



**Historical Resources Management Commission  
Special Meeting Minutes  
Hattie Weber Museum  
445 C Street – Corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and C Streets  
Monday, June 2, 2008**

Commissioners Present: Rand Herbert (Chair), Richard Rifkin (Vice Chair), Gale Sosnick and Mark Beason

Commissioners Absent: Keren Costanzo

Staff Present: Katherine Hess, Ike Njoku, Danielle Foster and Nancy Stephenson

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**1. Call to Order.** Chair Herbert called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**2. Approval of Agenda.**

**Action:** Vice Chair Rifkin moved, seconded by Commissioner Sosnick, to move Item 10 on the agenda to the June 16, 2008 meeting and approve the agenda. The motion passed by the following vote:

**AYES:** Beason, Herbert, Rifkin, Sosnick

**NOES:** None

**ABSENT:** Costanzo

**3. Approval of Minutes.**

**Action:** Vice Chair Rifkin moved, seconded by Commissioner Beason, to approve the April 21, 2008 minutes as amended. The motion passed by the following vote:

**AYES:** Beason, Herbert, Rifkin, Sosnick

**NOES:** None

**ABSENT:** Costanzo

**4. Public Communications.** None.

**5. Written Communications.** Staff Liaison Ike Njoku circulated written materials for review by the commissioners.

**6. Museum Report.** Jim Becket reported that 54 people visited the Museum on Saturday (May 31), and that many attendees are expected on Father's Day, as many graduations are taking place on the same weekend. Becket stated that an exhibit in honor of the recently deceased Narcissa Peña (descendant of the Peña family, early pioneers in the area) will be assembled tomorrow (June 3, 2008).

## **7. 2008 Historical Preservation Award.**

Chair Herbert introduced the 2008 Historical Preservation Awards. Noting that May is National Preservation Month, he stated that the City Council had issued a proclamation on May 6, 2008, declaring May as Preservation Month for City of Davis as well.

The three awards were presented to the following people: (1) Tony and Heather Martin for the restoration of and addition to the Craftsman Bungalow at 643 F Street; (2) Richard Berteaux for his sustained contributions to historic preservation in Davis; and (3) Sierra Railroad for rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of A. J. Plant's Colonial Revival house at 221 1<sup>st</sup> Street.

The Commission recessed for a small reception for the award winners.

The meeting reconvened at 7:22 p.m.

## **8. Staff and Commissioner Comments.**

Njoku asked if all the commissioners would be able to attend the June 16, 2008 meeting and all responded positively. Njoku presented Chair Herbert with the City Council endorsed National Historic Preservation Proclamation.

## **9. Advisory Items.**

### **A. 311 and 315 B Street – Aikin Townhouses Proposal (311 B Street is eligible as a Merit Resource and 315 B Street is a contributor to the neighborhood); Design Review Application**

The Commission is being asked to hold a public meeting and provide advisory input on the 311 and 315 B Street proposal to staff and Planning Commission on the proposed project's design compatibility with the Davis Downtown and Traditional Residential Neighborhoods Design Guidelines, consistent with Section 40.23.050 (i) and (j) of the Zoning Ordinance and The Secretary of the Interior's (SOI) applicable Guidelines for Treatment of Historic Properties.

Njoku introduced the item, a project proposing the construction of six attached and one detached unit. He stated that the project would cover both the lots and the units would be single-family, for-sale units. Njoku noted that an additional part of the project involves the relocation of one or both of the structures currently existing on the property to a City site on J Street (see Item 9B below).

Applicant representative Mark Rutheiser gave a brief outline of the proposal, stating that the project consists of seven residential units, four of which would face B Street and three of which would face the alley west of B Street. He said that all the units would have access to a central parking court with an outlet on the alley. Rutheiser added that there would be two parking spaces provided per unit. He said that the walk-up units facing B Street appear to be two-story structures from the front, but they are actually three-story units with a garage situated underneath the living area and having an overall height of 37 feet. Rutheiser added that the proposed exteriors of the units will be composed of a variety of materials, with some units having stucco exterior walls with Spanish style roofs, others with wood siding and brick exteriors with composition shingle roofs.

