



OAK RIDGE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING
OCTOBER 8, 2014 - 7:00 P.M.
OAK RIDGE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Members Present

Ann Schneider, Chair
Debbie Shoenfeld, Vice Chair
Ron Simpson
Mac McAtee
Caroline Ruch, Alternate (Sitting)

Staff Present

Sandra Smith, Town Clerk/HPC Staff
Bill Bruce, Planning Director

Members Absent

Michelle Ungurait
Cara Townsend, Alternate

1. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Chair Ann Schneider called the meeting to order at 6:59 p.m. After introductions of Commission members and staff, Schneider read a brief statement on the purpose, duties and responsibilities of the Commission.

2. **APPROVE AGENDA**

Debbie Shoenfeld made a **motion** to approve the meeting agenda as amended after Schneider suggested adding an item under Committee Reports/Updates to discuss a budget idea. **Mac McAtee** seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (5-0).

3. **APPROVE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 10, 2014, MEETING**

Mac McAtee made a **motion** to approve the meeting minutes. **Ron Simpson** seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (5-0).

4. **OLD BUSINESS**

- A. **Request for COA:** JPC Monroe, LLC, requests a Certificate of Appropriateness for the Lowes Foods store at Oak Ridge Commons shopping center. The property is located at 2205-B Oak Ridge Road, Tax Parcel 0166224, Oak Ridge Township, and is zoned CU-SC (Conditional Use-Shopping Center).

Will Spencer, project architect, and Roger Henderson of Lowes Foods were sworn in at the previous meeting by Town Clerk Sandra Smith, and remained sworn since the case was continued.

Spencer noted that the Commission had received the most recent version of the plan for the Lowes Foods store. He said the Lowes Foods To Go drive-thru had been

added, and pointed out that it would be a tower with arches similar to others in the shopping center but without a cap/roof structure. Caroline Ruch asked if the sides of the arch were also brick, and Spencer said yes, there would be brick on all three sides. Schneider asked if the arch would protrude the same amount as the other arches in the shopping center; Spencer said yes, it would come as close as possible to match the other towers and leave enough room for cars to drive under. McAtee asked why the superstructure was being left off the top of the tower; Spencer said he did not think it was necessary and that it would detract from the symmetry of the entrance. McAtee asked if arch would have a flat roof with a parapet, and Spencer said yes.

Simpson asked if Spencer could provide a sample of the stone that would be used on the front of the building. Spencer showed a photo of stone used on another Lowes Foods store. Simpson asked about the color of the stone for the store here, and Spencer said he would like to find a local stone that was native to Oak Ridge. Shoenfeld pointed out that the Historic Guidelines say on page 50 that it is not appropriate to use artificial cast stone. Spencer said he understood and that real stone would be used. McAtee asked if Spencer had a source for indigenous stone, and Spencer said he did not think the stone had to be local, although he would try to locate some. Simpson commented that the type of stone used on the Lowes Foods store shown in the photo might not be appropriate to use here, and Schneider said typically the Commission would want to see a sample of the stone to be used.

Shoenfeld asked about the windows in the shopping cart area, and Spencer said all glass on the front of the store would be 100 percent clear. Shoenfeld commented on the roof pitch, saying Spencer had said the roof structure on top of the Lowes Foods was a 3/12 pitch and that Town Manager Bruce Oakley had said the pitch on the tower roof structures at the shopping center is 7/12. She commented that the Historic Guidelines say the preferred pitch is 8/12 to 12/12 and that roof pitches on nearby buildings should not vary more than 2/12. She said that would mean the top roof structure of the Lowes Foods should be at least 5/12. She said the Guidelines also say attached secondary roofs, such as for drive-thru windows, should be clearly defined, and she thought in this case it was. She said she was unsure what the side view of the Lowes Foods To Go roof looked like, and Spencer said it looked exactly the same as the front view. Shoenfeld added that she understood branding and that she could see that the pitch of the top roof structure was part of Lowes Foods new brand.

