

**GAINESVILLE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
JUNE 6, 2022**

CALL TO ORDER Chair Cathy Day at 5:30 p.m.

Members present: Chair Cathy Day, Vice Chair Emily Wiley and Commissioners Jack Bailey and Ruth Bruner

Members absent: Commissioner Dick Bachman

Staff present: Director Rusty Ligon, Special Projects Manager Jessica Tullar, and Office and Records Coordinator Gwen Fleming

Others present: Councilwoman Juli Clay

MINUTES OF December 6, 2021

Motion to approve the Minutes as presented.

Motion made by Commissioner Bruner

Motion seconded by Commissioner Bailey

Vote – 4 favor, 1 absent (Bachman)

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

A. Certificate of Appropriateness

- 1) Request from **Leslie White (Resource Properties)** for a Certificate of Appropriateness for a Major Work Project involving building and site changes on a 0.29[±] acre tract located on the northeast corner of the intersection of Ridgewood Avenue and Bradford Street (a/k/a **440 Ridgewood Avenue, NW**).

Ward Number: Two

Local Historic District: Ridgewood Neighborhood

Tax Parcel Number(s): 01-041-001-010

Proposed Work Project: Building and site changes, involving demolition and new construction

Staff Presentation: Special Projects Manager Jessica Tullar gave the following staff presentation: The subject property contains a residential-style principal building used as a multi-family quadplex. The existing use, which is controlled by the underlying zoning, will continue.

According to the Historic Resources Structural Survey, the principal building is a Colonial Revival-style, bungalow-type house that was constructed around 1925. The house has been modified since its construction, including the enclosure of a rear service porch and rear addition, the replacement of Tuscan round columns with square posts, removal of a small side porch, and the application of vinyl siding.

The applicant is requesting approval of demolition and post demolition plans, and as such, the Commission will need to make and take action on two motions.

No similar COA request for the removal of a principal building, whether by demolition or relocation, within the Ridgewood Neighborhood district has been submitted. Requests for additions have been reviewed and approved with modifications/conditions by the Commission.

Demolition: The structural engineer's report submitted with the application details the extent of deterioration and structural instability that could be observed. The extent of deterioration of unexposed systems and materials will not be known until the exterior siding and other installed modifications are removed. Based on the detailed approach to rehabilitating the existing structure, it appears that rehabilitating the structure effectively results in reconstruction because the entire framing and foundation systems should be replaced. Replacement of the foundation and framing systems, even if completed in-kind, would result in a loss of historic fabric, and thus, a loss in historic integrity. Additionally, such work likely would result in significant increased construction costs due to necessary safety precautions and time and labor required to accommodate the restoration approach recommended by the structural engineer, who cautioned that such efforts might not be successful, as collapse during restoration is possible. Demolition appears to be an appropriate action given the extent of deterioration and structural instability combined with a loss of historic integrity due to previous renovations. Thus, staff recommends that the GHPC approve demolition.

Post-Demolition: The existing house, which is (and has been) used as a multi-family quadplex, is located on a corner lot that is slightly too small to be subdivided into two separate lots of record. The applicant's post-demolition plan maintains the existing use – which is controlled by the underlying zoning – but through a design, that reflects the existing single-family character of the site and district, specifically the primary district side of Ridgewood Avenue. With maximized spacing and vegetative landscaping between the two proposed structures, the post-demolition design gives the impression of two homes on separate lots. Such design is reflective of site conditions noted on the 1937 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, which include the primary dwelling facing Ridgewood (the existing structure), a smaller secondary dwelling to the rear along Bradford Street, and an outbuilding behind the Ridgewood-facing home.

Proposed materials on all structures are modern materials that are compatible in appearance to historically appropriate or materials used on historic structures in the district. Because the applicant intends to situate the front building facing Ridgewood Avenue within the same footprint as the existing house, it appears that the "front" new construction would be consistent with the historic patterns for placement, orientation, and rhythm. The proposed placement of columns as well as the number and fenestration of proposed window/door openings are consistent with the existing structure. However, the height and light pattern of the proposed windows are not characteristic of the existing house or historic structures within the district.

Scale and proportion of the Ridgewood-facing structure is dependent on the finished height of the proposed structure. Staff measured the existing structure (excluding the chimney height) to be approximately 23.25- to 24-feet in height on the westerly façade fronting Bradford Street. In order to be in keeping with the existing scale and mass, and thus compatible with the Design Guidelines, the new replacement structure should not be taller than the height of the existing structure. The full-width, two-story porch is not characteristic of historic structures in the district; the proposed design reflects some Colonial Revival-style

elements. The arches on the second floor porch are not characteristic of the district or Colonial Revival style and should be removed from the design.

The proposed second structure would face Bradford Street and would be secondary to Ridgewood Avenue, which is the primary street in the district. Without the final grade and height, it is difficult to determine whether the proposed structure will be consistent in scale and massing. Its placement to the far rear area and its orientation to Bradford Street will create a secondary presence to Ridgewood Avenue. The finished height and scale should be that this rear, Bradford-facing structure does not exceed the height of the Ridgewood-facing structure – especially when viewed from Ridgewood Avenue.

