

MELROSE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, June 11, 2024
7:00 PM
Cassidy Conference Room
City Hall, 562 Main Street

PRESENT: Richard Curl, Kevin Erb, Lindsay Toghill & Robert Tullis

ABSENT: Michael Coleman, Chair

Lori Massa, Senior Planner, was present.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Mr. Curl, Acting Chair.

I. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Tullis made a motion to approve the April 9, 2024 meeting minutes. Mr. Erb seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed.

II. Applications for Certificate of Appropriateness

562 Main Street, City of Melrose (Public Hearing)

Elena Proakis Ellis, DPW Director, and Jay McNeil, Facilities Manager, appeared to present the case for the front door replacement of City Hall. The front door of City Hall on the Essex Street side of the building is in poor condition. It needs to be replaced as it is beyond repair. The door frame and hardware will also be replaced. The door will be solid (not veneer) African mahogany with a glass top lite and raised bottom panel, per the submitted drawing. This is the same door that the Commission approved in 2021 for one of the basement doors of City Hall.

The front door handle will include a fob reader so that staff can use the door for after-hours access. The standard door handle specification submitted was replaced with one that includes this technology. The metal frame will be wrapped in wood. The window above the door is not proposed to change.

Commission members discussed the type of wood being proposed and questioned whether oak would be a better choice considering that some of the existing doors appear to be red oak. The preference is for all of the exterior City Hall doors to match. Ms. Proakis Ellis explained that the doors were proposed to be solid mahogany because the Commission requested that the basement door was solid wood and not aluminum as was originally proposed. Mahogany is the wood least likely to warp. The locks on the doors have programable and fob reading technology and it is critical that there is no warping so that the locks work reliably.

Members discussed how a wood species from the same supplier can have different colors and doors installed at different times will have different colors due to wear from the elements. In this case, the same stain that was applied to the new basement door will be applied to the front doors at the factory. Since the doors of City Hall are not next to each other, if there is a small difference in color, it will not be noticeable. Mr. McNeil said that the doors will be maintained and will be re-stained when needed, which will help to preserve their consistent appearance.

A member noted that the 5-inch threshold size may not work and should be remeasured.

No one from the public appeared to speak about the case.

After discussion the Commission members did not have any issues with the proposed door replacement as presented with conditions.

Ms. Toghill made a motion to approve the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the front door replacement at City Hall as described in the application materials and with the following conditions.

1. All the new door's hardware will have an oil-rubbed bronze finish.
2. Future door replacements at City Hall will follow the same material, color and style with solid mahogany and oil rubbed bronze exterior hardware.

Mr. Erb seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Application for Certificate of Appropriateness

523-535 Main Street, Theodore Lantzakis (Public Hearing)

Teddy Lantzakis, property owner, and Charles Cochrane, Architect, appeared to present the case for façade renovations including residing the façade with clapboards and trim, replacing existing openings with a new door and storefront window, and adding a new cap for flashing in the rear of 523-535 along Eastman Place, per the submitted drawing. The purpose of the work is so that the space can be used by a commercial tenant. The space was previously used in connection with the hardware store with the primary storefront on Main Street. The door on the left-hand side provides egress for another commercial space in the building.

No one from the public appeared to speak about the case.

The Commission members discussed the following issues with the proposal. The vinyl siding is not a quality material and should be replaced with either wood or a composite clapboard siding. The windows look too residential and should be longer with a lower sill so that the space reads as a commercial space and a future retail tenant has visibility. Members brought up that exterior lighting will be needed and that the soffit is not in good shape and should be addressed. The existing metal door should be painted and the trim should all have a consistent color. They felt that they could place conditions on their approval that would address these issues.

Mr. Curl made a motion to approve the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for façade renovations as described in the application materials and with the following conditions.

1. The clapboard will be wood or a solid (not hollow) composite material such as Azek or Hardie.
2. The storefronts windows will be taller, with the head aligning with the doors and a sill that is within 12 to 16 inches of the base of the building.
3. The soffit material will be replaced with a material, v-groove or other solid board, other than plywood.
4. For exterior lighting, four down-lit fixtures will be installed – one over each door and two over the storefront window so that the façade is consistently lit.
5. The existing metal door will be painted.
6. The head casing trim of all openings will align to create a level and consistent horizontal band.
7. The trim on the building will be a consistent color.

Ms. Toghill seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Application for Certificate of Appropriateness

III. Other

Mr. Erb made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Toghill seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.