

STAFF REPORT



HISTORIC DOWNTOWN ADVISORY COMMISSION

Zoom Webinar (Virtual)  
Thursday, April 15, 2021  
6:30 P.M.

**1. CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**

Applicant: Sarah Mackert, SJM studio LLC  
Location: 80 E Olentangy St  
Zoning: DB – Downtown Business District  
Request: Review of a plan for a proposed addition to an existing building for a private social club.

Aerial Site Image: <https://goo.gl/maps/3cVTir5m1v3A573z6>

**Project Background**

This project is located at the northeast intersection of Grace Drive and East Olentangy Street, and is currently used as a single-family residence. Good Night Investments is proposing to renovate and expand the current building, converting the existing home to a private social club. The Planning and Zoning Commission reviewed this project as a Sketch Plan on November 11, 2020, and as a Preliminary Development Plan on March 21, 2021. The Planning and Zoning Commission has requested the Historic Downtown Advisory Commission review the architecture and provide comments back to the Planning and Zoning Commission for their consideration prior to the submission of a Final Development Plan.

The Staff Report from the March 21, 2021 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting, as well as the Preliminary Development Plan submission, are attached.

**Proposal Overview**

The applicant is proposing to restore and maintain the original residential structure including the front porch, and remove the garage structure and rear porch. As stated in the application submission, a new addition is proposed to the north with a roofline that will mimic the existing. A transitional architectural component is proposed between the two buildings with a flat roof to allow the original north-facing roof soffit to remain uninterrupted. This transitional component will also be the new main entry. The existing building and new addition is proposed to house a new private, membership-only social club named “The Venerly”.

Alternative stormwater management strategies are being explored for the site, and new landscaping is proposed in addition to a new parking lot and entry location.

**Ordinance Review**

In accordance with the requirements of Codified Ordinance [1143.18\(a\)](#). It is the purpose of the Downtown District Overlay District (herein after referred to as the “Downtown District”) to promote the public, health, safety, and welfare by providing for the regulation of the downtown area through a single, unified district. This district is created to permit the careful and coordinated physical planning, development, and redevelopment of the land, and to provide flexibility in the location of land uses, housing types, and intensity. This district shall preserve, protect, and promote the historical nature of downtown by pursuing development that encourages a mix of uses in a manner that is safe, pleasant, convenient, and in context with the history of the area. It is also the purpose of the Downtown District to:

- (1) Safeguard the heritage of the City by preserving sites and structures within the historic central core of the City that reflect the City’s history and its architectural history.
- (2) Stabilize and improve property values.
- (3) Strengthen the economy of the City by promoting business development through the allowance of buildings that provide flexible commercial opportunities yet in keeping with the village scale and character.
- (4) Protect and enhance the City’s attractions to residents and visitors.
- (5) Enhance the visual and aesthetic character, diversity, and interest of the City’s history.
- (6) Foster civic pride in the beauty, human scale, and human details of the City’s history.

- (7) Promote excellence in small town design, incorporating elements that are consistent with the existing character of the area.
- (8) Promote the use and preservation of historic sites and structures for the education and general welfare of the people of the City.
- (9) Preserve sound existing housing stock in the historic central area of the City and safeguard the residential scale of the district and the character of sub-areas that are primarily residential in character

In accordance with the requirements of Codified Ordinance 1143.18(j)(2)(A), any addition of occupy-able space to an existing non-residential structure, whether principal or accessory, which creates a change in the outward appearance of a property within the Downtown District shall require approval of Certificate of Appropriateness by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Additionally, in accordance with the requirements of Codified Ordinance 1143.18(k)(2), the Planning and Zoning Commission may ask the Historic Downtown Advisory Commission to review a Certificate of Appropriateness application with City Staff and provide written comments and recommendations to the Planning and Zoning Commission for consideration. Such recommendations shall be part of the Planning and Zoning Commission approval unless the Planning and Zoning Commission finds the recommendations do not correspond to the adopted standards and guidelines or approval process as required by the zoning code. For any recommendation by the Historic Downtown Advisory Commission found to not correspond to the adopted standards and guidelines or approval process as required by the Zoning Code, the Planning and Zoning Commission shall provide a written reason for such finding. Should the Historic Downtown Advisory Commission not provide written comments and recommendations for any application, for any reason, it shall not prohibit the Planning and Zoning Commission from acting upon any application.

### Staff Comments

Staff comments address the applicable sections of the [Powell Architectural Guidelines](#) (PAG). These architectural guidelines are the standard used for the issuance of Certificates of Appropriateness in the Historic District Overlay.

