

BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW MINUTES

The Board of Architectural Review held its regularly scheduled meeting on, January 15, 2009 at 15 N. Cameron Street, at 4:00 p.m. in Council Chambers, Rouss City Hall.

PRESENT: L Belkin, T Bandyke, P Farris, M Lore, C Shore and L Saunders.
ABSENT: T Rockwood.
STAFF: Diem and Walsh.
VISITORS: Bill Wiley

MINUTES

It was moved by P Farris, seconded by T Bandyke, to approve the minutes as presented.

Motion passed unanimously 5-0-1, L Belkin abstained.

CONSENT AGENDA

None

NEW BUSINESS

BAR-09-01 Request of William & Kathryn Wiley to replace windows at 104 W. North Ave.

Mr. Wiley explained that he wanted to replace the windows in his house. He has spoken with different vendors and found a product made from PVC that when painted, looks like a wood window. He provided a sample.

Mr. Wiley planed to paint the windows to match the house. The reason for the upgrade is because their 9 month old son has four windows in his room that allows a tremendous amount of air in. He said that the drapes can be seen moving when the wind blows, which causes the room to be extremely cold. He had someone come in to make sure the radiator was working properly and it is. He was told the problems are with the windows. There are storm windows in place but they are not doing the job. Mr. Wiley stated that the PVC has a 25 year warranty and is aesthetically pleasing. His plan is to just replace the sashes to help with heating, cooling and noise.

Mr. Saunders explained that this is a tough issue because they must stick to the guidelines. There have been people that have glued wood strips on their windows after they had already put them in to get them approved. The guidelines are clear; if wood windows exist then it has to stay wood. He understood that Mr. Wiley was trying to save heat but they have to be consistent. There was a previous case where PVC was allowed but that was because it was never wood to begin with.

Mr. Belkin stated that with the house being built in 1910 its probably 8 inch solid brick. He lives in a house like that also. The walls themselves are very bad for heat and the windows are only slightly worse. Mr. Belkin explained that he caulked the windows shut in his home leaving one operable in each room for spring and summer time, now they don't let any drafts in at all.

Mr. Saunders stated that it is against building code to caulk the windows shut.

Mr. Belkin explained that it is ok to use rope caulk and have one operating window. He stated that it was just a suggestion instead of replacing the windows. He added that the storm windows are probably just as good as the wall itself, that there may not be a significant difference once the windows are replaced. He stated that his point is that this is the historic district and if you happen to live here the value system is different. The guidelines state that windows should be repaired before they are replaced. He suggested some weather stripping, caulking or perhaps a space heater.

Mr. Farris concurred with Mr. Belkin and Mr. Saunders. He stated that he wanted to see the product because knowing that the applicant was in construction, he thought maybe there was something new that he hadn't seen before. He explained that most of the applicants that come before the board have an economic argument but this board is bound by the guidelines. He asked Mr. Wiley if there was any wooden product that he would feel comfortable with.

Mr. Wiley explained that if he was willing to replace them with wood it would be a like for like exchange and he wouldn't have to come before the board. In regards to the previous comments he stated that there was a case for the record that he has spoke with staff about where vinyl was approved. He also stated that caulking the windows shut is a fire hazard. He would be in deep trouble if the house caught on fire, more than they would now. The windows are very hard to open; he can open them but his wife cannot. He was looking at the wood in front and using the alternative on the sides but his wife wants them uniform throughout. He wanted to replace all 15 at one time. The goal is to lower the heating and cooling costs and there is a tax incentive available for this very thing. He added that the house that was approved with vinyl windows was on Monmouth Street.

Mr. Farris answered by saying that there was an applicant with a house build in the 50's or 60's that was built with aluminum windows so they allowed vinyl as a replacement.

Mr. Saunders added that he was not against it, but just didn't see any way to get around it. He suggested pulling the minutes to get the specifics on that case.

Mr. Belkin felt that there is value in the standards. In a historic district the windows add a certain character to the house. If you remove them you may gain something but you lose something as well. Some may say that the house is not as attractive because it doesn't have the original windows and historic preservation is based on that fact. He suggested checking into a geothermal heat pump system because it is enormously efficient. He felt that there are more ways to be energy efficient than just replacing the windows.

Mr. Saunders stated that he is working on 2 buildings like this and manufactures tend to hold up these projects. They are terribly expensive and shouldn't be because it isn't hard to make a wood window. He asked Mr. Wiley if he would want to withdraw the application which would allow him to come back with another window choice.

Mr. Wiley explained that he looked at the alternatives in terms of being energy efficient and felt that others would be looking at that in these tough times. He understood that they are old houses and aesthetics are important but there has to be a side that considers heating and cooling costs. People will be looking at the tax incentive programs in order to save money.

Mr. Saunders agreed stating that there are a lot of houses in the historic district that are not worth what the cost would be to put the Colby & Colby windows in them. Unfortunately, there is the good with the bad when living in the historic district.

It was moved by P Farris, seconded by M Lore, to table BAR-09-01.
Motion carried 5-1, L Belkin opposed.

OTHER DISCUSSION

None

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 4:35pm.