

**Minutes
Historic Zoning Commission
Belle Meade City Hall
March 10, 2020**

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Mal Wall at 3:00pm

Commission members present

Chairman Mal Wall Gavin Duke Bunny Blackburn Ron Farris

Staff members present

Beth Reardon, City Manager Doug Berry, City Attorney
Lyle Patterson, Assistant City Manager and Building Official
Edie Glaser, City Recorder

Consideration of the Minutes

Minutes of the HZC Meeting held February 11, 2020

Motion to approve: Duke **Second:** Farris **Vote:** All aye

Old Business:

1. The application for a certificate of appropriateness for Province Builders, John Swift (20012), 1210 Nichol Lane for the demolition of existing home (Property of Conservation) and construct a new single family home.

Presentation: Chris Goldbeck with P. Shea Designs presented for Mr. Swift. We received the demolition permit at the January 14, 2020 HZC meeting and some feedback from the Board on the initial aesthetic design we presented. We took a step back and took the design in another direction from what we previously presented. It is now more of a French Provincial rather than a Federal Georgian style. The floor plan remains marginally unchanged from what had previously been presented. We have new hardcopies to give to the Board (Goldbeck handed to the Board members).

Duke asked if the changes were significant. Goldberg replied they have added an uncovered terrace on the front of the house and that the back porch is now deeper and narrower.

Farris asked the Board if they were interested in hearing the descriptions of the changes and offered to give his feedback on what he noted on the earlier design.

Wall commented this needs to be deferred because we don't need to be getting clouded drawings to consider for what is supposed to be resubmission.

Goldbeck asked if the Board could discuss the original design so that his client could proceed with those changes. Berry stated, the Commission can hear information about the old and new plans if they wish but would advise to not act on them until they have had time to review them.

Farris gave two comments on the previous plans.

1. Would like to see the grade at the front of the house and the front porch, addressed.

2. French Provincial is where you transition from the 14 and 12 pitch into the low 3 and 12 pitch. I want to make sure we understand how that transition occurs as far as composition and materials.

Farris added he would like to see material choices for the metal roof at the front porch and the side wing.

Duke commented the windows on the front elevation vary a lot from the back to rear. The windows at either side of the front door, the center bar, seems like it would be one window as opposed to two. Would be nice to see some examples of the center bar down the middle of the two sets.

Motion to defer: Duke **Second:** Blackburn **Vote:** All aye

2. The application for a certificate of appropriateness for Matt Bass, (20021), 429 Royal Oaks Drive for the demolition of existing home (Property of Conservation) and construct a new single-family home.

Presentation: Preston Shea with P. Shea Designs addressed the Commission. The demolition permit was granted on the existing home at the February 11, 2020 HZC meeting. We have some minor detail changes. We addressed the grade at the front elevation. We did not have drawings back from the surveyor, so we were unable to submit them in time. We are happy to pull it off of the Agenda. I was already attending the meeting so thought I could get some non-voting feedback primarily on the grade we raised about three steps off the front porch.

Blackburn, how many steps are there up to the front door now?

Shea, there are 3, about thirty inches, then the threshold into the house makes it about 34 to 35 inches.

Blackburn, didn't we defer this at the last meeting because we wanted to see a grading plan?

Duke, yes and we were going to see a topo and the possibility of a wall that brought you up from the motor court.

Motion to Defer: Duke **Second:** Wall **Vote:** All aye

New Business

1. The application for a certificate of appropriateness for Don Cochran (20031), 414 Ellendale Avenue, for the demolition of existing home (Property of Significance) and construct a new single family home.

Presentation: Mickey Batson and Chris Moran from G.P. Schafer Architects in New York, requesting demolition of the existing structure. There are a number of aesthetic and functional reasons that this house does not work with our client's current program and modern living. There are low ceilings, poor circulation, exterior and grade concerns. The construction is done in such a way that it has always experienced water concerns and issues with the grade. The grade slopes down to the house. There is deterioration of the house with the roof, the shingles, and the masonry. We are requesting to demolish this house and reconstruct something with more character and quality with a Southern Colonial Revival feel.

Blackburn, is the house compromised with the water issue?

Moran, there are moisture issues in the lower level of the house, but I do not know if there are structural compromise.

Blackburn, this house falls into the category of property of significance. There has been twenty nine houses torn down in Belle Meade in a year and a half, so it is very concerning. We are going to take a strong look at this because these are the homes we are trying most to protect.

