



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, December 1, 2020
Time: 9:00 AM
Location: Tampa Convention Center, Rooms 14-17, Tampa, FL

Call to Order Chair Vivian Salaga called meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

Silent Roll Call

Commissioners Present: Dominique Cobb, Dr. Thomas Pluckhahn, Vivian Salaga, Mary Schukraft, and KerryAnn Kanch

Commissioners Arriving After Roll Call: Patricia Ortiz

Commissioners Absent:

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: November 10, 2020, Minutes: Chair Salaga stated that the minutes stand as read.

Announcements: **Dennis Fernandez, Architectural Review and Historic Preservation Manager**

- Good Morning, Commissioners and Visitors. We appreciate you working with us on adjusting the date of the hearing due to schedule changes.
- This is the last meeting of 2020. Please review the 2021 calendar and let us know if you have any conflicts.

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 items that are on the agenda. Seeing none, for the record. Also asked the Commissioners if there were any ex parte communications regarding the items that are on the agenda today. Seeing none, for the record.

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

Commissioner Salaga – Agenda item #7, HPC 2021-01.

Commissioner Ortiz arrived at the dais.

HPC 2021-01 – Determination of Historic Significance (Sec. 27-257)

Elaine Lund, Historic Preservation Commission Staff – Presented a PowerPoint on case HPC 2021-01. The concrete block Masonry Vernacular house at 2118 W. Carmen Street was constructed in 1950. Joanna Tokley purchased the house in 1964. In 1982, Joanna (née Nutter) married Eugene James Tokley, and they lived at 2118 W. Carmen Street until they sold the property to its current owner in 2018. In 1996, Mayor Dick Greco named James Tokley Poet Laureate of the City, and Hillsborough County honored him as its Official Poet Laureate in 2013.

2118 W. Carmen Street is located outside of the West Tampa Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) in 1983. The West Tampa Historic District is significant historically for its associations with the development of the Cities of West Tampa and Tampa, their Latin communities, the cigar industry, and architecturally for its concentration of brick industrial buildings and frame vernacular and bungalow style homes built between c.1893 and 1933.

Applicable Criteria and Guidelines for Evaluation

City of Tampa Code of Ordinances Section 27-257: When designating a landmark, landmark site, multiple property designation, historic conservation overlay district, or historic district, the HPC and city council shall apply the following criteria:

(a) *The building, site, structure, object, or district:*

- (1) Was constructed or achieved its significance during the period of historic significance as delineated in the National Register of Historic Places guidelines or as established in the nomination pursuant to those guidelines; and
- (2) Has a quality of significance in American, state or local history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture which is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association and
 - i) That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history (otherwise known as criterion "A" of the National Register criteria);
 - ii) That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past (otherwise known as criterion "B" of the National Register criteria);
 - iii) That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction (otherwise known as criterion "C" of the National Register criteria); or
 - iv) That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history (otherwise known as criterion "D" of the National Register criteria);

National Register Bulletin (NRB) 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation

Criterion B: Person (p.14-16)

To determine whether a property is significant for its associative values under Criterion C:

1. Determine the importance of the individual.

The persons associated with the property must be individually significant within a historic context. A property is not eligible if its only justification for significance is that it was owned or used by a person who is a member of an identifiable profession, class, or social or ethnic group. It must be shown that the person gained importance within his or her profession or group.

2. Ascertain the length and nature of the person's association with the property. Consider whether the property illustrates (rather than commemorates) a person's achievements.

Properties eligible under Criterion B are usually those associated with a person's productive life, reflecting the time period when he or she achieved significance. In some instances, this may be the person's home; in other cases, a person's business, office, laboratory, or studio may best represent his or her contribution. Properties that pre- or post-date an individual's significant accomplishments are usually not eligible.

The individual's association with the property must be documented by accepted methods of historical or archeological research, including written or oral history. Speculative associations are not acceptable.

3. Identify other properties associated with the individual and evaluate which properties are associated with the person's productive life.

Each property associated with an important individual should be compared to other associated properties to identify those that best represent the person's historic contributions. The best representatives usually are properties associated with the person's adult or productive life. Properties associated with an individual's formative or later years may also qualify if it can be demonstrated that the person's activities during this period were historically significant or if no properties from the person's productive years survives. Length of association is an important factor when assessing several properties with similar associations.

