

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
Meeting Minutes
February 24, 2021 at 6:30pm via Videoconference

DRB Committee Members: Todd Boyer (Chair), Christine Iman, John Rucker, Jim Cron, Nate Byrum, Tim Dawson

Participants: Zoning Official: Taylor Brill, Clerk: Haley Lupton

Visitors: John Houchard (Property Owner)

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Boyer Called the Meeting to Order at 6:31pm.

ROLL CALL

All members present

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve Design Review Board-Regular Meeting- January 27, 2021 by Ms. Iman, seconded by Mr. Rucker. Five yea votes, Mr. Dawson abstained.

SWEARING IN OF SPEAKERS

There are no speakers this evening.

COMMUNICATION

Ms. Brill shared that staff is working with OHM on the Zoning Code updates. This will include a steering committee that should include one representative from the Design Review Board. Mr. Boyer will participate on the steering committee.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

114 West Main Street, Plain City, Ohio: To allow HVAC Unit Installation on building facade. Applicant: John Houchard (Application #COA-21-2).

Mr. Houchard was sworn in by Mr. Boyer.

Ms. Brill shared a presentation on this application. The HVAC unit has already been installed and the property owner has received a building code and zoning code violation, due to the installation and the downspout location. The Building Department has done an inspection on the unit and approves the downspout now since it has been rerouted. The zoning citation is pending the review of the application.

Ms. Brill's presentation showed surrounding buildings and where they have their HVAC units. Other buildings have their HVAC units on the sides of the building. The new unit has been installed where the old unit was on the building in question.

Mr. Houchard would like to address the question of other options where the HVAC unit could be installed. The building has three units and a staircase. Historically, the unit on Chillicothe Street had a fireplace, a coal furnace, then a gas space heater. Mr. Houchard has been trying to bring the unit up to date but ran into some issues with the vents to the third story. Alternatively, there are alcoves on the other side of the building but getting the heat to the unit was not possible. The HVAC unit being installed where the air conditioner is seemed like the best and only fit. When the AC unit was removed, it created a 30"x20" opening in the brick wall. So, the HVAC unit being installed in the opening closed the gap and can heat the unit. Mr. Houchard did not realize a permit would be needed since he thought he was technically replacing the existing unit.

Mr. Dawson asked Mr. Houchard if he thought about installing the unit on the roof, instead of the side of the building. Mr. Houchard considered this but since the roof is not flat and the three stories would be hard to reach the unit. Even the lower, second story, part of the building has a sloped roof. Mr. Dawson noted that a neighboring business installed an HVAC unit on their roof, but Mr. Houchard did not see this as a practical solution for his building. The distance for the cable would be extended and requires turns.

Mr. Byrum asked Mr. Houchard if he had got any quotes for professional installation. Mr. Houchard has said Mr. Foust was on-site multiple times and his opinion for the most practical and efficient solution was to put the HVAC unit where the AC unit was. The roof was not considered due to impracticality.

Mr. Rucker had concerns about the drain. Mr. Houchard emphasized that the building inspector noticed that and has approved the new downspout connection.

Mr. Houchard does not have measurements on how much more the HVAC unit protrudes than the AC did. Ms. Iman noted that the platform makes the unit seem bigger than the AC unit as well. Mr. Houchard spoke about the fire escape and that it will probably be changed next. It could serve as a screening possibility for the unit. Lattice could also be installed around the unit. The unit could also be made the color of the building to reduce the appearance and is willing to take suggestions from the Board.

Mr. Boyer described the unit as a mini split remote unit and would prefer to have it reinstalled on the roof. A screening solution would add more attention and the HVAC unit is made to be installed in places other than the unit.

Mr. Dawson would think that the fire escape is not safe or useful and would prefer to install the HVAC unit on the roof. The current installation would set the precedent for future building reviews. Mr. Houchard would need to speak with a professional about roof installation and whether it would work. Ms. Iman agrees that roof installation should at least be explored and considered.

Mr. Byrum reiterated that a professional quote would be appreciated to determine feasibility of roof installation before he makes a decision.

Mr. Houchard requests that the application be tabled in order to explore other options.

Mr. Dawson asked if there was a way to get two HVAC contractor opinions on the installation. Mr. Houchard will talk to two contractors.

Mr. Rucker moved to table the application to the March meeting at the applicant's request, seconded by Mr. Dawson. Six yeas votes.

OTHER UPDATES

Mr. Dawson discussed his DRB request about the fire escape stair railings. Because of weather and time constraints, the metal railings could not be installed. He temporarily put up a wooden railing for the temporary occupancy permit. Mr. Dawson will get the paperwork to Ms. Brill and may request that the wooden one be kept up. He requested that DRB take a look at the railing and see what they think.

Meeting adjourned at 7:07pm.