

DRAFT

**Everett Historical Commission
Minutes
September 27, 2011**

Members Present	Members Absent	Visitors	Staff
Barb Hardman, Chair	Morrie Trautman	Gail Chism	Dave Koenig
Sue Walsh	Paul Van Slyck	Fred Guilfoyle	Jan Meston
Dave Ramstad	Neil Anderson	Shirley Guilfoyle	Ross Johnson
Chandra Sadro		Annie Lyman	
Mark French		Paula McCulloch	
Jim Staniford		Marilyn Boyd	
		Shelley Weyer	
		Tom Rochon	
		Harv and Jan Jubie	
		SueAnn Roberts	

Barb Hardman: Thank you to all our guests for coming. The first item on tonight's agenda is to approve the minutes for the August 23rd meeting. Does anyone have any comments?

Jim Staniford moved to approve the minutes as written. _____ seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.-

Citizen Comments

Gail Chism: I am from historic Lowell, and we are trying to get the word out through all different avenues about Lowell turning 150 years old in 2013. We are looking for stories, photographs, memories, and volunteers. They don't have to be from Lowell. We have volunteers from Port Gardner and Snohomish. We would like to ask the Historical Commission's support for our celebration. We're open to any ideas or fundraising ideas. We are thinking about doing a book and getting information out electronically.

I have been talking to Carol Thomas of the City's Cultural Arts Commission about the possibility of a statue of a pigeon or two in Lowell Community Park. It would be in honor of Elwin Anderson, who has lived in Lowell almost his whole life. His dad and brother built a house. Elwin was in the Pigeon Corps in World War II, a prestigious group. He is a great pigeon person who was on Evening Magazine, and there was an article about him in the newspaper. He donated \$25,000 to the Everett Performing Arts Center, and they named a room after him. It was his idea to put a War Memorial in Lowell Park and put up historic street signs in Lowell. He was a great Everett Giants and Aquasox fan who went to all the games. Barry Smith from the Parks Department is also work on this with us. The Lowell Neighborhood is a non-profit organization, so anything you donate to the celebration or statue would be tax deductible. We're also working with the Northwest Room and KSER for publication. Please contact us if you would like to help.

Barb Hardman: Can you explain again what you are asking of the Commission? A letter of endorsement.

Gail Chism: Yes, a letter supporting our efforts to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Lowell. We would like to put it in a packet for when we solicit donations for the statue.

Jim Staniford: I would support a letter.

Dave Ramstad: How about a congratulations letter from the Everett Historical Commission for turning 150 years old and celebrating.

Mark French: The idea of congratulations and supporting your efforts to promote and advance information about the history of Lowell would be good.

Dave Ramstad: We encourage neighborhood historical initiatives.

The Commission agreed to send a letter to be drafted by staff.

Annie Lyman: Thank you for allowing citizens comments. I am here to sound an alarm. I spoke yesterday at the Snohomish County Council meeting about the urgency to protect the Snohomish County Museum's collection. The pressure is on to get it moved out of storage in the Carnegie Building. The City of Everett apparently has assigned two or three rooms in the Culmback Building to hold a small part of the collection. The collection is quite large and from what I can gather from the Museum, there is language that speaks to the fact that if the collection is not removed, it will be confiscated by Snohomish County. I think that is worrisome. It's an Everett collection, it belongs in Everett, and it definitely belongs in a museum. Whether it is an Everett museum or a Snohomish County museum, I think we, the citizens of Everett and the Historical Commission, should write a letter of concern to Snohomish County. I would like to see you recommend to the city of Everett that they find further storage for the collection. I appreciate what Mayor Stephanson has done in finding space in the Culmback Building.

Times are tough. We need to find a safe place for the collection. The state and national historic preservation societies are not too willing to give money for that purpose unless there is a guarantee of safe storage, which means humidity control, etc. Money is a big factor.

We have seen too many historical properties sold or taken apart. I would hate to see this collection broken up and sent out to smaller museums. The Hebolb Center on the Tulalip reservation is a Class I museum. Four or five tribal members saved artifacts for years and years in their homes, and that is why that museum has the collection it has.

Any kind of support you can offer would be appreciated. Snohomish County has said that no one is speaking up about this. We need to do that.

Dave Ramstad: Could we anticipate that the director or members of the board of the museum might approach us to appeal for support on an official basis.

Annie Lyman: Barbara George is the director at this time.

Dave Ramstad: It would be appropriate for our commission to listen to a status report from the director and we could take it from there.

Jim Staniford: I have been talking to Barbara George about this and have offered a building to be rented. However, funding is an issue.

Annie Lyman: The immediate concern is to protect the collection at this time. Get it in a safe place. They do not have the funds at this time to rent a facility.

Mark French: I think it would be appropriate to get an official, detailed breakdown of the situation so that we could act appropriately. We can toot the horn, but I would be more comfortable if I had actual detailing of the nuances of the situation.