4. If the individual is a living person,
 - a. consider whether the person's active life in their field of endeavor is over and whether there is sufficient scholarship and evidence of historical perspective to list the property (NRB 22: Guidelines for Evaluating and Nominating Properties that Have Achieved Significance Within the Past Fifty Years, p.9), and
 - b. whether the person's achievements dating from within the last fifty years possess exceptional significance (NRB 32: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Properties Associated with Significant Persons, p.12).

Properties associated with living persons are usually not eligible for inclusion in the National Register. Sufficient time must have elapsed to assess both the person's field of endeavor and his/her contribution to that field. Generally, the person's active participation in the endeavor must be finished for this historic perspective to emerge. (See Criteria Considerations C [Birthplaces or Graves] and G [Properties that Have Achieved Significance within the Last Fifty Years] in Part VII: How to Apply the Criteria Considerations.)

The National Register Criteria for Evaluation exclude properties that achieved significance within the last fifty years unless they are of exceptional importance. Fifty years is a general estimate of the time needed to develop historical perspective and to evaluate significance. This consideration guards against the listing of properties of passing contemporary interest and ensures that the National Register is a list of truly historic places.

Examples of Properties that MUST Meet Criteria Consideration G: Properties that Have Achieved Significance Within the Last Fifty Years: ... A property that is more than fifty years old and had no significance until a period less than fifty years before the nomination.

The phrase "exceptional importance" may be applied to the extraordinary importance of an event or to an entire category of resources so fragile that survivors of any age are unusual. Properties listed that had attained significance in less than fifty years include: the launch pad at Cape Canaveral from which men first traveled to the moon, the home of nationally prominent playwright Eugene O'Neill, and the Chrysler Building (New York) significant as the epitome of the "Style Moderne" architecture.

The phrase "exceptional importance" does not require that the property be of national significance. It is a measure of a property's importance within the appropriate historic context, whether the scale of that context is local, state, or national.

A property that has achieved significance within the past fifty years can be evaluated only when sufficient historical perspective exists to determine that the property is exceptionally important. The necessary perspective can be provided by scholarly research and evaluation and must consider both the historic context and the specific property's role in that context.

NRB 22: Guidelines for Evaluating and Nominating Properties that Have Achieved Significance Within the Past Fifty Years

Associations with Living Persons (p.9)

On rare occasions, properties associated with individuals still living have been listed in the National Register. However, the nomination of such properties is strongly discouraged in order to avoid use of the National Register listing to endorse the work or reputation of a living person. Periodically, however, sufficient scholarship and evidence of historical perspective exist to list a property associated with living persons whose active life in their field of endeavor is over. In these instances, sufficient time must have elapsed to assess both their field and their contribution in a historic perspective.

NRB 32: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Properties Associated with Significant Persons

Properties that were constructed within the last fifty years, or that are associated with individuals whose significant accomplishments date from the last fifty years (p.12)

To ensure professionalism and objectivity in assessing our history, the National Register criteria require that a property have acquired significance at least fifty years ago, or that more recent characteristics or associations possess exceptional significance. This requirement helps protect against transitory interest in recent persons and events that may not withstand the test of time, and allows a sufficient passage of time for scholars to have developed an interest in, conducted research on, and made critical judgements about past events, themes, and people.

Because it is important to be able to evaluate the accomplishments of an individual objectively, with the benefit of historical perspective, the function of the Register would be substantially changed if the National Register were to become a means of honoring living figures. The impossibility of maintaining historical perspective in the listing process ultimately would have the effect of devaluing the recognition afforded by listing in the National Register.

Therefore, properties associated with living persons generally are not considered eligible for inclusion in the National Register. If a person has ceased making contributions in a field of achievement for a sufficient length of time to allow a scholarly and objective assessment of his or her role within that field, the National Register will consider listing a property that represents the person's assessed significance. The National Register criteria define a sufficient passage of time as fifty years unless the individual's accomplishments can be documented as having been exceptionally significant. Exceptional significance must be clearly established and broadly recognized in scholarly literature and public consciousness.

A person does not have to be nationally known and recognized to have made an exceptionally significant contribution to our history. The standards for evaluating exceptional significance are the same whether a resource is important to a community, state, or the nation.

