



CLARK COUNTY

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Public Service Center
1300 Franklin St., 6th Floor
Vancouver, WA
www.clark.wa.gov/planning/historic

MEETING NOTES

Wednesday, January 8, 2020 - 6:00 p.m.
6th Floor Hearing Room, 1300 Franklin St., Vancouver, WA

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.

Members Present:	Julie Bohn, Sean Denniston, Alex Gall, Michelle Kapitanovich, Donald Trost, and Roch Manley
Members Absent:	Andy Gregg (excused)
Staff Present:	Sharon Lumbantobing and Jacqui Kamp (Clark County) and Jan Bader and Mark Person (City of Vancouver)
Guests:	Shauna Bilyeu, Keith Schreiber, Glen Gipe, Rob Freed, Wes Henson, Holly Chamberlain, Connie Kerney

- 1. Roll Call & Introductions:** Commission members and staff introduced themselves.
- 2. Approval of the Meeting Minutes from December 4, 2019.** Trost made a motion to approve the minutes and Kapitanovich seconded. Meeting minutes were approved unanimously.
- 3. Washington School for the Deaf (WSD) Campus Revitalization Project:** Shauna Bilyeu, Superintendent at the Washington School for the Deaf, and Keith Schreiber, architect to WSD gave a presentation on the school's development plans. WSD is 134 years old and is proud to be part of the historic fabric of the county. Our buildings are aging. WSD submitted a plan to HPC and DAHP and an MOU was developed in 2008 for removal of some of the core buildings, to replace Deer Hall with Kastel Multi-Purpose building. In 2017, the legislature provided funds for studying development of a new academic and physical education building to replace Divine and Hunter Gym. Deaf education needs purpose built environments to remove obstacles, eliminate sensory distractions, reinforce visual connections, and increase students' spatial awareness. Our project goals are equity, campus integration, student safety, and fiscal responsibility. We want to place academic and cultural core buildings at the center of the campus, where 6 historic buildings are currently located: old dining hall and boiler house, Hunger Gym, Maintenance/Storage building, Epperson building, and Divine School. We considered repurposing the old buildings, however, the size of the buildings and the condition is not suitable. The buildings are seismically unsafe and haven't been used for 20 years and the buildings are literally falling apart and hazardous material removal is required (old heating and



boiler insulation, asbestos), and buildings are not energy efficient. The new proposed campus core buildings will better serve present student needs as a cultural center. The project schedule was described. The initial phase of development was included in the governor's budget. DAHP mitigation MOU will be finalized from Jan 1, 2020 to July 1, 2020. Three phases of construction will be carried out and all completed by June 2024. Development will require demolition of several historic structures and mitigation measures.

The HPC asked questions:

- How many students are there at the school? 126 students pre-school through 12th grade and a tech school serving people through age 24. We serve students all over the state of Washington.
- How far along is the MOU? We thought it was complete. We were surprised to find out it wasn't. The state funded a detailed study of the buildings and we found that as the campus grew over time, new buildings were attached to the old buildings in the core. We need new infrastructure to serve the new and existing buildings. We need to address this in the revised MOU with DAHP. The buildings aren't suitable for reuse, however, some of the materials (timbers) can be reused and celebrated. The school has its own museum and we plan to incorporate the history of the buildings in the museum.
- Could the Historic Preservation Commission be an interested party in the MOU? What regulatory hook (SEPA or E00 505) is spurring DAHP's involvement? Yes. We can meet with DAHP and inquire about whether the HPC could be an interested party. Projects over a certain size and age are required to be reviewed by DAHP. That is how we discovered that the MOU was not complete. Four buildings will be removed in the initial phase which will allow us to build new buildings in the core.
- Do you have some documentation about the buildings that will be demolished? As part of the MOU, all the buildings were inventoried and documented. That information will be provided again, including older drawings, and will be added to the school's museum collection.
- DAHP's documentation on the school buildings is sort of thin. Is there more documentation somewhere else? All that information will be part of the new MOU.
- Did you look at campus plans to consider retaining any of the historic buildings? Are there pieces of any buildings that could be retained? In a previous iteration of the plan, another architecture firm looked at retention of the buildings, and we looked at costs of renting buildings nearby or moving the school to a new site. The life cycle evaluation indicated that the optimal solution is to demolish the old buildings and rebuild new buildings. The only building that might be salvaged is the Divine School, which doesn't have much historical value and was too expensive to retain. The buildings are structurally weak right now and it is not possible to enlarge the spaces to serve current needs. There are building components that we are committed to reusing in the new buildings (terracotta trim pieces to be used as landscape seating, lumber can be used as stair treads) and share the information about the buildings.
- There is the possibility that the school sits on an archaeological site. Has there been any work done? Was it a campus wide survey? The tribes have been notified. There is little chance of archaeological artifacts on the site. As each building has been built, we have

had archaeological surveys done. There are probably a lot of historical remnants in the old buildings that should be saved. The museum will be a repository for that. We are very interested on getting advice on things we can save and incorporate into the new buildings. We welcome the HPC members to come tour the school and see our museum.