He noted that two of the units on the alley have ground-level entrances and are configured on the interior to accommodate an elevator, thus making the units fully accessible.

Chair Herbert opened the public meeting.

John Hall of the University Avenue / Rice Lane Neighborhood Association expressed concern over what would happen to the existing structures at 311 and 315 B Street. He stated that he would strongly support the relocation of 311 B Street to a site in Central Davis. He also said that he and the neighbors are pleased to see that deck spaces are included in the proposed project.

Kemble Pope, a resident of the Downtown Core neighborhood, spoke for himself as well as Brian and Sabrina Morgan and Nancy Swim, other residents of the area, in support of the project. Pope stated that, in the interest of open space preservation, infill projects are needed even in historically sensitive areas, and that the applicants had done a good job of preserving the village feel of the area.

The commissioners had the following questions and comments:

- Do the staircases to the porches begin at the sidewalk?  
Architect Betty Woo responded that porch staircases begin near the sidewalk.
- How do the neighbors feel about the larger size of the project where it faces the alley? How will this impact the alley and the University Avenue rear yards?  
Hall responded that the neighbors are OK with the required setbacks of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and B Street zoning, and that the second floor setbacks do protect access to light. He stated that the neighbors are not opposed to seeing the alleys become vital centers of urban life. He added that there is concern about the traffic in the neighborhood.
- Do the two parking spaces per unit meet the parking requirement?  
Njoku responded that yes, two spaces per unit meets the requirement.
- Will the units be owned in a condominium?  
Rutheiser responded that there will be an association for the common property, but ownership of the units will not be in the form of a condominium.
- How will the parking area be paved?  
Rutheiser responded that either a pedestrian form of paving, such as stamped concrete, or pervious paving material, which would provide for storm water pollution prevention, would be used.
- How deep will you need to dig for the project?  
Rutheiser responded that utilities generally need to go to a depth of two to four feet.
- Will the mature trees on the north side of the property be preserved?  
Rutheiser responded that some large trees will be removed, but the project will preserve as many trees as possible.

- Why is there no landscape plan?  
Rutheiser responded that the applicants and designers have not developed one yet.
- The project seems generally compliant with the Design Guidelines.
- It is gratifying to see that the applicants have made an attempt to meet the “vitiated” Design Guidelines (the Davis Downtown Traditional and Residential Neighborhoods Design Guidelines as amended by the B Street Visioning Process, hereafter referred to as 2007 Design Guidelines Update) and the project is consistent with the guidelines.

The commission reached a consensus that the project is consistent with the 2007 Design Guidelines Update.

### **B. 233 and 239 J Street Project Options, Historic Review**

The Commission is being asked to hold a public meeting and provide input on the five conceptual project options for the Redevelopment Agency-owned properties at 233 and 239 J Street as advisory to the City Council/Redevelopment Board, in light of the Historic Review obtained on the options (Attachment 2 of the staff report) and based on the historic qualities of the Old East Davis Neighborhood in which the project properties are located.

Chair Herbert noted that this item deals with the potential for relocating the two historic buildings at 311 and 315 B Street (subject to the townhouse project discussed above in Item 9A) to an alternate location.

Housing and Human Services Superintendent Danielle Foster introduced the item, stating that the Redevelopment Agency had purchased the two properties in the Old East Davis neighborhood using Affordable Housing Funds with the goal of placing affordable houses there. She said that in January of the current year, staff was directed by the City Council to focus on placing relocated structures at the site. Foster said that the Aikins responded to outreach efforts made to owners of vintage structures in the City. She said that five options had been designed based on the Aikins’s response.

