



**HISTORIC
COMMISSION**

PRESERVATION

MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, June 9, 2019
Time: 9:00 AM
Location: City Council Chambers - 315 E. Kennedy Blvd., 3rd Floor

Call to Order Chair Vivian Salaga called meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

Silent Roll Call **Commissioners Present:** Dominique Cobb, Dr. Thomas Pluckhahn, Vivian Salaga, Patricia Ortiz and KerryAnn Kanch

Commissioners Arriving After Roll Call:

Commissioners Absent: Missy Schukraft

Staff Present: Dennis Fernandez, Elaine Lund, and Beverly Jewesak

Legal Staff: Camaria Pettis-Mackle

Commissioners introduced themselves and their position on the Board.

Review of Minutes: March 10, 2020, Minutes: Chair Salaga stated that the minutes stand as read.

Announcements: Dennis Fernandez, Architectural Review and Historic Preservation Manager

1. Good Morning, Commissioners and Visitors. We appreciate your patience in accommodating both social distancing and the additional health steps that will take place throughout the hearing.
2. During the public comment portion of the hearing, each speaker will have a maximum of three minutes. and there will be a timer. Three individuals can stand at a time during public comment, and we will be alternating podiums to allow for sanitizing between speakers.
3. The original agenda that went out had case HPC 2020-02, for the address of 5315 Taliaferro, Fire Station #7 that was originally requested for demolition review as well. On Thursday, June 4, 2020, the agent withdrew that request. We have revised the agenda to have the single case of HPC 2020-01, 801 E. Hillsborough Avenue, Seminole Heights Baptist Church.
4. We do have our annual Election of Officers on the agenda today, I would recommend Madame Chair to move the elections to the end of the hearing to accommodate the presentation and speakers at the hearing today. If you could make a motion to amend the agenda as discussed.

Motion: Patricia Ortiz

Second: Thomas Pluckhahn

I move to amend the agenda to move the elections to the later portion of the hearing.

The motion passed by a vote of 5-0-0.

Conflict of Interests: Camaria Pettis-Mackle, Assistant City Attorney

Camaria Pettis-Mackle asked the Commissioners if there were any conflicts of interest for the record based on the item that is on the agenda.

Commissioner Salaga stated the editor of Creative Loafing via email had contacted her and she forwarded that email on to staff for their response to the inquiry.

Camaria Pettis-Mackle – Thank you Madam Commissioner. Did you at any point respond to that email?

Commissioner Salaga – I did not.

Camaria Pettis-Mackle- Are there any other comments?

Commissioner Salaga – By copy of the email to the originator he knew that I was forwarding it to Dennis.

Camaria Pettis-Mackle – And, just again, there have been no other conflicts of interest from the Commissioners? Seeing none, additionally can any of the Commissioners announce for the record if there has been any ex parte communication regarding the item that is on the record. For the record, I see no comments or anything from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Salaga – We will swear in at this point in time all those who wish to make public comment. For those people who are not present in the room, but may show up later, how will that swearing in be handled?

Dennis Fernandez – I believe we are going to have to do multiple swear-ins this morning, so we will try to monitor the flow of individuals through the room. We would ask that once you have spoken that you leave the room, if you can, to allow other individuals out in the lobby areas to come in and participate in the hearing. The room is limited in the number of individuals it can have at one time, so we will need individuals to exit the room in order for others to enter. If everyone could stand and raise your right hand, we have Beverly Jewesak to administer the swear-in.

Swear-In: Beverly Jewesak swore in all owners, applicants, interested parties, and witnesses within the Tampa Convention Center, Rooms 14-17.

Commissioner Salaga – We will have our staff presentation on the matter before us this morning,

Dennis Fernandez – I did want to briefly go through how the hearing will work this morning; we will begin with a staff presentation, facilitated through a PowerPoint presentation. The applicant's agent will introduce their evidence and exhibits before the board. We then will receive public comment at three minutes per individual. Following public comment, the petitioner will be allowed time for rebuttal, if that is necessary. Following rebuttal, the Board if they feel it necessary may question any witnesses who provided testimony, including the public. The Chairperson may call to order any party before the Board who is deemed out of order. At this point, we would be closing the public hearing and the Board in discussion would weigh all testimony of the applicants and the witnesses, and the Board will move to make a motion. We will be here to assist as well. We will begin with the staff presentation, with Elaine Lund presenting a PowerPoint presentation.

HPC 2020-01 – Demolition Review - Seminole Heights Baptist Church

Elaine Lund, Historic Preservation Commission Staff – The application before you is for a demolition review for the Seminole Heights Baptist Church, located at 801 E. Hillsborough Avenue. We received an application on March 13, 2020, from Julia Mandell, who is here as the church's agent, to request a demolition review for this property. The application has been submitted into the record. We have a PowerPoint presentation, if we can get that up on screen.

