



MEMO

To: J.M. Rayburn
Planner I, City of Dublin

From: Christine Trebellas, AICP, LEED Green Associate
Historic Preservation Consultant

Date: July 16, 2016

Re: Application #16-05, 30 & 32 S. High St.

SUMMARY

The application consists of two properties located at 30 and 32 S. High Street in Dublin, Ohio. They are currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Dublin High Street Historic District. This locally significant historic district runs along both sides of High Street from 6 High Street to 126 High Street and contains approximately 18 contributing structures. It was listed on the National Register in 1979 for significant contributions to the areas of architecture, commerce, and exploration/settlement from 1880 to 1925. The properties are also part of the Ohio Historic Inventory.

The structure considered for demolition is located at 30 S. High Street and contains a wood-frame structure which appears to date to ca. 1900. This report will concentrate on that property. According to photographs and the Ohio Historic Inventory, the original structure was a log cabin dating to around 1850. It is one of the few remaining log buildings in Dublin. Despite several additions and alterations, it still retains the log structure under the exterior siding as well as several character-defining features which reflect the growth of the historic High Street area over the years. Although the structure may be in poor condition by today's standards, it is unclear from the information presented if the building can be renovated to an inhabitable level and/or can have a practical use. As such, I would **NOT** recommend demolition of this historic structure until additional information is provided. There are still several outstanding issues and questions that need to be addressed.

The summary below is provided to make recommendations which should be addressed before an application for demolition is approved for the building at 30 S. High Street and is based upon this reviewer's understanding of Section 153.176 Demolition of the City of Dublin Zoning Code. These comments are based on the reviewer's professional experience and judgment regarding historic architecture and preservation projects. They are intended to assist in the preparation and evaluation of a revised demolition application. However, these comments do not (and cannot) identify every issue that may be of concern to the City of Dublin and its various review boards. As always, the final determination of these issues lies with the City of Dublin.

INTRODUCTION

The property at 30 S. High Street is located in the Historic Core Bridge Street District in the City of Dublin. On the exterior, it appears to be a ca. 1900, one-and-a-half story, side-gable metal-roof, wood-frame structure with asbestos siding (It was built in 1900 according to the Franklin County Auditor). The building has rectangular plan with a rear wood-frame shed-roof addition. Closer examination reveals a ca. 1850 log structure under the asbestos siding. Some of the exterior alterations, such as the shed-roof front dormer, rear shed roof addition, and standing seam metal roof, contribute to the character of the historic district and represent the growth of the area from early exploration to early 20th-century commerce. Based on current information, I would still consider the building a **contributing** structure to the National Register-listed historic district. Even though it has lost some integrity of materials and workmanship as a result of the asbestos siding, it still has good integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, and association. Its status as one of the few remaining log cabins in Dublin further contributes to its importance to the area. I would recommend that the City of Dublin Planning Department request a draft report from the historic district survey currently underway to help in the planning and evaluation process.

COMMENTS ON THE APPLICATION SUBMITTAL

Based on the existing data presented in the demolition package, I would **not recommend demolition** until additional information is submitted to fully evaluate the condition and potential of the log cabin structure. According to Section 153.176 Demolition of the City of Dublin Zoning Code, an applicant must demonstrate economic hardship, unusual or compelling circumstances, or two out of four of the following conditions must be met:

1. The structure contains no features of architectural and historic significance to the character of the area in which it is located.

Bass Studio Architects (agent for the applicant) focuses on the original rough-hewn wood-frame structure and does not recognize the layers of historic development in the building and in the district. It is unreasonable to assume that a log cabin would stay in its original condition for over 150 years without some additions or alterations that reflect other periods of history. One cannot just focus on the log cabin portion of the building without recognizing other less significant, yet still historic additions. Nor is it reasonable to assume that the structure is only significant if the rough-hewn wood-frame portion is restored. The structure still contains features of architectural and historic significance and as such, this condition is not fully met.

2. There is no reasonable economic use for the structure as it exists or as it might be restored, and that there exists no feasible or prudent alternative to demolition.

The applicant states that the “maintaining the log structure would severely restrict the size and type of spaces, interior continuity, and street presence for this property.” According to their report, the log structure has low ceilings prohibitive for contemporary dining space, small spaces, and a closed structure with limited windows and doors. These elements make it difficult, if not prohibitive, to rehabilitate the log cabin into a modern bar or restaurant. They also argue that the inflexible character of the log structure as well as its size and location inhibit the development of the project. However, no analysis is given to how the structure may be

developed in other ways. Could it be used as a small dining or gathering room attached to a larger structure? How low are the ceilings? Notching in the logs indicate that the ceilings may have been higher at one time and later lowered to inhabit the upper story (Photo 4). Before the applicant can state that there is no economic use for the property, thorough analyses of potential options need to be explored. Just because the property is not suitable to their proposed development plan does not mean that it has no potential. And although Bass Studio Architects states that the property has no street presence since the main entry is to the side of the structure, the proposed patio will create a worse situation with a void along the street in the winter months. As such, this criterion is not met.

