



Historic Preservation Commission

6801 Delmar Boulevard, University City, Missouri 63130, Phone: (314) 862-6767, Fax: (314) 862-3168

AGENDA

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

Heman Park Community Center
975 Pennsylvania Avenue, University City, MO 63130
6:30 pm; Thursday, February 6, 2020

1. Roll Call

2. Approval of Minutes

Minutes for January 16, 2020

3. Old Business

a. **File Number:** 19-00711

Address: 711 Kingsland Avenue, University City, MO

Applicant: Tristar Companies LLC

Property Owner: Tristar Companies LLC

Request: Demolition Permit Review & Design Review

4. New Business

5. Other business

- a. Public Comments (Limited to 3 minutes for individual's comments, 5 minutes for representatives of groups or organizations)

6. Reports

- a. Council Liaison Report

7. Adjournment



Department of Planning and Development

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MINUTES

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

Heman Park Community Center

975 Pennsylvania Avenue, University City, MO 63130

6:30 pm; Thursday January 16, 2019

Ms. Marin called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

Roll Call

Present:

Donna Leach
Donna Marin, Chair
Bill Chilton
Robert Klahr
Sandy Jacobsen
Christine Mackey-Ross

Absent:

Esley Hamilton

Adam Brown, Planner
Clifford Cross, Director of Planning and Development
Council Liaison, Tim Cusick

1. Approval of Minutes

- a. The minutes from the HPC work session meeting on 11/21/2019 were approved unanimously.

2. Old Business

- a. **File Number:** 19-00711
Address: 711 Kingsland Avenue, University City, MO
Applicant: Tristar Companies LLC
Property Owner: Tristar Companies LLC
Request: Demolition Permit Review

The Commission met with Tri-Star at a work session on December 19, 2019. At that meeting Tri-Star presented their plan to renovate the Harvard School Building for office use and demolish the Delmar School building to be replaced with a hotel.

Mr. Chilton moved to amend the agenda to include discussion of the proper sequence for the HPC approval of design review for conformance. Ms. Jacobson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Chilton explained that the initial discussion of demolition begun at the last meeting (work session on 12/19/19) followed by design review. He stated that if there was a sound proposal as to why the Delmar building needed to be demolished, but the design of the new building was not approved, the City could end up with a vacant lot. Ms. Marin summarized that the HPC should consider the design of the new building before approving the demolition.

Ms. Mackey-Ross moved to discuss the design first, then approve demolition. Ms. Jacobson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Chilton expressed concern that the HPC was not properly prepared for this presentation because the commission members had not received additional information that was requested from the developers at the December work session. He stated that the agenda was the only information provided, and that the commission would have to rely on information from the work session. Ms. Leach said she had requested an engineer's report for why the building should be demolished, and that she would not be convinced without this report.

Michael Towerman of TriStar Properties said they were happy to participate in the work session in December as there was no quorum. He said that their team had incorporated the comments from Mr. Chilton and Ms. Leach into the current designs which they would be presenting at this meeting. He stated that they had not committed to providing an engineer's report.

Toby Heddinghaus from the Gray Design Group explained that the feedback from the study session in December had been incorporated into the design. He demonstrated a series of new renderings and drawings, including requested renderings from various directions showing the proposed new building in the context of the Civic Plaza as well as sections showing the relative elevations of the existing and proposed buildings.

He noted that the Tru Hotel brand is generally not brick, but mostly EIFS (Exterior Insulation and Finish System). In this case, the building proposed is mostly brick with bricks selected to match to colors of nearby buildings. He also noted that, per the commission's request from the study session, the pattern of lighter and darker bricks had been reversed, making the building more closely match those around it. He also noted the brick details such as soldier courses over the windows. He noted that the Tru brand colors had been minimized in the design. He contended that the renderings and sections demonstrated the low visual impact the hotel would have on the area.

Mr. Heddinghaus showed new landscape drawings including a landscaping buffer between the parking lot of the new development and Kingsland Avenue. He said the stone wall that runs along the sidewalk would be maintained except for the section to be removed for vehicle access from Kingsland. The stone that is removed will be used to recreate pilasters to match the existing design.

Mr. Chilton asked to confirm there is a fourteen-foot height difference between the Lewis Center and proposed hotel. He asked about the brand and design, and whether

the architects could pursue any further changes to be more in keeping with the context of the historic Civic Plaza. He gave the example of the angled wall treatment and the modern, plain windows with little articulation as design elements that could be improved upon.