The commissioners inquired as to the distances between the houses and the two-car garages in Option A. It was not apparent on the plans, and the general consensus was that the distance between the north house and its garage is 20 feet and the distance between the south house and its garage is 15 feet. Commissioner Sosnick expressed the concern that, with only a 15-foot separation between structures, a two-story structure in the rear yard of the relocated houses will make their interiors very dark.

Rhonda Reed of the Old East Davis Neighborhood Association (OEDNA) stated that the Association supports options that preserve more historic structures rather than less. Reed said that the neighbors are also in favor of preserving the tall fruitless mulberry tree existing on the site. She stated that the owner-occupancy requirement generally entailed by affordable housing would be a plus for the neighborhood. She also added on a personal note that having a two-story structure to the west of the houses would actually be beneficial, as it would provide shade for the structures in the afternoon. Reed expressed concern about possible second-story balconies overlooking the neighboring back yards. She noted that the neighbors are also concerned about

parking in the neighborhood; there is a 10-room duplex just south of the project site, and the tenants currently use the vacant site for parking.

Tim Allis of the OEDNA noted that Options A and B make use of the existing driveway, thus preserving other open space on the site. Allis stated that mitigation of the existing parking issues should not be a requirement for the new project in that the site is already small. He indicated that there is strong support among the neighbors for moving both the houses (Option A or B) because it would strengthen the Old East Davis neighborhood as well as serve the community's interest in creative historic preservation. Referring to the drawings, Allis said that the second units seem to be boxes that are placeholders rather than representations of a finished design. In addition to this, he stated that the dimensions in the drawings may not be altogether correct. Allis explained that there has been discussion about a surveying error in the neighborhood and suggested that it would be useful to determine how the error affects the project site. Allis reiterated Reed's comments in reference to the mulberry tree. He also expressed concern about open space and street parking being affected by driveways from the structures to J Street.

Allen Miller, a resident of the OED neighborhood, spoke in support of Options A and B, stating that they are much more consistent with the Design Guidelines than any of the other options. He agreed with Allis's comments regarding the negative impact of having driveways on J Street in that not much is gained, but one parking space is lost on the street for each driveway.

Vice Chair Rifkin noted that although the resource at 311 B Street is on the priority list of houses in the B Street Visioning area to be relocated rather than demolished, the contributor at 315 B Street is not. This being the case, he urged the City to leave a space at the J Street site open for the relocation of a more deserving structure because sites are limited. Rifkin also suggested making the units over the garages rent-controlled units.

Foster replied that no other owners had responded to outreach efforts and the City cannot compel owners to move houses to this site. She stated that it is also difficult to design a project for an unknown structure that may or may not be located there at some point in the future. In addition, she said that the City is required to use the site and Affordable Housing funds within a limited period of time for the purpose for which they are allocated.

Commissioner Beason asked if there had been any thought about putting the 311 B Street house on the northeast corner of the site rather than putting the 315 B Street house there.

Commissioner Sosnick responded that the smaller house is on the corner because of larger setback requirements on the corner lot.

Rutheiser responded that 315 is the smaller structure, and placing the smaller house on the corner opens sight lines. In addition, he said that Options A and B keep the houses in the same configuration in which they are on B Street.

Chair Herbert asked about the covered parking for the project and Foster responded that the covered parking would be in the form of enclosed garages.

Chair Herbert noted that moving 311 will not affect its eligibility as a City of Davis Merit Resource. Regarding Vice Chair Rifkin's question about "banking" the land for future relocation of a structure, Herbert stated that the Commission is obligated to deal with what is brought before it, and in this case the options are either to relocate the two structures or relocate one and demolish the other. He noted that from a green building perspective, retaining a vintage building is far more environmentally sound than constructing a new building, even if the new structure is an energy efficient one. Herbert concurred with earlier comments regarding retaining open space at the site. He also stated that the units over the garages should be one-bedroom rather than studio units, and that the second-story balcony issue needs to be addressed.