This is a post card of the Seminole Heights Baptist Church, which the photo dates sometime prior to 1977, since there is a postal stamp on the front for that year. This is the church, as most people are familiar with it. This view is from Hillsborough Avenue. This is an aerial photograph from 2020, and you can see the proximity to Hillsborough Avenue, I-275, Taliaferro Avenue, Nebraska Avenue, and Giddens Avenue. Hillsborough is to the north, Taliaferro is directly to the west, Nebraska Avenue is to the east, and Giddens Avenue is to the south of the property. The buildings that are under consideration are the primary church structures: the original auditorium, or sanctuary, and the two subsequent education buildings that were additions to the 1949 structure. We have some historic aerals, this one is from 1957, you see the main roads there, and that is the block where the church is these days. In 1965, you can see the area being cleared for the Interstate, and by 1973, there is the Interstate and Hillsborough Avenue has been widened. By 1980, this is the configuration of the buildings as they are today.

This is a Fire Insurance Company map, the Sanborn map from 1922 showing the wood frame building where the church initially held its services. In the 1925 photo, you can see some additions that were done to expand for the growing church. In the 1931 Sanborn map below, you can see they expanded to the south and east from the original one story wood frame structure. The building that is present today was originally constructed in 1948 and finished in 1949. The image on the right is an advertisement that ran in the Tampa Tribune unveiling the model of the proposed new buildings. The proposed images are similar to what was actually built; obviously, some changes occurred between the couple of years from when the model was unveiled to when it was actually being built. In this 1949 photo, you see the original steeple or bell tower of the church being constructed. These are the finished photos in 1949 (southwest) and 1950 (southeast). Note that a dome caps the steeple. In the 1951 Sanborn map, you can see the original wood frame building and additions are still on the site, and the newer 1949 building in its place on the corner of Hillsborough Avenue and Taliaferro Avenue. This is a shot, looking down Hillsborough Avenue east of Nebraska, looking toward the church in the distance. You can see the tower, then rising above the adjacent buildings, landscaping, the trees, and beyond. This was part of a very interesting photo series that was done for some of the road projects at the time.

The next Sanborn map that is available is from 1976, and by this point, the church had acquired most of the property on the block, which is the same property I believe it has today. The original wood frame building is gone, but some of its additions are still left. The two rectangular buildings to the right were acquired by the church for educational purposes; they were formerly apartments. There are two wood frame buildings to the south facing Giddens, and the photo of one of them in the bottom left corner is Babyland, the nurse for the church. And then you see the entire complex as it sits today on this 1976 map. The photo above is the Canvas Cathedral that was used to house services during the 1958-1959 renovations. It was approximately a block away. During the 1958-1959 series of renovations, there was a new pastor at this time, under his & the Trustees' direction the church proceeded with some interior renovations including adding a stereophonic sound system and some modifications to the choir area, along with replacing the 1940s steeple cap with a new tall spire. The front portico with the Neoclassical two-story columns and the pediment above were placed in front of the original building at this time, and in 1959, the first educational building was constructed. It was the one southeast of the original. The 1976 Sanborn also shows the 1976 addition to the church and site, noting, "drawn from plans." When the Sanborn map was drawn, the building was most likely not complete. As you can see through color coding, here is the 1949 portion, the 1959 education building, porch, and steeple, and the 1976 the second education building.

Taken from the Google Street View service, you can see a couple of 2018 views taken from the Interstate and views taken earlier this year. One of the few notable changes to this structure is on the Hillsborough Avenue side: the north elevation doors have been filled in and are no longer in use. The first education building, finished in 1959, has a connector, which was part of the 1940s construction. The education building from 1976 runs along Taliaferro, and the fire station would be just to the left, just off the image, and to the right would be the playground. The east elevation of the building is not highly visible due to the proximity of where it was built in reference to the 1959 education building. In addition, the fire station blocks the view of north elevation to some extent. The 1959 addition is prominent, and was built within the 50-year review time that we usually consider items for the National Register. When we look at this structure, the original portions of it from the 1940s and the additions from the 1950s all fall within the period we would consider the appropriate historic period.

