for the Church, they would accommodate their overall needs and allow for the continued use or sale of the apartment building. Staff had encouraged the Applicant to proactively design feasible alternatives that would allow for the retention of the apartment building, and believed that Option 2 came close to achieving both the goal of the Church and the need of the City to protect the historic resources. He added that Option 2 would not be a cost burden because it would actually cost less than the preferred Option 1.

Mr. Crowe summarized that Staff recommended denial of this request to demolish 205 S. 3rd Street. This recommendation is based on the building's representation of the Art Moderne style, a recognized

and celebrated American historic architectural style, which is rare in the City. The building is a contributing building within the South Historic District, as it represents this architectural style and meets the National Register test of being at least 50 years old. The loss of the building would present a detrimental impact to the South Historic District as it would disrupt the continuity of historic buildings along S. 3rd/River Streets and create a noticeable gap in the historic fabric of this block. The building is structurally sound and viable as a rental residential property. Utilizing the approach of Option 2 with modifications previously described would allow for the Church to design more classroom and other space to achieve the goals of their Master Plan and not deny the Church reasonable justice and equity.

Mr. Crowe said that should the Board disagree with Staff's findings and recommendations, the strongest argument for approval of the demolition request hinges on the following alternative findings: the lack of relevance of the Art Moderne style to Palatka, the likelihood that the loss of the building would not harm the South Historic District, and the fact that any new building on the Church property would meet Board design review, ensuring that it would be compatible and an asset to the district even as noncontributing buildings. This alternative finding would note that impeding the Church's ability to design the new buildings in its preferred campus-style configuration would run against the need to provide the Church reasonable justice and equity.

Chairperson Correa read for the record a letter from Mrs. J. H. Bryan Jr. asking the board to approve the demolition of the apartment buildings.

Bob Hartwig, 542 West River Road, said he has resided in Putnam County for 17-18 years and has been a member/volunteer of the Presbyterian Church the same amount of time. He said what the Church was trying to do was present to the board variations from what staff had presented. He said Mr. Taylor had submitted a lot of time, research and effort on this effort.

Agent Robert Taylor, an architect with a place of business at 710 St. Johns Avenue, gave a power point presentation that started by showing the Church's long range master plan. He noted that the Church was built in 1881 but was destroyed by the Great Fire in 1884. The Church was then rebuilt in 1886 and the basement was added later. In 1849 the annex was added and in 1969 Westminster Hall was constructed. He stated it the Church wants to continue to grow the facility on this particular site.

Mr. Taylor said the object of the Church's growth was to construct the Family Services Building in an initial phase and the Classroom Building in a second phase. The Family Services Building would serve as a multipurpose area for children to view audio/visual presentations along with appropriate space for basketball, volleyball, gymnastics and church wide gatherings, dinner for up to 388 people. The building would also include areas for student activities and additional space for bible studies, women's gatherings, storage for tables and chairs, a much larger kitchen than what already exists, bathrooms, showers and changing facilities.

Mr. Taylor said the Master Plan Drawing shows the Church property is essentially landlocked. The Church on the east is bounded by the St. Johns River and on the north and south by City property. He said the Church bought the apartment complex with the sole purpose to expand Church facilities.

He then showed the floor plans of the multipurpose area which he said was a reasonable development. In discussing the apartment building, he noted the interior load bearing walls stymied floorplan changes and discussed the building's past termite problems and roof leaks. He said the mechanical and electrical systems are marginal for its current use. He showed the floor plans of the first and second floors, noting that the primary accesses to the second floor apartments are only accessible from the exterior stairs. He said the building is elevated and is not handicap accessible.

Mr. Taylor explained the only significant Art Modern element that is on the building are the rounded stairs and canopies. He said other than those features the building is a straightforward concrete block with stucco building with a dab of architecture. He said that when considering renovations to the existing building to accommodate the Church's long range plans, the Church did conduct some in-depth studies as to what staff had requested and tried to determine if it would be practical to renovate the apartment building to accommodate those long range plans. This was determined to not be feasible because of the inability to expand interior rooms due to the load bearing walls and the resulting small class rooms. There were also mechanical and electrical problems.

Mr. Taylor then discussed the options. He said that with Option 2 the Church was trying to utilize a building that will be approximately 400 feet by 110 feet which gains about 2,800 square feet for a basketball and volleyball court. This would only accommodate a half court size. The Church did not consider Option 2 to be practical because it would only net about 665 square ft. more than what would be available at the Westminster Hall which only serves about 46% of the Church's program needs. He showed pictures of the preferred Option 1, saying that it would provide the optimum development for a future sanctuary, classrooms and open spaces for planning. The existing (dentist office) building to the south is not owned by the Church but they do have first refusal rights for that piece of property in order to help them to develop it as a future access point. He said the apartment building crowds where they are on the site.

Mr. Taylor said Option 2 was really an exercise to see if they could get another building on that site without taking away the Church's opportunity to build the future sanctuary, classrooms and offices. This did not turn out to be a practical solution for them. He said he did rotate the multipurpose area of the basketball and volleyball area and he couldn't get it to fit into that space. He then said even though Option 2 was a consideration it ended up not being an attractive one. He then went over the cost/program matrix.

Mr. Taylor said they were asked to determine what the Church's expenses and income had been over the last three years. The year 2011 netted a little bit of income, 2012 showed a loss due to more repairs and expenses, and 2013 to date has been a loss. He said the apartment buildings were originally purchased for the needs for expanding the Church.

