



# CLARK COUNTY

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Public Service Center  
1300 Franklin St., 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Vancouver, WA  
[www.clark.wa.gov/planning/historic](http://www.clark.wa.gov/planning/historic)

### MEETING NOTES

Wednesday, August 15, 2018 - 6:00 p.m.

These are summary, not verbatim, minutes. Audio recordings are available on the Historic Preservation Commission’s page at [www.clark.wa.gov/community-planning/historic-preservation-commission](http://www.clark.wa.gov/community-planning/historic-preservation-commission).

Members Present:	Robert Hinds, Sarah Fox, Alex Gall, Michelle Kapitanovich, Andy Gregg, Sean Denniston, Roch Manley
Members Absent:	-
Staff Present:	Sharon Lumbantobing and Jacqui Kamp (Clark County); Keith Jones and Mark Person (City of Vancouver)
Guests:	See attached sign in sheet

**Roll Call & Introductions:** Commission members and staff introduced themselves.

**Approval of the Meeting Minutes from July 11, 2018.** Fox moved to approve the minutes with minor edits and Gall seconded. Meeting minutes were approved.

**Public Meeting: Vancouver Heritage Overlay Review: The Academy (House of Providence).**

Keith Jones gave an overview of the existing site plan and surrounding area. Tonight is not a public hearing ; it’s a public meeting. Due to the high level of public interest and historic significance of the building, we want to hear what people have to say tonight. The applicant is proposing the following:

- 1) The demolition of the 1976 restaurant building. The restaurant was constructed in 1976, constructed of Hidden bricks. The code does not require that demolition of the restaurant be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission. The Academy is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but not on the Clark County Heritage Register. The building is not more than 50 years and is not a contributing building to Academy site’s listing on the National Register. We are asking the HPC to vote on this to confirm that this is their finding as well: that the restaurant building is not contributing to the listing on the National Register and that the demolition is not subject to HPC review.
- 2) A mixed use development (Building A: 5 stories, 50 units, 6,803 sq ft of ground floor commercial with rooftop garden and Building B: 6 stories, 90 units, 5,402 sq ft of ground floor commercial) is proposed on the western side of the lot, with a 5,026 sq ft public plaza along C Street and Evergreen, with a paved and landscaped parking area.



The development standards in the Heritage Overlay code include a zero height area where no building is allowed, and there are view corridors established in the code. Code also requires a 15 ft setback along Evergreen. New buildings need to be made primarily of brick in similar color to the academy.

This is a comparison of what standards are required in the Overlay District and what the applicant is proposing:

12<sup>th</sup> St View Corridor Width:

- 50 Foot Min (total)
- 250 Feet Proposed

Maximum Building

- 75 to 200 Height Max
- 76 Feet Proposed

C Street View Corridor Width

- 50 Feet Required (2 view corridors that total 50 ft)
- 54 Feet Proposed

Brick Color

- Primarily of Brick
- 75% Brick Proposed

Front Setback

- 15-foot min
- 58 Feet Proposed

C Street view corridor has a setback requirement from East Evergreen Boulevard of not less than 50 ft for open space and substantial planning. The maximum building height is 75-200 ft, which pertains to FAA requirements.

The code states that the Historic Preservation Commission is advisory to city staff for new construction. City staff is to make the decision based on code (Type 1 Ministerial). The project must comply with approval standards and staff must consult with the Historic Preservation Commission. Staff concludes that the proposal complies with the standards. The staff decision will be made after receiving the HPC recommendation.

- 3) The third item being discussed is the west porch renovation. The applicant is proposing to restore the west elevation closer to its original design with a staircase with pillars and balustrade. The new stairway will be off to the side as opposed to centered due to access constraints. The Historic Preservation Commission is advisory to staff. The approval standards are the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation. Staff concludes that the proposal complies with standards.

Jones outlined the summary of code requirements and approval process as follows:

**1. Restaurant demolition**

Code Requirement: HPC Approval (All Listed Buildings)  
Staff Finding: Building Not Listed  
Staff Conclusion: Historic Review Not Required

**2. New Multi Use Development**

Code Requirement: HPC Advisory to Staff (New Construction)  
Approval Process: Staff Decision – Type 1 Ministerial  
Staff Finding: Project must comply with approved standards. Staff must consult with HPC.  
Staff Conclusion: Proposal complies with Heritage Overlay code standards

**3. West Porch Renovation**

Code Requirement: HPC Advisory to Staff (National Register)  
Staff Finding: Building on National Historic Register  
Approval Standards: Department of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation (36 CRF Part 67.7)  
Staff Conclusion: Proposal complies with Heritage Overlay code standards

Jones outlined the summary request of HPC’s involvement:

1. Demo Restaurant: HPC Review not required
2. New Development: HPC Review Advisory to staff
3. West Porch Renovation: HPC Review Advisory to Staff

Staff Conclusion: Proposal complies with Heritage Overlay code standards

Jones stated that the HPC’s Role is to make recommendation on each item above and provide written recommendation to the city within 14 days.