Dennis Fernandez – Thank you Elaine. For the benefit of the Commissioners, I just wanted to walk through the staff report for just a moment. Obviously, the information that Elaine was talking about is in the staff report. The first two pages of the staff report deal mainly with the parcel details and the relevant processes that are in play during this morning's hearing. That would be any National Register Criteria, which are referenced in the various reports that will be referred to during the hearing. The third page is the National Register Criteria - condensed version. The fourth page is the Section 27-257 of the City of Tampa Code of Ordinances, which deals with criteria necessary to qualify as a Landmark, Landmark site, Multiple Property Designation, Historic Conservation Overlay District or Historic District. In addition, we have some attachments to the staff report, the excerpt from the Cultural Resources Assessment Survey that was done, which was one of the references used in determining eligibility for this particular property when it went through demolition review. The excerpt that we included deals with the church site, specifically the sanctuary and the education building. There additional pages that lead to a letter from the Florida Department of Transportation to the Federal Highway Authority. The letter is concurring with the conclusions of the report. You have the detail of that discussion and some exhibits attached to that as well. Then the last page should be an email that was received from the owner's agent, Ms. Mandell. It was directed to Ms. Mandell from Timothy Parsons, the State Historic Preservation Officer for the State of Florida. National Register eligibility is principally determined by the State Historic Preservation Office in conjunction with the National Register Review Board. So obviously, their participation noted in the email and their observations are relevant to today's discussion.

Go back to the PowerPoint please. What triggered this process was a request by the property owner to determine if the buildings on the site can be demolished. That does come to the Historic Preservation Division, and we review that against criteria within the code, specifically under Section 27-260 Emergency Actions to Protect Buildings, Sites, Structures or Objects; this morning we are dealing with buildings. In my office, we review any structure that is 50 years old or older against the criteria under this section. In this case, I determined with the resources available that it did meet criteria set forth in Section 27-260(b), and that is the catalyst for this process we are dealing with today. Under Section 27-260(b), it reads that a building, site, structure or object of historical or archeological significance, if it meets any of these three criteria, it rises to a level of a full Commission review for determination of the Board's evaluation of whether it should be sent forth for emergency action before City Council. The criteria are listed here, I will not go into those in depth, but I will say the one criteria met for this particular property was II, which says that the property meets the criteria for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places but has not been locally designated under the provisions of this chapter.

We relied upon the Cultural Resource Assessment Survey produced by Janus Research, which is a cultural resource company that has been in existence for 25 years or more and is well known in this area for cultural resource surveying. They participate in a lot of the different assessments, particularly in reference to Interstate expansion. This particular segment of their study dealt with the interchange from [MLK] northward toward Bearss Avenue. You see on their map in the staff report, p.9-92, the property is outlined in a red line and you see the pink & red lines that form the boundary along the Interstate, that is referred to as the Area of Potential Effect. They look at any potential cultural resources within that area and make a determination of adverse impact by the prospective FDOT project that is being considered. Here is an aerial of the immediate study area and their area of focus. Janus Research concluded in its evaluation of the property that the Seminole Heights Baptist Church is considered eligible for individual listing in the National Register. It did call to mind that typically religious properties are considered ineligible for listing in the National Register, as historic significance cannot be established on the merit of religious doctrine. However, according to National Register Bulletin 15, under Criteria Consideration A, a religious property that derives primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance may be eligible for listing in the National Register. This Seminole Heights landmark church is a good example of Neoclassical Revival architecture, and the original circa 1949 gable entry features little alteration. It goes on to talk about the flat roof and the additions. You will see often in the report that they refer to pre-1965; that is because the report was being developed in 2015, and anything prior to 1965 would be considered potentially eligible.

Your first role this morning will be to determine if the subject property does meet the criteria for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. We are dealing with the significance of the built structure under this criterion, emphasizing the stylistic elements that are represented today in the existing structure and considering changes that may have been made over time. One of your roles this morning is to determine if individually this property rises to that level of being distinct or if it relies upon comparisons to similarly situated period relevant architectural references.

If you determine that the property does not meet the criteria, then you will instruct staff to approve the demolition permit when presented. If you determine that the property does meet the criteria then you will request City Council to take emergency action to review the threat of demolition. In that motion you would need to submit information to City Council supporting the statement that irreparable harm will be done to the property if a demolition permit is issued. Then we would need to submit to City Council all information available regarding the properties eligibility for local designation as well.

The last couple of slides deal with the criteria for local designation under Section 257: that this property was initially constructed more than 50 years ago, and if it does have the determination for eligibility from the National Register, that criterion is very similar to what the local criteria reflects in item III.

Lastly, I did want to call to your attention that when the Cultural Resources Assessment survey was completed, there was a conflict in the language of the survey. In the text, as you will see in the staff report, it is determined that the property was eligible for the National Register under the criterion I reviewed. However, on the site form they checked that it was ineligible. The applicant's agent did request from Dr. Parsons, the SHPO, for some clarity on that, and you have that in an email. For the benefit of the audience, I will read the bullets: "After reviewing the available information, my opinion can be summarized as follows: The church is potentially eligible for the National Register. Although modifications have been made over time, the architecture does not have to look exactly how it was when the church was initially constructed to be eligible. The current façade appears to date from the mid-1950s remodeling of the church, which took place over 50 years ago. It is an excellent example of Neoclassical revival architecture as applied to a church, as seen from the exterior. The addition to the church is compatible and secondary to the principle façade, so while it is larger in breadth than the church façade, it is subservient to it and therefore does not negatively impact its potential architectural eligibility."