Annie Lyman: There was an article in the paper in April. But time has gone quickly and the deadline is approaching.

Barb Hardman: Are they looking for interim storage right now or a more permanent location.

Annie Lyman: The immediate need is to raise your voice, because County staff says no one has come forward with concerns. A couple people have come forward with offer of storage space at a price, but no one has said they are concerned about that collection and its safety. Their position is that if no one cares, the County will take it and do whatever they need to do with it. It belongs in Everett rather than being broken up and distributed to smaller museums in the area.

Barb Hardman: What do you all think about a letter of concern expressing that the collection be kept together and stored safely.

Jim Staniford: I was unaware until Annie spoke that they were having trouble with storage. Could the City help to get more press on this I the hope of getting more offers of storage?

Dave Koenig: We can look into the specifics of the situation.

Dave Ramstad: I'd like to hear from the museum the real status. It's a tough time. In the latest budget, the state suggested shutting down all the museums.

Public Hearing on Proposal to Remove a Contributing Structure and Construct a New House at 1102 Grand Avenue

Barb Hardman: Now we will open a public hearing regarding the application to remove a contributing structure from 1102 Grand Avenue and to construct a new single-family house on the lot.

It is important that the Historical Commission's consideration of this matter not only be fair in fact, but also fair in appearance. Does any Commissioner know of any real or potential conflict or concern which should cause that member to avoid participation in this hearing? *(No response.)*

Does any member of the public have any objection to any Commissioner's participation in this matter before us? If so, now is the time to come forward and state your objection. *(No response.)*

The Commission will consider whether to recommend approval of the proposed project.

The purpose of this hearing is:

- To provide factual information about the proposed project to the general public and to the Historical Commission.
- To provide a fair, open and orderly forum for public comment and questions.
- To identify issues to be considered as part of the decision.

We will begin with the Applicant's presentation.

Tom Rochon: (Giving a PowerPoint presentation.) I was fortunate enough to be called by Jan and Harv Jubie because they had purchased the property at 1102 Grand Avenue. They had a program of what they desired in a house. We toured the existing house. It would have been very difficult to work with. It would have been an extensive remodel involving moving all the walls. The interior would not have worked for us. We would also have had to build out to the north and the west. The Jubies asked about the potential for demolition and rebuilding. We also talked about having the house moved, then the client discussed that with a mover, who is interested in the house. After that, we started considering a new home on the site.

I know there have been public comments received about the size of our proposal. The lineal frontage of this lot is 90 feet, which is a big lot in this area. A lot of homes are on 50-foot lots. I have examples in this PowerPoint of other homes that are in scale to the lot size in the neighborhood.

We worked toward compliance and compatibility with the historic overlay guidelines and standards. The portion of the house furthest forward is on the 30-foot setback, then we stepped back several times, so that the garage is actually 14 feet further back. We were trying to break up the scale of the house. Using the Shingle Style, we were able to reverse the gables so that we were able to break up the masses.

As we discussed a new house, the client pulled a photograph of the style they were interested in. I looked at homes within the historic neighborhood which are of a similar style, with a steeper roof pitch. I have several examples here. For the size of the lot that we have, I feel we are in proportion to many of the houses I am showing now.

The drawing of the front elevation uses some shadows to show the relief on the front of the house. The bay window is on the setback, then we set back 2 feet, then another 4 feet at the entrance, then another 4 feet where we have an office, then another 4 feet back to the garage. We feel that with the gables to break up the mass, the eyebrow dormer, and the fact that the roof is receding away, it helps break up the mass. On the side of the garage, we added another gable to break up that mass. We also used some brick along the base of the house and shingles for the siding. This is a drawing of the rear of the house. There are decks so they can live on the outside patio with minimum steps, then there are steps to access the back yard. There is a ramp by the garage that you can use to go out to the lawn area.

These are more photos of large houses in the neighborhood. The proposed house is not anything new, there are houses of that size along Grand Avenue. We still maintain a view corridor on the north side of the property. Many of these examples from the neighborhood have just the minimum setback, resulting in 10 feet between houses. We will have 20 feet between our house and the house to the north.

Sue Walsh: What did you call this style?

Tom Rochon: We are calling it a Shingle style because of the steep roof pitches. There is an English influence, a kind of Tudor revival influence. The Colonial Revival brought an English influence to the East Coast, the shingles, so it's kind of an English revival.

Mark French: Have you done a landscape plan?

Tom Rochon: Not at this point.

Mark French: It appears that there may be several generations of the drawings. I'm trying to reconcile the drawings we received in our packets versus what's in tonight's presentation. I'm having a difficult time reconciling the roof plan with the elevations. The gutter lines and roof lines do not seem

to reconcile. I have a sense that once you reconcile some of the rooflines, that may change the configuration.

