

# CITY OF BENSON

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

### THURSDAY, JANUARY 30, 2014 – 10:00 A.M.

#### MINUTES

Chair Ruth Wilson opened the meeting at 10:31 a.m.

Members present: Ruth Wilson, Joanne Sturgeon, Phyllis Little, Alwine Frega and Peter Wangsness.

#### CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

There was no call to the public.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

Chair Ruth Wilson introduced the request, stating the Hi Wo house at 393 E. Fifth was placed on the National Register in 2011 after a 7 year process. She stated that she personally has been involved for the past several years, including delivering paperwork to the residents of the Barrio explaining the tax benefits of being listed on the Register. Ruth Wilson acknowledged that the tax benefit is a moot point for the Catholic Church, but noted that some grant funds could be available for repairs.

Ruth Wilson provided a brief description of the Wo family, noting that Hi Wo was from China and become active in the Catholic church once settled in Benson. The house itself was moved from Tres Alamos to Fourth Street in Benson and then moved again to its location on Fifth Street.

Ruth Wilson recognized the Church's need for parking, but stated the Commission would like to try to move the house to a new location, if it is stable enough. She recognized the issues of cost would still need to be addressed, but stated that the Commission would like more time.

Commissioner Alwine Frega stated her agreement with Ruth Wilson, noting that she'd like to see if moving the structure is even feasible and then look into cost considerations if it is feasible.

Commissioner Joanne Sturgeon asked about moving the addition along with the house. Chair Ruth Wilson responded that it would be preferable to leave the addition and just take the original structure. She also noted that detaching the siding creates issues with asbestos. Building Official Luis Garcia stated that asbestos is certainly likely in the siding covering the house.

Commissioner Joanne Sturgeon asked if hazardous materials had been factored into the cost of demolition. Father Michael Bucciarelli replied that the estimate of \$4500 did include hazmat considerations. The preferred contractor is also removing the old St. David LDS church, which also has asbestos, so the equipment will already be in the area. The demolition of the house

would take only a day or two. Father Michael noted the next lowest bid was almost double, at \$8000.

Chair Ruth Wilson asked if the house had been stripped by salvage, noting the interior window and door frames had been removed. Father Mike Bucciarelli and Broker David Miller replied the church had not removed anything from the house, had turned off the utilities, but that the house was in the condition it had been purchased.

Commissioner Alwine Frega asked about the missing crown molding to which David Miller confirmed that the molding was gone when the purchase was made. When asked about the hole in the ground, where the floor furnace would go, David Miller also confirmed that no ductwork was underneath. He further stated that modern windows had been added, as well as the porch, along with miscellaneous interior construction. He also noted that the house sit so cinderblocks.

Chair Ruth Wilson reiterated the desire for more time in order to have an architect evaluate the house and determine where the house could be set if it could be moved. She questioned when the contractor is supposed to arrive in the area to demolish both the LDS church and this house. David Miller responded that the contractor was expected to work this week and would spend several days in St. David.

Building Official Luis Garcia commented that he and the City Engineer had looked at the house for life safety hazards and found none, but did not review the building for structural stability to move it. David Miller commented that he didn't know if the house would hold together if moved.

Dan Garcia, a contractor hired by the Church stated his opinion that the removal of the north wall where the addition is attached and the removal of an internal wall will cause instability if the building is moved. He agreed that the addition would probably be left behind if the original structure was moved but this would require shoring up the north wall.

Resident Jack Comaduran, the grandson of Hi Wo, confirmed there used to be an internal wall through the living room area

When asked about the appearance of the addition in an early photograph, Building Official Luis Garcia suggested that the "addition" in the photograph was a lean to against the house, which was eventually removed.

Commissioner Joanne Sturgeon asked when a firm answer on receiving a Certificate of appropriateness for the demolition would be needed into order to least disrupt the demolition schedule to keep costs minimized for the church. David Miller responded they'd like a response within 2 weeks.

David Miller stated the Catholic Church agrees with preserving historical structures, but in his opinion this house seems too altered to be historical. Father Mike Bucciarelli agreed will allowing an additional 2 weeks to determine if the house is structurally sound enough to move. He noted there will still be costs to the church, such as the demolition of the addition.

Chairman Ruth Wilson asked if the church would give the house to the Commission if it can be safely moved. Father Mike Bucciarelli agreed to give the house away if the moving feasibility question could be answered within 2 week and the moving process begun shortly afterward.

Commissioner Alwine Frega questioned when the St. David LDS demolition was starting, to approximate when the \$4500 demolition cost would be lost. Ruth Wilson agreed that if action couldn't be taken promptly on the Commission's side that demolition would not be stalled so the church would not lose their money.

Commissioner Phyllis Little made a motion to find an architect to look at the structure of the house to see if it is feasible to move the house and to reconvene within 2 weeks to discuss the findings. Commissioner Alwine Frega seconded.

Father Michael Bucciarelli asked if a demolition permit would be issued in 2 weeks for either the house or the addition if the Commission takes the house. Building Official Luis Garcia stated that the Commission would issue a Certificate of Appropriateness and then the Building Department would issue the demo permit.

Commissioner Alwine Frega made a motion to find an architect, reconvene to discuss the findings and issue the Certificate of Appropriate for either the house or the addition in 2 weeks.

Father Michael Bucciarelli reiterated that they'd like to keep on schedule with the contractor. He also stated that if the Commission can move the house-structurally and financially, that the church will work with the Commission, but that the church can't have the house sitting there indefinitely.

Commissioner Phyllis Little seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

**ADJOURNED:** Chair Ruth Wilson called the meeting to a close at 11:05 a.m.