That concludes my staff summary and we will now hear from the applicant's agent.

Julia Mandell – Attorney with the firm Gray Robinson and Agent representing Seminole Heights Baptist Church. I have Pastor Bryant Adams and expert witness Edward Browder with S&ME here with me today. I think Dennis did an excellent job describing this entire process. I think I should give you some background on what happened to get us here, because I think it is a little bit of an unusual situation. This property was analyzed, both the property where the church is and the fire station, as part of a Cultural Resource Assessment in reviewing whether or not they were going to expand I-275. This was not an analysis done for determination of preservation; it was really done for the purposes of making a determination of what resources are out there, should there be an expansion of I-275 that could affect those resources. If they find potential resources, should they have gone forward, there would have been a secondary process that would have been gone through; it is called the 106 process for those of you who are familiar with it. This determination and what was put in that report was not done for the purposes of full determination for the listing in the National Historic Register it was simply done to identify properties for that purpose if they had to go into a further process. That being said, it is something that does exist, and it is something that needs to be dealt with. For the record, my client was never aware that this process was taking place. They had no opportunity to be involved in that process.

As Dennis noted, there was some confusion in 2015 as to whether the church property was eligible for listing, and that is why we contacted the State. It is important for you to know, and members of the public to know, that this came up as part of a process where there was a potential contract purchaser who went forward to the City as part of their due diligence to determine what could be done on this property. It was at that moment in time that this was determined, as you would suspect it would, because at point in time you have a property that is over 50 years old and although there was not a demolition permit, and for the record there doesn't exist a demolition permit outstanding, this was done as part of that due diligence. At that point in time I was retained to come into the process to give legal advice and make some determinations, because there were conflicts in the reports, and procedurally the Church really had to figure out what property rights they have. They have owned this property for a very long time, 100 years, and Pastor Adams will describe the history of the church, but procedurally I thought it was important for you to understand why we were here and what led to this, and so it is very important for the Commission to understand its role today is to actually sit in the shoes of what would traditionally be part of a federal government process: evaluate these criteria and actually make a finding. This is a little different than some of the other things that come to you. I was with the City for a very long time, and I was the attorney for the HPC, and I cannot recall ever being in this situation, specifically, where

you had a property that came forward to you, not because it was already part of a listing, or was in a district, or individually it had some evaluation needed for that purpose, but was in fact something identified through a secondary process where really no finding has been made, just a determination of potentially eligible.

In the packet that I gave you, go through all of those items because you actually have to be in that process to actually make those findings. In addition, the other thing I do want to state for the record, I have read a lot of the letters and I understand visually that especially the steeple has meaning to the community. I live in Tampa Heights; I understand. I drive by it all the time, so I understand visual nature of the steeple. I am not sure, and I have not read a lot, that the other elements have that level of import to the community. It really is the steeple, maybe the façade. But it is really important to remember that there is no façade designation, there is no designation of a piece of a building. It is either all, or it isn't designated. I understand that a lot of folks will want to talk about the idea of different uses for the existing structure and different ways it could be repurposed. That is not your role, and it cannot be your role. Your role is a very simple one: it either meets the criteria, and therefore we should move it forward for the purposes of local designation to the City Council, or it does not. It is the building as a whole, the elements as a whole, the history as a whole, and looking at this with a historical context.

Through my presentation that you have seen and the documents that I have given you, I think something that was missing, I think there are a couple of things missing as part of the original analysis that Janus undertook. The elements are really, what everyone is looking for in the Neoclassical Revival design, those were additions; they were not part of the original building. The original building was built in 1948-49 period. They had grand plans, as you can see from the advertisements, but they did not effectuate those plans. Ten years later, they put elements on. The porch, the pillars - those were additions. The steeple actually was not original. I have been told that, and Pastor Adams could reiterate that, there was a fire that did have an effect on the original steeple. The steeple that everybody has a visceral feeling about today is not original to the building. So really, the question you are facing is not whether or not, as indicated in the Janus report, this is a good example of Neoclassical Revival. There are lots of good examples. Some of them are church buildings, some of them are bank buildings on Dale Mabry, and you can debate what a good example of Neoclassical Revival is. That is not what your role is today. Your role is to make a determination of whether or not this has distinctive characteristics of the type, period, and method of construction, and that it derives its primary significance from its architecture.