Jan Meston: It looks like I got an earlier version of the east façade in the Commission's packets without the eyebrow dormer. That is the only change I am aware of. That's my error, Mark. The version with the eyebrow dormer was submitted.

Mark French: Can you show the elevations on the PowerPoint? If you look at the north elevation versus the east elevation on how the gutters come together, the roof lines need to be reconciled. In addition, if you look at the plan with the rooflines, you can see that there are issues with the rooflines. The hips and valleys do not appear correct. When those are reconciled, you may have to alter the elevations.

Tom Rochon: You have to remember we are still in schematic design, so we have not yet gone to the next level. Those are things that I expect to work out. The character of the house will not be changed drastically. We will have to work through the design.

Jim Staniford: The vents have been added in two of the front gables, too, but not the third. Why?

Tom Rochon: I thought the third one was a little crowded.

Jim Staniford: And the eyebrow window in the front of the roof goes to what?

Tom Rochon: It is a high window in a bathroom.

Mark French: On the north elevation, I see an upper window that does not reconcile with the floor plan.

Tom Rochon: Yes, I missed that; there's a little gable there and the interior space will be coming out. The look of the exterior takes precedence over the floor plans.

Barb Hardman: So in order to make the exterior look like this, you are saying that you would change the floor plan.

Jim Staniford: Looking at the siding and the roofing, it looks like too much the same. There is nothing breaking the house up.

Dave Ramstad: How would the colors go? The colors could break it up.

Tom Rochon: If you look at the first photo of the PowerPoint, you can see that there is difference between the roof and the siding. The roof would probably be darker and the shingles will be lighter. The singles are drawn to scale; the exposure is about 6 or 7 inches.

Jim Staniford: Do you anticipate any brick columns on the sides of a walkway that is similar brick to the house?

Tom Rochon: I would like to go that way, but I have not discussed that in depth with the Jubies.

Jim Staniford: On a lot of houses, by the time you put the planting in, you can't see the brick.

Tom Rochon: We may bring the brick up a little higher to avoid that.

Sue Walsh: I want to ask this question again because I think I heard you describe this as Shingle Style.

Tom Rochon: Yes.

Sue Walsh: Are there other Shingle Style houses in the neighborhood? Did you see the examples?

Tom Rochon: That's what I hoped to show with the examples.

Sue Walsh: I wouldn't call those examples Shingle Style. They look more like Tudor. The style is descriptive. The whole area is descriptive.

Tom Rochon: If I call it a Tudor, people start to think stucco. I'm just trying to be careful with my terms.

Chandra Sadro: Were any preliminary schematic drawings done at the early stage when you discussed their program with the clients?

Tom Rochon: Yes?

Chandra Sadro: Were they developed to this degree?

Tom Rochon: No. They were hand sketches, pretty loose. They were to scale, but not to this level.

Jim Staniford: Is the existing house being removed? Is it structurally stable? Is it being demolished?

Tom Rochon: Nichols Bros. has been contacted and they are interested in moving the existing house.

Barb Hardman: Did you discuss remodeling the existing house and modifying it to meet the clients' needs.

Tom Rochon: The existing Dutch Colonial is very symmetrical and it would have been very difficult to work out a layout that would work with the owners' program. The alignment of rooms just wasn't working with what the owners' wanted. It would have been gutted inside.

Staff Report

Jan Meston: The staff report compares the proposed design with the Rucker/Grand Historic Overlay guidelines and standards. The Historical Commission received the report in their packets. I will summarize the report now for the record.

The first item we considered was the removal of the contributing structure. The effect of removing the existing house will have the same effect on the historic overlay neighborhood as would demolition. Accordingly, we have brought the applicant forward through the demolition review process which requires review by the Historical Commission.

Relative to the design of the new house, the staff report is broken down into the general characteristics addressed in the guidelines and standards. The entryway of the house is clearly visible and provides weather protection as required by the guidelines. The design and proportions of the façade are generally

consistent with the neighborhood. The proposed house meets the required setbacks. There is a 30-foot front setback from the inside edge of the sidewalk. The north side setback is 10 feet, which is more than the required 5 feet. The 10-foot side setback is required by the ordinance through which the 11th Street end was recently vacated. Nothing is allowed in that setback except for existing vegetation 36 inches high. The south side setback is 5 feet as required. And the rear setback more than meets the 20-foot standard.

The massing of the new building should be in keeping with the neighborhood. The house is two stories, which is typical of houses in the neighborhood. Because of the width of the lot, this house is wider than some houses. The proposed house is 48.5 feet wide, and the garage is 25.5 feet wide, for a total of 74 feet. There are several gables on the front of the house and steps back in the façade to help minimize the mass.

There is a 28-foot height limit in the overlay, and the proposed house is 28 feet. The eaves should be not more than 24 feet high, and the proposed eaves are 12 feet 3 inches from the highest point of the sidewalk. The guidelines and standards require building modulation. This building includes several steps back which total 14 feet from the bay window to the façade of the garage.