3. Deterioration has progressed to the point where it is not economically feasible to restore the structure and such neglect has not been willful.

It appears that the applicant recently obtained the property on October 9, 2015 (Franklin County Auditor property report) so such deterioration was not willful. However, neither Bass Studio Architects' report nor the engineer's report fully addresses the economic feasibility of restoring the log structure. Jezerinac Geers (the structural engineer) states that the overall condition of the structure is satisfactory to poor. The walls and floor have shifted, which is common for older structures with locally sourced logs and wood that was not fully dried before use. The basement made of local stone is in poor condition with a significant amount of erosion and shifting. Again, this is also not unusual considering the age of the structure. While the engineer believes that "the amount of work needed to restore the basement to a sound condition would be extensive and invasive to the point that it may call into questions the stability of the log cabin above," no analysis is given of how this structure could be restored and the costs associated with it. The local stone foundation is a character-defining feature of the building and should be preserved, if possible, along with the rest of the log structure. Ideally, a consultant with expertise in log cabin construction techniques and restoration should examine the building to determine the extent of the deterioration and propose possible restoration methods. A thorough cost analysis should be prepared to determine the economic feasibility of restoring one of the few remaining log structures in Dublin.

Moreover, Jezerinac Geers' report does not state that the log structure is not sound or at risk for structural failure. Nor has the building been condemned by a government authority. Thus, it is unclear if it can be restored or needs to be demolished. And until more information is provided by a contractor or other consultant familiar with historic log cabin construction and renovations, we cannot fully determine the economic feasibility of renovating the structure. As such, this criterion is not met.

4. The location of the structure impedes the orderly development, substantially interferes with the purposes of the district, or detracts from the historical character or its immediate vicinity; or, the proposed construction to replace the demolition significantly improves the overall quality of the Architectural Review District without diminishing the historic value of the vicinity or the District.

Bass Studio Architects argues that the new development (a patio and cottage-like addition to 32 High Street) will improve the overall quality of the Historic Core Bridge Street District by

activating the space and creating an interesting pedestrian area and vibrant threshold to the Bridge Street corridor. However, demolishing one of the few remaining log structures in Dublin would have an adverse effect and diminish the overall historic value of the district. And, as mentioned earlier, the proposed patio would create a void, barren space along the street in winter months and not contribute to the overall quality of the district.

And while the applicant states that the log structure cannot easily be woven into an integrated design large enough to be economically viable, they have not presented a thorough analysis to prove this point. There are no alternatives offered except demolition. There are neither cost estimates nor income forecasts. Again, just because the current log building does not meet the developer's need is not a justification for demolishing this National-Register listed structure. Moreover, demolishing it and replacing it with a new structure would detract from the historic district and reduce the overall quality of the district. It would be replacing an original with a substitute and provide a false sense of history. As such, this criterion for demolition is not met.

In addition to not meeting two of the four conditions listed above for demolition, the applicant has not demonstrated economic hardship or unusual or compelling circumstances. Nowhere in the application does it state the economic necessity for demolishing the structure after all prudent and feasible alternatives have been explored. Cost estimates for the log cabin's restoration and a detailed comparison of the new work proposed by the applicant to restoration costs could provide the evidence needed for this hardship. The analysis and cost estimates for restoration versus new construction need to be prepared by an architect, engineer, and/or contractor with substantial experience in historic property restoration as opposed to new construction. The consultant must be familiar with historic properties and building techniques to determine what can be reasonably restored and what needs to be replaced. Income forecasts comparing the current potential of the property to similar properties in the area could also help provide evidence of economic hardship. An analysis of other uses for the property, their economic feasibility, and their income potential would be helpful as well. With so many outstanding issues, I recommend that further documentation be provided before the demolition application is approved or denied.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

The city may want to impose a waiting period for demolition until more information can be obtained and analyzed. The applicant should make every reasonable effort to find an alternative to demolition. This log structure is one of the few remaining log buildings in Dublin and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. As such, demolition should be the last option after all other avenues have been evaluated.

The log structure is covered with what appears to be asbestos siding. It is also of an age where it may contain lead paint, insect or other pest infestations, and/or biological contaminants such as bat or bird guano, feces, urine, or mold. Any renovation costs should include estimates and a description of the method for the remediation of these potentially hazardous materials by a licensed contractor who specializes in remediation.

To get a better understanding of the interior condition of the log structure, more photographs are needed. These photographs should be in color, taken in every room of the building, and

keyed to a floor plan indicating the angle of the shot. Ideally, each room should have four photographs (or more) from each angle of the room to get a clear understanding of the layout and condition of the structure. Areas of deterioration need additional documentation; a ruler or tape measure would help provide scale. Video could also be used to show interior conditions.

If demolition is approved for a structure, is there a required timeframe for new development and/or construction to occur? I would want to discourage demolition of a structure in a historic district to have the lot unused and undeveloped. This could encourage land speculation and create bare areas in the urban fabric which would detract from the overall character of the historic district.

The building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. As such, it has some protection from development projects (in part or wholly) funded by federal or state government agencies. Any developer needs to be aware of these restrictions since it will impact development plans.