Mr. Taylor showed pictures of other types of architecture including the Larimer Building, explaining the difference between the styles and gave a brief history of the apartment building when it was constructed. He said the only element that makes the building appear to be in the Art Moderne style is the curved stair and the curved cantilever. The rest of the building is of a simple straight block building with stucco covering.

Mr. Taylor noted that at that time of the surveys (1978 and 1981) the building was not considered to be contributing to the district. In 1998 the Church purchased this property with the intent of demolishing the building. The historic districts were established in 1982 and were added to the National Register in 1983. He said the building style was not representative of the neighborhood and also was not a particularly good example of Art Moderne. He said in the cultural resource study had its own historic preservation design criteria, and it was interesting that these criteria were not included in the City's eventual historic preservation ordinance. He said that the new building will be constructed to mimic the historical Church building by incorporating the red brick. He said the apartment building was not historical and the new building would improve the image for that corridor.

Christy Sanford, 312 Dodge St., said there is a one-of-a-kind Queen Anne building in the South Historic District - you wouldn't suggest tearing it down because there were no other places like that. She added even though Pat Wilson's house on River St. is extremely modern you wouldn't argue to tear it down since it was different from the surrounding Victorians, Bungalows and Vernaculars. She said this was the most attractive apartment building in Palatka and said it is an example of Art Moderne; the lines are very balanced and clean. She added she was opposed to demolition and said the idea of trading an Art Moderne with a basketball court is crazy.

Robert Browning, 225 River Dr. East Palatka, applauded the Historic Board for looking after historic buildings that they treasure and preserving them, but the apartments in question do not need to be preserved.

Kirby Kennedy, 106 Lisa Ln., referenced the first Presbyterian pilgrims coming to this country. He said the Church needed to expand to help the community and demolishing the apartments will allow this to happen.

Cynthia Bents, Interim Pastor for the Presbyterian Church, said rather than repeat what had already been stated she offered profoundest thanks to the Board for taking their time to hear what the Church needed to say. She added there was a lot of thoughtful information presented on behalf of the City as well as the Church. She asked the Board to consider the Church's request along with their long history in the community and their commitment to this community.

Michael Gagnon, 703 Emmett St., said he is the president of the Southside Neighborhood Association and felt obligated to say he was against the demolition.

Barbra Wayne, 417 Emmett St., spoke against the demolition.

Marylin Young, 702 Cleveland Ave., spoke in favor of demolition.

Tyler Weinand, 205 S 3rd St., said the Church kept saying they are unable to keep up the apartment buildings, and wondered if they would be able to keep up the new buildings.

Hearing no further comments, Chairperson Correa closed the public hearing.

Ms. Crabill asked Mr. Taylor if the new building (Family Services Building) would fit in with the historic look. Mr. Taylor said it would and added that it will have red brick exterior, cast stone elements, arched windows in the walkway which is reflective to Westminster Hall. Mr. Crowe cautioned the board that the new building was not under consideration by this board at this time, and that they needed to focus only on the demolition of the apartment building.

Ms. Schoenberger asked when the Church would want to build something there and also did the Church currently have the financial ability to do so. Mr. Taylor replied this is the first step in the Master Plan; the Church has been planning this for some time now. He said due to the way the economy has been the Church planned to move expeditiously, but estimated it would be a few years before they started. Ms. Schoenberger asked if the Church had the funds aside for this project. Mr. Taylor replied they did not.

Mr. Beaton asked how many parishioners attend the Church and also asked if there was a breakdown of how many adults and children attend. Mr. Browning replied there are approximately 250 people that attend services. He said there are many more adults that attend than children and youth.

Mr. Beaton asked when the Master Plan was started. Mr. Browning replied approximately 7-8 years ago. He added the Church was under the impression by the City at the time of purchasing the building that they would be allowed to tear it down. Mr. Beaton asked if there was someone there that knew what the venue of this discussion, was that in a public meeting, personal conversation, is there something in writing that says that. Mr. Browning said no, but added when the former Pastor was here who created the vision for the Master Plan, he and Mr. Taylor went to speak with the City Manager (Bush) and they were told there wouldn't be a problem tearing it down. With that permission and understanding the Church proceeded with the purchase of the apartment building.

Ms. Schoenberger said she was under the impression that if they were denied demolition of this building they would just let it go into disrepair. She asked if this is what their intentions were. Mr. Browning replied they had not crossed that bridge yet, but they are looking at all of their options, depending on this Board's action along with the action of what they take to their session.

Ms. Crabill asked if it was determined they could not tear the building down and that they could not maintain it would they sell it. Mr. Browning replied that this would be a possibility.

Mr. Graffweg said the presentation was very well done; there were good arguments on both sides. He said he felt this is a historical building and should not be torn down.

Ann Hartwig, 2543 West River Rd., said the Church is known for preserving its historic building. She asked if the apartments could be moved and preserved elsewhere. Chairperson Correa said this would have to be considered as a separate COA and that this meeting is strictly for the demolition request.

Motion made by Mr. Graffweg to deny the demolition request, seconded by Ms. Crabill.

Ms. McCamey asked for roll call since there was one vote of no in the voice vote.

Roll Call, Chairperson Correa-yea, Ms. Crabill-yea, Mr. Goodwin-yea, Mr. Graffweg-yea, Mr. Beaton-no and Ms. Schoenberger-yea. Motion approved to deny the demolition request.

Other Business- there was no other business.

Adjourn- With no further discussion meeting was adjourned at 5:20 pm.