The window trim is consistent on all four sides of the house. The façade is asymmetrical but balanced by the configuration of the gables. The guidelines require the roof pitch to be at least 6:12. The proposed pitches are 10:12 on the front pitch and 7:12 on the north and south hip roofs. The only variation from these pitches is on the front dormer shed roof which is 4:12. Shingle siding is called out as appropriate in the guidelines.

The garage is required to be set back 5 feet from the entry from the building. In this case, it will be 8 feet. The garage is 35 percent of the width of all buildings facing the street.

Based on this comparison to the guidelines and standards, the staff conclusion is that the design meets and historic overlay zone guidelines and standards. Our recommendations for conditions on the project come from our review and the SEPA review on the project. They are:

1. Applicant must obtain necessary building permits from the City of Everett's Building Department.
2. The Applicant must submit a geological assessment as required by the Everett Municipal Code prior to receiving a building permit. If that assessment requires any modifications to the exterior design and/or location of the new house as reviewed by the Historical Commission, the project must be resubmitted to the Historical Commission for review of those changes.
3. The project must meet the requirements of Ordinance 3217-11, which granted vacation of the 11th Street end, which requires a 10-foot setback on the north side of the property in which nothing but existing vegetation can be located.
4. The driveway must be relocated as shown on the site plan and must meet current city standards.

The letters received from the public on this proposal were provided to the Historical Commission in their meeting packets. That concludes the staff report.

Barb Hardman: Can you clarify for me how you dealt with the comments in the letters from the public as far as the impact that the proposed project has on the historical character of the neighborhood and the

adverse effect of removing the house? The comments I noticed repeatedly in the letters were the significant effect this would have on the historical character and the effect on the historical view corridor?

Jan Meston: We compare the project with what is in the neighborhood guidelines and standards. The guidelines say that before demolition, alternative uses should be considered. However, there is nothing in the guidelines or standards that prohibits demolition or removal of a historic house. We try to encourage applicants in the direction of preserving existing houses, but ultimately there is nothing in the standards on which we could recommend a denial.

Barb Hardman: So your recommendations are based on the guidelines and standards.

Jan Meston: That's correct. The underlying zoning and the historic overlay zone guidelines and standards.

Barb Hardman: And what about the impact on the historical character of the neighborhood? Is there anything in the guidelines or standards about that? Everybody talks about the impacts of it. How do you approach that?

Jan Meston: Again, there is nothing in the overlay standards that prohibits these actions. The overlay standards and guidelines are meant to guide new development to blend in with the existing neighborhood, and in that way mitigate the effect on the historic character of the neighborhood. But there is nothing in the guidelines and standards that denies the option to demolish or move a house.

Jim Staniford: About a year or so ago, didn't we require a house to be demolished to be photographed for our records? At least we could preserve the image.

Jan Meston: I believe we did that on the Levine house. That's something the Historical Commission could recommend.

Sue Walsh: Did staff feel they had sufficient opportunity to comment on the design submitted.

Jan Meston: Yes, I think we did. Our job is to look at the elements of the standards and compare the proposed development with those standards. Doing that, we do feel this design meets the standards. Many of the houses in the neighborhood are of Craftsman or Colonial design, but there is nothing in the standards that specifies what style the design must be. There are also a number of examples of houses in the neighborhood that do have the same characteristics as the proposed house.

Mark French: We have the seven design categories you have gone through which guided the architect through the design process. The architect mentioned that this is in schematic phase. In the past we have seen drawings from various states of development, some of them pretty scratchy, and we have asked applicants to rework drawings to make them more understandable. If we are told that we are looking at a schematic set of plans, that means that there are two more phases of development for the project. I didn't ask Mr. Rochon what he meant by "schematic," but typically you go through design/development to make sure everything works, then a final drawing for your permits, in which case you still may make additional changes. Windows may be eliminated, a lot of features may be changed. A homeowner may reduce size due to budget, etc. We have talked a little about landscaping and paint colors. A lot can go on with this design between now and when construction begins. How can we avoid changes being made that alter what we may approve tonight.

Jan Meston: Generally speaking, what you approve tonight is what's being approved on the exterior of the building. When building plans are submitted, we review the building plans to make sure there have not been any significant changes over what you have approved. There could be minor changes, but generally we are very conservative about what we allow for changes without coming back to the Commission for another review. With respect to paint and landscaping, the overlay zone only has very general guidelines on those items, so that is not something that we expect to review in detail either now or at building permit time. The guidelines give guidance on paint colors such as using muted colors and earth tones, but we don't have specific standards to apply.

Mark French: A lot of those images that the applicant presented, the warm value comes in with the landscaping. I'm sure the owner appreciates that. Landscaping really says a lot about the character. It can be contemporary or formal and obscure features. I hear what you are saying, but for the record I am just saying for the owners that we are concerned that it all comes together in our historic district.

