

CITY OF JACKSONVILLE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
COMMISSION

Excerpt of proceedings held on Wednesday, December 9, 2015, commencing at 3:00 p.m., Ed Ball Building, 214 North Hogan Street, 8th Floor, Jacksonville, Florida, before Diane M. Tropia, a Notary Public in and for the State of Florida at Large.

PRESENT:

BARRY B. UNDERWOOD, Chair.
JENNIFER MANSFIELD, Vice Chair.
CORA HACKLEY, Secretary.
JOHN ALLMAND, Commission Member.
SEARCY DANNHEIM, Commission Member.
DAVID B. CASE, Commission Member.
ANGELA SCHIFANELLA, Commission Member.

ALSO PRESENT:

JOEL McEACHIN, Planning and Development Dept.
LISA SHEPPARD, Planning and Development Dept.
AUTUMN MARTINAGE, Planning and Development Dept.
BLAIR MULLINS, Planning and Development Dept.
GLORIA BLAKE, Planning and Development Dept.
SONDRA FETNER, Office of General Counsel.

THE CHAIRMAN: Hearing none, the meeting minutes from November 10th, 2015 are approved.

Please note on the agenda the deferred items: COA-15-016, COA-15-696, COA-15-697, COA-15-872, condemned properties. We will begin with Item E, historical designations for Landmark 15-03.

If we could have a staff report on the landmark.

MR. McEACHIN: Yes. The landmark in question is the H. & W.B. Drew Building. It's located on the north side of West Bay Street, between North Laura Street and North Main Street downtown.

The building is surrounded on the west side by another historic building, the old Bisbee Building, and on the east side by a parking garage.

The only real articulated facade is the front facade that faces south as far as decorative details go. The rear elevation is also visible, but it has been stuccoed over. It has no fenestration or anything.

The building was originally constructed with load bearing walls. And, again, the primary elevation faces West Bay Street. It's constructed in light tan brick and enhanced with decorative cast stone trim and reconstructed metal cornices. And, of course, it's has a flat built-up roof and (inaudible) curtain wall.

The central entryway into the building features two of the original iron columns that constitute the storefront when it was built in 1902, and they have been reused and has provided the entryway into the atrium.

Now, the building was -- like I say, it was started in -- it was completed in 1902. It was only two stories, as you see it here. And then in 1910, they actually put a third story on this building. This is a two-story building. A third story.

In 1982, they had a fire that completely gutted the building and also resulted in removing the third floor. So it started with two floors. And now, at this point in its life, it's got two floors.

The building -- we found that the building met four of seven criteria. The first criteria is the value as a significant reminder of cultural, historical, architectural and archaeological heritage of the city, state or the nation.

Based on the rebuilding, it's significant as the only remaining commercial structure directly associated with one of Jacksonville's oldest businesses that operated for 135 years, from 1855 to 1990.

The business was started by Columbus Drew, who came -- who started the company in 1855, but came to Jacksonville in 1848. He came to Jacksonville in 1948 actually to produce a newspaper for the Whig Party. And soon thereafter, he bought a used print shop, or actually equipment of a used print shop. He brought the material down to Jacksonville and opened Columbus Drew Books, Stationary & Printing Company located on East Bay Street and Union Street.

In 1876, Columbus Drew was appointed by Governor George Drew -- no relation -- to serve as a state comptroller. So he had to give up his business and sold it to his son Horace Drew, and Horace Drew renamed the company H. Drew Company. And then his brother went into business with him, William B., and it became H. & W.B. Drew Printing Company in 1893.

A few years later, the company, H. & W.B. Drew Company moved to a larger building on the side of the current building. This building was destroyed in the 1901 fire. And after the fire, the owner of the property, which is the Witschen Family, John Witschen, had a new building constructed, two stories, that you see here for the Drew Company to occupy.

The building was never owned by the -- actually, the building never went out of ownership by the Witschen Family. It never was owned by the Drew Family, and then they -- until they sold it in the 1970's.

To accommodate the growth of the company, as I say, a third floor was added in 1910. The interesting thing about the third floor is that one newspaper article identified John Klutho as the architect of the third floor.

Later, another -- another newspaper article credited the Architect William B. Camp. We remember him from the old Duval High School. Camp was a former associate of Klutho. There are several ideas on this. It's possible that Klutho had a real heavy workload during this time, the same time that St. James was being built and the Florida Life Building. Klutho may have turned around and hired Camp to complete the building plans and also to -- to supervise the architecture.

Interesting, too, in later years, plans for the third floor was actually found in the attic of William Camp's house in Springfield, when he -- after his death, which more or less confirmed he probably was the architect.

The case might be made, he was the architect of the original building. We don't know because he used the same style of the old Duval High School, but he didn't come to Jacksonville until fairly late in 1901.

During construction of the third story, the roof of the original building collapsed. It collapsed in killing two workers and injuring five others. It was determined that the collapsing of the second floor was not due to a faulty design, but the fact that they put too much heavy materials on the roof. The second floor caved in.