Jones stated that 19 letters of public testimony were received along with a petition, which are posted on the web and are now part of the public record.

Hinds explained that this is not a public hearing, but because of a lot of public interest, he will conduct the meeting like a public hearing. Hinds opened up the floor for the HPC members to ask questions of staff, then the applicant will be able to present, and then the public will be able to ask questions.

Fox asked Jones to provide clarification about the code requirement (section e) that pertains to a 15 ft setback for both open space and substantial planting. Jones replied that the question will be addressed by the applicant.

Manley also asked about code section e., specifically “...such construction shall be so located and designed as to preserve views of the main Academy building from East Evergreen Blvd between

the freeway and C Street...” Manley says he struggles with the lack of specificity with this code language because you can’t quantify the view corridor. Jones explained that the schematic in the code shows where the no-build zone (zero height area) and the site line is located, and that the 75-200 ft build zone is located. Denniston stated that section e doesn’t address the zero height area; section e is about the removal of trees and about preserving views of the Academy from Evergreen and C Street. Code is explicit that views need to be preserved. Manley stated that section e goes along with a.1. and the general description of protecting the Academy and its outbuildings. Denniston stated that none of the presentation materials show what the Academy will look like from C and Evergreen. The perspective view that lets you get the sense of the whole building (not just from the front façade) is completely gone with the proposal.

Denniston stated that the code requires purposes, standards, and requirements. The staff report addresses the standards but not the requirements. Jones replied that the city attorney stated that the standards are what must be complied with. The purpose statement of the code is not an approval criteria that can be used to evaluate the proposal. The purpose statement can be used to help define any ambiguity in the code. Staff will have to look at the standards to determine the proposal’s compliance with code.

Hinds opened the presentation to the applicant.

The applicant is represented by Mike True, former President and CEO of the Historic Trust and current volunteer with The Trust, Aaron Wygod (Marathon Development and applicant of the new mixed use proposal), and Holly Chamberlain, Interim Director of Historic Preservation for the Historic Trust.

Wygod addressed the questions raised by the HPC members. Most codes have a policy statement explaining the rationale of the code and the standards set the objective criteria that are to be enforced by the code. Section e of the Heritage Overlay is ambiguous at best. Wygod read Section e. “...such construction shall be so located and designed as to preserve views of the main Academy building from East Evergreen Blvd between the freeway and C Street, and shall preserve a setback from East Evergreen Blvd of not less than 15 ft for open space and substantial planting and such setback area shall not be used for parking.” Wygod asked what specifically needs to be seen of the Academy? Does it mean that every inch of the Academy building needs to be seen, or the cupola, or the main door? If the code is read literally to mean that every inch of the Academy needs to be seen, then there would be a no build zone along the western part of the property (all the way between Evergreen and 11<sup>th</sup>). The perspective changes significantly depending on where you are standing along C street along the southern side of Evergreen. We pushed the southern façade of Building A further back 16ft to preserve the view of the Academy. Our view is that if you could see entrance, the cupola, and the main portion of the Academy façade, you would be preserving the view corridor. From a pedestrian’s perspective, the ground floor of Building A is mostly glass, which allows views of the Academy façade. If the intent of the code was to preserve the view corridor along the entire west side, they would have required a no-build zone in the code, but they didn’t. “Substantial planting” is not defined in the code. The substantial planting question will be

addressed in the plaza as it can't be addressed in the parking lot. Substantial planting will be specified in greater detail in the development application.

Hinds asked Jones if he talked to the city attorney about Section e and the sight line requirements. Jones replied that he received consultation about the purpose statement of the code, not specifically about Section E.

True shared The Historic Trust's overall goal with the Academy Building. The Trust is a non-profit organization. We entered into a capital campaign in 2012 to raise \$5.5 million dollars. The Academy was acquired in 2015 with a combination of \$5 million in funds and debt to the Hidden family. The goal is to find a way to best preserve the Academy building, and convey the stories and significance of Mother Joseph and the Academy that haven't been told. The Trust aims to bring vibrancy and activate the building, and to bring out the stories of the Academy. The building is currently used as a small business incubator with 65 tenants, but these rents aren't sufficient to cover the capital expenses of the building due to the deferred maintenance and rehabilitation needs. It's an active building today. The Trust developed a mobile app that gives an augmented reality tour of the building and its history. This week, the Trust produced a week long program called Common Ground that took place inside the Academy. The Trust aims to develop a very activated space in The Academy. Officer's Row is primarily a drive-by experience for our community. The goal is to make the Academy an experience where people can come inside and activate and energize this space and tell the story of the Academy's history. The Academy is a gateway to Officer's Row and Pearson Field. I-5 cut off that connection. The library and movie theater across the street lend themselves to activating the indoor and outdoor spaces at the Academy. The Trust's motivation is the preservation of the Academy building and it's stories in a way that does the building justice.