It was the consensus of the Commission that Option B is the preferred design with Option A as the second choice. In response to a question from Hess, Chair Herbert responded that, from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) point of view, 311 B Street would retain its integrity under Option D; however, the Commission finds Option B or Option A preferable to Option D.

### **C. 233 B Street Townhouses Proposal – Design Review Application**

The Commission is being asked to hold a public meeting and provide advisory input on the 233 B Street proposal to staff and Planning Commission on the proposed project's design compatibility with the Davis Downtown and Traditional Residential Neighborhoods Design Guidelines, consistent with Section 40.23.050 (i) and (j) of the Zoning Ordinance.

Njoku introduced the item, which consists of four detached, for-sale, single-family units proposed for the property located at 233 B Street.

Architect/applicant Maria Ogrydziak presented the proposed project, stating that two important objectives of the project are to implement green building practices and to echo or bring back the "green roots" of Davis. She noted that the two units facing B Street have a live-work option and are therefore accessible at ground level from B Street. Ogrydziak highlighted the building material proposed for the project, a concrete sandwich panel system that is thermally efficient and would allow for the construction of green roofs. She explained that a green roof is a roof system that is waterproof and strong enough to support vegetation and soil on its upper surface. She added that green roofs are thermally efficient.

At this time members of the public asked questions.

Rhonda Reed asked which of the units had zero lot lines. She asked if it is the applicant's intent to repeat the design in the development of the next phase of the project (the part of the site at the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> and B Streets).

Ogrydziak indicated that the north property line of each of the four units has a zero lot line and the property line running north and south between Units 2 and 4 has a zero lot line. She added that the next phase of the plan for the property had not yet been decided.

Reed inquired about the project's effect on the historical resources in the area.

John Hall stated that the major concern expressed at the neighborhood meeting regarding the project centered on the question of the 2007 Design Guidelines Update and the historic character of the neighborhood and the relationship of the Guidelines to this plan. In addition, he said there was little concern about the lack of modulation in the walls on the north side of the project because they cannot be seen from B Street and are blocked by the structure currently located to the north of the project, at 241 B Street. Hall stated that some people at the neighborhood meetings favored application of the 2007 Design Guidelines Update and others felt that good architecture is more important than the Guidelines. He maintained that those at the neighborhood meeting all agreed that the benefits of the project far exceed any loss felt by the neighbors due to the lack of sloped roofs, bungalow front porches, and so forth. He stated that the project would contribute a number of positive benefits to a neighborhood that is fragile in terms of its balance of uses. Hall indicated that owner-occupied housing and green roofs are benefits worth having, and it was the perception of those at the meeting that the 2007 Design Guidelines Update do not have the force of law. In addition, he asserted that even those in the University Avenue / Rice Lane neighborhood who had been supportive of the 2007 Design Guidelines Update are now either in support of the proposed project or are willing to let it go forward; there were no people who ended up saying that they objected to the project going forward.

Allen Miller asked if the project infringed on the alley.

Ogrydziak responded that the City gets seven feet in addition to what is currently there.

Old East Davis Neighborhood resident Jennifer Leifson asked if there would be a guarantee that the proposed project will be owner-occupied. In addition, she asked if it would be affordable housing.

Ogrydziak responded that every attempt was made in the design to make the units attractive as owner-occupied units, but that there is never a guarantee of owner occupancy.

At this time Chair Herbert closed the public meeting.

The commissioners had the following questions and comments:

Commissioner Sosnick stated that the proposed project represented a kind of modernism that does not fit with the culture of Davis and would stick out like a sore thumb. She characterized the ambience of Davis as "hokey," and stated that everybody is in love with cottages and wants to keep old buildings. Sosnick stated that for these reasons the project would be incompatible.

Vice Chair Rifkin asked Ogrydziak if she plans to demolish the structures at 241 B Street and build something new. Rifkin noted that hers is the only property under the 2007 Design Guidelines Update that would be allowed to have a structure up to approximately 45 feet in height, so one would assume that she planned to build something tall at that site.