There is a reason why in the Code of Federal Regulations, as well as the Bulletin, there is an additional review for churches. Church buildings are more public-type buildings and have more visceral effect. If this was a bank, maybe, the fact that this architecture exists may not be as interesting. Probably would not have a steeple, but who knows. The bottom line is that you are to look at this in a more heightened way. I go through that in my packet, but I think that the way you really need to look at it is not just the context of this location or the context of the building as it stands today. It needs to be looked at because of the historical context. It is not in the district. It could have been made part of the district, but it never was made part of the district. You are obligated to also look at it in a historical context. I think that is probably one of the most important things, when you look at the church, originally constructed in 1949 and having additions in 1958, and other additions to the property, this property has morphed over time. The fact that it has been a church for that many years is not nearly as important as the construction of the church and what it looks like. I have provided in your packet photos of five other churches built during this time. Ms. Mandell showed photos and described five different churches built in Tampa between 1949 to 1969.

Pastor Brant Adams gave remarks.

Edward Browder, Landscape Architect & Project Manager with SNME. Mr. Browder gave remarks.

Dennis Fernandez – Thank you Commissioners and we will now start to receive public comment. You will be given 3 minutes per speaker, we ask that when you have finished speaking that you exit this room to enable other who want to speak to enter. Commissioners in your packets there is a stack of letters received by our office and we process those up to noon yesterday, the applicant's agent has also received a copy of all letters, there were 105 letters reflecting their opinions on the property, the designation, and your role here today. With that, we can begin public comment.

Commissioner Salaga – Commissioner Ortiz has a question.

Commissioner Ortiz – I would like to request a recess.

Commissioner Salaga – I call the hearing recessed for 5 minutes.

Commissioner Salaga – I call the hearing back in session. If I could ask that those who need to leave for any reason speak first, and once you have spoken, please move to the outside lobby to allow those out in the lobby to come in to speak.

Dennis Fernandez – Madame Chair could we have another swear in, in case someone has entered that was not previously sworn.

Swear-In: Beverly Jewesak swore in all owners, applicants, interested parties, and witnesses within the Tampa Convention Center, Rooms 14-17.

Public Comment: Ellie Baggett, Tim Keepports, Jack Fernandez, Steven King, Bonnie Behnke, Larry Hodkins, Jessica Atanasoff, Janeen Stokes, Natalia Mohabir, Angela Stutz, Charlie Naffziger, Donna Harris, Eric Laney, Roger Bunner, Michelle Thomas, Regina Wilson, Amy Walsh, Jack Young, Anne Hasler, Larry Tyner, Bryant Adams.

Commissioner Salaga – Seeing no other members of the public coming forward to speak.

Dennis Fernandez – The applicant’s agent will have 5 minutes for rebuttal.

Julia Mandell- Rebuttal remarks.

Commissioner Salaga – Let us move on to any questions the Commissioners may have.

Commissioner Cobb – In regards to the up keep of the building, and the community. I have seen where Seminole Heights has expressed their concern about the steeple and the church itself. My question is for the Pastor, has the community helped in any way to help maintain this building or the services you have?

Pastor Bryant Adams – No

Commissioner Cobb – And also as far as the economic hardship, have you tried reaching out to the City of Tampa to see if there are any funds to help with preserving the building?

Pastor Bryant Adams - \$9,000,000 is what it would cost to bring all the buildings up, to answer your question no we haven’t sought funding, because as long as I have been Pastor we have always desired the flexibility, and had an understanding that it wasn’t designated historically; and imagine the shock, because we’ve always wanted to do with the property that we have always owned over 100 years. We wanted the flexibility to do what we see fit as the property owner and have never sought designation because of that. Quite honestly, do not want it. We should be able to do with our property just like at your house, if you had a house and someone else wanted to do something to it, you should be able to say, no.

Julia Mandell – additional remarks.

Commissioner Ortiz – I have a question for staff. Regarding the criteria consideration for churches, the staff report goes on to say that the Southeast Seminole Heights neighborhood is not one which could potentially lend itself to a National Register historic district, and in the criteria for consideration the last sentence reads, “churches or such properties will qualify if they are integral parts of districts that do meet the criteria or they fall within the following categories. If the Southeast Seminole Heights is not a National neighborhood, then how does this property quality. I would like some clarification on that.

Dennis Fernandez – I do believe some of the wording you are referencing is from the Cultural Resource Assessment survey, that was looking at the area to potentially support a district. On criterion, C that very last part is emphasizing a district but that is not a caveat of this particular evaluation it is being evaluated by you today as an individual listing.

Commissioner Kanch – In the examples of the churches that you gave and looking at National Registry Criteria C and it did say, “Will represent the work of a Master” and you were saying it is not an excellent example it was just a good example. When you looked at the other churches how far away in proximity to this church, because if this church is the only example in this area, then that does bring about other questions.

Julia Mandell – Concerning the statements that were made that was from the report by Janis. That is their words not mine. I did not do an exhaustive search, but I did find several others as I began to do more research. Geographically these churches are the best examples and synergy. You could almost call it iconic.