The demolition of the El Presidente restaurant will open up the southern façade of The Academy and return it to a landscaped space. The applicant is covering the cost of demolition of the restaurant. There is a ballroom in the Academy on the ground floor that can be opened up to have a connection to the outdoor space. The heart-shaped landscape entrance will be preserved and enhanced. To date, I have received no negative feedback on the removal of the restaurant.

The current condition of the Western porch is in a very deteriorated state. The entrance is not currently used as it goes into a stairway to access the upper floors. The original staircase had a central stair with a first and second floor balcony, which are consistent with the balconies on the southern façade. The new stairway will be on the side, not a central staircase. This is due to the proximity to parking and sidewalk connectivity. The goal is to return this view to be more consistent with the architectural character of the building.

True stated that economic elements are driving certain decisions about the preservation of the Academy building. The Trust purchased the Academy for \$5 million and financed the property around it through a note from the sellers for \$4.3 million. The note expires the first part of this year and the Trust entered into a short term extension. The Trust's intent with the purchase of the building is to work with the development community to improve the Academy. This site has a

significant amount of liability due to the need for renovation and improvement. The site requires a \$15million renovation budget for improvements, which is a conservative estimate. The Trust recently completed a \$2.1 million dollar renovation of the roof and southern porches, and is soon to undertake some interior and landscaping renovations. The Trust put together a capital campaign committee that is seeking to raise funds for the \$15 million renovation budget. The surrounding property around the Academy has been listed for sale since the Academy purchased it. According to the city code, the unimproved parking surfaces need to be improved as of Dec 2015. The Trust entered into a Developer's Agreement with the city to work through a 3-year process to address the development of the site and the parking. There are about \$3 to \$5million worth of parking surface expenses that need to be addressed, such as parking, utilities, stormwater facilities. These fees don't include the work needed on the laundry building and smokestack.

The Trust has worked with a variety of partners and consultants to look at all the strategies and options to preserve the Academy and address its liabilities. The Trust is pleased to enter into a relationship with Marathon, which is a Portland-based developer that builds high quality projects. The main thing is the Academy building. There are economics that play into the site and preservation of the Academy. Marathon would be paying \$5 million for the acquisition of the property on the western edge of the Academy, but is also investing several million dollars into the landscape, the demolition of the restaurant building, and the parking improvements that are required under the Development Agreement with the city. It is one thing to fundraise \$5 million dollars for acquisition of a building. It is not reasonable to fundraise \$15 million dollars for renovations, for parking improvements to asphalt surfaces, stormwater systems, drainage, and landscaping. Improvements to the site are critical for the financial infrastructure of the site, and for preserving the Academy, and for activating the site through ground floor retail and having a clinic back on the site. All these elements are critical to the preservation of the Academy.

Kapitanovich asked if the proceeds from the site will be used to retire the debt? How much will go towards improvements to the Academy?

True stated that the proceeds will go towards retiring the debt and the remainder will go towards improvements to the Academy.

For the past few years, the Trust has looked at all the ways we could preserve the Academy. We looked at different financing tools and transfer of development rights. We are very proud of the development proposal we have put together. We are at a critical point with the Academy building. The Trust has invested millions in renovations. The state recognizes the significance of this building. This building continues to need a significant amount of investment and this proposal provides a significant amount of investment. The city is requiring that improvements be made in a timely way. There is not enough revenue on the site to service the current debt, and the note has an expiration date on it. The Trust is working toward a \$15 million dollar campaign to rehabilitate the Academy. If this sale does not move forward, we are at a critical juncture. I appreciate the support of our community and the public feedback that we have received. We went through a series of open houses at the Academy, held stakeholder interviews, and sought online feedback

with the help of BergerAbam, as well as sought feedback from the HPC. The feedback resulted in significant changes to the proposal.

Wygod stated that there are easier sites that are more profitable to develop in Vancouver. This site is complicated due to site constraints, and political and public attention. There are other sites that are easier and more profitable to develop in Vancouver. Marathon is in this to preserve the Academy. We would not have chosen this site if we were not interested in preserving the Academy. This site has a unique opportunity to be a mixed use urban campus with many different uses on a 7 acre site in an urban area (retail, restaurant, office, service, public museum, restored landmark, public event space, public open space, residential, commercial). This is a unique site that allows so many different uses that is hard to come by. The project name 'Aegis' is really a nod to the Sisters of Providence.