McAtee said he had also read the same things in the Guidelines about roofs that Shoenfeld had commented on, but he also noted another point under Roofing on page 51 that says, "Flat roofs may be acceptable for commercial buildings, depending on compensating design, such as including an attractive cornice, parapet wall, or a form that breaks a continuous cornice and suggests nearby roof shapes." He said the Guidelines seemed to indicate there were exceptions for putting flat roofs on commercial buildings. Shoenfeld said she understood, but noted that the majority of the building has a pitched roof, but the Lowes Foods To Go area had a flat roof. McAtee said the Guidelines say that while certain pitches may be most appropriate, that exceptions are allowed.

also be included on the sample wall. Spencer said the sample wall would be constructed at the site and would include samples of the brick, mortar, windows and other materials to ensure they match what was approved. Schneider said the brick and mortar should match the existing brick and mortar as closely as possible and that natural stone should be in a complimentary color.

Commission members discussed whether approval of the stone color should be left up to staff; Bruce said staff could approve the color with input from individual HPC members. Schneider said her only discomfort was that the Commission was trying to not issue conditional COAs, and wanted to make sure the Commission was comfortable with approving the COA with the condition that the specific stone be approved later. She said she thought it might be helpful to provide a preferred and alternate stone choice. Roger Henderson of Lowes Foods asked if the Commission would like to try to describe the type of stone it wanted, and Schneider said HPC could only make decisions based on what was submitted for approval. Spencer said natural stone does not have names, so it might be difficult to describe.

Schneider began to summarize the findings of fact, which included the following:

- The flat roof on the drive-thru structure is compatible with the Guidelines;
- A sample of the stone must be submitted, and it must be natural stone;
- 100 percent clear glass will be used, which is compatible with the Guidelines;
- Although the roofline has a different pitch than what is generally recommended in the Historic District, it is compatible because it is distinctive and adds variety;
- The design of the building does not compete with or overwhelm surrounding buildings and is not obviously inconsistent with the surroundings;
- The applicant incorporated brick and windows in a way that is appropriate for the structure;
- Precedents have been set on commercial buildings in the Historic District for this type of roofline.

McAtee added that brick should match the existing brick as closely as possible, and Schneider said that could be included in the motion.

Debbie Shoenfeld made a **motion** to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application to allow for an addition to Lowes Foods using some existing vacant shops and remodeling the existing front elevation for JPC Monroe LLC of the Lowes Foods store at Oak Ridge Commons shopping center, 2205-B Oak Ridge Road, Tax Parcel 0166224, Oak Ridge Township, which is zoned CU-SC (Conditional Use-Shopping Center). The construction is to be as described in the COA application dated September 1, 2014, and described in the presentation and responses to the Historic Preservation Commission at the meeting on October 8, 2014, using materials and colors as presented including brick and mortar to match the existing building, and stone approval after HPC evaluation as presented by the owner. **Caroline Ruch** seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (5-0).

B. Town Council report. Shoenfeld drafted the report last month that was given at the Town Council meeting, and it was presented by Schneider. Shoenfeld volunteered to

draft the report for the next month's Council meeting, and Simpson said he would present it, with Schneider being his backup.

C. COAs approved/reviewed at staff level.

None

D. COAs approved but not completed.

- **ORMA addition to Holt Hall.** Smith reported that she had talked with Kevin James, a landscape architect who serves on the Academy's Buildings and Grounds Committee. James indicated that since landscaping to match what was existing had been approved, that was what he planned to install there in lieu of a different plan that would have to be approved by the Commission. James said the plants would be installed in the fall. Smith said James had also said the holly bush at the end of the steps could not be replaced because septic lines now run through that area. HPC members agreed by consensus to that change.

5. NEW BUSINESS

Request for COA: Oak Ridge Foundation Inc. requests a Certificate of Appropriateness for Linville Chapel, located on the campus of Oak Ridge Military Academy. The property is located at 2324 Oak Ridge Road, Tax Parcel 0162858, Oak Ridge Township, and is zoned PI (Public and Institutional).