Ogrydziak responded that the second phase of the project would be to preserve the addition that she had built at 241 B Street and have a property line to the north of it. She maintained that she is still not certain what she will do with the north portion of the property.

Rifkin stated that the project under review belongs in an urban, warehouse district and not in a bungalow-type district. He added that it is not consistent with the 2007 Design Guidelines Update. Rifkin characterized the project as “urban boxy” and did not want more boxy structures added to be compatible with the concrete block at 217 B Street and the boxy addition at Ogrydziak’s 241 B Street property.

Rifkin expressed his agreement with the letter from the Board of the ONDNA (Attachment 8 of the staff report) which refers to the “boxy design” of the project and states that it is “incompatible with the spirit and intent of the Davis Downtown and Traditional Residential Neighborhoods Design Guidelines” and that it is “completely out of character with the other structures fronting B Street in the area.” He expressed concern that the project would set the tone for the street, and that a disjointed streetscape would be the result.

Commissioner Beason asked if the construction matrix proposed by Ogrydziak is tied to the flat roof design or if these are two different concepts that are working well together. He asked if the system could be used for sloped roofs.

Ogrydziak responded that the construction matrix is what allows her to consider the flat roof as an option, because wood frame construction with a conventional wood frame roof system would not work with the green roof concept. She stated that it would not be cost-effective to use the concrete sandwich panel system for sloped roofs.

Beason commented that he appreciates the look of the project and the fact that it incorporates green roofs. However, he stated that it does not fit in with the bungalow character of the neighborhood and it is far from being consistent with the 2007 Design Guidelines Update.

In response to a question from Beason regarding the year of construction of the addition at 241 B Street, Ogrydziak responded that it was constructed around 2000, before the 2007 Design Guidelines Update “were even thought about.” She went on to state that a corner is a different place, and that guidelines are meant to be guidelines and that the neighborhood is not monolithic. Ogrydziak added that putting a sloped roof on a three-story structure does not make it a bungalow.

Beason stated that the design presented earlier in the evening (Item 9A) made a conscious effort to address the 2007 Design Guidelines Update issues. He quoted from the introduction to the Traditional Residential Neighborhoods section of the Davis Downtown and Traditional Residential Neighborhoods Design Guidelines (page 83): “Identifying a neighborhood as part of a conservation district recognizes that there is an identifiable visual and emotional character to the area that should be respected.” Beason concluded by saying that the project does not visually meet the guidelines.

Chair Herbert clarified the meaning of the Davis Downtown and Traditional Residential Neighborhoods Design Guidelines. He stated that the Guidelines are not just advisory; they were the subject of several years of development among the neighbors, developed through consensus among the neighbors, adopted by action of the City Council and subject to an Environmental Impact Report. Herbert emphasized that the Design Guidelines have an actual place in City regulation and under CEQA Guidelines and that they are not optional and cannot just be ignored

for one project or another. He noted that the Aikin and Ogrydziak projects are the first two projects to be reviewed by the Commission under the 2007 Design Guidelines Update.

In other comments, Herbert noted a phrase in the staff report on page 5 in the penultimate paragraph: "The applicant is proposing roof decks, green roofs and the use of an innovative construction material to reflect the 'Davis of today' instead of the 'Davis of yesterday.'" He took exception to the phrasing and characterized it as special pleading. He stated that it is not a neutral statement appropriate to a staff report. Focusing on another statement on page 6 in the top paragraph that states that the "project is consistent with the majority of the Davis Downtown Traditional Residential Neighborhood Design Guidelines for the Mixed Use Character Area: Core Transition West, and complies with the zoning," Herbert emphasized the word *majority* and stated that yes, in a checklist sort of way, the project meets the 2007 Design Guidelines Update. However, there are clearly some 'guidances' in the guidelines that are far more important than others, and it is not possible to quantify compliance in this way.