Commissioner Salaga – I will close the public hearing, and open the floor to Commissioner comments.

Commissioner Pluckhahn – Thank you for coming this morning, it is heart breaking to hear how much of a burden that it has become to maintain the church. To me, we have ample evidence that it is eligible for the National Register under criterion C. We have the Janis Report, concurrence from the FDOT, the statement from the highest historic preservation office in the state, Dr. Parsons. It does not matter that the steeple is not original, it does not matter that there were alterations, most/maybe perhaps most National Register structures have alterations and sometimes it is the alterations that make the property eligible. Does it matter that it is not part of a district? Seminole Heights District is defined to more narrowly to the period before WWII so it obviously is not contributing to the district under that criteria. It does not matter that there are other churches of that same style in the area. This is something Historic Preservationist do consider. We can't not call a property eligible because there are few scattered elements, especially when we don't know if there are protections in place, we don't know if those other properties are protected or not. If there were an abundance of properties of that same style that were already protected. It does not matter that there was a clerical error. I've done thousands of site forms for the State of Florida and it's easy to make a clerical error on those electronic forms. Clearly, the intent was to call it, "potentially eligible". I think on the narrow issue of eligibility, I think it is eligible under Criterion C.

Commissioner Kanch – I would agree on the narrow criteria. Because I was considering if there were other buildings of the same style built around the same time, with more superior or artistic craftsmanship. You brought up a great statement that if there were we don't know if those are protected. You cannot demolish something just because it is not pleasing or hard to keep up or maintain. I do understand the congregation too, I understand how that can be a burden on the congregation because old buildings are expensive. I understand too that when something is built so long ago, it becomes a part of the community it is interwoven and it is part of the community's identity. I would agree that it is eligible, because of the time and style it was built in. I do want to state that the additions do contribute to the structure; they were built in the same architectural style so it did not take away from it, it enhanced it. That is my take on it.

Commissioner Ortiz – My thoughts are that the architecture at this location, we are asked to measure that is it distinct. I have to say that based on the definition of distinct that the applicant has provided us, being excellent or superior. I do not think that this is an excellent or superior rendering of the Neo Classical architectural style. Is it significant? Sure. People in this neighborhood do believe that this church influences them and has an effect on them. I do go back to the architecture of this location and I do not believe that it is an excellent or superior example.

Commissioner Cobb – I agree with Commissioner Ortiz, given that this is an iconic structure in the area. I do not see where this building stands out from the other examples. It does meet the criteria, but I do not think it is very distinct compared to others. I do also feel for the public having this structure in this area for such a long time, Again that was a lighthouse to me coming in and out of the city but what is the purpose for this area if it can be repurposed. I do agree that this structure is not so significant that it has to stay.

Commissioner Salaga – It is significantly unfortunate that the building has deteriorated to the point it has. The Architectural Review Commission often times reviews demolish requests and many times, it is due to a lack of maintenance and repair over time on these buildings. I heard earlier that someone made a comment that a building is just a building; to preservationists a building is not just a building. These buildings are the cultural history of our community and our society and they need to be preserved and treated delicately as time passes. I understand the position that everyone here has raised, but to trivialize an historic building because of the function that occurs within the building may to many people seem more important than the building itself, is not really a reason to bring forward as a legitimate argument for the lack of preservation of the building. The fact that 75-year-old buildings are expensive to operate, I live in a 115-year-old house and can attest to the fact that it requires constant maintenance. I would like to make just a general comment to all of the members of the parish; churches are iconic in neighborhoods regardless of the church, they are cultural resources for communities and they are very important in their own right no matter which church or who's church it is, and I know that over time I can see the painfulness in your eyes when you made

your comments about the fact that this was a very difficult decision for your church to have arrived at, and that too can be appreciated. I have been torn, while I recognize that the architect who originally did the building wasn't the architect that put the additions on, nor was there evidence that he was later involved with the structure, while he did study under Adam Misener, Mr Giesler did not go on to create a portfolio to the level of Mr. Misener. For that criteria, I do not believe we have much of an argument to allow for the work of an architect as a means to justify the demolish. I probably closed the Public Hearing too soon, because it seems to me in my dealing with preservation work that the sanctuary itself could be saved as a building without saving the adjacently built structures. I should have posed that questions earlier, so could Dennis provide comment.

Camaria Pettis-Mackle- Madame Chair are you requesting to reopen the Public Hearing?

Commissioner Salaga – Yes, I propose to reopen the Public Hearing to received comments from staff.

Dennis Fernandez – Could you repeat your question.

Commissioner Salaga – Is it legitimate that the original sanctuary structure which is primarily sounds like the conversation that has gone on here, could be separated from the two Sunday school buildings and that alone could be designated exclusive of the rest of the building.