Ms. Marin stated that the proposed hotel in the renderings dominates the site and competes with City Hall and may not be consistent with the rest of the plaza.

Ms. Leach stated that parents of Wash U students would not stay in a hotel of this quality. Mr. Heddinghaus said that all of the potential partners they had spoken with were in favor of the Tru brand. Mr. Klahr noted that the choice of hotel brand is not the purview of this commission.

Mr. Towerman described the process by which the brand and design were chosen, including a review of about 40 other Tru brand hotel designs throughout the U.S. In his estimation, this design represents the most conservative of all the Tru hotels they had viewed.

Mr. Heddinghaus said the three Tru brand features are the angled wall, which, in other hotels, further off the main structure, the “racing stripes” which were removed in this design, and the blue and yellow branding colors which have been significantly reduced to the circular brand sign and the canopy over the entrance. He said there is a high likelihood that Tru would give up the blue and yellow canopy elements to match the brick colors. He shared some brick samples they had used in the design. Mr. Towerman said these samples demonstrated the care taken to match brick in the design to the surrounding buildings.

Mr. Towerman said that the viewpoint from the parking lot across Kingsland would not be a common view of the building. He noted that the developers had taken care to anticipate the impact of the hotel from the surrounding neighborhoods.

Ms. Leach asked if any of the trees in the landscaping plan would be taller trees that would approach the height of street trees. Thomas Douglas of TriStar said they would be preserving as many of the existing trees as possible, particularly the maples on Kingsland.

Ms. Jacobson said she felt the three elements of the design that do not fit for the Civic Plaza were the contemporary, streamlined look, the dynamic aspect of the brown colors, and the height. She felt that this building challenges City Hall and other buildings around it. She also disagreed that people the vantage point from the City’s parking lot across Kingsland was not an important view – she felt many people would view the building from that location.

Mr. Heddinghaus noted that the height was close to the surrounding buildings and not substantially taller than the existing Delmar Building.

Mr. Klahr asked for clarification of the height differential at grade between the existing and new building, as well as the difference in size between the footprint of the existing and proposed structures.

Mr. Heddinghaus shared that the top of the proposed building is 588’ above sea level and the current Delmar building is 568’ above sea level, while the new building would be

two stories taller. He noted that the footprint of the proposed new building would be longer but not significantly larger than the existing building.

Ms. Mackey-Ross made a plea for the removal of the blue awning. She said she appreciated the absence of the “racing stripes”.

Mr. Towerman said that Tri-Star’s partner in the project said that Tru may give up the colors in the canopy. Mr. Heddinghaus said it would be changed to bronze instead of blue, and the yellow element would become either bronze or red brick. Mr. Klahr clarified that the angled wall in the design would be bronze. Mr. Heddinghaus said the angled element would be either metal or EIFS, and that the dark bronze colors would match in any case. He noted that in his experience it can be a worse outcome to try and create a classical look when the building is modern. He further described the detail elements around the windows, as well as the areas of transition between the alternating brick colors, each with a soldier course of bricks at the transition point.

Ms. Leach asked what the building would look like at night. Mr. Heddinghaus said there would be understated but dramatic upward light which would graze the brick, and some light under the entrance canopy.

Ms. Jacobson asked what the developer meant by stating that this was a “pedestrian-oriented” hotel. Mr. Heddinghaus said Tru hotels have active lobbies with limited food service. This would encourage guests to head on foot to the shops and restaurants in the Loop district nearby. Mr. Heddinghaus also clarified the choice of office and hotel uses as being complementary in terms of their parking needs. Ms. Jacobson clarified that the parking lot across the street was part of the proposal. Mr. Heddinghaus confirmed this.

Mr. Cross clarified the process. This is the first step in the process: review by the HPC. The developers would then come before the Plan Commission for a planned development concept plan and re-zoning application for a Planned Unit Development. The shared parking ratios, additional lighting and landscaping, and similar details would be considered as part of that process. Anything that came from the HPC will be a recommendation and would not be set in stone. There are still changes that can take place throughout the process.

3. New Business

4. Council Liaison Report

5. Adjournment

Ms. Marin adjourned the meeting at 9:02pm

Prepared by Adam Brown