Conclusion

2118 W. Carmen Street, initially constructed 1950, is old enough (generally at least 50 years old) to be considered for listing in the National Register (36 CFR 60.4). No known significant events are associated with this property. This property exhibits a common architectural style (Masonry Vernacular) that is widely found throughout residential areas in the City of Tampa. Therefore, it is not considered eligible under Criteria i (A) or iii (C). Criterion iv (D) is typically applied to archaeological site. Lacking significance in these areas, there must be a clear association with a person significant in our past, for the property to exhibit significance under Criterion ii (B).

James Tokley, who resided in the house from 1982 to 2018, has been recognized for his poetry by the City of Tampa and Hillsborough County, both appointing him Poet Laureate in 1996 and 2013, respectively, and the National Urban League. He was a contender for the Pulitzer Prize in 1994. In 2007, he received an Emmy award for his narration of "Central Avenue, Remembered," produced by WEDU, based on his poem by the same name. Tokley's poem "Song of the Hillsborough" was chosen to represent Hillsborough County, Florida, during its year-long millennium celebration activities, and was part of the White House Millennium Exhibit. Tokley has written poems for mayoral and gubernatorial inaugurations and for memorial services of civic leaders. His poems have been adapted for cinema, and his works appear as public art throughout the City of Tampa, including "Freedom" and "Saga of St. Benedict School." Additionally, Tokley has given recitals, lectures and workshops at numerous local schools and colleges. His body of work has had a broad impact on the local experience of poetry and art.

During a recent telephone call with staff, James Tokley stated that most of his work was completed in the 2118 W. Carmen Street house, establishing a clear connection between the building and the artist's productive life. No other structures have been identified as having a direct association with Tokley's writing.

In evaluating this building's significance for its association with James Tokley, it must be noted that Mr. Tokley lived in this house beginning in 1982, less than fifty years ago. As this property is more than fifty

years old and had no significance until less than fifty years ago, it must meet Criteria Consideration G in addition to the standard considerations under Criterion ii (B). Mr. Tokley's poetry, written within the last 50 years, must be clearly established as exceptionally significant – broadly recognized in scholarly literature and the public consciousness.

Staff finds that Tokley's poetry is undoubtedly held in high regard, as evidenced by many local and national recognitions. However, the recent nature of much of his work has not allowed for the sufficient passage of time that permits scholars of that field to make objective and critical comparisons and judgements about a body of work and its artistic significance.

Additionally, the relationship of the property to Tokley's entire body work cannot yet be established as the poet is a living person. While Tokley lived at 2118 W. Carmen Street for a large portion of his productive years, he authored several works before residing at this property, and he may continue to produce work similar to that written in this structure. Lacking the necessary historical perspective, there is insufficient basis for satisfying all the criteria in Sec. 27-257.

David M. Mechanik – Agent representing PointSource Consulting Group, Inc., owners of the property located at 2118 W. Carmen Street, gave a brief presentation pointing out specific items from documents entered into the record and provided to the Commission for review prior to the hearing. Mr. Mechanik read the conclusion from the City of Tampa staff report, then referenced the Janus Research Report, which he requested be part of the record. He stated that Janus Research, based in Tampa, is a well-known throughout the state of Florida for its cultural resource expertise and provides consulting services to many government agencies. Max Imberman who authored the report holds a master's degree in Historic Preservation and, among other positions, worked in the survey and registration section of the Florida Division of Historical Resources. In his report, Mr. Imberman agrees with your staff that an insufficient amount of time has passed to allow for sufficient scholarship to make objective and critical assessments of Mr. Tokley's work. Mr. Imberman cites National Register Bulletin #22; as follows, "periodically sufficient scholarship and evidence of historical perspective exists to list a property associated with a living person whose active life in their field of endeavor is over." Mr. Mechanik emphasized the word "over," because Mr. Tokley from what we know is still writing poetry. To continue the quote, "In these instances, sufficient time must have elapsed to assess both their field and their contribution in a historic perspective." Indeed Mr. Imberman states that "local historic preservation ordinances which employ National Register criteria are viewed as the final word on a person's legacy with such determinations taking decades of literature and scholarly interpretation before exceptional significance can be determined." Mr. Imberman concludes his report by stating that the house at 2118 W Carmen is not eligible for historic designation under the City of Tampa criteria. Mr. Mechanik stated that he thinks we all realize that Mr. Tokley is held in high regard within the community, but that is not the question today; the question is whether his work meets the criteria listed by the National Register and as determined by your staff.

