

**SITE PLAN
and
APPEARANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE
MEETING NOTES
October 26, 2005**

Attendees:

Committee Members: Carolyn Brzezinski (Chair), James Wolinski, Dennis Marino, Walter Hallen, Rajeev Dahal, Paul D'Agostino, Arlova Jackson, Captain Dale Fochs, Tad Cook, Jill Chambers

Other Staff: Frank Aguado, Carlos Ruiz, Susan Guderley, Ingrid Eckersberg, Delores Holmes, Larry Widmayer, Chair of the Planning Commission

SPAARC 1708-1710 Darrow Avenue Pre-Application Conference
PD request for 27 dwelling unit multi-family building and 2,000 sq. ft. of retail space (also includes the 1805 Church Street property).

PROJECT REPRESENTED BY: Richard Koenig
Dennis Langley

GENERAL PROJECT PRESENTATION / DISCUSSION:

Richard Koenig, Executive Director of the Housing Opportunity Development Corporation introduced himself, the architect, Dennis Langley of Reese Langley Reese, his staff Michael Colon, and Tina Cress.

The location, of the project, is the northwest corner of Church Street and Darrow Avenue. Currently, the official address of 1805 Church Street is currently a vacant lot. Included are two houses at 1708 and 1710 Darrow, which goes all the way to the alley. They have been working with the Evanston Community Development Corporation for the past couple of years attempting to do a development at this site. They have decided to develop it into an affordable rental property. They are proposing to construct a 27 unit apartment building. The building will have a mix of one, two, and three bedroom apartments. All apartments will be affordable to low income families based on 60% of the area median income, depending on family size. The financing would enable them to keep the rents substantially below market rate/value. One bedroom apartments would be between \$500.00 and \$600.00 per month, two's between \$700.00 and \$800.00, and three's between \$800.00 and \$900.00. HUBC will operate as property management.

They will be working with ECDC to do screening of tenants eligible for the building. HODC has a building at 319 Dempster, 743 Brummel, and a couple of smaller buildings around Evanston. They currently manage 78 units in Evanston. They do affordable non profit housing throughout the northern suburbs, including Morton Grove, Highland Park, and several other areas. This project is slightly different from a typical affordable rental building. They anticipate a condominium conversion in fifteen (15) years. They plan, when affordability restrictions expire on the property, to sell the units as condominiums, to people living in those units at the time. They will do home buyers training classes to prepare people for home ownership. They anticipate selling the condominiums in fifteen years for approximately \$150,000.00, substantially below today's market value. This is an overview of the program, to keep the building affordable, viable, and help build wealth in the community. In reference to the condominium conversion in fifteen years, Mr. Koenig, stated they will have flexible structures, with one year leases, and right of first refusal to tenants, living in the units. Whoever is in the units after fifteen years will have the first right to buy. They will make allowances for the difference by making it cheaper for people who have been there longer. They cannot build a savings plan, but can structure how pricing works.

C. Brzezinski asked about eligibility and if tenants would have to move if not income eligible. Mr. Koenig stated that the project is financed by HUD Home \$, which will require that residents be income eligible when they move in. If they stay in the building, they will still be eligible if their income technically crosses that threshold of 120% of their medium income. Mr. Koenig pointed out 60%, of medium income, for a family of four would be \$45,000.00, the highest possible income of anyone living in the building.

Mr. Koenig stated they will accept Section 8 certificates, and do not discriminate against anyone. It may be possible for people with a Section 8 certificate to rent a unit. There will be units set aside at 60%, 50%, and even 30% of medium income. There will be a couple of affordable units available for two person households @ 30% of medium income, which is, \$18,000. There will be a mix of unit sizes, including, one, two, and three bedroom units. This mix will allow for both seniors and families. HODC will probably develop a lottery, depending on how applications come in, to select eligible tenants. HODC will perform tenant screening, credit checks, and home visits, to ensure people are eligible, while working with ECDC.

Architect, Dennis Langley explained the site plan as tight and very dense. The building is elevated over a portion of the parking, with the offset in the alley and residential area. The main entry, an elevator lobby, and service core is accessed from Church street. The community room has a service phone and can be used by the community for various functions. Parking is within the prescribed dimensions of the requirements. There are zoning issues related to the proposed set back. The project complies with the original setback requirements of the "B" district. The Landscape design is in development, and is slightly different than the site plan suggests.

They will plant some tree clusters on one side of the elevation, and if there is available money, they will bring landscaping around the corner to the front. The façade is articulated. The large “L” shaped windows will be living room areas where there will be more light. The bedroom areas have outside balconies with windows.

Placement of the windows and balconies is to encourage and allow for natural ventilation of the units. They are proposing to keep the masonry and stone articulation along the façade. Along the side elevation, a grid that matches the grid on the storefront will enclose the ground floor parking area. There are three floors of units, with ground floor parking and support, at about 39,000 sq. ft. total. It was suggested that the community room, the toilets and the entries be secured from the rest of the first floor so they can operate at a later hour. They hope ECDC will want an office there. They have a part time staff person and have discussed job training programs, or housing counseling work at the location. HODC will not have full time staff on site, however, they are working to include such things into the programming. There will be a laundry on the first floor with a common area, as well as washers and dryers provided in each unit.