- The site epitomizes a record of time. DSW accumulated buildings over 100 years. But now you are facing a situation where the record of your past is hindering the needs of the present and future. Sometimes we can find creative ways to save all or part of buildings.

4. Old Business

- **City of Vancouver Unified Development Code Amendments – Historic Preservation (VMC 17.39) and Historic Preservation Commission (VMC 20.220.050).**

Page 8: members need to be present to vote on an issue. It is legal to vote over the phone as long as all the voices can be heard. It doesn't have to be in the code; it can be in the Rules and Procedures. The HPC is open to discussing the concept of voting by phone. Need to consider how many times per year a member could participate by phone.

Page 9: under educational services, this should have examples in code, and put the exact educational services into the interlocal agreement.

Page 20, notifying the public about actions the HPC is taking, we removed the requirement to physically post on the property. The county does this, the city does not. The HPC suggested that the city post signs on the property.

Page 23 B was discussed.

A separate section of code discusses the Heritage Overlay. That has not yet been updated.

Bader requested written comments from the HPC by end of January 2020.

- **Discussion of city's response to HPC's Providence Academy letter.**

Gall opened the floor to the HPC to share thoughts and questions on the city's response to the HPC's Providence Academy letter. Denniston suggested that DAHP be invited to come down and run a workshop on SEPA to provide a shared understanding of how the process works. Trost made a motion to send a response to the city, thanking them for their letter and their suggestion to provide input on code revisions, and proposing a SEPA workshop for the HPC and the City to be run by DAHP. After discussion, Trost amended his motion to have the subcommittee draft a response letter for discussion and approval by the commission at the February HPC meeting. Denniston made an amendment that Gall will reply to Chad Eiken's email to let him know the commission is drafting a response letter. All were in favor.

Public Comment: Connie Kerney knew Ed Lynch who wanted to purchase the Academy and had quite a vision for it. She believes the impact of the Aegis Development on the

Providence Academy is huge and she urges the commission to consider taking legal action to get their attention.

5. **New Business**

- The demolition subcommittee update will be moved to the HPC's February meeting.
- **Clark County Courthouse** – new front signage request for HPC comment. Thank them for the opportunity to comment but the HPC has no substantial comment.
- **Sara Store potential to be demolished** – the building is not structurally sound due to long-term water issues. It's on the CCHR. Realtors are asking about allowed uses and what is the process to demolish the building. What is the process for bringing unpermitted work into compliance? A lot of damage and work appears to have been done to the property without permits. Staff will look into this. HPC is interested to visit the property.
- **New Heights Church, circa 1912, in Vancouver is a possible demolition** – it's not on any heritage register or historic overlay district. The building is not seismically sound, is in a deteriorating state, and the property owner is no longer holding services in it. They want to sell the property and they think the fate of the building will likely be demolition. Bader stated that the city's building official has no requirement to demolish the building and there is a covenant running with the land that the building cannot be demolished. The HPC would like to be involved with future property owners as there are opportunities to seismically retrofit and think creatively about adaptive reuse for the building. If it was listed on the national register, there are tax credits. Saving it might be the more economic path to economic viability. The city has an adaptive reuse project. The property owner could market the sale of the building as a valuable building that can be repurposed and may be eligible for historic tax credits and special valuation if it is listed on a register. The building has more value than just a tear down.
- **DAHP's response to HPC's Intangible Cultural Heritage Register letter.** Would the HPC like to invite Greg Griffith from DAHP to address the HPC at a future meeting? The HPC would like to accept DAHP's offer of a presentation. Staff will send a reply to DAHP.

6. **Public Comment:**

- Rob Freed, former HPC Chair, shared that the HPC's letter to the city about the Providence Academy was well composed. The previous owners allowed the building to deteriorate. Freed feels frustrated about the Historic Overlay District code. The preservation of the viewshed was not considered because the HPC never thought the restaurant building would be demolished. The Trust buying the property and needing to generate revenue to pay mortgage is a balancing act with development. The city's letter does not seem to indicate that they are embracing the spirit of historic preservation.

7. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.