

MINUTES

HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION MEETING

August 28, 2024
4:00 p.m.

CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
313 Court Street, The Dalles, Oregon 97058
Via Zoom / Livestream via City Website

PRESIDING: Robert McNary, Chair

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Bev Eagy, Forust Ercole, Eric Gleason, Karl Vercouteren

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

OTHERS PRESENT: Museum Commission Representative Julie Reynolds, City Councilor Scott Randall

OTHERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Director Joshua Chandler, Executive Assistant Abigail Jara

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair McNary at 4:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Ercole led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Ercole and seconded by Eagy to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried 5/0; Eagy, Ercole, Gleason, McNary and Vercouteren voting in favor, none opposed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Ercole and seconded by Eagy to approve the minutes of February 28, 2024 as written. The motion carried 5/0; Eagy, Ercole, Gleason, McNary and Vercouteren voting in favor, none opposed.

It was moved by Ercole and seconded by Eagy to approve the minutes of June 26, 2024 as written. The motion carried 5/0; Eagy, Ercole, Gleason, McNary and Vercouteren voting in favor, none opposed.

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PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

PUBLIC HEARING

HLC Application 216-24, Claudia Leash, 200 E. 2nd Street, The Dalles

Request: Approval for interior residential improvements to create four apartments, and exterior improvements to restore the historic building façade and storefront.

Museum Representative Reynolds read the rules of a public hearing. Chair McNary then asked if any Commissioner had ex parte contact, conflict of interest or bias which would prevent an impartial decision. Hearing none, he opened the public hearing at 4:11 p.m.

Director Chandler provided the staff report and presentation (Attachment 1).

Vice Chair Ercole asked if the current windows were wood framed. Director Chandler replied the storefront windows are aluminum framed. The remaining windows are wood framed.

Chair McNary asked if the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) had shifted its stance for aluminum window frames. Director Chandler replied he could not answer that question.

Chair McNary asked if the application would go to SHPO for approval. Director Chandler replied the City is a Certified Local Government; decisions would be made by the Historic Landmarks Commission.

Michael Leash, 306 Court Street, The Dalles

Mr. Leash stated the metal iodized windows were included in the application to, and approved by, SHPO.

Commissioner Vercouteren inquired about regulations for window materials. Director Chandler replied preserving historical authenticity while allowing for modern updates is a challenge. Many older buildings in The Dalles were modified before the City was designated a historic district. Given the costs and the lack of original materials in some cases, the use of new materials is understandable. Many of the current aluminum frames are actually modern alterations themselves, rather than true historic elements.

The aim with any replacement materials, such as updating metal frames, should ideally be to mirror the original as closely as possible. When wood frames or historically accurate materials are not feasible due to cost or durability issues, the goal then shifts to finding alternatives that respect the aesthetic and character of the original design. This approach balances historical preservation with practical restoration, especially as new, more historically accurate materials become available.

Commissioner Eagy inquired about the possibility of framing the aluminum windows to resemble wood. Director Chandler responded that it could be feasible and emphasized that the primary goal of the project is restoration. He explained that in restoration projects, it is common to encounter deteriorated materials; approval would allow the applicant flexibility to proceed as the condition of the materials is assessed.

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Vice Chair Ercole proposed that the conditions of approval might specify the use of wood framing on the upper floor, while permitting aluminum framing on the ground floor, as metal framing is already present there.

Commissioner Vercouteren asked if the bronze color closely resembled the original wood appearance. Director Chandler replied the bronze finish, being closer to black, might not effectively match the original wood.

Byron Balogh, LRS Architects, 720 NW Davis, Suite 300, Portland, Oregon 97209

Historic storefronts, even those from over a century ago, often used resilient materials like wrought iron or steel to endure daily use and occasional damage. Using modern materials that align with preservation guidelines ensures both durability and authenticity without resorting to faux finishes that imitate older styles.

Chair McNary opened comments from proponents.

Michael Leash, 306 Court Street, The Dalles

Mr. Leash said he estimated the total project cost to be in the \$780,000 to \$800,000 range. This includes all aspects of the renovation, covering systems like windows and interior treatments. Our goal is to preserve the building's historical integrity by maintaining or restoring elements consistent with its original state. For instance, as Byron explained, we are using a metal system similar to what was implemented on the Lemke building renovation about five or six years ago. Our intention is to restore all wood windows, including rebuilding deteriorated frames on the upper floors, while keeping wood frames wherever possible."

