



MEETING: Site Review Committee
SUBJECT: Ashley Manor
ADDRESS: 303 E. Jefferson

LOCATION: City Hall
DATE: 4/26/05
ZONING: C-3/R-3
PARKING:
VARIANCES:

PRELIMINARY SITE REVIEW

IN ATTENDANCE:

Craig Phillips, Planning Director	(219) 462-1161
Matt Kras, Stormwater Engineer	(219) 462-1161
Vicki Thrasher, Building Commissioner	(219) 462-1161
Daryl Brown, Water Department	(219) 462-6174
Dave Nondorf, Fire Chief	(219) 462-8325
Bill Oeding, Public Works Director	(219) 462-4612

PRESENTERS:

Heather Hill
477-1976
462-1560

Media

Email addresses for the above City of Valparaiso Departments can be found at:

<http://www.ci.valparaiso.in.us/>

The following is a summary of discussion at this meeting:

The Site Review Committee met to discuss the proposed renovations of the "White House" located at 303 E. Jefferson Street. Phillips stated that site review is not an approval. It is meant to be a preliminary discussion of the requirements and issues to be considered by the developer or owner and there may be some cases where it will need to come back before site review or to seek other approvals. Phillips advised that no one is present to represent the Police Department and he would like Hill to contact them in regard to the noise ordinance. Dave Pilz, City Engineer, is not present and if he has any contacts we will forward them to her. The Sewer Department is not present but there is not much that will be different with the sewers but he would like Hill to contact them in regard to capacity since the uses are going to be greater with what she is planning. Hill advised that Gus Karras and Mike Manos are still owners of the property and she is on contract with them for 15 years, at 5-year intervals. She is leasing the property with right to purchase. Sisters Bridal Boutique has a bridal shop in the building. Indiana Showcase Furniture is a sponsor. Just Be Creative Floral & Design and a photographer have been brought in. Billy's Jack has committed to catering and they will be looking to add on other caterers. She is planning on utilizing the community to help her in this project.

Hill stated that first they will be refurbishing the building itself. They will be preserving the outside of the building first to make it look like it was originally. They want to renovate the grounds and turn it into Victorian Gardens. There is a lot of overgrowth to get rid of and they would like any help they can get from the City to get this out. The historical tree on the property will be used as an icon with the White House. They would like to have an annual tree-lighting ceremony for that tree in conjunction with the activities in the City. They are planning on using the building as a special events manor and would like to incorporate all avenues from birthday parties, tea parties to

weddings and receptions. They hope to target maximum events of 350 people, which they feel they can comfortably do on the exterior grounds and 75-100 in the interior of the building. They would like to convert the attic to "Grandmother's Attic" for dress-up tea parties for little girls. On the second floor they have the haute-couture line and the bridal boutique for retail. On the main level will be the rental of the rooms for corporate functions and individual gatherings. The lower level requires a tremendous amount of refurbishing. For now they wish to have this closed off with the exception of the Chicago Street entrance which they would like to divide the lower level because they have the use of two restaurant facilities in the lower level that could be used for outdoor functions. This would be kept separate from the additional three restaurants that are in the building. They would also like to work with the City in establishing horse drawn carriage tours. She feels that this would be a great addition to the City to have tours with commentary and they would use the carriages for weddings also. She would like to ask the City's permission to designate certain parking areas for valet service parking so that they would not interrupt the daily activities in the City. They will be holding fundraisers for the community and will be bringing in celebrities to help in that regard. They would like to prepare the library to educate the community on the history of the community to be tied in with the university. They would like to eventually get the large kitchen running. They have a small kitchen that would like to prepare for the caterer to use. They would like to start with serving "high-tea" at 2:00 and a Sunday brunch on the first and third Sundays of the month. In regard to a D.J. they have hired one that will work in compliance with whatever regulations are necessary. They plan on controlling the type of music, using only soft music and that at 9:00 the volume would be turned down. Activities would close down at 11:30 on Friday and Saturday nights. They would like to implement the activity between the School of Arts for musicians as well as offering classes to them. They would like to offer their parking area for handicapped parking for the Popcorn Festival.