Berry, properties that are constructed before 1939 are thought to be of significance. You would want to look at the architectural and historical qualities of significance. These are listed in page four of your guidelines.

Blackburn, I would like to know more about the structure of the house. How low are the ceilings?

Moran, the ceilings are eight feet.

Duke, are there any plans to preserve any of the materials?

Batson, we have discussed salvaging some of the brick although it's an expensive proposition but it's something we will certainly consider. We are proposing in the new design to paint the brick so perhaps we can use it as a site element or site wall something of that nature.

Wall, how long has the property been vacant?

Cochran, two years.

Blackburn, I think this house is situated well on the lot and a great house for renovation and I cannot support demolition.

Duke, I do feel if there is a nice quality home to replace it that meets the character of Belle Meade it should be considered.

Batson, the grading is certainly a non-debatable issue. There are major grading and site drainage concerns. I worry that the amount of grading we would have to do in order to make this even a viable repair or renovation would be much more extreme than what we are proposing to do.

Public Comments:

Mary Anne Blaufuss, 409 Sunnyside Drive, the house is in very poor condition. The owners occupied it for seventy years. The house was rented for two years and then has been vacant for two years. It is in very poor condition but there are some beautiful things about the property that should be considered in the new design in my opinion. There is a gate and a solid stone well on the property.

Wall, there are a number of 6ft and 8ft walls around this property. Are you going to keep these or take them down?

Moran, we are taking the walls down with the exception of the back wall separating the property line. The wall to the South will stay because it is the retaining wall.

Wall, what about the curved wall?

Jahley Rae with G.P. Schafer Architects, we are proposing to take this wall down because it is more interior to the property and you have the property line outside of it. Taking that wall down to replace with a clean 6ft wall for the pool enclosure on that side.

Patterson, I was in this home not too long ago and it is in pretty bad shape.

Blackburn, I want to preserve these older homes, but I am concerned with the water issues of this house and that the bricks are falling off.

Don Cochran, owner of the house at 414 Ellendale Avenue, I would just like to correct the record. We bought the house two years ago. The house was in bad shape when we bought it. It has been occupied by tenants until May 2019. The water flowed off of the hill into the back of the house where there is a tacked on sunporch that does not go with the design of the house.

The house has very low ceiling, only one bathroom on the second floor and even lower ceilings on the second floor. We hate to see the house torn down and looked into the possibility of renovating it. It is not feasible. We went to Gil Schafer the best architect we could find to design a house for us. I understand your looking at history, but I would also think you would look at what we are proposing to replace on the property. I feel like we have made a good will effort and worked very hard at a great expense to us to bring in architects that can build a beautiful house that looks like it has been there one hundred years. If you are familiar with Gil Schafer homes, you know what I am talking about.

Charles Thornburg, 1212 Nichol Lane, most of us have dealt with water since the 2010 flood. I am very sympathetic; I would not have bought that house because of how low it is to the grade. I would be more concerned on what is going to replace the home. If it was demolished and something better is put back up to me that is a win, win.

Farris, I don't see in looking through our list of what a property of significance is, that it is holding some of those characteristics. It does fall in the year range, but it lacks some of things that I would put at a very high bar. To my knowledge it is not the work of a master builder, designer, or architect. I feel if it was renovated it would completely mitigate any of it's redeeming values.

Wall, how do we get the message out to the builders, developers and homeowners that they need to build a case on why a home needs to come down? Duke, we can demolish this but need to have reassurance that the replacement will be built.

Blackburn, the water damage to me is important so I will reconsider based on that.

Motion to approve the demolition: Duke Second: Farris Vote: All aye

Christopher Moran with G. P Schafer Architects explained the new build to be a three bedroom, two story Colonial Revival, classic, symmetrical, with some Georgian features. Exterior is a painted brick with symmetrical pitch roof with wings on each side. Double hung windows painted traditional in character in keeping with what you see in Belle Meade.

There will be a two bay garage pavilion connected off one of the one story wings. Largely out of sight from the street. There are double bi folding shutters. The trim elements are cornice with shutter dogs.

The existing detached garage will remain. The downspouts will be copper.

The arched wall will be replicated and will go to the BZA. We are proposing to demo the curved walls.

Cochran, the previous owner's family requested for sentimental purposed the well. We have agreed to give them that feature. It is not a true well.

