

APPROVED

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW COMMITTEE  
Special Meeting Monthly Meeting No. 302  
Tuesday, September 9, 2008**

**MINUTES**

This special meeting of the Historic Preservation Review Committee (HPRC) was convened at 7:30 PM in the Multi-Purpose Conference Room in Borough Hall. Jeanne Perantoni opened the meeting in accordance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, Section 5, Chapter 231, P.L. 275 by reading the following statement:

In conformance with the requirements of the Law, Notice was provided of the date, time and location of this regular meeting by posting a copy of the adopted Schedule of Regular Meetings in the Borough Hall, by mailing copies to the Trenton Times, Princeton Packet, and by filing a copy in the Office of the Clerk of Princeton Borough. Adequate notice was provided to the public and to all parties concerned.

**PRESENT:** James Constantine, Jane Faggen, William Howard, Nora Kerr, Jeanne Perantoni, Carolyn Robertson, Celia Tazelaar and Kirsten Thoft

**ABSENT:** Regan Tudor

**ALSO PRESENT:** Derek Bridger, Historic Preservation Review Officer; Danielle A. Britton, Recording Secretary

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The draft Minutes of July 9, 2008, Meeting Number 300 were reviewed. J. Perantoni moved to approve minutes as amended. W. Howard seconded and motion was approved unanimously.

**ADMINISTRATIVE WAIVERS**

**Southern Side of Nassau Street from University Place to Washington Road  
Princeton University Trustees/ Applicant  
CBD Zone, Central Historic Overlay Zone  
Sidewalk Replacement  
Approved-June 3, 2008-Jeanne Perantoni**

**344 Nassau Street, Block: 32.01, Lot: 214  
Coolvines/Mark Censits/ Applicant  
NB Zone/Jugtown Historic District Overlay Zone  
Main and Directory Sign Request  
Approved- July 22, 2008-Jeanne Perantoni**

## APPROVED

**42 Witherspoon Street, Block: 20.01, Lot: 87  
Green Design/Tim McNulty/Applicant  
CBD Zone/Central Historic Overlay Zone  
Main Business Sign Request  
Approved-July 22, 2008- Jeanne Perantoni**

**15 Edwards Place, Block: 41.01, Lot: 62  
Eitan Webb/Applicant  
R4 Zone/Mercer Hill Historic Overlay District  
Fence Request  
Approved-July 29, 2008- Jeanne Perantoni**

**23-25 Witherspoon Street, Block: 27.01, Lot: 7  
La Mezzaluna Restaurant/ Applicant  
CBD Zone/Central Central Historic Overlay Zone  
Main Business Sign Request  
Approved-August 19, 2008- Jeanne Perantoni**

**33 Witherspoon Street, Block: 27.01, Lot: 9  
Kinlin Group GMAC Real Estate/Applicant  
CBD Zone, Central Historic Overlay District  
Main business sign request  
Approved-September 9, 2008-Jeanne Perantoni**

**34 Bank Street, Block 19.01, Lot 43  
Adam and Lauren Bauser Owner/Applicant  
R-4 Zone/Bank Street Historic Overlay District  
Main business sign request  
Approved-September 9, 2008-Jeanne Perantoni**

**4 Nassau Street, Block 19.01, Lot 2  
2-4 Nassau LLC Owner/Applicant  
CBD Zone/Central Historic Overlay District  
Replacement of existing wood brackets with identical bracket constructed of  
synthetic material  
Approved-September 9, 2008-Jeanne Perantoni**

## HEARINGS

**25 Library Place, Block 37.01, Lot 14  
Princeton Theological Seminary/Applicant & Owner  
Renovation and Expansion of Princeton Theological Seminary Bicentennial Library  
E1 & E2 Zone/Mercer Hill Historic Overlay Zone  
Concept Site Plan Review  
Historic Preservation Plan Review**

In attendance for review of the concept site plan/historic preservation plan application for the

## APPROVED

applicant were: Mr. Steve Crocco, Princeton Theological Seminary (PTS) Librarian; Mr. David Fixlar, Architect; Mr. John Gilmour, PTS Senior Vice President; Mr. German Martinez, PTS Director of Facilities; and Ms. Ann Reichelderfer, Attorney.

