

INDIANAPOLIS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
DEPARTMENT OF METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT

# COMMISSION HEARING MINUTES

Wednesday, December 6, 2023, 5:30 P.M.

2nd Floor, Public Assembly Room, City-County Building  
200 E. Washington St., Indianapolis, Indiana

**Commissioners Present:** President Bill Browne (WB), Vice President David Baker (DB), Michael Bivens (MB), Anjanette Sivilich (AS), Annie Lear (AL), Secretary Susan Williams (SW) (Corley, Watson and Keller absent)

**Staff Present:** Meg Busch (Administrator), Chris Steinmetz (CS), Emily Jarzen (Principal Architectural Reviewer), Shelbi Long (Senior Architectural Reviewer), Dean Kessler (Architectural Reviewer), Grace Goedeker (Preservation Planner)  
Melony Evans (Office Manager/Recorder)

## BUSINESS

### I. CALL TO ORDER 5:30PM

### II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

October and November 2023 Minutes

**DB:** Made motion to approve

**AL:** Moved

**DB:** 2<sup>nd</sup>

Unanimous approval

### III. OLD BUSINESS – NO PUBLIC HEARING

NONE

### IV. NEW BUSINESS – NO PUBLIC HEARING 5:48

#### ADOPTION OF WORK PROGRAM 2024

**Meg:** Discussed approval of work program adoption.

**AS:** Motion to approve the work program

**MB:** 2<sup>nd</sup>

UNANIMOUS APPROVAL

#### APPROVAL OF DESIGNATION APPLICATION FOR MERIDIAN PARK

**GG:**

I have been working with Meridian Park Neighborhood Association, For the past 2 months to get application approved. It is understood that the neighborhood association, and neighbors want to approve a conservation district because of the same problems as with Meridian-Kessler with demos and improper work to facades. They only want to be a conservation district at this time. The proposed boundary map is much smaller than Meridian-Kessler between 30<sup>th</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> street north and south and Pennsylvania and Washington on east and west. They are a national register historic district this is where they got their statement of significance. We have been working on a strategy for engagement and measuring support over the last few months. This will be done through a combination of emailing residents, social media, flyers and listening sessions. We found the listening sessions to be really helpful for Meridian-Kessler, so we plan to employ that again on a smaller scale. I can answer any questions.

**BB:** With it being nationally registered, it would be nice to include that west side of Pennsylvania, south of 32<sup>nd</sup> almost to 30<sup>th</sup>. It has a series of really important residences in that section of the street. It would seem to me that it would be nice to include that west side in the district if we start to identify a boundary. I understand why they did what they did, but just knowing that one of their feature properties is at the SW corner of 32<sup>nd</sup> and Penn. Then the Tuckaway House is just down the hill, that has some amazing history associated with it. It just seems to me that should be considered. I just want to offer that comment.

**DB:** I was going to bring up the same thing. I was surprised when I looked at the National Register boundary and saw that it did not include the west side of Penn. Has there been any discussion about that in the neighborhood?

**GG:** I don't know that there has been. I think the preview of the Meridian Park Neighborhood Assoc. is the area that has been outlined. I can ask if that row of neighbors would like to be included in the district

**DB:** I think that is something that you all and the neighborhood should look at.

**BB:** It is an important feature of that neighborhood. Even to their own admission, when they feature the house in their documents and it's not in this district it seems logical that they would want to approve that. Other comments? Do we need to approve this.

**Meg:** I think we need to take a vote to move forward with the designation application process.

**AL: Moved**

**DB: 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**UNANIMOUS APPROVAL**

**\*(See neighborhood president comments at end of meeting minutes)**

## PUBLIC HEARING

**BB: Introduces Commission and staff and reads Rules of Procedure**

### V. REQUEST TO WITHDRAW OR CONTINUE APPLICATIONS 5:53

**2021-COA-583B (CAMA)**      **863 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE**      *continued to March 6, 2024 (BB recused)*

**RATIO ARCHITECTS**

Construct a rooftop addition and decks.

**2022-COA-112B (IRV)**      **5270 E. WASHINGTON STREET**      *continued to February 7, 2024*

**SYLVIA GARCIA**

Replace historic tile roof with alternate roofing material.

**2023-COA-251 (FP)**      **529 FLETCHER AVE.**      *continued to January 3, 2024*

**KIM COOK**

WSWA: Retain deck extension and fence inside yard constructed without approval.

**2023-COA-379 (HMP) &  
2023-ZON-090**      **1708 N. PENNSYLVANIA STREET**      *Withdrawn*  
**NEIGHBORHOOD DOWNTOWN ZONING ASSISTANCE**

Rezone from D8 to SU2.