Dennis Fernandez – I think there are a couple different ways to look at it. You have evidence in front of you that was completed by the Cultural Resource Company that evaluated the entire site and found potential eligibility for the entire site less the 1970's Education buildings. I also believe most of the emphasis has been focused on the sanctuary architecturally it is being described at a more detailed extent then the education building has been. Of course, their built originally at different phases and with the modifications and the expansions they somewhat come together in the late 50's. You can formulate your recommendation how you see fit. Given the evidence that has been presented.

Commissioner Salaga – All right.

Dennis Fernandez – Once you have opened the Public hearing I believe that Ms. Mandell is allowed to comment.

Julia Mandell – I have worked with you for a long time, and I respect what you are saying. I had an opportunity to speak with my client about that issue, some of the economic hardship issues, and just sort of listening to the conversation. Perhaps, and not to continue to draw this out, but I understand it is a hard decision. Perhaps the thing to do would be to allow a continuance, for us to look into the issue that you have raised and to bring forth our evidence as it relates to economic hardship. So we can have that also heard, I did not bring that here, because unlike some of the other situations there has not been a determination that the criteria have been met. That being said and listening to the conversation I am feeling that you are have some questions, why don't I suggest that we go ahead and continue this hearing to allow first the question that you raised to be responded to both from a legal perspective and from a procedural perspective, and secondarily to bring forth our evidence as it relates to the economic hardship. You have some of that evidence in the record but there is additional evidence that we would need to provide you. I propose that as a solution, we would go ahead, accept it, and request that continuance so you have that further information as it relates to these questions. I should note for the record that this was also noticed for the economic hardship portion, but after speaking with Dennis and City Attorney's office because this is the situation where the designation question has not been answered yet, it was making it very difficult for us to obtain that information, so we would be bifurcating that question anyway.

Camaria Pettis-Mackle – Ms. Mandell for clarification are you asking the Commission for continuing to bifurcate the hearing or to continue the purpose of.

Julia Mandell - I'm asking for both. Because of the questions that were just asked as it relates to just looking at the certain area of the sanctuary, as well as, going ahead and bringing forth the evidence on the bifurcated issue of the economic hardship. I would be asking if that were the determination that it was eligible for designation, and I would have been asking for that continuance anyway, so I think, given the fact that Ms. Salaga has asked a question that we would like some time to think about and be able to respond to, I think that would be acceptable and appropriate.

Commissioner Salaga – I have to say that I was not asking it as a means of consideration for economic hardship, I was simply asking from an architectural perspective, because that is what we are here to determine.

Julia Mandell – And I understand what you are saying, the problem is that procedurally this sits in front of you as an entire building and when we are the ones that brought the application. So if there is a question on that and there is some opportunity to either make a decision on the way our application is brought forward I think we should be able to do that. And if it is something you want to have more information on, we would really need to have the opportunity to continue on that basis.

Commissioner Salaga – No, I do not think that would be necessary. Thank you.

Julia Mandell – I think this is important, and that is why I was suggesting that if you want us to explore that issue we would be happy to take some time to explore that issue. That being said, you are not looking at this building, just that one area, you have to look at it as a whole and it is inclusive of the property as a whole. I just wanted to make that clear for the record.

Commissioner Salaga – I will close the Public Hearing now and turn back to the Commission.

Commissioner Pluckhahn – I would like to address the issue of distinct that is not actually in the criteria except as distinctive, so at the local and in the National Register level don't say that the property has to be distinct, what staff is invoking is that the property embodied the distinctive characteristics of a type, so it has to have the architectural elements of a type, those elements that make a type, a distinct entity, not that the property has to be distinct.

Camaria Pettis-Mackle - Are we going to address the applicant's request for continuance, Is the Board going to continue the matter?

Commissioner Salaga – But her continuance was to bring forward the economic hardship considerations and those we were instructed at the beginning of the hearing that those are not to be taken into consideration in our deliberations.

Julia Mandell – Maybe I confused you, Ms. Salaga you had asked a question as it related to whether or not the sanctuary part of the building could be separated for the purposes of a designation or preservation. What I wanted to have an opportunity if that was an exploration. If this is not something the Commission wants to explore then we do not need that part of the continuance. Notwithstanding, if this Commission makes a decision that it meets the criteria then we would ask for a continuance to bifurcate and bring forward the economic hardship evidence.

Camaria Pettis-Mackle – That is what the request was from the application, the building as an entirety and ask the Commission to remain focused on what the application request is for.

Commissioner Salaga – And unfortunately, I think as we look at the building and all of the criteria. The building itself is the only criteria that is actually up for grabs as the defining characteristics and I even from my own preservation point of view it is not in my opinion that it would stand out as being distinctive, I'm sorry to say that because I would love to preserve every possible historic building in the City if it were possible. May I ask one of our Commissioners to put forth a motion?