### Site Considerations:

- Roads and Drives (PAG, pg. 10)
  - “Private parking and roads should be designed to require the least amount of surface. Drives should be the shortest length possible and the minimum width necessary. Access roads should be located as unobtrusively as possible, and landscaping should be planned to soften their impact.”
    - Proposed parking and drive: The access drive is proposed off Grace Dr. The width of the drive is proposed to be 24.00 feet.
    - Staff Comment: The access drive is proposed in the least obtrusive location, as it is as far from the Grace Dr/E Olentangy St intersection as possible while maintaining the flood plain from Bartholomew Run. However, staff is concerned that the 24’ wide access drive is wider than necessary and requests the applicant work with Staff as well as the Liberty Township Fire Department to decrease the size of the drive, if possible.
- Parking (PAG, pg. 10)
  - “Parking for residences turned into businesses or newly constructed businesses along Olentangy and Liberty Streets shall be provided at rear yard areas. Parking areas should be only as large as necessary to provide a reasonable number of parking spaces as determined by applicable code requirements. Commercial lots should be paved with asphalt, brick, concrete, or tar and chip as required in the Powell Zoning Code.”
    - Proposed parking: 13 spaces, including one ADA space, are proposed along the east portion of the site. A pervious pavement material is being considered for the parking lot.

- Staff Comment: Parking in the rear yard is not an option, as this property is a corner lot with a stream running through the rear. The number of parking spaces proposed is reasonable, as the Zoning Code calls for one parking space per 10 members, and the applicant has expressed that private parking agreements will be created to cover any additional spaces that may be needed. Staff supports the consideration for pervious pavement on this site, which would alleviate stormwater runoff, even though pervious technologies are not called out in the PAG.
- Sidewalks (PAG, pg. 11)
  - “Some type of contemporary, all weather path must be provided to allow for increased pedestrian traffic along Olentangy Street and at the Center of the City. Sidewalks should be provided along Olentangy Street from Martin Perry house on the east to the railroad tracks on the west.”
    - Staff Comment: Sidewalks exist on this property along the Olentangy St frontage, and connect to the Grace Drive intersection.
- Lighting (PAG, pg. 13)
  - “Lighting fixtures should be simple Victorian or turn of the century in design, with round or egg-shaped globes on metal posts with minimal detailing.”
  - “Free standing, pole mounted lamps may be used to light paths or drives. These lights should not be taller than the height of the first story or adjacent buildings. Metal posts should be painted in dark, muted colors such as black, brown, or dark green. The more elaborate the shape of the globe, the simpler the detailing of the post should be. Simple globes can be mounted on more detailed posts. All pole mounted lights should be individual. Clusters of lights are not acceptable in the Historic District.”
  - “Contemporary lights which incorporate simple, round or oval globes and modest posts or brackets may be appropriate in the Historic District. Frosted globes should be used in all lights in the Historic District, as they will provide softer light than clear globes.”
    - Proposed Lighting: Free standing, pole mounted path lighting, and feature wall sconces.
    - Staff Comment: Additional exterior lighting will help to create a safer environment for customers and employees. The freestanding path lighting meets the architectural guidelines, but the wall sconces are more modern than the guidelines suggest.
- Signage and Graphics (PAG, pg. 15)
  - “Appropriate signage should convey the name and purpose of the business in a direct manner, using small, simple letters. Logos and graphics should be small, straightforward, and kept to a minimum.”
    - Proposed Signage: The applicant is proposing no signage.

#### Building Materials:

- Manufactured Siding (PAG, pg. 27)
  - Proposed siding: 8” fiber cement clapboard siding is proposed for the new addition. The glazed block wall on the existing home will remain.
  - Staff Comment: Fiber cement board is not addressed in the building materials portion of the PAG. Natural materials are preferred per the PAG.
- Asphalt Singles (PAG, pg. 34)
  - In many cases, asphalt shingles, “are appropriate as replacements for slate, or for use on new construction.”
  - “Asphalt shingles are now available in a variety of colors. Variated grays are the most appropriate for use in the Historic District.”
    - Proposed roofing: Dark gray/black dimensional roof shingle.
    - Staff Comment: From the submission, it is not clear whether the proposed dimensional roof singles on the new addition will match the existing home.