Derek Bridger read from his staff report, dated August 27, 2008, and provided a brief summary of the proposed development on the subject property. In 1992, the applicant was granted site-plan approval to construct a four-level (three above grade) 42,610 square-foot addition to the Luce library, located at the northwestern corner of the subject lot. The existing Speer library was connected via a bridge to the remodeled Luce library. This project was completed in 1993.

The proposed concept-plan calls for the demolition of the Speer Library and construction of a new 98,000 square-foot addition. The new addition will feature a basement connection with Luce Library, a new courtyard, and a high-density storage book stack. A café for library patrons is proposed on the Mercer Street elevation. The height of the new building would be three stories or 59 feet 6 inches. The height of the structure is stepped down to two stories along Library Place. The existing tower located on the northeastern corner of the Luce Library will remain. The subject property is located in the E1 and E2 zoning districts and is subject to the Mercer Hill Historic District Overlay Zone. D. Bridger noted that an actual historic survey of the library was never done but it is referenced in the street surveys conducted in the 1980 Historic Survey for both Mercer Street and Library Place.

The applicant's proposed demolition of the Speer Library must be reviewed in the context of the Historic Preservation ordinance Section 17A-193A of the Borough of Princeton Land Use Ordinance. The ordinance requires that the applicant illustrate that the replacement development will conform to the standards and criteria set forth in Section 17A-193A or that the building cannot be put to a reasonable use and its preservation will impose an undue hardship on the applicant.

Carolyn Robertson commented that the Speer Library is over fifty years old and that its prominent location at the center of the Mercer Hill Historic District in close proximity to the Einstein house and Morven qualified the structure as a contributing historic resource to the Mercer Hill Historic Overlay Zone. C. Robertson noted that Robert B. O'Connor and Walter Kilham, the same firm that designed the Firestone Library at Princeton University, designed the interior of the Speer Library. C. Robertson stated that the Mercer Hill Historic District is listed on both the National and New Jersey Register of Historic Places.

There were in-depth discussions by the Committee regarding the proposed demolition of a contributing historic structure within a historic district and the protocol and the proof of hardship necessary to permit a demolition. C. Tazelaar inquired if there have ever been a historic structure within a historic district demolished on record since the inception of the historic preservation ordinance. D. Bridger responded that he was unaware of any other demolitions within an historic district. The Committee noted the precedent the proposed demolition might have in this and other historic districts. The Committee suggested that the Borough Attorney review the demolition portion of the historic preservation ordinance to determine if it could be strengthened.

## APPROVED

Mr. Stephen Crocco, the James Lenox Librarian for the Princeton Theological Seminary, addressed the Committee and provided background information on the evolution of the Princeton Theological Seminary's library. The Seminary grew out of Princeton University and the Presbyterian Church USA in 1812. There have been six libraries since the Seminary's inception including one at the Archibald Cox house, the Lenox Library, the Speer, and Luce Library addition. The PTS library is one of the largest theological libraries in the world.

S. Crocco noted that the changing field of library science in the last twenty years is largely due to the great technological changes that have taken place. S. Crocco voiced the need for additional bookshelf capacity and noted that the library receives approximately 15,000 books annually. The existing space within the Speer library does not provide capacity for additional books. The Seminary is one of the largest theological schools in the world and its library should reflect a higher capacity of book space and amenities.

S. Crocco addressed the changing nature of libraries and commented on the "Barnes and Nobelization" of libraries and how they have become gathering places featuring comfortable seating and coffee bars. The modern interior renovations and upgrades are essential to the way students' study and research in libraries. Modern interior renovations and upgrades are vital to the way students' study and conduct research in libraries.

S. Crocco spoke of the physical limitations of the Speer library and explained that most of the building's systems are nearing the end of their natural life. The low ceilings and antiquated physical layout of the existing building make it difficult to adaptively reuse the building. Further, currently it is difficult to allow natural light to enter the structure.

S. Crocco introduced Mr. David Fixlar, Architect, with the firm of Einhorn, Yaffee Prescott Architecture & Engineering, P.C., Boston, Massachusetts. D. Fixlar presented a power-point presentation and discussed the reasons for the demolition of the Speer library and the proposed development. D. Fixlar stated he is a "Preservationist" who is interested in and sensitive toward the conservation of historic buildings. He described the Speer as a contributing structure to the historic district and deemed it a 'workmanlike' building. However, he observed that preservation is about managing change and doing what is right for the institution and the community. PTS investigated expanding the existing Speer Library but it was their opinion that such an approach was not feasible.