Schneider said since this is a new COA request, she encouraged Commission members to discuss the eligibility of the request and the completeness of the application, whether the project falls within the scope of activities outlined in the Guidelines, and considering whether all necessary information has been submitted in order to render findings of fact and a decision. If the Commission believes an application is not complete, it can disapprove the request and the applicant can reapply with a complete application, or the Commission can continue the request to the next meeting to allow the applicant to submit more information. If the Commission concludes an application is complete, it will be discussed. She asked Commission to cite applicable sections of the Historic Guidelines in making their determinations.

Mark Overby and Irvin Angel were sworn in by Smith.

Overby, assistant chair of the Academy's Buildings and Grounds Committee, said Buster Linville had left a trust fund to help care for buildings at ORMA. Overby said Irvin Angel had overseen work on Holt Hall, which is beside Linville Chapel, and during that project had noticed issues with the foundation of the chapel. The Oak Ridge Society Foundation oversees the money left by Linville, so Overby said he took them a proposal to prolong the life of the chapel and also helped raise money to do the foundation repairs. Overby said a good deal of the brick will have to be removed because it is crumbling. He said that includes some of the brick in front of the building where the steps go into the building. Although the proposal is to change the design of the steps, the foundation work must be done to preserve the building. The

steps are made of poured concrete and at some point a handrail was added in the middle, which will have to be reinstalled to meet the current building code, regardless of the design.

Irvin Angel said during the time he was overseeing the Holt Hall addition, the Academy had someone look at the foundation at Linville Chapel. He corrected Overby and said the brick is OK, although at some point, some of the brick at one corner have been replaced. Angel said the issue was that from below ground level up to floor level, some of the mortar is coming out of the brick as much as $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch. He said it had been decided that the best solution was to leave the existing foundation in place, but put in new footings all around the building, reinforce it with rebar and then install a new foundation over the old foundation and put cove water table brick on the top to direct water away from the foundation.

Angel pointed out the proposed repair on an engineer's drawing, adding that once the new brick is installed and the water table brick added to the top, there would be about 1½-inches of space in between where a new type of grout would be installed to fill up even the tiniest cracks. Dowels would also be drilled into the old brick to carry some of the load from the existing brick foundation to the new footing. He showed Commission members a sample of the new brick to be used, which he said matches the existing brick on the chapel as closely as possible.

Angel admitted he was not an architect, but said he thought the focus of the chapel would be much improved if the stairs were removed when the foundation is repaired and replaced with a more narrow set of stairs that do not go across the entire width of the building. He said the stairs would be made of the same type of brick proposed for the foundation, except the step bricks would have a bullnose.

McAtee asked if the carpet that had been installed over the stairs would be removed. Angel said yes, and that the stairs would be made of bullnose brick. He added that currently there is about a 7-inch drop from the floor of the chapel to the porch, and if the plan is approved, the same brick will be installed on the floor of the porch to raise it up so that the chapel would be handicap accessible. McAtee asked if there would be a separate handicap entrance. Angel said yes, although it was not shown on the drawing; he added that it would include a brick ramp that would be installed on the Holt Hall side (left side) of the chapel. McAtee said that would need to be shown in detail before it could be approved by the Commission. Schneider asked where it would be located, and Overby said it would be located just behind the first column on the left side of the porch. Shoenfeld asked how long the ramp would be, and Angel said there was only about an 18-inch drop from that side of porch to the ground.

Ruch said she was trying to understand why the original design of the stairs was not being retained. Angel said there were several opinions, and that several people wanted to get rid of the carpeted stairs, saying they detract from the chapel. Ruch asked if the stairs were just being changed because some people just wanted a change. Shoenfeld asked if the same construction theory could be used on the steps as on the remainder of the building and keep the same style of stairs.

Simpson asked if the change to the steps was motivated by safety concerns, saying that by putting up railings around the porch and on the sides of a narrower set of stairs, people are being funneled into the building entrance. He asked if perhaps people had fallen off the porch. Angel said that was a concern.