Jan Meston: If there are things on which the Historical Commission would like to comment to make a recommendation, even if they are not set down in the guidelines or standards, you certainly can get those on the record and it can serve as guidance for the architect and the owner. I think we have a pretty good history of applicants taking direction from the Commission on items like that.

Barb Hardman: If, for example, the roof were to change and the brickwork would come up higher, at what point would you decide the changes were significant enough to require the applications to come back before the Historical Commission.

Dave Koenig: We would come back if it is a major change versus a minor change. If they were making the building one foot less deep, for example, that would be a minor change. But if they were proposing to substantially increase the size or make major changes to these drawings, it would come back. The location of windows in the back of the house would be minor.

Chandra Sadro: Can you tell me how the 4:12 roof pitch on the dormer fits in with the standards?

Jan Meston: The general rule, which is not in writing, is that if only a small portion of the roof pitch is less than a 6:12 pitch, such as on a dormer, that is acceptable, as long as the vast majority meets or exceeds the 6:12 pitch.

Dave Koenig: Dormers such as these are fairly typical in the neighborhood.

Jim Staniford: Is there a certain percentage you look for? Say 75% if roof meets the guidelines, that's okay?

Dave Koenig: We don't have a percentage, but if the roof generally meets the pitch and one or more dormers are shallower, that is acceptable.

Mark French: A lot of Craftsman styles have varying roof pitches.

Chandra Sadro: We saw a lot of photographs, but they were on smaller lots. Does staff feel the large mass of this house is mitigated enough by stepping back?

Sue Walsh: They are saying within the rules they had to go by.

Jan Meston: Right. When you have a lot of this size, the house is allowed to be larger. There was a public hearing process for the vacation of the 11th Street end and public comments, then City Council

made the decision to grant that vacation. Then you have a 90-foot lot. With the setbacks in the standards, it allows a large structure to be built.

Sue Walsh: How big was the right-of-way that was vacated?

Dave Koenig: I believe it was a total of 80 feet. The ordinance requires a 10-foot easement for a view corridor on each side of the property line.

Mark French: Will staff be following the status of the relocation?

Jan Meston: You can put that on as a recommendation? We would do that anyway.

Dave Ramstad: The street vacation did not come before the Historical Commission even though this is in a Historic Overlay Zone.

Jan Meston: Right.

Public Hearing

Barb Hardman: We will now open the hearing for public comments.

Fred Guilfoyle: 1203 Grand Ave. You've got to be kidding me. This house is nowhere near the same as houses in the historic overlay. Not even close. You want to see a house that is similar those in the overlay, look at the picture of the Van Valey house by the elevator. This is not even close. The fact that you are tearing down a historical house and putting this up in its place, and you guys are seemingly allowing that, talking about windows and things like that, that's a crime. 1136 Grand Ave., that's a crime. That's not a historical house, not even close. It looks like a Motel 8. This house here could just as easily be found on the Issaquah plateau, not in historical Everett. If you guys allow this house in a historical area of Everett, I think they should abolish the Historical Commission. This is a crime.

The fact that the applicants bought the house with any intention of remodeling it is baloney. They bought that house with the intention of leveling it and putting up an Issaquah plateau house. What they are tearing down is historic. They just don't want to live with the floor plan. Maybe they shouldn't have bought the house.

Paula McCulloch: 1631 Rucker. I've lived in the Northwest neighborhood for 40-some years and I can't believe this. It's a slippery slope, one house at a time, we're going to lose the face of our neighborhood. I didn't realize you could tear down a house, a perfectly good house. It is a real shame and a scary thought for everyone who lives in the north end. That's why we move into these neighborhoods, because of the old houses. I realize that some houses have disrepair, but you can fix a lot of run-down houses to be perfectly good if you are serious about how important it is to keep these neighborhoods. I think most people live in the Northwest neighborhood, because of the old homes. I am just shocked that we don't have any protection in place for these houses and for neighbors to protect themselves. It looks like a beautiful house, but I see historic houses being replaced. That's all I have to say.

Shirley Guilfoyle: We moved here 10 years ago specifically to a historic overlay because we thought they are preserving the houses. This is where we want to be. We lived in Ballard a long time ago and thought we wanted to take on an old house. Just in the last 5 years we've had 3 houses in our block be torn down or moved. It will march all the way down Grand. Just tear down the house, it doesn't fit what we need. We need a big house with a view. I am utterly amazed that this goes on. I honestly did

not realize that you could tear down a house and just put something else up in the historic area. I'm appalled. It's a shame.