Staff recommends the following modifications/conditions to the post-demolition plan if approved by the Commission:

1. Finished elevation/height of the proposed Ridgewood-facing structure shall not exceed the height of the existing house as measured from the tallest point of the remaining chimney to the ground.
2. A brick chimney element, whether functioning or non-functioning, shall be included in the design of the easterly façade/elevation.
3. The proposed arches on the second floor of the porch on the Ridgewood-facing house shall be modified to match the bottom level.
4. Windows shall be shortened to reflect the height of windows on existing historic structures in the district.
5. The applicant/owner shall work with the Community & Economic Development Department to determine the conditions of all mature trees. Removal of mature trees shall be approved if determined by the CEDD staff landscape architect and/or a Certified Arborist to be dead/dying/diseased/distressed or a threat to public safety. Final landscape design and replacement tree species and planting location shall be approved by the Community & Economic Development Department.
6. Final architectural design, structure placement, tree and landscape plan shall be approved by the Community & Economic Development Department

Applicant Leslie White stated she is a business owner, investor and loves Ridgewood. She stated the first home she bought was on Crestview Terrace living after moving to Gainesville twenty-three years ago but now lives off of Piedmont Road and for the last eight years has invested around Ridgewood, Simmons Street, Forest Avenue and North Avenue. The applicant stated she has bought, renovated and sold several homes on Ridgewood. Ms. White said she purchased the home at 440 Ridgewood with a partner several years ago and had some light renovations made on the left side of the quadplex and planned to lease it to have money coming in and eventually planned to renovate the entire right side. The applicant stated she bought her partner out the first week of January and had contractors there the second week of January to look at continuing renovations but was notified by them of issues and called a structure engineer. Ms. White choose an engineer out of the Buckhead/Atlanta area that specializes in historic homes and the engineer told her that it should come down and the renters should get out due to a dangerous situation. She stated she bought the house because of it being an income producing property and a business decision for her and the family. Ms. White stated that since January she has lost the renters and income for six months. The applicant said the silver lining is she can build back something better accenting the

historic district of Ridgewood and hope to go with the current style of Colonial Revival but with a different spin. She introduced her architect Greg Loyd along with two contractors Greg and Walt and all are willing to hear recommendations, make necessary changes and as a team make it a spectacular property on Ridgewood and Bradford.

FAVOR: Luke Lovell, 802 Holly Drive, stated he came to speak against the request but has changed his mind. He passes by the location every day going to a building he owns on Green Street. Mr. Lovell said there has been a huge improvement on the property over the last three years. He stated it will possibly be one of the nicest products in Gainesville and is not opposed since he saw the proposal.

Greg Loyd, 421 Ridgewood Avenue, stated he is a general contractor and has been working with the applicant for several months on the project. Mr. Loyd said he has worked on historical projects in the past but not in Gainesville and understand the importance of keeping it the same general look. He stated they are willing to tweak the plan for it to be historically acceptable along with residing across the street from the project and wants it to look nice too.

OPPOSE: None

Commissioner Bruner stated she thinks it will be a beautiful project and was pleased the applicant is willing to tweak the project, which looked like something from Savannah or New Orleans. She suggested the back building be squared off and passes by the residence daily, has lived in the area since 1976 and stated it will be a great improvement.

There was a motion to approve the requested demolition of the structure located at 440 Ridgewood Avenue, NW.

Motion made by Commissioner Bruner
Motion seconded by Vice Chair Wiley
Vote – 4 favor, 1 absent (Bachman)

Statement of Finding

The site consists of a historic principal building that has been modified over time. A structural engineer's report detailed the extent of deterioration and structural instability of the existing house, outlined in the detail the steps necessary to rehabilitate the historic structure while expressing concern for the safety of workers, and offers recommendations for future action. Based on the level of deterioration, the structural engineers recommend demolition, including removal of the foundation system.

The post-demolition plan involves construction of two (2) single-family-looking structures that will have individual driveways and be separated by vegetated landscaping, giving the appearance of two homes on separate lots. Historic Sanborn Maps suggest that at one time the subject property was improved with two dwellings and an outbuilding, so the proposed post-demolition plan with two principal dwellings reflects historic conditions of this site. Similarly, the proposed structure facing Ridgewood Avenue will be constructed in the same footprint as the existing house, and thus, will maintain historic building patterns.

The new construction will be comprised of **generally appropriate and compatible** building materials for modern construction. Minor modifications of the proposed architectural design would bring the proposed structures more in keeping with existing historic structures in the district. Thus, in accordance with Section 9-23-3-8 of the Unified Land Development Code, it appears that the proposed material change in the exterior appearance of the building and site, **with modifications/conditions, does not** adversely affect the historical, architectural, aesthetic, cultural or environmental character or value of the historic district; and therefore, is in **compliance** with Chapter 6 and Section 3.4.2 of the adopted Design Guidelines.

There was a motion to approve with modifications/changes the post-demolition plan for 440 Ridgewood Avenue, NW.

Motion made by Vice Chair Wiley
Second made by Commissioner Bruner
Vote – 4 favor, 1 absent (Bachman)

Mrs. Tullar shared once receiving a COA, there is a 15-day waiting period due for an appeal to the City Council by anyone. She said the next step would be working with staff on the final architectural and site design to reflect the approval and then going through permitting.

MISCELLANEOUS

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:07 p.m.

Motion made by Vice Chair Wiley
Second made by Commissioner Bailey
Vote – 4 favor, 1 absent (Bachman)

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Day, Chair

Gwen Fleming, Recording Secretary