Motion to approve with the walls to remain as we discussed (the rear wall in the back of the property to remain, the side wall to remain due to it being retaining and the replication of the arched wall): Farris

Second: Blackburn Vote: All aye

2. The application for a certificate of appropriateness for El Jack Custom Home, LLC. (20032), 4310 Sunnybrook Drive, for the demolition of existing home (Property of Conservation) and construct a new single-family home.

Presentation: Mark Spivey with El Jack Custom Homes, we are proposing to demo existing structure and build a 4500 square foot cottage. Features of the house are a cedar shake roof on it, copper gutters, and full bed stone.

Wall, I went by the house and there is nothing terribly appealing about the existing house. It is a brutal lot.

Motion to approve demolition: Duke **Second:** Farris **Vote:** All aye

Wall began the discussions on the new single family home structure stating it has some of the same problems that River Oaks does. They jack the finish floor elevation up in order to get clearance underneath for a full height basement and it makes it look strange.

Duke, what style house is this?

Spivey, cottage style.

Duke, there is a lot of height with this roof.

Farris, my broad concern is that the level of detail at the dormers and porch massing and proportion do not match the example picture. If they did, I think we would be having a different conversation.

Wall, is there a reason for extending the brick all the way to the windowsill?

Duke, I would suggest working on the dormers to get those closer to the example you submitted.

Duke, there is no topo on the site plan, we would like to have one.

Farris, looks like the side set back might be a BZA matter. It has a 15 foot side set back shown. Think that is going to play into part of the grade of how the driveway and garage is entered. I don't think that 15 foot side set back would be in compliance.

Patterson, what is the width of the property?

Wall, it's one hundred feet. It is a little too far over.

Patterson, you can only go 20 percent of the width of the property to the left or to the right. Twenty feet is as far as you can go on the left side. The driveway has to be 5 feet off the property line.

Farris, I am prepared to make a motion to move for a deferral. I would like to see an application that complies with current code and ordinance. I like the example and at least in your front elevation has all the details we would be looking for. I would suggest picking a style and be very harmonious to that and stay in compliance to what you are showing us in your example pictures.

Motion for sixty day deferral: Farris **Second:** Wall **Vote:** All aye

3. The application for a certification of appropriateness for Chandelier development (20033), 100 Bellevue Drive South, for the demolition of existing home (Property of Significance) and construct a new single family home.

Presentation: Joel Lyons with Chandelier Development stated the house was built in 1933. This home was marketed as a tear down the seller would not allow to view the property. I have not been inside the house. The home has low ceilings and no HVAC.

Bunny, you have not been inside of it so I am not sure how you can say it's a tear down.

Berry, if someone other than the owner that is under contract and is asking for approval for demolition that is not unusual. If approved, it would be with the property and project not the person.

Blackburn, I went and looked at the house. It is in bad need of renovation, but the wood is not rotten, the bricks are not bowing, as far as the exterior of the house. I have not been on the inside of the house.
Patterson, I have three letters that have been submitted today concerning this property.

Public Comments

Laura Rhodes, 101 Bellevue Drive South, we live directly across the street. We have lived on the street for 23 years. This is a carriage street, it was part of the Belle Meade Plantation. This is a cool house and a house that I thought this Commission was formed to save. This house faces the Temple. I believe it was there before the Temple was built and faced Harding Road. I would love to see it stay and be renovated. Should it not stay and be demolished I do not like these plans. These plans look like a Green Hills type home. A pretty house but not very historic looking or the right scale to Belle Meade. There was another house on our street that was demolished and built by this same builder and the house is very out of place. I also submitted a letter. I am curious who built this house and am going to do some research on it.

Bunny, there are three letters from neighbors on the Street asking for this house to be preserved.

Sara Hall, 100 Bellevue Drive West, I do know the house on the inside is probably still the exact same way it was built. The kitchen is tiny. I'm sure the sunroom was not part of the original house and it not a thing of beauty. It is just a product of the time when it was built. There is a big magnolia on the lot. I have not seen the plans for the new built, but this house has never been brought up to date as other houses on the street. I would like to see a renovation rather than a tear down.

Farris, I make a motion to defer to give the applicant time to present his case. There is strict criteria we are going to evaluate on this. I would probably want to get on the property and see it. I don't necessarily have to get inside but would want to see the outside.

Wall, the developer needs the opportunity to present a case on why it needs to come down.

Motion to Defer sixty days: Farris Second: Duke Vote: All aye

Motion to adjourn 4:50pm: Wall Second: Duke Vote: All aye

Chairman Mal Wall

City Recorder Edie Glaser