Mr. Koenig stated they are doing landscaping on the Darrow side. The streets are paved from the property line, so there will be room for four (4) planters, and room for planting trees. There are thirty (30) proposed parking spaces underneath, which is not in compliance with zoning. In terms of water service, Mr. Koenig stated they will get by the combined sewer and get to the relief sewer, and their trash room/ trash shoot can be accessed form the parking garage. Staff, stated that their transformers, generators, and utility should be discreetly located on the site. The project plan is for open parking, not enclosed, so tenants will be able to see through one parking area into another, and onto the streets. There will be access from two locations of the building to the parking lot. The parking area will not be secured but will be well lit. Light will not spill onto adjacent areas. Mr. Koenig stated they anticipate condominium conversions at some point. Funding requirements require 20% of the units are fully adaptable and accessible, which will help in the market of elderly residents. They will be meeting with the community, and it was suggested they extend elevations down to neighborhood heights, and keep in mind energy efficiency. Staff asked if individuals will be paying their own utilities. Mr. Koenig stated they are seeking a grant from DECA with the State of Illinois to provide higher efficiency and mechanical energy star appliances, which has been done in the past for affordable housing projects. He said the point of the grant is to continue to make the properties affordable. That concluded the pre application conference.

SPAARC 325 Greenwood Street Recommendation to ZBA
Enclose a rear porch and install an AC condensing unit.

PROJECT REPRESENTED BY: Paul Janicki - Architect

GENERAL PROJECT PRESENTATION / DISCUSSION:

The Preservation Commission, has approved the enclosure of the porch, located, in a historical district, and a favorable recommendation for the zoning was made. They are doing improvement throughout the house, of a late Queen Anne brick house, at 325 Greenwood. Improvements are being done throughout the house. They want to enclose a rear 4' x 4' post porch, and make it a room/vestibule/air lock. The renovations will mimic the dormers, which are split face, shingles, and Queen Anne diamond pattern, upper sash with double hung windows, and match the railing on the front of the house.

Because of the configuration of the site, there is only one legal place to put an air conditioner connector, which would be in the middle of the back yard. Mr. Janicki proposed to locate it according to the site plan. Using a narrow carrier air conditioner, they have to go 8' from the building, although they will still be 8' from the lot line, which is in violation of the ten foot setback required by the zoning ordinance. Mr. Janicki is getting letters from all three neighbors; however, one of the neighbors is concerned about decibels. They investigated the decibels and discovered the units are very quiet. 64 decibels and Mr. Janicki stated there will be two units, one for the attic, and the other for the basement.

The top of the stairs will lean into the porch. A new bulkhead will be on the other side, and they are mimicking the light that is on the front porch. Mr. Janicki said his neighbor on the east side of him does not have central air and he does not know about the other two. Arlova confirmed they received one letter of support for the project.

There was a Motion to recommend approval to the ZBA. It was 2nd, and approved unanimously.

SPAARC 930 Pitner Avenue Final Approval
Convert existing space into 12 office condominium units. (film studio)

PROJECT REPRESENTED BY: Andy Spatz

GENERAL PROJECT PRESENTATION / DISCUSSION:

The subject property's dimensions are 185' x 120'. Mr. Spatz stated that it contains three buildings from the middle fifties: two bow string warehouses, and one two-story steel frame. The project is presently in for permit, and they have a permit for interior demolition. The units are under contract. The loading dock, at one time was a depressed short loading berth. The loading dock is now the entrance for unit six. The berth is in the back, per the ordinance. The building originally had ten parking spaces, as opposed to the, now twelve or thirteen on one side of the alley.

Mr. Spatz, stated they are asking for one curb cut. He brought in photos to show his neighbors all have anywhere from two to four curb cuts. In reference to the truck loading zone, businesses can load from the street.

Mr. Spatz explained it's a easier to pull the truck inside the facility than to take stuff out and walk it across the concrete.

Without the curb cuts, that is what they will have to do, stated Mr. Spatz. The parking lot is shared, and the property's line runs down the center of the road. Staff questioned a more street parking to get parking for ONLY one unit.

Mr. Spatz emphasized that is the idea, however they will also have parking in the lot and parking for staff. He stated that all unit owners park in a specific area and for tenants on the second floor, they have to walk a distance.

D. Marino stated he has worked in this neighborhood in the past five years. His experience is there is not a parking problem in the immediate area. He pointed out the problem was with abandoned buses and trucks. Staff suggested the parking across the street from the property is being ignored.

Mr. Spatz stated he has to have a loading berth for the entire building. That the problem they are having is the ordinance is written a certain way, but their use is different from the intent of the ordinance. He emphasized these are individual units, not shared. Because of the separate entrance, some tenants cannot access the loading berth. According to zoning, the loading berth is for the entire building, and the loading berth has to meet the zoning requirements. One building, one property, and one loading berth is required. In terms of streetscape changes, the parking lot area will be planted with a low ornamental grass. They will remove overgrown ones, trim everything up, clean off the front, preserve three trees that are there, and leave some of the yews. They will clean up the corner and the bench.

R. Dahal questioned the projecting panels on one side of the elevation, from a concept of being able to see. He also questioned whether the curb cut is for one unit only.

Mr. Spatz said yes, to the first half of question, and stated curb cut is for two units, which is owned by one owner. The square footage is approximately 3,300. One unit does not extend back to the alley. There are no residential units. There are no garages. The garage is for storage and unused equipment, etc. It is for ease of loading and unloading equipment. They are using stock, insulated residential grade garage doors, insulated with a metal skin and painted it a colour matched to the perforated metal. The frequency of delivery will be two or three times a week.

Although C. Brzezinski stated this is a great project, she questioned allowing a curb cut that would give up a street spot. She asked why they should approve that.

Mr. Spatz stated they wanted to add a parking space inside but was advised not to because it created other problems. He pointed out the other businesses curb cuts, and the unfairness of it, since there was no ordinance for curb cuts before.