Representative Reynolds inquired about flashing on the top of the cornices. Mr. Leash replied that metal currently covered all the top cornices. The cornices would be repaired by a company experienced in historic buildings.

Mr. Leash added the project involved rebuilding nine chimneys, though only one original chimney remained. D & R Masonry Restoration would reconstruct each chimney, matching the original stacks that served the nine rooms on the upper floor. Mr. Leash said that these restorations would result in a representation of the building's 1890s appearance. He added the doors on the west side would all be wood.

Commissioner Gleason suggested that, given the lower storefront had already been replaced with aluminum in the past, the Commission might be less strict about returning it to wood. While wood is generally preferred, Gleason noted that since replacing aluminum with aluminum would not result in a loss of original materials, it would likely be acceptable if a return to wood was impractical.

He added that, ideally, the transom windows could be restored with glass if the frames were in good enough condition, though they would likely require some repair. The lower storefront could remain aluminum, while the upper transom windows could be restored in wood if feasible. If the wood was beyond repair or the cost prohibitive, aluminum would be an acceptable alternative.

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Commissioner Gleason expressed appreciation for the project, noting the significance of restoring the building closer to its original condition and the positive impact it would have on the area.

Discussion then focused on the proposed awning.

Mr. Leash expressed interest in options for a metal storefront, citing the nearby Lemke building as a precedent. The Lemke building features a black or bronze anodized aluminum storefront system, including the transom, lower glass, door system, and a metal awning. This metal awning is powder-coated, welded, held at a 45-degree angle, and supported by metal rods to provide rain shelter.

There was a discussion on whether an awning or canopy was required for historic buildings on Second Street. One commissioner noted previous guidelines suggesting that awnings help create a sense of enclosure and provide pedestrian protection from rain, referencing standards similar to those on the Commodore building. Although not a current requirement, awnings are generally encouraged to enhance street engagement.

The applicant confirmed their intent to follow design guidelines as closely as possible, including an awning. However, due to potential high costs—estimated between \$20,000 and \$30,000—the awning might be deferred if financially prohibitive. Research on the building's original awning revealed only early, unclear drawings of a cloth awning, possibly tent-like, from the era when sidewalks were wood or dirt. This historic reference resembles the awning style of the Commodore, though it remains uncertain if the drawings depict the actual building facade or a rendering.

The suitability of a metal awning was discussed, considering both the local climate and historic design guidelines. Commissioner Eagy questioned the durability of a canvas awning, which might not withstand high winds. Director Chandler noted the Code mentions flat, horizontal metal canopies suspended by chains or rods, which offer pedestrian coverage.

Mr. Leash clarified that, if approved, the proposed metal awning would match the bronze aluminum used for the lower window frames, ensuring a uniform appearance. He added that the awning had already received approval as part of their application process with SHPO and the Main Street "Diamonds in the Rough" grant.

Some Commission members, while acknowledging past guidelines favoring fabric awnings, recognized that a metal canopy might be more practical and in line with historic preservation goals. The public hearing concluded with an invitation for any final questions, after which the Commission planned to deliberate on the proposal.

Commissioner Eagy asked if the paint palette would return to the original, or chosen from a palette of historic colors. Mr. Leash replied the colors would be historically appropriate. Director Chandler added the historic palette is a condition of approval.

Chair McNary closed the public hearing at 5:30 p.m.

Commissioner Ercole supported a compromise on window materials. He recommended that, if feasible, the applicant should replace the upper-floor windows with wood to maintain the building's historical integrity. For the ground floor, he found it acceptable to use bronze

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aluminum, as it aligns with the current materials in place. He suggested adding a condition of approval specifying that the ground floor may use bronze aluminum, while the upper floor should prioritize wood.

Director Chandler noted the proposal involves matching the new entryway materials with those used in the existing entry on Court Street. The only area where the aluminum system would be applied is on the building's northern face, specifically for the transom windows, door, and storefront glass window system in that section.