Motion: Thomas Pluckhahn

Second: (None received)

Motion that the property meets the criteria for designation to the National Register of Historic Places under criterion C: specifically, for its embodiment of distinctive characteristics of the Neo Classical Revival style and for its integrity in expressing those distinctive elements. We request City Council to take emergency action to review.

Commissioner Salaga – Do we have a second, or would anyone like to modify the motion.

Dennis Fernandez – Seeing no second.

Motion fails for lack of second.

Commissioner Salaga – Now therefore, is there another motion to be made regarding this case.

Commissioner Ortiz – Maybe a question first, and this would go to staff, are we still eligible as this case was presented to us as a whole, are we eligible to hear the continuance as offered where we will be to looking as I understand at specific elements of this building and economic hardship or would that require a new application?

Camaria Pettis-Mackle- If it be the pleasure of the Commission, you can reopen the public hearing to hear the Agent’s comments.

Commissioner Salaga – We will reopen the public hearing to hear from the Agent for the Applicant.

Julia Mandell – I am going to answer both your questions but separately. As it relates to the economic hardship that only comes into play if there is a determination that the criteria had been met. The applicant in front of you is the entire criteria. As Ms. Salaga had suggested I was prepared to explore that and I think at this point we probably look at it as a whole and we can see where we go from there. I can say this, although I have been very clear that this is not related to any existing or potential development of this site. Both the church is very sensitive of what this property means as you have heard; they have not just gone out there and marketed this property to the highest and best use or highest and biggest seller, it is very important that no matter what goes there that it is sensitive. I also want you to keep in mind there is another structure on the property, the fire station that we did remove. There are probably a lot of different opportunities to honor that as well. I only posture this because, if that was a conversation you wanted to have I wanted to respect this Board to say let’s have this conversation. I do not want there to be a belief system that there is no interest in honoring what has been there. Secondly, there is another part of this, which is not in front of you, but we also do have the fire station, and the fire station may actually also inform additional architecture in this area. Both my clients have told me and it has been made part of this process and something they really want to consider. Any reuse of this property, if the church no longer exists, is going to have to take into consideration how it deals with it as it relates to the fire station. I point that out as part of your deliberations.

Commissioner Salaga – Is there a motion or would the Commission care to honor the request for continuance, or?

Camaria Pettis-Mackle- The application is for the entire building, there is not an application for pieces of the building.

Commissioner Salaga – Is there a motion on the floor? As regards to the entire building and its eligibility to be potentially on the National register.

Commissioner Ortiz – I am trying to create a motion, but if anyone else would like to take a swing at it, I would of course listen.

Motion: Patricia Ortiz

Second: Dominique Cobb

Motion to approve the request based on the fact that this building on its entirety does not embody a distinctive characteristic of a type, period, or method of construction.

Motion passed by vote of 4-1-0, with Commissioner Pluckhahn voting against.

Commissioners closing remarks.

Dennis Fernandez – We need to move on with the agenda.

Julia Mandell – We are outside of the public hearing, but I can tell you I hear what you say, and I certainly will express that as we go through the process.

Commissioner Salaga- We moved item #4 to the end of the meeting, Dennis would you like to take care of that.

Dennis Fernandez: Is it the pleasure of the Board to hold elections now?

Commissioner Salaga – Yes.

Dennis Fernandez – In accordance with your Rules of Procedure, annually you elect your Chair and Vice-Chair, currently Ms. Salaga serves as your Chair and Ms. Ortiz as Vice-Chair. You will be making this election for the next year. I will ask first for nominations for Chair and any individual nominated must express their willingness to serve. Then continue with Vice-Chair. I open the floor for nominations for Chair.

Commissioner Ortiz – Vivian are you eligible to serve for another term.

Commissioner Salaga – Yes.

Commissioner Ortiz – I nominate Commissioner Salaga for Chair.

Commissioner Salaga – I would agree to continue if that is the desire of the Commission.

Dennis Fernandez – Are there any other nominations for Chair? Seeing none. Just a simple vote to affirm the nomination.

Vote: 5-0-0

Dennis Fernandez – Moving on to Vice-Chair, are there any nominations for Vice-Chair.

Commissioner Cobb – I would like to nominate myself for Vice-Chair.

Dennis Fernandez – Are there any other nominations for Vice-Chair? Seeing none. Just a simple vote to affirm the nomination.

Vote: 5-0-0

Dennis Fernandez – That concludes our old and new business and our next Public Hearing is scheduled for July 14, 2020, at 9:00 a.m. in this room, if that hearing becomes necessary, I will have to evaluate it after this process.

Date and Time of Next HPC Meeting

July 14, 2020, 9:00 a.m.

Adjournment

10:00 a.m.

Approved: _____ Date: _____
Vivian Salaga – Chair