Annie Lyman: 929 Hoyt Ave. I think we're setting a very dangerous precedent here, because I have seen this happen to 3 houses on Grand. The houses have been demolished or moved and something new and big put in. They want the view. We understand that. Port Gardner Bay is the prettiest view in the northwest. But we have a historic overlay. Our feeling was that that was put there to protect the historic buildings. The Dutch Colonial is probably too small for what they want, but it is a historic house. Granted it might not be in the primo move-in condition, but on Hoyt where I live, several people have taken on old houses and fixed them up fabulously. You know what it takes to fix up an older house and live in it. It is very expensive, but it keeps the heart of the neighborhood alive. This sets a very dangerous precedent. We've seen 1, 2, 3 come on real fast. That sends out the message to other people that this is precedent. Every one you let happen, it just opens up the door to more. There are wonderful houses along there. Some older people can't afford to maintain them. So people are thinking I'll buy it, tear it down, and put in what I want. It's really dangerous.

Is that a third garage in the back?

Tom Rochon: It's the back of the garage, it's a drive-through garage.

Annie Lyman: So you're not going to use the view corridor for a driveway.

Tom Rochon: No.

Shelley Weyer: 1501 Rucker. I don't have a whole lot different to say in regard to the new house. I would say that the comparisons to the different houses in the neighborhood were ridiculous because none of those larger homes were on Grand. They were all set back in other neighborhoods. One thing that is disturbing to me as neighborhood chair is I don't believe that anybody around this house was taken into consideration. The neighbors or becoming part of the neighborhood. Being a good neighbor. We try really hard in the association to bring our neighborhood together. We do things together and watch out for each other and see children grow up in the neighborhood. One of my concerns is that the neighbors that live around this property aren't taken into consideration. A lot of them have gone to great extent to fix their older homes up to look very nice. Then to have something new come in right next door is very sad because this is a historic area and we try to keep it looking nice and keep up the value of what the whole neighborhood is about. It's too bad that new homes can just take over in spots where there are very nice older homes which I understand are still structurally sound.

Dave Ramstad moved to close the public hearing. Jim Staniford seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Commission Discussion

Mark French: I wish the gentleman who excused himself would have stuck around to hear our side of the story. Jan, you've had to address these sentiments. Nobody fights harder to have this kind of stuff avoided than the Commission and staff in Everett. The individuals from the public may not see that side, but we do what we do because we are restricted by city ordinance. How do we make it known how we fight to have the ordinance changed and updated. We have talked a lot about demolition. How do we fight that? We want to help the homeowners understand the balance between what appears to be obvious disruption of an overlay versus making enhanced modifications to an existing house. Our hands are tied. Once the staff makes the report based on the ordinance, we can only make minor

recommendations. I find it disturbing that the public believes that we can actually stop this, and we can't. Is that correct?

Jan Meston: That's correct. The Historical Commission will make a recommendation to the Planning Director, and you are guided in your review of a design by the overlay guidelines and standards which only go so far. It is a misconception in the public that any historic building can be saved. In fact historic preservation is voluntary. But we are one of the few cities that have historic overlay zones with design guidelines and standards. This review process is one of the strictest procedures there is for design review. So even the fact that we are meeting here this evening. That you are all reviewing the design, that property owners within 500 feet were notified about the design and given a chance to get more information or to comment is a very high standard for design review. We are achieving a lot in the historic overlay zone. It's a hugely popular area and the overlay has helped maintain neighborhood character in the last 20 years.

Mark French: And is it also true that we have actually saved some homes in the overlay zone.

Jan Meston: Absolutely.

Barb Hardman: We have yet to make a recommendation on the proposed action this evening. We tried to make it clear to everybody what the limitations are on us and on the staff in terms of what they can do that is appropriate under the law. If you want the laws changed, there's a different process, but we are limited by zoning regulation and what is spelled out in the historic overlay guidelines and standards.

Dave Ramstad: I think the answer is that the neighborhoods themselves must stay proactive and alert and aware and be willing to approach the Planning Department and City Council to see that the ordinances can be revised. We need citizen pressure to revise the ordinances. Then that's where the city could go or not go.

Sue Walsh: I agree with all the points made. We will pull them together. There is another element here that is equally troublesome to me. We have dealt with similar proposals before and have gotten different outcomes. In my judgment, previous projects were taken forward in the context of valuing and contributing even if you had to take a building down. We've had people duplicate the front of the existing house in a new house. That recognizes the value of the neighborhood and the neighbors. I'm disappointed that we don't have more of that cooperative spirit to get to the common denominator. That bothers me a lot. This is a tipping point. I'm not seeing the spirit of cooperation, ownership, commitment, dedication and value.

