

Local Advisory Committee (LAC) for the Old Town College Park Historic District
June 13, 2019
City Hall – Lower Level Conference Room

LAC Members Present: Richard Biffel, Chairman, Nigel Key, Bob Schnabel

LAC Members Absent: James McFadden, Vice Chairman, Hassan Tariq

Staff Present: Tom Gross, M-NCPPC -HPC Staff, Sheryl DeWalt, Contract Secretary.

Guests: James Furr, Cunningham Contracting, Edgar Ortega Maggio Roofing, Antonio Moscoso, Maggio Roofing

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Mr. Biffel, Chairman.

1. The agenda was reviewed. Mr. Schnabel made a motion to accept the agenda. Mr. Key seconded the motion. **Motion carries 3-0-0.**
2. The draft minutes from the April 29, 2019 meeting were reviewed. Mr. Schnabel made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Mr. Key seconded the motion. **Motion carries 3-0-0.**

3. 4604 College Avenue – Tri-Delta House

Mr. Furr, with Cunningham Contracting, spoke on behalf of the home owner and the owner of Cunningham Contracting. The roof is in bad shape – crumbling and cracked tiles, leaking into the house when it rains, slates falling off. He stated that the company has tried to repair the roof; the company understands and has worked on numerous slate roofs. Several have landed in the yard and on the patio and the owner is concerned about the possibility of a slate tile hitting someone. The owner would prefer, instead of spending piece meal money for repairs, to just replace the roof. They would like to use a synthetic slate tile that mimics real slate tile.

Mr. Gross explained about the guidelines adopted by the Department of the Interior for historic areas which Prince George's County follows and uses when determining historic structures for repairs or replacements. He also gave a copy of the guidelines to Mr. Furr. Mr. Gross also explained that prior to the Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) creation and designation of historic districts, many of the buildings on fraternity/sorority row were renovated and there was not a need to go through Park and Planning and the HPC. Another caveat is the University of Maryland is state owned and they do not have to concede to Prince George's County rules and regulations.

Mr. Schnabel stated that he toured the outside of the Tri-Delta House and he does not believe the slates need to be replaced. He used his binoculars for observation of the roof. He read his email comments to the group:

“If there is a slate fastener problem these slates should be removed and refastened because the existing slates will outlast the lives of the current members and another generation of members and another if not more. If the fasteners are still with serviceable life, then individual slates should be installed where the previous ones are missing or damaged or reinstalled with the appropriate fastener if they have just fallen out of place. If areas of roof wood sheathing is damaged from prior water penetration due to lack of proper maintenance and wood rot prevents proper fastening then that section will require slate removal to install new replacement sheathing which cannot be plywood. The removed slates are then of course reinstalled. Damaged sheathing if at all will occur in only small areas unless there has been major neglect. Appropriate sheathing wood and fasteners are very important otherwise the slate will way outlast the sheathing or the fastener.

I can see that very inappropriate work has been done. All the hip corners have been tarred. Not only is tar ugly it cracks over a short period of time to allow water infiltration. But I did not see slate delamination or red coloring on the surface of the slates which indicates iron deposits which will expand and cause delamination. There are colored slates (reds and greens) that are installed which most likely are Vermont slate which can come in colors: reds, purples, greens, blues, as well as black and grays. There are also color fading slates (colors that arise due to weatherization = Browns plus fades of true original colors). Some Vermont slate is unfading some not. My first thought in looking at the roof was that the majority of the roof was Buckingham slate but given the amount of colored or fading slates I think the roof is Vermont quarried. Buckingham slate does not fade (company claim) and only comes in unfading blues to the black spectrum meaning grays. The longevity estimate of Buckingham slate is 175 years. Vermont slate is very good with the average longevity being 150 years. Slaters can tell the condition of a slate by tapping it to judge its ring. If it sounds like a dull thud and is flaking it is dead. If it rings it is good and will welcome in a new generation of two leggeds.

I am pretty sure these slates are not Bangor slates (Penn origin) which have a longevity of 75 years plus.

Should also be noted that the slates are I believe graduated. That is the slates near the ridge are less long which creates an optical affect which should be maintained in the repair.”

It was mentioned that perhaps it is only the fasteners that need to be replaced to hold the slate tiles rather than replacing the entire roof. It was also mentioned that the slate nails are deteriorated and could also be replaced.

Mr. Gross stated that there is a hardship exception that could be presented, but it is rarely exercised by the HPC. Mr. Biffel stated that there would have to be extenuating circumstances as to why a synthetic slate tile should be used over real slate tiles.

Mr. Key made a motion to recommend disapproval of the HAWP for 4604 College Avenue. Mr. Schnabel seconded the motion. Motion carries 3-0-0.

Mr. Gross mentioned that if the owner chooses to withdraw this application to inform him quickly, otherwise, it will appear on the July HPC agenda.

4. 4508 College Avenue – St. Andrew’s Church

The HAWP states that the owners would like to replace the slate roof and replace the dormer siding. There is damage around the eaves and there is some asbestos in the dormer siding. The felt paper is worn out, many of the nail heads are gone, and there is caulking that is also gone. Mr. Schnabel stated that he also visited the church, and, in his opinion, the roof can be repaired and not replaced, and the dormer can be power washed. It was mentioned that GAF products can be used.

Mr. Key made a motion to recommend disapproval of the HAWP for 4604 College Avenue. Mr. Schnabel seconded the motion. Motion carries 3-0-0.

Mr. Gross mentioned that if the owner chooses to withdraw this application to inform him quickly, otherwise, it will appear on the July HPC agenda.

5. Brief discussion about the houses on Howard Lane.

Mr. Key made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Biffel seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Sheryl DeWalt, contract secretary.