#### Massing:

- Roofs (PAG, pg. 42)
  - “Gable roofs are most appropriate for new construction in the Historic District. Their breadth, length, and slope should be similar to those of existing gable roofs, as excessively wide, long or steeply pitched gables would not be appropriate.”
    - Proposed Roof: Gable roof with dormers. Please see the roof plan included in the submitted materials.
    - Staff Comment: The gabled roof is appropriate for the Historic District, however, as the Architectural Advisor notes below, the roof plan is complex. Staff requests the Commission provide comments on whether the roof forms should be simplified.
- Additions (PAG, pg. 44)
  - “Appropriate additions to existing buildings in the Historic District are encouraged. A close look at additions made in the past can yield clues to sympathetic design of contemporary additions. In general, additions to an existing building should be compatible with that building in massing, materials and level of detail.”
  - “It is not necessary nor desirable that additions match the existing buildings exactly. Contemporary design is encouraged as long as it is in harmony with the character of the Historic District. This will continue the tradition of growth and change in Powell, without completely altering the essential character of the City.”
  - “The mass of any addition should be kept subordinate to the mass of the main portion of the building. This means that the addition should be smaller and shorter than the main portion of the building. The roof line of an addition should not appear as a continuation of the main form or roof, nor should it mimic, or “complete” existing forms or roof lines.”
    - Staff Comment: The proposed addition has a larger footprint than the existing home, however, the ridge of the existing roof and new addition are similar in height, about 20'-3”.

#### Architectural Elements:

- Windows (PAG, pg. 47)
  - “There are three basic types of windows which are historically correct within the Historic District, double-hung, ‘ribbon’ and fixed sash. The most common type of window in the City is double-hung, straight-topped, and has tall, thin proportions. These windows range from two to three times as tall as they are wide. Two-over-two or one-over-one pane divisions are typical.”
  - “New construction within the Historic District should use window types and proportions characteristic of Powell. Double-hung windows in tall, thin proportions are appropriate in almost all types of Powell buildings.”
    - Proposed Windows: A variety of windows are proposed, please refer to the elevation drawings.
    - Staff Comment: Staff requests additional detail for the windows, as they appear to lack consistency with the architectural guidelines, or match the window proportions or style of the existing home.
- Doors (PAG, pg. 57)
  - “Doors used in new construction within the Historic District should be similar to those typically found in Powell. These doors should be simple in design, and generally vertical in proportion. Three or four paneled wood doors or doors with a glazed upper panel are appropriate. Doors with more than four wood panels or several small panes of glass are generally too elaborate for the simple buildings typical of Powell. Modern flush doors are too simple and are not appropriate in the Historic District.”
    - Proposed Doors: Please refer to the elevation drawings.
    - Staff Comment: The applicant has not provided sufficient information for Staff to determine whether the proposed doors meet the Historic District guidelines. These

details will be required prior to the Final Development Plan review.

- Gutters and Downspouts (PAG, pg. 68)
  - “Downspouts designed for replacement or new construction should be as unobtrusive as possible. They should be located on a side façade, far enough back to they will not interfere with any front façade detailing (like porches) or on a rear façade.”
  - “Aluminum downspouts may be used for replacement or new construction. In general, downspouts should be painted to match the base wall color of the building.”
    - Proposed Gutters and Downspouts: 5” gutter, downspouts are not detailed on the drawing set.
    - Staff Comment: The applicant has not provided sufficient information to determine where the gutters and downspouts are located. The color and material of the gutters and downspouts are not included in the submission. The gutters and downspouts should be located as unobtrusively as possible, and should match those of the existing home.
- Painting and Colors (PAG, pg. 70)
  - “In general, colors used in the Historic District should be muted, dark, and earth-toned. Livelier colors should be limited to trim, or one accent piece, such as a door. Avoid extremely bright, pure colors, or using two colors of the same intensity.”
    - Proposed colors: Dark colors, including Sherwin Williams Dark Night, Sherwin Williams Mount Etna, and Sherwin Williams Inkwel.
    - Staff Comment: Color samples are included in the submission; however, more clarification is needed where each color is applied.

The proposal also meets the purpose of the Downtown District. The renovation of the existing building and new addition and will:

- Strengthen the economy of the City by promoting business development through the allowance of buildings that provide flexible commercial opportunities yet in keeping with the village scale and character.
- Protect and enhance the City's attractions to residents and visitors.
- Enhance the visual and aesthetic character, diversity, and interest of the City's history.

#### Architectural Advisor Comments

- The differentiation between the existing and new structure is appreciated.
- Concerns regarding the application of materials in regard to the restoration of the existing structure.
- The wall lights appear to be midcentury (however, that aesthetic does tie to the theme of the establishment). Something more art deco or Victorian could be a better starting point.
- The interaction of the “atrium/connector” could be improved where the hip roof cuts into the glazing. The connector could be recessed and the solid “crown” increased so that the bottom lines up with the soffit of the new structure
- The roof plan looks very complex, there are some concerns with how the valleys and roof penetrations are flashed and treated.

#### Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends the Historic Downtown Advisory Commission provide comments to the applicant and respond to Staff concerns. The applicant should incorporate HDAC's comments into their Final Development Plan proposal.