We are talking to Providence about being a tenant on this site, which would return a medical clinic to the site, and be an excellent tenant. The plaza will be a pedestrian gateway to the site and hopefully to Fort Vancouver. We will provide public open space at the plaza, connected to ground floor retail space. We will provide all the high-end features and amenities that have not yet been seen in Vancouver. It will be an asset to the community. We think the development brings a lot of public benefit from the 5,000 sq ft open plaza at the corner of C St and Evergreen that will be the gateway to a vibrant campus consisting of the Academy and Fort Vancouver. Demolishing the restaurant building is a huge public benefit. Other public benefits include: vastly improved pedestrian access, LEED building, improved auto access, improved bike and pedestrian access, removal of dead trees and broken asphalt. There is no connection now between the Academy and the existing sidewalks, downtown, and Fort Vancouver. Activating the site with retail on the ground floor and connecting it to the library is a huge public benefit.

Preservation and Possibility is our 20,000 ft design guideline: Give a historic site new life while embracing its architecture, spirit, and history.

Compatibility: We are trying to create a compatible juxtaposition of old and new, employing modern design techniques to accommodate modern needs while incorporating traditional architectural elements to showcase the Academy's inspired history. You can't build apartments today without large windows. It might not be compatible with the Academy, but you need to accommodate modern needs of the tenants. We paid very close attention to the details of the buildings.

Public Art: informative art (maps, timelines, interpretive plaques) and abstract murals. We created blank brick walls for informative and abstract murals to make it interesting from the automobile and pedestrian perspective as well as plan to have 3D art (such as transparent sculpture created from words) to recognize Mother Joseph and her legacy.

Major Design Revisions:

- Created a 58 foot setback on Building A to create the public plaza and open up the view corridor; the plaza is now 5,000 sq ft. Added a sixth story on Building B to make up for the loss of space on Building.
- Changed balcony railing materials from glass to metal pickets. Pickets obstruct the view for the tenants. But the horizontal bands help ground the building.
- Arched the entrance canopies at all four lobby entrances to mimic the Academy's arched windows (arched windows for storefronts looked forced and faux).
- Aligned the ground floor columns with the vertical bands of structure above. Moved the ground floor columns to align vertical bands of glass on the corner of the buildings.
- Changed the material to red brick ran it to the top floor of the east elevation of Building A above the lobby entrance with a setback. The buildings are 75% brick.
- Added precast concrete sills to the storefront windows.
- Added precast concrete parapet cap (ties it to the stone sills of the Academy)
- Changed the parking between the two sites to create curbside parking with brick pavers on the plaza and parking (to help it feel cohesive with the Academy).
- Incorporated brick elements into walkways along Evergreen frontage, and C Street access at 11st
- Created blank brick walls for public art
- Refined the landscaping plan along Evergreen to ensure compatibility and cohesiveness between the two sites

Hinds opened the floor to the HPC to ask questions of the applicant:

- Gall: Looking forward, what are the plans for the laundry/smokestack portion of the property? True replied that the Trust began to focus last year on that area and it became very complicated. The commission's feedback was to preserve that iconic smoke stack which is a \$750K project to add seismic infrastructure. Yes, there is potential for redevelopment, but there is no master plan yet for what the improvements may be.
- Kapitanovich: Could that land with the smokestack be sold and how big is it? True replied that it is about 80,000 sq ft (approx. 2 acres) and it could potentially be sold. Chamberlain stated that she has begun collecting information on best practices on smoke stacks throughout the country. Wygod stated that the applicant would like to preserve it, but it is a complicated element. True stated that their focus right now is on fundraising and preserving the Academy, not on the non-income producing smokestack.
- Denniston: Have you reached out to the Historic Tax Credit Office of the National Parks Service? True stated that they have not spoken with the National Parks Service, but have consulted with Nick Vann from the State Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation. Denniston stated that if you do something on your site that is not compliant with their standards, you become ineligible for tax credits for 5 years. True replied that DAHP has said that the new development would not be detrimental to future federal tax credits. Denniston stated that Nick Vann had said the siting and scale of this new construction would not comply with the standards and could jeopardize the tax credits.



True stated that the Trust has engaged advisors who have researched financing and tax credits. The Trust will continue to explore this.