**Meg:** Reads continued and withdrawn cases.

**BB:** I acknowledge the withdrawal

**DB: Moved**

**SW: 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**UNANIMOUS APPROVAL**

**VI. EXPEDITED CASES 5:56**

- 2023-COA-252 (HMP)**      **2133 N. TALBOTT STREET**  
**LANCE CLELAND**  
Construct new 2.5 story, single family residence with detached 2-story 3-car carriage house.
- 2023-COA-426 (ONS)**      **640 E. 13<sup>th</sup> STREET**  
**BRENT BRIDGMAN**  
Install front yard up lighting and for WSWA including the installation of rear yard fencing, repair of siding, replacing deteriorated corbels, chimney removal, and the installation of a hot tub.
- 2023-COA-457 (IRV)**      **558 N. AUDUBON ROAD**  
**DUSTIN MCKINNEY**  
Construct a one-story rear addition.
- 2023-COA-458 (IRV)**      **332 LESLEY AVENUE**  
**JOSE GARCIA**  
Demolish existing historic garage and construct a new 2-car garage.
- 2023-COA-466 (WP)**      **ROW: 600 BLOCK WOODRUFF PLACE MIDDLE DRIVE**  
**HISTORIC WOODRUFF PLACE FOUNDATION**  
WSWA: Retain pavers & benches; Install lighting bollards around fountain.
- 2023-COA-469 (ONS)**      **1474 N. NEW JERSEY STREET**  
**GEORGE ANGELONE**  
Install ground lighting.
- 2023-COA-475C (ONS)**      **517 E. 14<sup>th</sup> STREET**  
**KATIE BRYAM**  
WSWA: Infill step and entry alcove on east side of building.
- 2023-COA-479 (SJ) &  
2023-VHP-007**      **935 N. ALABAMA STREET**  
**ALEXANDER COHEN**  
Construct living space addition on detached garage; Variance of use to allow a secondary dwelling unit on a lot without a detached single-family dwelling.  
**Meg:** Reads cases.  
**BB:** Anyone in public wishing to speak to the expedited cases? Any commissioners?  
**DB:** COA-252 HMP, 2133 Talbott. I noticed the garage it doesn't have an apartment above, but it has occupied space for an office. I just don't know how the codes are for the door being visible from the alley. I think there are codes that require it now.  
**DK:** It is only if it is a secondary dwelling unit. It is in the zoning ordinance  
**DB:** I guess down the line if someone wanted to put an apartment there, it would be an issue for them.  
**BB:** Any other comments  
**AL:** Moved  
**DB:** 2<sup>nd</sup>  
**UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**  
**Variance**  
**AL:** Moved  
**DB:** 2<sup>nd</sup>  
**UNANIMOUS APPROVAL**

**VII. APPLICATIONS TO BE HEARD (CONTINUED)**

NONE

**VIII. APPLICATIONS TO BE HEARD (NEW)**

NONE

**IX. PRELIMINARY REVIEW**

NONE

**X. APPLICATIONS TO BE HEARD – WORK STARTED WITHOUT APPROVAL**

**2023-COA-460B (HMP)**

**2059 N. ALABAMA STREET**

**MICAH HILL**

WSWA: Retain front yard retaining wall with fence.

**Micah Hill Compendium Group offices at 961 N Highland Ave**

I want to acknowledge that this is not the preferred time slot for the approval process. Compendium Group, our company was the owner of the property in 2019 when the original designs were made for this project. This property is a little unique in Herron Morton. We thought there were some complexities around the home itself and would be best designed with an architect partner we had worked with quite often. We didn't start with a homeowner in mind with this project. The COA was originally issued in March of 2020, it was an expedited approval. When we talk about topography, and context and retaining walls this was not discussed because it was expedited. COVID affected the progress of this project during the months of March through Fall of 2022. Also, during that time, we sold the project to the new owner. We sold that project in August of 2020, we are no longer the owners, but we are still the contractors. The wall itself was installed in December 2020. We were discussing exterior paint colors, with Reviewer SL and other details. We had her do a site visit when the construction of the wall was occurring. So, no sleight of hand here it just got mixed in the chaos. One other brief note is landscapers usually do retain wall installation, and landscape is not reviewed in HMP. So, in the spring, early this year it was brought to our attention that we did not get approval for this project. This is why I am here today to hopefully get this paper trail in order. I want to thank the staff, Shelbi Long who spent a lot of time reviewing some previous cases specifically at property 2009 which is what most of their staff report is tethered to. 2009 you will hear me reference this project. I understand their hesitancy of handling this at maybe an administrative hearing or expedited level is given their interaction with that case. I believe page 163 in your packet; I think you all have looked through this and understand the context. This property is almost to the corner of 21<sup>st</sup> and Alabama St. The context of this area of HMP is unique to HMP and very unique to most of downtown. You will see at the subject property the change from the top of the street to the top elevation of the property, not the finished floor elevation, the dirt is almost 6ft. It is very atypical compared to a lot of neighborhoods. Right through the e/w boulevard there is a lot of topography. It can impact the use of the front yard, produce heavy slopes at times, and also how the home is accessed having to go up several flights of stairs. I looked at the surrounding areas and it is relatively flat halfway up the 2800 block of Alabama. It is just this small area that is really impacted by topography. You will see more fences and retaining walls in the front yard. I want to read from the HMP Greenbook, Section 7 page 28 that says under new construction guidelines context, every site will possess a unique context. This will be comprised of the buildings immediately adjacent, the nearby area, a unique sub area within the district, and the district as a whole. You do not see a lot of retaining walls in HMP, or most areas in other historic neighborhoods you don't see them as much. But in this area shown on the map 1 block to the north, east and west and half a block to the south has a lot of topography. The property to the north is a somewhat newer home built I think in the 90s, the retaining wall is built to the same height. So, the large retaining wall in the property adjacent to the subject property spans the entire length of the home up 21<sup>st</sup> street, the subject retaining wall is built to the same context. I have shared some retaining walls of all different types within that topography map. They are in front of older historic homes, and more often