Simpson then asked if the wrought-iron handrail was going to be replaced with aluminum. Angel said it would be a wooden railing. He said the safety concern was not only for the front of the porch, but on the ends as well. He said with the current stair configuration, people tend to stop and visit on the porch of the chapel.

Angel also said that the drawing showed that the ceiling of the porch was now one continuous ceiling, and that would be replaced if the plan is approved. He said at some point, someone had done a bad thing to the building and put metal with holes in it on the building soffit. Shoenfeld asked if he was referring to vented aluminum, and he said yes, but not just strips. Angel said the entire porch underside was covered with metal, which was not original. He said the porch had three soffits – one on the main entrance to be the same width as the main entrance where the ceiling goes up about 8 inches, with crown molding all around. He said the other two end-piece soffits on either side of the main entrance would also have crown molding. He said he thought that those changes would provide a place on the sides of the porch could where people could stop and talk without impeding the flow of traffic out of the church and down the steps. He added that he thought building code would require handrails all around the porch.

McAtee said he had visited the site that it looked like the bricks on the side of the foundation have been painted. Angel said yes, but those bricks would be covered with new brick. McAtee asked if the new bricks would be painted, and Angel said no.

Shoenfeld noted that the current handrail is located on the inside of the center columns, and asked Bruce if that is a code requirement or if the hand rails could be located at the ends of the stairs. Bruce said he did not know. Angel said he had heard current building code would require three sets of handrails. Simpson said the problem with the handrails at the ends of the stairs was that people coming out the front doors would not use them because they will come straight down the stairs.

Shoenfeld asked about the color of the steel pipe on the top of the railing, and also asked what it would be attached to. Angel said the pickets would be 2-inch-by-2-inch fir painted white with a 4-inch top rail. Ruch asked what color the top rail would be, and Angel said it was stainless steel. McAtee asked about the size of the newel post, and Angel said it was 4 inches square. McAtee asked if anodized aluminum could be used instead of stainless steel so it could be painted, and Angel said yes, or it could be powder coated any color. Ruch asked if the handrail on the porch would be steel or wood, and Angel said it would be wood.

Schneider said her biggest question and concern was that a 100-year-old building was being affected and the biggest change is that the stairs are being made smaller and railings are being added in front of the stained glass windows. She wondered aloud if building codes were triggering the railings being installed because the stairs are being changed. She asked if there was concrete under the carpet on the stairs, and Angel said yes. Angel said that the porch is $6\frac{3}{4}$ inches below the floor of the

chapel. In order to make it handicap accessible, the level of the porch must be made higher than it is now. Ruch asked if the porch would be elevated because the new footings are being poured. Angel said no, what was driving the change in the elevation of the porch was that you have to step up from the porch to enter the chapel building, an issue which is unsafe and must be changed in order to meet current building codes.

Shoenfeld asked if the porch was going to be raised by adding bricks to the top of the existing concrete porch, and also asked how that change would affect the porch columns. Angel said the bottom of the columns would be restored at the new level of the porch and would be identical to what is there now but the columns would be $6\frac{3}{4}$ inches shorter. He elaborated that the columns are all solid masonry, and the new concrete for the porch would just be poured around the base of them.

Schneider said she understood the other driving factor of the project is to repair the foundation, which is being caused by a water issue. She asked if a conservation architect had been involved, and said there are usually a number of ways to go about mitigating water damage. She asked if this is the only way in this case or if it had been determined to be the best way. Angel said the problem was not caused by a water issue, but that it was a structural issue. He said water is not seeping through the brick into the mechanical room under the main chapel floor, but that it is simply a matter of deterioration of the wall that supports the building. Schneider asked for clarification that a layer of brick and rebar was being added to reclad the foundation, and Angel said yes.

Ruch said she understood Angel had said the mortar was coming loose from the bricks, and Angel pointed to Section A-A of the drawing, saying that there would be a space of about $1\frac{1}{2}$ -2 inches between the new foundation and the old which would be filled with the new grout. Simpson asked if that would fill in the holes in the current foundation, and Angel said yes, and that the holes are so large you can stick your finger in them.