- Fox reminded the HPC to state if any HPC members had a conflict of interest or have had any ex-parte communications, even though this is not a public hearing. Hinds reminded the commission that they need to make sure they relay any ex parte conversations they have regarding the applicant even though it is not a public hearing the commission should follow similar process. Fox stated that she will recuse herself from the discussion of the West Porch as her family will be involved in it.
- Denniston asked about the west porch elevation and commented that the new construction looks so faithful to the original that it gives the impression that it is original to the building. There are ways to show that there is a change there, such as through materials differentiation. There should be something about it that makes it clear that this is not original to the building. Chamberlain stated that they are working within the Dept of Interior Standards of Rehabilitation to document the changes and have some interpretation there to explain to the public about how and what has changed. Denniston said this could be accomplished with an interpretive panel. Chamberlain said that there is no documentation about when the existing stairs were installed. They are not in good shape now and not the original material.
- Manley asked about the public plaza. Is there a thought about how the plaza will be used? As a pass through place or place where events could occur? Wygod stated that it will be both a pass through space, active space for restaurants, and event space. The canopy divides the plaza in half and will be used by food service and the other half of the plaza can be use by the public to sit outside.
- Hinds: The HPC has received all the comments submitted to Community Planning and the HPC takes all comments seriously and understands the importance of this site to our community and its underlying history. Hinds quoted the Secretary of Interior Standards for Guidelines for Cultural Landscape Treatments.

Hinds opened the floor to public comment:

- Main Street organization: We think the proposal is right for the Academy and is what is best for downtown Vancouver. We are constantly approached by people who say they want to live in downtown Vancouver in a walkable area that has unique textures in a historical context that you can't find anywhere else. Beautiful, meaningful, historic buildings can be lost if the investment is not there to support them.
- Carolyn Pleny: I graduated from the Academy in 1966, the last year it was open. My family has deep roots. My grandmother was born in Hockinson and came to Academy in 1908 after her mother passed away. She graduated in 1916. Many generations of my family grew up at the Academy. I volunteer as the head docent at the Academy. I lead tours and do research on the Academy. I recently did an interview and got an oral history of my 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher. I'm very impressed with work of The Historic Trust, their sincere commitment, honesty and passion to save the Academy and tell the story of Mother Joseph. Last week, the Trust sponsored the Common Ground program. There has been an

upsurge in people coming off the street to tour and hear about Mother Joseph. Many people have never been and know nothing about the Academy. The development will bring more people into the Academy and open the property up for everyone to enjoy. She was a pragmatist and did what was needed. The building was originally designed in the shape of a cross, but had to be added onto years later. She knew it had to change to accommodate growing needs. Buildings were added as needed and came down when they fell down. She would not want the Academy to be a shrine to her, but would want it to be useful for the community. For all of its history, the Academy has been a multi-use property and the new development will continue that legacy and help us tell her story into the future years to come.

- Pat Jollata: I heard the word pragmatic and that is what we have here. I'm a veteran of another historic rehabilitation along with Mayor Higgins. We obtained Officer's Row which at time was derelict and neglected. It was going to take a lot of work and money. We looked at if we should we have it all offices, restaurants, museums. We rehabilitated it and today it is a jewel. The proposal for the Academy is a use that is vital for our community, to use this building, to have weddings, parties, meetings, commemorations, political rallies, and not just to drive by. If not, the parking lot and building will continue to deteriorate. This is a good plan with good people running it and it is a good sensible use that returns it to the community.
- John McDonough: I'm representing the Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce (largest association of business in Southwest Washington). I come with the full endorsement of the board for the Trust to develop this site and to rehabilitate the Academy building. From the economic development standpoint, the Trust should be applauded for their vision in acquiring the Academy, for their commitment to bring it back to a vital space. It is a historic icon in our community. The Trust should also be applauded for their approach to financing the plan. The development will provide additional housing in our downtown core, and tie it to commercial and retail space. The improvement to the streetscape along C Street will be a tremendous welcome improvement. We hope you endorse it and recommend it to the city.
- Rob Freed: I am a former HPC member and I wanted to shed some light on the viewshed from the corner of C St and Evergreen. We never considered the view from that corner because of the El Presidente restaurant. I participated on development of the overlay code while I was on the HPC. I feel remiss that we didn't consider that view corridor as it is important that the view be taken into consideration. I was struck by the fact that there is no master plan for the property and am worried about a piecemeal approach to development. It is important to have the master plan to drive the whole project. I agree with the letter sent by the Clark County Historical Museum that the Academy should be put on the Clark County Heritage Register. It would cement the relationship between the Trust and the HPC and may make other grants available.
- Royce Pollard: I was a Lieutenant of the Vancouver Barracks. We had great history here that nobody was paying attention to. We have two of the most significant historic sites in the state (the Academy and Fort Vancouver) that are important to the West Coast and America.