This will significantly impact people's own property rights and values. That is something that needs to get to the City Council. It's a policy question that keeps bumping around. What we can do is acknowledge that the rules allow this to go forward, but we can vote no, it doesn't work anyway. And we can recommend that the City look at more incentives to avoid this type of action and more stringent requirements around demolition of contributing structures. It is a beautiful house, wrong place. The rules we have to work with are producing an unintended consequence. It's wrong to go along with it. We acknowledge the staff and what they had to do or could do, but we also have to acknowledge that it's part of our responsibility to the community and to the policymakers to point out that if something is not done, the whole historic area will be trashed. I don't know anything else you can do in the meantime. I would hope the applicant would rethink some of the stuff they have done and come into alignment.

Dave Ramstad: I can see a day when the three historic overlays of Everett, and for the size of Everett, that's pretty significant, that the residents of the three overlays might come together and work out a plan, get a consultant and approach the Planning Department and City Council and push for the value of their properties and the look of their neighborhoods. That might be something that comes before the voters, maybe not. Pressure from citizens is how change happens.

Barb Hardman: It is so disturbing when people talk about losing a good example of a historic house. I feel the same way. There is the public perception that we can protect those properties because they are in a historic overlay zone. Realtors and the City promote historic preservation and historic tourism and the historic overlays, and makes it sound like we really value historic properties and will protect them. We are so limited by our current regulations. Until that is revised, all we can do is offer conditions and encourage the public to do more. It seems deceptive.

Dave Ramstad: It's not all negative. We have a high level of protection in Everett. I can remember the Commission working on projects on Grand where we significantly altered projects for the better. We worked together with applicants. City staff does this even before it gets to us, sometimes getting from something regrettable to something that's decent for the street.

Chandra Sadro: One by one, houses go away. With every house gone, the fabric of the neighborhood is getting weaker, thinner. We don't have tools to stop that. I don't think National Register designation would even stop that.

Dave Koenig: It would have less protection.

Jan Meston: Historic overlay zones have the highest level of review. The highest. The National Register has nothing.

Chandra Sadro: What about beefing up some of our guidelines?

Dave Ramstad: We had a subcommittee a couple years ago looking at somehow making the demolition requirements tougher.

Chandra Sadro: It's very vague.

Dave Koenig: I'd suggest you deal with this project now instead of the bigger picture.

Chandra Sadro: I would suggest we put the bigger picture on as an agenda item at the next meeting so it doesn't get pushed under the carpet.

Barb Hardman: I agree that we could put it on an agenda in the future. I know the staff has worked really hard to represent us in this, but they can only do what the regulations allow. I know that historic overlays have benefitted through staff and Commission reviews and there has been progress. We can do a lot, but when it comes to demolition, it is really painful. The house proposed to be moved is the best quality house that's come before us to be removed.

Mark French: Jan is correct in that we have one of the most successful overlays and the Commission can be proud of that. A lot of what we do is subjective. That's the challenge. Our struggle is an international struggle. There are volunteers like us across the globe trying to do our best to wade through the challenges. We're not professionals, not archeologists, not historians. I have an architectural background, so I have some sensitivity there. I have seen neighborhoods that have not been torn apart by contemporary attempts at infill. It is not all bad. It's commendable that we have a

target tonight. Some places don't even have a target. We can make as many comments as we want at that target. We should get down to the bare bones of what needs to happen to make sure that this happens successfully.

Probably through our efforts, the house is being relocated. We can put a beacon on it and follow it. When I started four years ago, I think the house would have been demolished. We have established a reputation for knowing how to play hardball within our legal rights. A lot of the homes in the neighborhood were built by unqualified laborers drawn on the back of napkins, not architect-designed homes. Hopefully the district will retain its integrity through using some sensitivity. This could be worse; it could have a flat roof and be painted orange were it not for the historic overlay.

We have a job in front of us. We can look ahead. We need to continue to work on issues surround demolition and see where that takes us. Let's see what kind of a message we can send with our comments on this design and see if we can help the neighbors.

Sue Walsh: What about turning it down tonight and asking them to come back with their next set of drawings and their landscaping plan also. That would give them the message that they need to work with us. They're not doing that. They've left, which is insulting.

Barb Hardman: There are two things I see we can do here. One is to send a recommendation on the removal. The other is to make a decision on the design of the new house.

Jan Meston: You can make a recommendation about the removal of the house and about the design of the house. We don't have any standards on the landscaping. That is not something you can use to make them come back. If you were to turn this design down, it needs to be based on a reason that it does not meet the design guidelines and standards. That's what you need to base your decision on.

Mark French: But if we are representing the community and the city, if we send along recommendations, it sends a message that they don't necessarily have to comply with. If you are willing to let us send messages, then I would like to make a motion that includes asking for a landscaping proposal. It could be schematic. And ask for the paint color proposal. And to follow the relocation of the house. Would that have to come all in one motion?

Jan Meston: Usually it comes as a general recommendation with conditions. All one recommendation. Whatever comes out of your decision tonight is a recommendation that will go to the Planning Director for a decision.

Barb Hardman: One thing that troubles me is that there is no minimal level of consideration of other alternatives. This is like a demolition. It doesn't seem like they provided adequate evidence of exploring alternatives using the existing structure as a starting point. At least the Levines used the design of the existing house in the new design.