Phillips said that this is a very large building with a lot of possibilities and her proposed uses of the building are very multi-faceted. From previous meetings there is a lot she is planning on doing in phases that include: Wedding receptions, gatherings, birthday parties; retail bridal shop which is already in place on the second lever; carriage rides; short-term child care for customers (at a much later date to be used during dress fittings, etc.); cigar bar/lounge in lower level; retail floral shop; retail photography studio; DJ/music for gatherings; outdoor use for receptions and gatherings; catering on and off site; tea room; dining services for lounge and tea room.

The two big things that Phillips feels need to be discussed in detail are that she is going to need to apply for a rezoning or use variance for the rear portion of the property since it is zoned R-3. For the use of the property on a outside gathering basis the rezoning will need to be done as this area is all in the R-3 district. The gatherings cannot occur until this is taken care of. Along with that there are screening standards that should not be much of a problem. The other big issue is the parking. The requirements that need to be met, but can be met both on site and off site, are: Salons-3 spaces per operator; Dance hall/event site-1 per 100 square feet of area (indoor or outdoor); Retail-1 per 150 square feet of customer floor area; Restaurants/lounges-1 space per 100 square feet of customer area. At some point this parking area will need to be figured in detail. There are currently 51 spaces on the site. The total square footage of the manor is 7,200 square feet. We will need actual floor plans of the building. All public areas need to be looked at and parking figured on those areas. Another thing that will need to be taken care of is the use of permanent outdoor tents. They are planning on using the tents outside during the season for the larger events. They are looking at enclosing the area between the coach house and manor house for more permanent purposes but the larger tent to the north would be more of a seasonal element. Special approvals may be required to do that. Hill advised that she would be working with Jim Mooney as a business consultant. Phillips advised that he is familiar with the steps that need to be taken for her to get to where she wants to be. We need an actual site plan that was

drafted by a surveyor along with a legal description for the property. They are located on a signature street so there is a strict standard on screening of service areas so dumpsters, air conditioner units, compactors or outside equipment areas that are visible to the public need to be enclosed with a building material similar to or compatible with the building.

There are residential uses adjacent to the property on the north, south and east so we need to make sure that there is adequate screening in place for the uses being talked about. A lot of that will be discussed when she seeks the use variance or rezoning. Those standards will probably be set as a condition of the approval. There is already existing landscaping that will apply to this. Her intention is to use this for events in June of 2005 with the retail elements in place before this. There are elements that need to be taken care of immediately which will be discussed by Nondorf and Thrasher. It is a historically significant building and he would suggest that she contact the Historic Commission to help her, as there may be grant opportunities available. Phillips wants her to consider the preservation of this building in the form of a "single site" historic district. She does need to pay close attention to the noise standard. She does need to contact the Sewer Department in regard to the sewer capacity in regard to the new uses. Phillips will need to talk with her in regard to the parking, the use of the property in the rear, the tents, and screening. He feels that this is a very excellent use of the property but it will be a very intense use of the property and we need to be careful that we don't have any negative impact on the rest of the neighborhood. Nondorf stated that he feels that this is a great use for the building and should have "staying power". The bridal boutique should have had an inspection prior to opening. His concern with the mixed occupancy use is that this project will need to be tracked through the phasing with a permitting process. There are certain separations that must be provided for retail and it is a very involved process. He would suggest that they work with a contractor or developer now to let them know what will be needed with each phase. Inspections can be made to let them know ahead of time what may be needed. We want to see her succeed but we have certain obligations that have to be fulfilled in regard to this. He would like to do a walk-thru with Vicki now, which Thrasher agreed to.