- Tom Nappenberger: I am 90% excited about this proposal. I have a concern about psychology, and people flow, and traffic. I am concerned about the wall of buildings being proposed. The Academy is oriented toward the south, which is the side of the library, not its front. Was there any thought to put Building A along the north of the property? My other question is that the north and east sides don't have any development proposals. I am wondering if there is a master plan for the entire site?
- Anne Denniston read from her letter submitted to the HPC (see full letter in public comments): I urge the city to reject the proposal for the Academy. This proposal will harm the site. It disrespects Mother Joseph's years long battle to unite these parcels. This development undermines all view sheds from downtown and cuts the Academy off from the downtown. The fact that the Trust did not know about two key stakeholders until the later stages of development indicates that the Trust is not well aware of the history of the site. The Academy is what will activate the site, not commercial development along C St. The site itself is historic, not just the Academy building. Where is the feasibility study? The Trust should release the feasibility study that shows that the other options are not viable. DAHP's letter shows that the proposal does not meet the historic overlay code. I urge the city to enforce its code and reject this proposal.
- Paul Spear, speaking on behalf of Sister Suzanne Hartung, read Suzanne's letter in support of the proposed development of the Academy (see full letter in public comments).
- Paul Spear: I am a board member of the Historic Trust and 37 year resident of Vancouver. No other organization other than the Historic Trust has the depth of commitment, dedication and passion to take this on. We are grateful for the broad base of support in the community from \$10 to \$2 million donations, in addition to the grants we have received. The Academy does receive financial support from 60 tenants and parking fees, but without financial resources made possible through this development, restoration and rehabilitation of the Academy to this extent will not happen.

Hinds closed public comment and opened the discussion to the HPC for deliberation.

Item 1: Demolition of El Presidente Restaurant: HPC Review not required (not listed). Jones requested that the HPC confirm that it does not need to give approval to the city for the demolition of this building. Manley made a motion that the HPC state their agreement with the proposed demolition. Gregg seconded the motion. All agreed.

Item 3: West Porch Renovation: HPC Review Advisory to Staff. Denniston stated that it is important that the renovation not appear to be original to the building since the design is not original and this is not technically a reconstruction. Fox stated that a plaque should be a sufficient mitigation measure to communicate this. Gall stated that losing the central stairs to the west façade removes the visual invitation to enter the building, but he understands that the central stairs would interrupt a planned pedestrian walkway. Fox made a motion to approve the west porch renovation with the mitigation of a plaque to identify what the original west elevation looked like. Denniston seconded the motion, but added that the renovation be made in a way to differentiate the new balustrade where the central stair was in terms of materials or design. All agreed.

## Item 2: New Development (HPC Review Advisory to Staff):

Kapitanovich understands that this is an economic decision to sell the property so that funds can go into renovating the Academy. Kapitanovich stated that she has concerns about the design of the new building in that it doesn't complement the existing Academy and she wonders if there was some way to bring more historic design elements into the two new buildings.

Manley stated that we all understand the financial realities and we all want to preserve the Academy structure. The main issues that he wants to see addressed by the city's review are the view corridor (paragraph E) and the view from the C Street area of Evergreen. The HPC unanimously agreed with the demolition of the restaurant building, which now opens up that view corridor, which didn't exist when the restaurant was there. If we were talking about that restaurant construction today, the Vancouver Municipal code would allow construction of a 200 ft tall building at the footprint of the restaurant building that is proposed to be demolished today. Manley really likes the plaza as it offers up a view corridor of sorts. Manley appreciates that the developer gave up another 16 ft of additional setback on Building A to create the plaza, but as a trade-off added an additional story to Building B. Manley wonders if the developer could expand the plaza even more to further improve the view corridor because there was a significant net gain in floor area of Building B (more than 10,000 sq ft from the originally proposed design). Manley stated that although the design of the two new buildings is well executed and attractive, there is nothing that distinguishes the design as being specific to the Academy site. The proposed buildings would be equally at home on any other street in Portland or Vancouver. However, Manley thinks if the designers were to apply even more historic architectural elements to those buildings they would run the risk of creating false historicism. It's not an easy task to create a design for the new buildings that is sympathetic to the Academy that would be attractive as a new development in downtown .

Fox has concerns about criteria e in the code. Fox appreciates the expansion of the plaza to open up the view corridor. The requirement in section "e" for 15 ft of landscaping means that the city wants substantial planting, which means that in 20 years, people should feel like there is a tree canopy along the street frontage. The size of the planter is one of the biggest determinants to ensuring a substantial tree size. Fox urges the city to hold to the 15ft planter area for a large tree to be able to grow there. There are lists of trees that grow better in planters. Fox is not a fan of the design of the new buildings and would have liked to see the arched windows to see if it looks contrived as the applicant claims. Fox also notes that the proposal has met the zoning and code criteria of the city, but is concerned about the removal of the restaurant because it now opens up a potential development site in front of the Academy. The city should update its Overlay Code. There should have been a public hearing for this site, and more weight should have been given to the input of the HPC than just an advisory role.