In comments relating to the massing/modulation of the project, Herbert stated that because they have the same design and are massed together, the units give the sense of being one building rather than separate units.

Ogrydziak responded that 233 B Street had been merged with 241 B Street, making it a part of the corner in terms of zoning. She stated that, in her understanding, she was charged to create a vocabulary that read as one and is modulated. However, she maintained that the units are distinct from one another.

Chair Herbert asserted that, his admiration of the design notwithstanding, he had to conclude that the proposed project does not even meet the "vitiating" Design Guidelines (2007 Design Guidelines Update).

The commissioners reached a consensus that the project does *not* meet the 2007 Design Guidelines Update. Referring to the 2007 Design Guidelines Update included in the staff report, Chair Herbert listed point by point the position of the Commission:

Design Objective A: "*The area should serve as a use and physical scale transition to the predominantly single-family character of University Avenue/Rice Lane neighborhood to the west.*"

- "*The traditional 'bungalow feel' of the area should be maintained while accommodating compatible new development.*"

It was the consensus of the Commission that this is *not* met by the proposed project.

- "*A sense of 'front lawns' should be maintained, which may be reinterpreted as landscaped courts and yards.*"

It was the consensus of the Commission that this *is* met by the proposed project.

Design Objective B: *“The west side of B Street between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets should have a built form and variety of compact housing types promoting an urban village feel.”*

- *“Conversion and expansion of existing residential structures to accommodate office uses is also appropriate in this area.”*

N/A

- *“The design of new higher density development should reflect the residential character of the area.”*

It was the consensus of the Commission that this is *not* met by the proposed project.

- *“New development to be of high quality design and construction to enhance visual quality of the street and support potential for owner occupied units.”*

No consensus.

Guideline A: *“A new building should have sloping roof forms with extended eaves and front porches/entries similar to those seen on residential buildings.”*

It was the consensus of the Commission that this is *not* met by the proposed project.

Guideline B: *“A building should be setback to align with the fronts of existing houses.”*

It was the consensus of the Commission that this *is* met by the proposed project.

Guideline C: *“New larger buildings along B Street should be designed to be compatible with the architectural character of the adjacent residential neighborhood.”*

- *“New taller buildings should step down towards smaller buildings.”*

No consensus stated.

- *“The massing of new buildings should be broken into modules that reflect the scale of traditional buildings found in the adjacent neighborhood.”*

It was the consensus of the Commission that this is *not* met by the proposed project.

- *“Traditional residential door and window patterns should be used with location of new windows carefully considered with regard to privacy of neighboring residences.”*

It was the consensus of the Commission that this is *not* met by the proposed project.

- *“New buildings should be set back and provide landscaping to retain a sense of a ‘front yard.’”*

- “*Front porches and landscaped courtyards should be incorporated into the front setback.*”

It was the consensus of the Commission that these *are* met by the proposed project.

It was the consensus of the Commission that the project meets Guidelines D, E and F of the 2007 Design Guidelines Update.

## **10. Business Items.**

### **A. Commission Business Items.**

Commission Subcommittee will provide updates, and discussions may continue on the following Commission-initiated projects relative to their scoping:

- Signage and Identification for Historic Resources and Important Street Names
- UC Davis Centennial Celebration – participation/recommendations
- Begin Planning for Update of Historical Resources Inventory
- Preservation of Digital Records

The commissioners agreed to discuss this item at the June 16, 2008 HRMC meeting.

**11. Adjournment.** The next meeting will be **Monday, June 16, 2008** at the Hattie Weber Museum (445 C Street) at 7:00 p.m.

**Action:** **Commissioner Beason moved, seconded by Vice Chair Rifkin, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed by the following vote:**

**AYES:** Beason, Herbert, Rifkin, Sosnick  
**NOES:** None  
**ABSENT:** Costanzo

The meeting was adjourned at 9:53 p.m.