D. Fixlar summarized the shortcomings of the Speer Library as follows:

- inadequate structural capacity
- inadequate ceiling height for new mechanical systems
- the existing building does not address the campus divide
- renovation of the existing structure cannot fully address programmatic shortcomings

D. Fixlar spoke of the reorientation of the proposed new library, which is set back further than

## APPROVED

the Speer Library to accommodate and reduce the presence of the larger proposed library. The location of the building was also designed to better relate to the Seminary campus located on the other side of Mercer Street. James Constantine raised the question of whether the proposed landscape changes would introduce an entirely new landscape to the existing streetscape. D. Fixlar responded that the proposal is a concept review and the landscaping features were still in the planning stage and not set in stone.

D. Fixlar noted in his presentation that materials from the existing building would be saved and recycled as much as possible, and that only one tree would be removed within the proposed development. The height of the proposed library is stepped down to two stories along Library Place. The new library would be designed to have a life span of 100 years. The exterior of the proposed building consists of limestone and relates to the existing stonework present on the Luce Library. The Committee expressed concern about the effect of light at night on the adjacent properties. D. Fixlar explained that the windows were designed to allow light in during the day and prevent spillage at night. The proposed roof design is a butterfly-style roof as opposed to a flat roof. D. Fixlar described the proposed cafe located on the Mercer Street façade and noted that it would not have any cooking facilities. The possibility of opening the café to the outdoors during nice weather was also discussed. D. Bridger expressed concern that the café's highly visible location might attract visitors from outside the library. D. Bridger noted that the ordinance only permitted dining halls and that additional variance relief might be required if the café's use intensified.

The Committee stressed the need for appropriate evidence as to special reasons for a demolition of a historic structure versus an adaptive reuse, and requested additional information with regard to a cost analysis and feasibility analysis supporting demolition of the subject building. The Committee discussed the precedent-setting nature that such a demolition could have not only on the Mercer Hill District but other historic districts as well.

The Committee entered into discussion with the applicant and expressed concern about the proposed new structure and its affect on the existing streetscape. The concerns centered on the height, massing and size of the new building as well as the changes to the hardscape and campus pallet. There was discussion about the roof and its relationship to surrounding structures. The Committee observed that the new building had the feel of a campus center and threatened to drastically alter the existing historic streetscape. The large amount of window area in the proposed library and the effect on surrounding properties was discussed. There was a general consensus that the applicant had failed to provide sufficient information to support the demolition of the building and had neglected to address the criteria necessary to demonstrate that the replacement library will conform to the Standards and Criteria set forth in Section 17A-193A.

There was no public comment.

**ACTION.** The Committee will draft a report outlining their concerns with the proposed demolition and the replacement structure and its conformance with Section 17A-193A of the Borough of Princeton Land Use Ordinance. The memorandum will be forwarded to the planning board for consideration when they review the concept plan.

### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

## APPROVED

### **Revisions to a Previously Approved Preservation Plan for 319 Nassau Street**

Mr. Eric Holterman, Architect, presented changes to a previously approved preservation plan for 319 Nassau Street. This original application involved a two-story addition and the construction of detached two-car garage with a studio loft. The application was approved on March 7, 2007 with the following conditions:

1. The sills of the two second-floor windows located on the front façade of the addition shall be lowered to match the sills on the existing house.
2. The arch window on the second floor of the garage shall be replaced with a louvered arch.

The applicant is proposing the following changes:

1. The second-story window sills on the front façade of the addition as requested by the HPRC will be lowered.
2. A new six-pane divided-lite window is proposed on the western elevation.
3. The three casement windows located on the second floor of the rear elevation are now proposed to be six-over-six windows (Marvin simulated divided lite w/wood exterior).
4. The applicant is now proposing two six-over-six windows on the main dormers. The previous plan reflected three windows on the main dormer with arch windows above them.

C. Tazelaar moved to approve the modifications. W. Howard seconded motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Preservation New Jersey: Grant Update**

D. Bridger stated that nine grant proposals including the HPRC's Historic Buffer District proposal the have been selected for additional review and consideration. The State Historic Preservation Office anticipated making a final selection within the next two weeks.

At 10:32 p.m., J. Perantoni moved that the meeting be adjourned. W. Howard seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Danielle A. Britton, Recording Secretary