McAtee asked if the new grout would be poured and not troweled, and in doing so the places where grout has been lost would be filled in with the new grout to stabilize the old foundation and prevent more water from getting into it. Angel said yes, and that the cove water table brick at the top of the new foundation would also repel water away from the foundation.

Simpson said he thought the Commission now understood the foundation issue, but said that was not as great of a concern to them as the changes to the front of the building. He said ordinarily the Commission would not want to see something done to the façade of a historic building that is not accurate, although he understood the change in levels could be hazardous. He asked if people had fallen off the stairs with their current configuration, and asked what is driving the idea to narrow the steps. Angel said that when the foundation is repaired and the water table brick installed, it needed to go all the way around the building. He said the thought was that they might be able to shorten the full width of the steps. He said he did not think the end cap/platforms at the ends of the steps were there originally, and that the brick on them had been painted. Angel said that addition was not historically accurate, and to correct that, they were dealing with it in this manner.

Schneider said she felt like the cart was driving the horse, and that the main façade and historic value of the building should be what drives the changes. Again, Angel said the platforms at the ends of the steps were not originally there, and Schneider referred to a historic photo in the packet from 1916-17 that was supplied by staff which showed the platforms present and the steps looking the way they look today. Overby said they had tried to find an old photo to show what the steps looked like originally; he said they found a yearbook from 1921 and it did not show handrails. Shoenfeld said the handrails may not have been there, but the end cap/platforms had been there since at least 1916. She said the main issue she had was that the stairs would be changed.

Ruch pointed out that the Historic Guidelines say on page 30 to “retain and preserve historic porches, balconies, entrances and other outdoor structures such as trellises or arbors.” Schneider said several other items on page 30 also apply. Simpson said it seemed something would have to be done to the steps because the plan called for the level of the porch to be raised. Ruch asked if the steps could not be built all the way across the front of the building, as they are now. Shoenfeld asked if there was going to be brick on top of the existing porch or if concrete would be poured on top of it; McAtee pointed out that Detail B on the drawing submitted shows a new topping would be installed on top of the existing slab.

Schneider said she understood the step down onto the porch could be a safety concern, but pointed out that many historic buildings have awkward steps and are not handicap accessible except from a side or rear entrance. Angel responded that the chapel does not have another entrance. Shoenfeld asked if the foundation damage was at the porch area or at other areas of the building. Angel said the brick on the corners is not the same as the original brick, and that they are not the same as on the main building where the mortar is coming out of the joints.

Schneider said she could see a pattern and it appeared there was an impasse. She said it had been noted that the foundation work was necessary, but what she was struggling with was the need to make all the proposed changes to the porch and the stairs in order to get rid of the step down onto the porch of the chapel. She said she had not realized the extent of the changes when she was reviewing the application. She said the Historic Guidelines make it clear that whenever a significant change is made to the front of a historic building, it had to be arguably necessary from a safety standpoint, but also that this level of change was not consistent with the Guidelines because such a significant change was being proposed. She said she thought the application was incomplete because it did not include details on the handicap ramp. She added that she understood that if the step down onto the porch was changed, it triggers code issues that were not in place when the building was constructed.

Simpson said he thought the Commission did not understand why such a drastic change is necessary to the front of the building. He said perhaps the case should be continued to allow the applicant to present additional information or provide other options. Schneider said the Commission could also deny the application, but that the applicant was welcome to resubmit. She said it would be helpful to have the rationale for the proposed changes clearly spelled out.

Simpson said perhaps the applicant should be asked if they would like to submit something to help the Commission understand the rationale for the redesign. He said perhaps building codes would justify their approach, such as if the porch height is changed, current building codes are triggered. He asked Bruce if that might be the case; Bruce said the Americans with Disabilities Act requires that "reasonable accommodations" be made for those with disabilities. Schneider said having wide stairs across the front of the building was not in itself a code violation. She said she thought she would like to see a different approach that keeps the appearance of the existing façade while addressing safety and building codes.