Hinds stated that the Secretary of Interior Guidelines lists the different elements of a cultural landscape. The Academy itself is a preservation project. In terms of the site, the west half of the property is about rehabilitation, repurposing, and bringing new vitality to the site. Hinds understands the purist's argument that has been put forth, but also recognizes that there is a deadline with a financial investor/developer. The HPC has seen a number of presentations and public processes. The Historic Trust has been proactive and the HPC has provided feedback. Hinds is encouraged that the feedback is being reflected in the current renderings. Hinds agrees that there is some ambiguity in the heritage overlay code and understands the questions about the sightlines. However, he thinks the overlay has served its purpose because it has brought some

protection to this site and given the HPC and the public opportunity to weigh in in a meaningful way. Hinds is disappointed that we haven't received more positive reassurance about the preservation of the smokestack and laundry. While he understands it is expensive, the proposed \$700,000 to renovate the laundry and iconic smokestack still seems feasible and worthwhile to pursue. Hinds is encouraged by the applicant's comments about interpretation of substantial planting and their willingness to receive and respond to feedback from the HPC and the city. Hinds appreciates all the strong emotions behind this project that have been voiced, but feels the proposal should go forward. Hinds appreciates the mitigation and design changes that have gone into it.

Gall stated that the policy and intent portion of the Heritage Overlay plays up the grounds in addition to the building. The National Register nomination is for the whole site, including the grounds. Going over the policy and intent language, not the criteria, there is recognition of the Academy as a dominant landmark in downtown. Galls concern is that the massing of buildings and their position diminishes the dominance of the building. From the main entrance to the downtown area, the view will be totally disrupted by the proposed new construction. Therefore, the proposal doesn't meet that criteria to preserve view corridors. Gall is concerned about this proposal and future development chipping away at the site until we end up with the Academy being an isolated island. The I-5 already cuts off the Academy building from the east side and the new buildings will then cut it off even more and it will lose its connection to the landscape. Having a 10-20 year management plan that takes the whole property into account would be helpful. When the proposal came to the Historic Preservation Commission, it was already well envisioned. Bringing it before the Historic Preservation Commission earlier in process would have enabled commission members to voice their concerns earlier.

Denniston said he does not find the code ambiguous. His primary concern is about the views from Evergreen as required in section e. The site plans presented do not show all the roads, and the renderings with Evergreen show four lanes, which is wider than what is actually there. As a result, the images do not fully show the impact on views. The perspective of the Academy's western façade is blocked with this proposal. You lose one of the most critical views of the building, the perspective view looking east from Evergreen, where you can envision the whole thing and not just the building as a front façade. Criteria e is very clear about preserving views. The 75-200 ft height limits are zoning requirements, not preservation requirements, and preservation requirements must be met regardless of height. Denniston doesn't see how the proposal meets the code requirements. If there is a lax interpretation of code, the views won't be protected and this sets a bad precedent for future development on the site, including on the old restaurant site. Section b requires a view corridor from 11<sup>th</sup> st to the main part of Academy. The purpose statement in the code explains why the requirement exists. Section A.1 of the code gives the purpose and intent for that requirement and what it is meant to accomplish. This proposal only maintains a view of the back of the building, but that view is not meaningful and doesn't accomplish the results the code states as the purpose of the requirement. Losing the view of the western façade is negatively impactful. Most historic photos we have show students going in and out of that entrance. If you read the history of the site, one of the big issues is of a woman who battled a male power structure to join the separated plots in order to even be able to build the building. The elimination of roads is one of the historically defining elements of the site. It is problematic to now divide the site and put in roads. It doesn't mean you can't develop the site and sell off parts of it, but that history is significant. The sisters always built on the site to support the Academy, but that development was always to the north, behind the Academy. The Heritage code calls the Academy the principle building on the site. If these buildings are approved, these new buildings will become the principle buildings on the site since they are larger, taller, and more

massive. The prominence of the Academy is a key architectural feature, which will be completely lost with this proposed development. It doesn't meet the code requirements as laid out. Denniston is worried that the code is being interpreted so loosely that it could put the other buildings in the heritage overlay at risk to development pressures. Denniston has a lot of preservation concerns about this proposal beyond the code requirements and thinks the city really needs to enforce the code. Denniston stated that if the finances don't allow compliance with the code, then the applicant needs to apply for a code variance rather than the city loosely enforce the code.