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than not in front of newer homes. 2009 North Penn which was discussed in the staff report does not have the topography that this site does. 2009 North Penn shows 2 ft of topography change. It does not have a large home and large retaining wall to the north. It has an alley directly to the south. The retaining wall affected the clear sight triangle as people were trying to pull out of that alley looking north at the southbound traffic. So, there is a variance and a safety issue there. Another thing to highlight is they installed a fence that was 60ft tall, the fence at the subject property is 42 which is the approved height requested by the Greenbook. Multiple properties are just across the alley, so they are backed up to this property. I have tried to explain the context and the differences of maybe a case that you have heard like 2009 North Penn. There are very significant differences. Lastly, you should have a letter from the HM use committee. They are in support of seeing some historic curves and some historic elements retained, however they chose to support due to the specific context of this property.

**BB:** Anyone wishing to speak in support or remonstrance of this case. Staff comments

**SL:** The topography in HMP varies from street to street, and even pretty drastic changes from block to block or in one single block. As well as you will see a variety of retaining walls of various heights and materials. We are unsure if all these have been approved. What staff has seen is that retaining are becoming a more popular request. And we are beginning to lose the topographic nature of the district. Staff is recommending approval but with changes. We are recommending that the wall be lowered, and the slope of the front yard be recreated. These alterations are consisted with previous cases that staff has reviewed. I can answer any questions.

**DB:** This retaining wall thing always was a difficult issue; I can remember dealing with it. I drove by there this evening fully expecting to see a situation where something is sticking out like a sore thumb. That's not what I found; it actually fits in pretty well as a design feature. The one right next door to the north, was it approved.

**SL:** Yes, in the early 2000s

**DB:** I think that what you are proposing is that they bring it down a bit. If we were starting from scratch, I would say that is a good way to go. I do not think at this time it warrants taking it down. That wall on that site in that location with what's around it. I may say something different about other locations. I think I am ok with leaving it how it is.

**BB:** I actually agree with David, looking at this the fact that this wall is virtually identical to the one on the left. I do not know how it makes sense to reduce the wall when it would create a different condition in that corner. I do not know if I have a real problem with the fence being on the top of the wall. I understand why staff is recommending what they are. I am not suggesting that staff should have recommended something different. I am predisposed to leave it where it is.

**BB:** We will take staff recommendations to retain the work as is.

**Meg:** We anticipated that the conversation would go in this direction. We do have an alternative recommendation to approve the retaining wall leaving it the way it is. So, if anyone wants to make a motion for me to read that I can.  
'Meg reads alternate recommendation.'

**MH:** Acknowledges acceptance of alternate recommendation.

**SW:** Moved

**DB:** 2<sup>nd</sup>

#### **UNANIMOUS APPROVAL**

**Meg:** Shannon from Meridian Park Neighborhood Association is in the office.

**Shannon Eckleburg:** 3129 N Delaware. Historic Meridian Park has been a long-time historic neighborhood with the National Register.

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There was a question of if the westside of Pennsylvania is included in our application. To my understanding it is included. The alley between Penn and Meridian as our westside boundary and the alley between Washington and New Jersey is our eastside boundary. The midline of 30<sup>th</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> is our north and south.

**BB:** Does it jog at 32<sup>nd</sup> and does not include St. Richards?

**SI:** It does not include Trinity, but it does include St. Richards. There has been work in the past with this commission. If you drive up Penn and notice the soccer fields there used to be a row of houses that were there before I was a resident of Indy. Some of those houses were moved, some of those were brought down to the end. There are 2 that were retained at the corner of 33<sup>rd</sup> and Penn. We with Grace have met with a smaller group of individuals who were a part of the original national register application. 15 years ago, there was a petition for us being an historic district. There was low response, and I think if that wouldn't have happened, we would have already been an historic district. We desire to not lose any more houses in our neighborhood. We want neighbors and not things.

**BB:** Ok good luck with your application process and we look forward to hearing from you in the future.

<b>XI. CLOSING BUSINESS</b>
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<b>NONE</b>
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<b>XII. ADJOURNMENT 6:12 PM</b>
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