The H. & W.B. Drew Company became one of the largest and most successful printing companies in Florida. It was a full-service business offering printing, engraving, (inaudible), book binding, rubber stamps, notary seals, pencils, blue line printing and photostat prints. Also, they produced (inaudible), color postcards, calendars, brochures. And later, added wholesale and retail office supplies and furniture.

An interesting little tidbit, during the early 20th Century, the Drew Company became Florida's major producer and distributor of postcards. However, within -- printing postcards as early as 1906. The first cards with their name on it was in 1915.

In 1921, the company purchased the building across the street, at 2030 West Bay Street, and they moved their printing operation. The offices and warehouses remained in this building more for retail purposes, but eventually, they didn't need the building. So they moved out, and it was occupied in 1932 by the Morgan's department store, which was owned by a former State senator, Mr. [(Inaudible)] Morgan.

As I stated, the identification of a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the city, state or nation. Again, I won't go into the details of the Drew Family. I will say that Horace Drew was born in Jacksonville. He's the one that's most directly associated with this particular building because he's the one that actually had it constructed. He didn't have it constructed, but he's the one that occupied it at the time in which it was constructed.

He completed -- he was born in Jacksonville in 1855. He completed college at the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee. He came back to Jacksonville to run the business. He was also very civic minded. He was involved in numerous activities and organizations. He was president of the Chamber of

Commerce, a founding member of the Jacksonville Rotary Club, very active in the Democratic Party.

As a member of the Rotary Club, he played an instrumental role in having the U.S. Army establish Camp Johnson along Black's Point as -- to support the war effort during World War I. This site became a (inaudible) station.

The second -- the third criteria of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, method of construction, or use of indigenous materials. The design of this building reflects the Renaissance Revival style, probably from about 1845 to 1920.

This is the style that you find on this building, is a division of the ground floor and the upper stories into distinct horizontal zones by the use of string or belt courses, and cornices in this case, and each floor is articulated with a different room and type, size.

When the building had the third floor, it had a different window arrangement than it has currently on this second floor. An example of this style in Jacksonville, in downtown, include the Guaranty Trust & Savings Bank, old Duval High School, and the Dyal-Upchurch building.

The Renaissance Revival style is not real common in Florida because it's pretty early style, but it's -- there are some fine examples I just mentioned that are found in the downtown area.

Suitability for preservation, restoration. As I stated, the building is -- had a severe fire in 1982. It resulted in the loss of the third floor. And also, the interior was completely destroyed. So what they -- what the owners did, or architects, I believe, came back in and resupported the walls with steel as well as supporting new commercial spaces as well. It supports a new roof system that was also put on after removal of the third floor.

If you look -- I'll show you the photographs. If you look, you can see right here, those are some of the -- probably floor joists, something made out of wood. Of course, they are charred from the 1982 fire.

The current storefronts on the building are contemporary interpretation, traditional commercial design utilizing large plate glass windows and transoms, as well as incorporating the original cast iron column.

The second story sash windows were replaced with a metal product matching the original, and the

projecting cornice on the second floor was reproduced and done based on the design found on the third story.

I'll be happy to answer any questions about it.

COMMISSIONER SCHIFANELLA: It was -- the application was initiated by the building owner?

MR. McEACHIN: That is correct.

COMMISSIONER SCHIFANELLA: Great.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Any questions?

COMMISSION MEMBERS: (No response.)

THE CHAIRMAN: Open it for a public hearing.

Would anyone like to make comments or address the -- come on forward.

(Audience member approaches the podium.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hi. I am Tiffany. I am one of the four tenants.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do we need to have her sworn in for this?

MS. BLAKE: Please state your name and address for the record.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Tiffany Vargo, 45 West Bay Street.

MS. BLAKE: Do I have a card for you, Tiffany?

MS. VARGO: No. I'm sorry.

MS. BLAKE: Before you leave, make sure I have one.

MS. VARGO: Okay.

MS. BLAKE: Would raise your right hand, please.

MS. VARGO: (Complies.)

MS. BLAKE: Do you affirm that the testimony you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

MS. VARGO: Yes ma'am.

MS. BLAKE: Thank you.

MS. VARGO: Hi. My name is Tiffany. I'm one of the four current tenants in the Drew Building, and I'm just here to represent the building.

And I appreciate all the work that you have put into it and finding all the great history in it. We think it's a really great building that's going to thrive. There's some really great business in there.

And if you have any other questions, that's -- I think he covered everything pretty well. We're available for any questions. And I encourage everybody to go take a look at it. It's really a spectacular building.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MS. VARGO: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Anyone else in the audience like to speak on this?

AUDIENCE MEMBERS: (No response.)

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Close the public hearing.

COMMISSIONER SCHIFANELLA: Well, I'll make a motion that we support the designation of the H. & W.B. Drew Building at 45 West Bay Street for historic landmark status.

COMMISSIONER CASE: Second.

THE CHAIRMAN: With your motion and your second, all in favor?

COMMISSION MEMBERS: Aye.

THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed?

COMMISSION MEMBERS: (No response.)

THE CHAIRMAN: Hearing none, we approved as noted.

Thank you, Joel, for that in-depth research on the project.