Schneider asked if the railings are required if the changes to the steps are not done, and she asked whether making the building handicap accessible is required. Ruch said she thought they were trying to make the building more accessible for the handicapped, and Schneider said that perhaps they were not required to do so, but simply wanted to. Angel said he thought the Academy Foundation's board was concerned about if someone were to get hurt there. Schneider asked if the issue had to do with potential liability. Shoenfeld asked if Angel felt the level of the porch floor could be raised and the full-width stairs with handrails added. Ruch said she thought the Commission's position was that they needed to preserve the integrity of the chapel and the proposed plan did not accomplish that.

Debbie Shoenfeld made a **motion** to deny the Certificate of Appropriateness for repair of the brick foundation and removal and replacement of steps from the front of the building as shown on the drawing submitted to the HPC for the Oak Ridge Foundation, Inc. for Linville Chapel on the campus of Oak Ridge Military Academy, 2324 Oak Ridge Road, Tax Parcel 0162858, Oak Ridge Township, and zoned PI (Public and Institutional). **Caroline Ruch** seconded the motion.

Schneider said the Commission could also continue the case, although there was no real difference in the outcome. Simpson said he would like for the Commission to reach out to the applicant to see if they preferred one outcome over the other.

Overby said it was pretty clear that the design is the big issue, and he felt it would be better to reapply. If only the foundation repair was done, he asked if the decisions on the work and brick color could be made by staff. Schneider said she thought the documents submitted could stand as far as the foundation work was concerned, and that the Commission could stipulate that the brick must match the existing brick. Smith said the foundation work might be able to be approved by staff under routine maintenance if it was not seen from the road; Schneider asked that she verify to be sure that was the case. Overby asked if the brick must be approved in a COA by staff, adding that in most cases, it was more important to match the mortar because matching brick could be more easily attained; he said he would follow up with staff.

Simpson asked if the shrubbery would cover the foundation work enough that it could be considered routine maintenance, and Schneider said she would let that be determined by staff.

Shoenfeld asked when the work was going to be done, and Angel said the project would need to begin by the middle of November in order to complete it before

winter. Schneider said the question was asked because the Commission intends to dedicate a historic marker at Linville Chapel, but said that was a separate issue.

The Commission's vote to deny the application was unanimous (5-0).

Ruch asked to be excused from the meeting, and Smith said that could best be accomplished with a motion and vote.

Debbie Shoenfeld made a **motion** to excuse Caroline Ruch from the meeting. **Ron Simpson** seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (5-0).

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS/UPDATES

A. 2014-15 Budget update

Smith presented the 2014-15 budget, which is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of the minutes.

B. Budget idea

Although Schneider had requested this item be added to the agenda, she asked that it be discussed later due to the length of the meeting.

C. Historic inventory/Markers

Schneider said she had contacted Dr. Danny Nobles, president of Oak Ridge Military Academy, about the historic marker dedication ceremony for Linville Chapel, and that they were working on a date.

Shoenfeld commented on the siding recently installed at Ai Church, where a marker will also be dedicated in the spring. Smith said Preservation Oak Ridge, which is restoring the structure, had raised around \$25,000 at its recent dinner/auction.

D. Communications outreach

No report

E. Display case

No report

F. Land Use Plan Update

Schneider reported that the first meeting of the committee was held in October. She represents the Historic Preservation Commission, but Simpson is also on the committee as a Planning & Zoning Board representative and Smith was appointed as a citizen. She said the committee was asking Town residents to complete a survey, and she encouraged Commission members to do so and to also invite their friends and neighbors who live in Oak Ridge. Schneider asked Smith to send the electronic

version of the survey out to all HPC members, and they were also encouraged to attend an open house on November 5.

7. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Councilman George McClellan said the Commission had done a great job, and he thanked them.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Mac McAtee made a **motion** to adjourn the meeting at 8:49 p.m. **Ron Simpson** seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (4-0).

Respectfully Submitted:



Sandra B. Smith, Town Clerk



Ann Schneider, Chair