73 South Riverview Street (OHI # FRA-8812-1):

The building at 73 South Riverview (OHI # FRA-8812-1) is a one-and-one-half-story, front-gable, bungalow-type single family dwelling with a vernacular architectural style. According to the Franklin County Auditor's Office, the house was constructed in 1936. The house has an asphalt-shingle roof with eyebrow dormer vents on the north and south roof slopes and an internal chimney located toward the southwest corner of the house. The exterior walls of the house are clad in vinyl siding with a projecting bay window on the south elevation. The windows for the dwelling appear to be three-over-one wood-frame units protected by one-over-one modern storm windows. An enclosed, hipped-roof porch supported by square wood columns with aluminum-frame jalousie windows shelters the entrance on the east elevation. The house occupies an irregular footprint, and the original portion of the house rests on a rusticated concrete-block foundation while the rear addition to the house rests on a plain concrete-block foundation. To the west of the house is a two-car, front-gable garage with a standing-seam metal roof, wood siding, and a shed-roof addition in a deteriorated condition.

The house appears to retain a good level of integrity, and although the house does not appear to be individually eligible for the National Register, it does appear to contribute to the Dublin Historic District. The contributing characteristics that the dwelling retains includes its modest height (less than three stories tall), its vernacular architectural style, space between its neighboring buildings allowing for open views of the surrounding neighborhood, an easily visible chimney, a landscaped yard, and an older outbuilding located behind the house. Although the house does not have a standing-seam metal roof and its siding material has been replaced, Commonwealth recommends that 73 South Riverview Street continues to contribute to the historic district.

30 South High Street (OHI # FRA-2445-1):

The building at 30 South High Street (OHI # FRA-2445-1) is a one-and-one-half-story, side-gable, vernacular-style building used for commercial purposes. Although the Franklin County Auditor's Office records a construction date of 1960 for this building, additional resources and the building itself suggests a construction date of ca. 1840. The building has a standing-seam metal roof with a shed wall dormer on its west slope and an exterior chimney off the ridgeline on the south elevation of the building. The exterior walls are clad in asbestos siding, and the windows are two-over-two wood-frame units. According to records provided by the city of Dublin, the building is a log-frame structure. The building occupies a generally rectangular footprint and rests on a stone foundation reinforced with concrete.

The building appears to retain a good level of integrity, and while the building does not appear to be individually eligible for the National Register, it does appear to contribute to the Dublin Historic District. The contributing characteristics retained by the building include its modest height (less than three stories tall), its vernacular architectural style, an older-style standing-seam metal roof, a readily visible chimney, a landscaped parcel with space allowing for views of the surrounding neighborhood, and its stone foundation, although that foundation has been reinforced with concrete. Commonwealth recommends that 30 South High Street continues to contribute to the historic district.

32 South High Street (OHI # FRA-2587-1):

The building at 32 South High Street (OHI # FRA-2587-1) is a one-story, false-front, commercial building, which is currently vacant. Although the Franklin County Auditor's Office records a construction date of 1960 for this building, additional resources and the building itself suggests a construction date of ca. 1840. The main portion of the building has a front-gable roof covered by standing-seam metal with a false-front storefront on its west elevation. The exterior wall of the west elevation of the false-front storefront is clad in shiplap wood siding, while the remainder of the original portion of the building has board-and-batten siding. The storefront features two wood-framed display windows, while the remaining windows appear to be two-over-two wood-frame units. While the original portion of the building occupies a rectangular footprint and rests on a stone foundation, a rear gable addition, with an exterior chimney on its southwest corner, rests on a concrete-block foundation. A small older style front-gable shed is located to the east of the building.

According to a plaque attached to the building, the building is listed on the National Register. The building appears to retain a good level of integrity, despite being vacant and currently having its interior gutted. The building does not appear to be individually eligible for the National Register, but it does appear to contribute to the Dublin Historic District. The contributing characteristics retained by the building include its modest height (less than three stories tall), its vernacular architectural style, an older-style standing-seam metal roof, a readily visible chimney, its stone foundation, a landscaped parcel with space allowing for views of the surrounding neighborhood, and an older outbuilding behind the main building. Commonwealth recommends that 32 South High Street continues to contribute to the historic district.

30 South High Street Supporting Photos:



Photo 1- Foundation wall has fallen away at the base



Photo 2- Additional foundation stones falling away



Photo 3- Additional photo of foundation damage



Photo 4- Exposed cabin logs, will require rethinking.



Photo 5- The cabin has little activation of the street edge, only two small windows. The entry is removed from the street on the North of the building.



Photo 6- Rear of the 32 S High Building, note the later addition that hides the central cabin.

32 South High Street Supporting Photos:



Photo 1- Main room of 32 South High Street which will be turned into the primary dining room for the new restaurant.



Photo 2- Insect damage on some structural studs, there appears to be no active insects at this time.



Photo 3- Existing roof framing will require some reframing and alterations to meet or exceed modern building code.



Photo 4- Basement foundation will require some repairs

Historic stone wall and mature tree photos:



Photo 1- Historic stone wall with associated mature tree line to remain in place.
Small outhouse building to be removed.