Gregg stated that the Academy building sat vacant for many years until the Hidden family bought it. The Providence Academy is struggling for survival and has never been maintained to more than a limited degree. This may not be the last best chance for rehabilitation, but it very well might be. There were objections when the county courthouse went through ADA compliance. We are still debating changes to the Heritage Farm. The Historic Trust has been looking at development proposals for the past years. The longer we deliberate, the less likely that the object of our discussion will even endure.

Hinds stated the deliberation of the HPC reflects a lot of the thoughts expressed by the community.

Jones stated that the city's attorney said that the HPC has an advisory role. It makes sense to have something in the record.

Gregg suggested that everyone on the commission has voiced their views. It would be divisive to have an up or down vote. The commission offered all their comments and could let the comments stand as the recommendation.

Hinds stated that the HPC could provide input on the boiler room, the plantings, and all the different elements.

Gregg stated that if we let the contents of the HPC comments stand, we can revisit these topics in the future.

Fox restated that we are an advisory body. We have given clear motions for Items 1 and 3. The HPC seems split on Item 2 and we could have a straw poll to document our feedback on each element of the proposal. Hinds said this was a good idea. Most of the resistance is around Building A and reduction of sight lines, while some of the other elements seem less contentious.

Design of Plaza: Fox made a motion to approve the design of the plaza but to increase the width of the planters to be at least 15 ft wide to allow room for large species trees. Gregg seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

Surface parking: Fox stated that there weren't concerns about the location of the parking. Hinds stated that relocation of the building would mean parking would need to be moved. Denniston stated that the surface parking requires the introduction of a road on the site, which is not historic and contradicts the historical character of the site. Fox liked the design improvements (use of bricks) to the parking lot that made it look more integrated and connected the two properties. Denniston stated that there still is a road proposed between the two buildings, but still thinks there is a fundamental problem reintroducing a road to the site, when removing roads is a historical defining feature of the site. Manley stated that the HPC comments are interdependent and any comments on any of the bullets impacts the other elements of the proposal. Manley

stated that the city requested a letter from the HPC and county staff could turn the HPC comments into a compilation letter that could reflect the opinion of the HPC. Manley stated that staff could take HPC comments and turn it into a compilation letter to be submitted to the city as the opinion of the HPC. At this point, the HPC members ended this conversation and agreed to let their individual comments stand as the consultation.

Gall said that we are tasked with deciding if the proposal is consistent with the criteria in the heritage overlay. Hinds confirmed that it is. Gall asked if the proposal is restricted to the criteria or is it broad based compliance with the purpose and intent?

Denniston stated that it needs to be broad based compliance with the purpose and intent. Fox stated that we should direct the city to amend the code in the future to revise the overlay to remove some of the ambiguity. It won't impact this proposal now. But code revision should be added to the list of things to do. The role of the HPC is not to determine if this proposal is economically feasible. The proposed development shouldn't be penalized by what we hope and wish to happen on the site. The applicant went above and beyond the current code even though they weren't required to do certain things.

Denniston stated that the HPC can not support this proposal without key changes to the design. The proposal doesn't meet the code requirements, substantial plantings, the view corridor, the brick color. The HPC has identified several key issues where the proposal doesn't align.

Gall said that Building A blocks the viewshed of downtown. Fox said that the library already blocks the view corridor. Gall stated he has a different interpretation of the viewshed of downtown.

Denniston said when they built the library, they pulled that lot out of the heritage overlay. The new construction will have a detrimental impact on the heritage overlay because of its impact on the views.

Hinds proposed one option is to vote up and down to endorse the plan with the condition that the applicant continue to consult with HPC. I don't think we are going to reach a resolution or consensus if we continue to debate all the fine details of this very challenging project. The other option is to let our comments be the record, as Andy proposed. The Trust has been very open and receptive to our comments to try to mitigate those concerns, where possible. Letter from DAHP has also raised concerns. These are two possible courses of action.

Fox made a motion to let our comments that we have individually made stand for the record on Item 2. Andy seconded. All in favor.

Fox stated that we add discussion of code revisions to the Heritage Overlay to a future agenda.

#### **New Business Items:**

- **2019 CLG Grant Decisions:** The Parkersville grant was not awarded. We encouraged them to apply for a Historic Promotions Grant.
- **Public Benefit Rating System – Historic Categories.** This will be discussed at the September HPC meeting.

**Old Business & Updates:**

1. The 78th St. Heritage Farm Preservation and Maintenance Plan was presented to the County Council on Aug. 8 at 9 a.m., 1300 Franklin St., 6th floor Training Room, Vancouver. A second presentation will be given on Aug. 16 at 4 p.m. to Heritage Farm Team, 4700 NE 78th St., B-1, Vancouver, WA.
2. Chair/Vice Chair Elections on September 5.
3. CLG training on Sept 25 in Tacoma.

**Public Comment:** No public comment received.

**Adjournment:** Meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.