Oeding stated that he also feels that this is a great use of the building and is a very novel idea for Valparaiso. Parking is an issue but he assumes that a lot of the events will be weekend evenings and there is a fair amount of people using the downtown lots. We would have to work out how the process would happen with a valet service, which would also need to go before the Board of Works for approval. The city's policy is that we do not do commercial work, only residential work. If there were only a small amount of brush to pick up we would do that but if there is a large amount to pick up it is best handled by a commercial company. Oeding questioned any work on the sidewalks around the property. Hill said this has not been considered. Oeding advised the sidewalks should be looked at to eliminate any liability issues. Hill advised that she would have employees monitoring the property to make sure that people stay inside the area. Oeding said that Chicago, Valparaiso, Morgan & Jefferson have no real parking on the streets to speak of so success is incumbent on her making a deal with the City to use city lots for valet parking. On street parking would be highly discouraged and that would be incumbent on her people directing traffic. She would like to keep it open between her exit on Chicago and the corner of Morgan and Oeding advised that she would have to put this before Traffic & Safety as a request. Pulling out of there would be a problem with oncoming traffic but to make this a no parking area would also be a problem because of the limited parking in that area. Hill advised that all the retail areas will work with the manor's schedule and will be closed during the times that they are using the manor for an event. Oeding said that the truck delivery would be a problem in that area also so that should be taken into consideration when figuring the entrances and exits to the property. Phillips also questioned the clean up in regard to the carriage rides. Hill advised that there would be

agreements for clean up with the carriage company. Also the continued use of certain routes and causing ruts in the streets may be considered.

Kras stated that he has nothing in regard to drainage since there will be no addition of impervious surface or any building additions. Phillips asked if the area between the manor and carriage house is paved. Hill advised that there is a concrete and natural surface in that area. They want to utilize that area immediately with temporary wedding tenting and then eventually get into permanent cover. Phillips stated that if there is anything covered that is now pervious drainage and run-off would have to be considered.

Brown stated that he too is happy to life being breathed into this great building and feels that this is a great project. He asked if the coach house currently has water. Hill advised that there is currently two apartments in that building and is a separate service. When the salon is put in we will required a backflow protection device at the water meter. There was just one put on the manor so it is okay. He asked if the main building is sprinkled. Hill advised that there is a sprinkler system in the lower level. She advised that at first the salon would house people to do hair and make-up for the photographer and for brides. This will be for specialty purposes only at first and may later be opened for the public. Brown advised that the coach house now is considered residential so the backflow would be required for another use. He also asked if the pond exists. Hill stated that it is an existing pond but it does need to be cleaned out. No larger water service is planned on being put in and Brown feels that the service is adequate if they are not adding any more fixtures.

Thrasher said that there are going to be issues with the mixed uses as they are phased in. She asked if they are using a design professional or architect for the project. Hill said that the building is serviceable the way it is now. They are not making any physical changes. The bathrooms are not handicapped accessible at this time. The main floor has a small bathroom facility and the doorway is wide enough to get into the bathroom. She is not sure if they meet the accessibility code. Thrasher advised that the different uses and how many people are going to be in the building might change the amount of fixtures they are going to need. There may be issues with firewall separation in the walls and ceiling with the mixed uses. We will also have to look at egress or exiting to make sure that it is adequate. They may need a design professional to apply for state design releases if they are needed. The structural integrity will need to be checked in order to use it along with exiting on that floor. Some things need to be looked at for safety reasons on whether they can be grand fathered. Vicki strongly suggested getting a design professional to help with all of this. She will walk through with the fire department and tell them what they need but cannot tell them how to do it, as she does not know what is in the walls and ceilings, etc. Phillips said that there might be additional questions raised from the building and fire standpoint when they come see the site. Most importantly is the retail use that is being conducted right now being inspected by the fire and building departments to make sure that there are no liability issues. Again, he stated that they cannot use the portion of the property to the east of the manor house for events until the land use approvals are in place. Phillips stated that the cut-off dates have passed to get on the June meeting agendas but he would try to work with her to get on their agenda.

Nick Pollaro from the Police Department advised that he can be contacted in regard to the noise ordinance. The Board of Works would need to approve any closing of streets or public rights-of-way if ever needed.

Hill said that her target date for the use of the manor is June 17. Phillips said that he would try to work with her to get her on the agenda and if not she would not be able to use the property until the 21st of June if approvals are granted by these boards. The use on the inside is limited but she wants to use the property to the east of the manor by June 17. This will all depend on when she gets on the board's agenda so she may need to hold this off until the beginning of July.