Commissioner Salaga – Commissioners are there any comments or questions to either the applicant or staff?

Commissioner Schukraft – This is a question for staff. I don't see anyone from the community, has there been any correspondence other than the discussions that Mr. Mechanik raised in his presentation?

Dennis Fernandez – There was a public notice process that occurred, requiring a mailed notice and sign posting. The neighborhood associations would have been part of that mailing. The staff did interview

Mr. & Mrs. Tokley for the report and they were obviously aware of the hearing, we spoke about it. There were some phone calls early in the process and we have had no interaction that sometimes accompanies these types of discussions.

Commissioner Cobb – Was there any information that we may need to know that they expressed?

Dennis Fernandez – It was mainly a discussion of his body of work, getting chronology and the connection to the house clear. His spouse had owned and lived in the house prior to their marriage. There wasn't any sort of information beyond what we presented to you this morning.

Commissioner Cobb – So he did not express whether he was ok with it or any other information?

Dennis Fernandez – No, we were not polling him for his degree of support for the request. It was more informational and factual; however, we did make him aware of the hearing today.

Commissioner Pluckhahn – This has been a very thorough and convincing case about the eligibility under Criterion B, I don't think we have gotten enough detail under Criterion C. I don't think I would hold this up for this, but I'm a little concerned that we are too easily dismissive of this mid-century architecture. To me, just looking at the photos, it looks like it does have the characteristics of the period and the method of construction, it may not be a high style or aesthetically pleasing as a lot of bungalows that we consider. It is also true that these are very common. Probably very few are on the National Register or protected locally, and they are going fast. I think it would have been appropriate to consider them under Criterion C. It's not covered in the Janus Report either, I think that report was requested to be specifically about Criterion B. That is more a comment.

Elaine Lund – To address Dr. Pluckhahn's comment, the staff report did not include much of a discussion about the architectural style and its merits. We did look at it as a very common resource type throughout the city. We noted that there had been alterations. There were additional photos on the last few pages of the applicant's application for reference.

Commissioners discussed the case briefly.

Camaria Pettis-Mackle – Your motion should be to recommend or not recommend.

Motion: Mary Schukraft

Second: Patricia Ortiz

Motion to accept the findings as established in the staff report prepared by the City of Tampa for a determination of the historic significance for the property located at 2118 W. Carmen Street, case HPC 2021-01: while Mr. Tokley is a very respected and living poet, who is active in his field, the property does not satisfy the criteria as established for historic significance by the City of Tampa, Code of Ordinances, Section 27-257 (a) (1), (2) (i-iv).

Motion approved by a vote of 6-0-0.

Commissioner Salaga – Now we are at item #8, The Interstate Historic Preservation Trust Fund.

Dennis Fernandez – Agenda Item #8, Presented a PowerPoint overview on the Interstate Historic Preservation Trust Fund and provided the contact information for the next cycle which has deadlines in January. We will be working with our digital media division to expand our reach on getting information about this program out to the community.

Commissioner Salaga – Is there a limit on the loan program?

Dennis Fernandez – There is a limit per cycle, per property. \$200,000 per folio, and the entire investment is capped at \$400,000. This brings properties into condition where they can actually receive conventional funding and we get those funds back, making it a revolving program.

Commissioner Salaga – Any questions for staff on this matter?

Commissioner Salaga - That concludes our old and new business, and our next Public Hearing is scheduled for January 12, 2021, at 9:00 a.m.

Date and Time of Next HPC Meeting

January 12, 2021, 9:00 a.m.

New Business:

None submitted.

Commissioner Schukraft – I just wanted to take this opportunity to compliment the staff on this particular report, but really all the reports that I have received since being on the commission. I find them incredibly thorough, interesting; the presentations are wonderful, and it really is a respite from my day. I come in and I’m taken away. As a person who has been working in preservation for a very long time it is difficult to take some of these dry items and turn them into a real story. Thank you! Much appreciated by me.

Commissioner Salaga – It makes our job easier, because of it.

Commissioners concur.

Adjournment

10:13 a.m.

Approved: _____ Date: _____
Vivian Salaga – Chair