Modified conditions of approval were discussed. Condition 7: "Following a complete assessment of existing conditions of the storefront and transom glass system on the northern building face, if replacement of the system is needed, the applicant may replace the system with new wood framed windows, or replace the system with a new bronze anodized aluminum storefront system. If original materials are uncovered during this process, the applicant should try to retain original materials.

Condition 8: The applicant may install the metal awning as shown on the elevation drawing, or install a canvas cloth awning once the restoration work is completed and paint colors chosen.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Chair McNary moved on to Commissioner Comments, prior to returning to the public hearing motion.

Representative Reynolds reported that recent "hop-on, hop-off" days from cruise ships have been inconsistent and less frequent compared to the previous year. A new staff member with a background in Native American Affairs from Evergreen State College has joined the team, bringing valuable knowledge. Current director Crystal Davis Ross will retire in November, and the organization is actively seeking her replacement. Additionally, the latest issue of *The Fort Dalles Dispatch* has been mailed to members; those interested in receiving it are encouraged to join as members.

Commissioner Eagy said the garden in front of Saint Peter's Landmark had been cleared of weeds and cleaned up. Additionally, the site's stolen outdoor lights—valued at around \$600 each—have been replaced, restoring the grounds to a well-maintained state.

Commissioner Vercouteren noted the Original Courthouse was not included in the "hop-on, hop-off" tours this year. Efforts to have the tours stop there were unsuccessful, leaving visitors with fewer opportunities to view the site, though it is accessible by walking from the Chamber of Commerce. Vercouteren expressed concern about the lack of visitors, as previous agreements with the tour boat operators were not renewed for this year.

Commissioner Vercouteren asked Claudia Leash whether a trap door at Sigman's Flowers, used for quick escapes during the building's past, would remain as part of the renovation. The answer was no, the trap door would not be preserved. The story behind it was shared: the hotel had been used for "certain purposes," and when the law came knocking, the trap door allowed people to escape from the apartment to the mezzanine, where they could quickly jump down and flee, avoiding being taken directly to the jail across the street.

PUBLIC HEARING

HLC Application 216-24, Claudia Leash, 200 E. 2nd Street, The Dalles

Chair McNary returned to the discussion of HLC 216-24.

Director Chandler presented the modified condition number 7: Following a complete assessment of existing conditions of the storefront and transom glass system on the northern building face, if replacement of the system is needed, the applicant may replace the system with a new wood framed window system, glass and frame, replace the system with a new bronze anodized aluminum storefront system, glass and frame. If original materials are uncovered during restoration, the applicant should strive to retain all original materials whenever possible.

Modified condition number 8: The applicant may install the metal awning as shown on the elevation drawing, or install a canvas cloth awning once the restoration work is completed and the paint colors are chosen.

It was moved by Vercouteren and seconded by Eagy to approve HLC 216-24, with modified conditions of approval. The motion carried 5/0; Eagy, Ercole, Gleason, McNary and Vercouteren voting in favor, none opposed.

RESOLUTION

Resolution HLC 202-24: Approval of HLC 216-24, Claudia Leash

It was moved by Ercole and seconded by Eagy to approve Resolution 202-24 approving Application HLC 216-24, based upon the findings of fact and conclusions of law set forth in the staff report, with the modified conditions of approval following Commission discussion. The motion carried 5/0; Eagy, Ercole, Gleason, McNary and Vercouteren voting in favor, none opposed.

DISCUSSION ITEM

STAFF COMMENTS

Director Chandler stated the next meeting date will be set before the end of the year. Currently, there are no new applications, but one potential project involves the demolition and replacement of a dilapidated garage on a historic property. Additionally, updates include the planned restoration of the Bohn's Printing mural, returning it to its original design, and the ongoing work with a local archaeologist for the First Street parking lot repaving project. The project is being carefully managed to ensure no artifacts are disturbed during the resurfacing process, with appropriate notices sent to relevant parties, including individuals on the notification list. The goal is to create about 55 new parking spaces for local businesses after the project is completed.

ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Meeting conducted in a room in compliance with ADA standards.

Submitted by/
Paula Webb, Secretary
Community Development Department

SIGNED:


Robert McNary, Chair

ATTEST:


Paula Webb, Secretary
Community Development Department