

Meeting Date:

March 13, 2024

Subject

Case 23-1132 - 50
Division Street

Applicant

James Field, Temple Beth
Shalom, Hudson

Case Managers

Amanda Krickovich
Nick Sugar



Background

The application for a door replacement has been made by Temple Beth Shalom located at 50 Division Street. The proposal would replace an existing wood door with a metal security door. The AHBR has held discussion for this request at the January 10, 2024 and February 14, 2024 meetings.

Staff has prepared this report as a comprehensive analysis of the request.

Applicable Code Standards

Staff notes substantial discussion has occurred of the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation, including:

- *The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided*
- *Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.*

Based on these discussions, the AHBR may consider the following Sections of the Architectural Design Standards

Section II-1 – Approval and Discretion of the AHBR

c. The AHBR may waive any requirement of these Standards in order to approve a proposed project, if the AHBR finds that the project fulfills the five principles enumerated in Section I-2, and meets one of the following conditions:

- (1) The project is an exceptional design, meaning that it is either especially creative or it is designed in response to unique situation, such as a very difficult site or an unusual program requirement.

or

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(2) Exceptional and unique conditions exist that create a practical difficulty in complying with the requirements of these Standards. The AHBR should consider the factors enumerated in as defined in the Land Development Code in determining "practical difficulty".

Staff Comment: An exceptional and unique security need warrants consideration of the practical difficulty analysis, more further described below.

Section I-2. - Principles

a. *The creation and maintenance of the "public realm" takes precedence over individual buildings.*

The "public realm" is that space occupied both in physical and visual terms by the public. It is created by such elements as the parts of the building that are visible from the street, the front yard, the sidewalk, street trees and lighting, and the street itself.

The historic residential and institutional areas of the City strongly influence the character of Hudson. Although the architecture of this area is diverse, it is held together by a strongly defined "public realm". The Green is also part of the "public realm". In the historic village, the "public realm" is clearly delineated by the consistency of narrow streets, mature street trees, sidewalks and the setback of buildings. The rhythm of houses and side yards provides another dimension of unity. The "public realm" in all areas of Hudson needs to have similar delineation, although the particular dimensions and details are scaled to new kinds of buildings and lot patterns.

Staff Comment: While the alteration would be visible from the public realm, it is located at a secondary building entrance. The primary entrance facing division street is more ornate, with a set of double doors, columns, and entablature.

b. *Buildings shall maintain a high level of architectural quality.*

Architectural quality does not refer to specific style or details, but to the general level of composition, materials, and design integrity. These Standards are not meant to encourage or discourage any particular style of building within Hudson. Quality building design is a complicated matter which needs to balance many competing requirements.

Staff Comment: The proposal would not diminish the building’s level of architectural quality for the following reasons:

- The door would be located on 1950s wing addition, built much later than the historic main mass.
- The door would be surrounded by existing concrete block.
- The proposed door would be panelized in a similar design style as to the existing door.

c. *The site plan and building shall respect the land and the environment in which they are placed.*

An attractive city takes advantage of its natural setting. Buildings should be sited to minimize regrading and to take advantage of natural features, including mature trees. For the most part, environmental issues are covered by the City's Land Development Code.

Staff Comment: The proposal would not result in any natural impacts.

d. *There shall be architectural variety within a defined framework.*

The historic village displays a high degree of variety in its buildings. The overall environment is nonetheless coherent because of the strength of the urban framework and a general uniformity of building scale. Variety within this coherent framework enriches the "public realm".

Staff Comment: The proposal would not negatively impact the surrounding area’s architectural variety.

e. *New buildings and alterations shall respect the existing context and framework*

The design of any building shall be judged in reference to its site and the character of its surroundings, not as an independent object. The site plan for all new buildings shall be prepared with a clear understanding of the framework that exists or is being created in a particular area, through development standards, zoning and other regulations.

Staff Comment: The applicant has indicated the door would be field painted to acknowledge the existing context of the area.

Standards for Practical Difficulty

- a. Whether the property in question will yield a reasonable return or whether there can be any beneficial use of the property without the variance;*

Staff Comment: The applicant has documented the need for the security door in light of the current threats facing the Jewish community. These threats are well documented and unique to Jewish synagogues.

- b. Whether the variance is substantial;*

Staff Comment: The variance is not substantial when considering the age and design of the 1950s wing.

- c. Whether the essential character of the neighborhood would be substantially altered or whether adjoining properties would suffer a substantial detriment as a result of the variance;*

Staff Comment: The essential character of the neighborhood would not be substantially altered.

- d. Whether the variance would adversely affect the delivery of governmental services such as water and sewer;*

Staff Comment: The proposal would not adversely affect the delivery of governmental services.

- e. Whether the applicant purchased the property with knowledge of the requirement;*

Staff Comment: The applicant purchased the property in 2005. The requirement was in place at this time.

- f. Whether the applicant's predicament can be obviated feasibly through some method other than a variance; and*

Staff Comment: The applicant has explored numerous options to bring added security to the building including;

- An all-wood door
- A wood storm door
- Interior modifications
- Grant funding opportunities
- Metal door with fiberglass exterior

The applicant's testimony indicates these options are either infeasible, impractical, or cost burdensome.

- g. Whether the spirit and intent behind the requirement would be observed and substantial justice done by granting the variance.*

Staff Comment: The AHBR shall consider the above factors when making this determination.

Recommendation

Staff recommends the AHBR collectively weigh the above factors when making a determination.