Dave Koenig: The standards say to consider other uses. Part of the historic overlay has uses that could be commercial uses, so instead of being a single-family house, you could convert it into a bed and breakfast, for example. The language doesn't really work well for the single-family area. You can't have any other uses here. There are no alternatives. It doesn't talk about the building itself.

Mark French: The plans are schematic, so I think we should work to formulate a recommendation with conditions. They are going to be massaging the design. They still have room.

Chandra Sadro: Why don't we recommend denying the removal of the existing structure because the mass of the new structure is incompatible with the neighborhood? The guidelines say, "The massing of a building affects its size and proportion. Buildings which are too wide or too tall are incompatible with their neighborhood and interrupt the consistent streetscape." I argue that this applies. I don't care if the modulation meets the requirements. It is too big for the character of the neighborhood.

Is that something we can hang a point on? Since we are still in schematic phase, maybe they can tighten it up a little, make some changes.

Jan Meston: Yes.

Dave Ramstad: The first thing I saw about the massing was put the parking underneath. That was before I found the page that had the lap pool in the basement. The house one block away, at 12th, which is also too big, did put the parking underneath rather than blocking more view. I support Chandra's statement.

Chandra: A lot of the public comments were directed at the size of the house. You can't fault the applicant for the window or door detailing.

Dave Ramstad: No. It's a handsome house, it just doesn't belong there.

Sue Walsh: All else flows from the mass – the size of the building.

Chandra Sadro: The guidelines say the historic buildings were typically 30 to 40 feet wide, and this house including the attached garage is 74 feet wide. They are trying to mitigate it, but it isn't cutting it. They are following the rules, but they are missing the spirit of the guidelines. That is why we are here, and we need to remind them of it. They will be pretty surprised, because apparently they thought they were in the clear when they left.

People come in with a wish list, the program they talked about, which is never going to be compatible with a historic home.

Mark French: Is there any discussion about the three points that I brought up?

Dave Koenig: Procedurally, why doesn't someone make a motion and you can amend the motion.

Jim Staniford: I'm extremely disappointed that the applicant left, that he didn't wait for comments so he could respond. I'm also disappointed that someone makes a comment from the audience and leaves without our commenting about the procedure. I'm disappointed that in the last few years on this Commission that we don't have more teeth. I think we should put as many items that we don't like as possible on the condition list, but I still think we should recommend no. There's nothing wrong with the existing house. It preserves the neighborhood character. I think a strong no is the best way to make our statement.

Sue Walsh: How about we address the mass issue and say, no way, it doesn't work. The mass is too big and not acceptable. However, we could indicate we would like to have a joint committee this time, with City Council and Planning Committee and whoever else, to really get to the heart of these issues. They will come back again. We need to hammer out a solution. So we are saying no, and we are going to see more of these things, so let's get together and try to come up with something that might make a difference.

Mark French: So the “no” would be based on the massing alone?

Chandra Sadro: Yes. That’s keeping it clean, above the belt, and based on fact. This is serious.

Ross Johnson: If you don’t make recommendations, and the Planning Director were to overrule you, he wouldn’t have any guidance from you.

Chandra Sadro: One of our biggest objections is the size of it. In addition to the fact that none of us wants to see the original house removed.

Barb Hardman: That’s the biggest objection for me. The houses create the neighborhood character and that’s what we’re trying to protect.

Jim Staniford: If we follow Chandra’s direction on a motion, can we still put conditions on it to help guide the Planning Director in his decision?

Mark French: That’s my point.

Dave Koenig: We have the minutes to document your discussion and comments.

Dave Ramstad moved to reject the moving of a contributing structure from 1102 Grand Avenue in the Rucker/Grand Historic Overlay Zone and to reject the proposed design of the new house because the mass of the house is incompatible with the character of the neighborhood. The Neighborhood Conservation Guidelines state, “Buildings which are too wide...are incompatible with their neighbors and interrupt the consistent streetscape.” (Neighborhood Conservation Guidelines, B. Massing, p. 11) Jim Staniford seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Dave Koenig: With reference to your discussion, houses of this size may be proposed again, but it is fairly rare because this large lot was created by the 11th Street vacation. There were a lot of comments during City Council’s consideration of that action about view corridors, etc. Granting the vacation was not a unanimous vote at City Council.

Barb Hardman: There are some other 90-foot lots in the overlay.

Dave Koenig: There are not many street ends left. The vacation of the street end itself was controversial to some. City Council discussed issues such as the view corridor before their approval. The property owners to both the north and south petitioned for the street vacation.

We will also be happy to send a message about your desire to have a joint meeting with others on these issues to get more focus on them. A code change can happen only three ways. It can be initiated by the Mayor, Planning Commission or City Council.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.