



Historic Landmarks and Preservation Districts Commission

Report to the Committee

To: Limerick Architectural Review Committee
Thru: Bob Keesaer, AIA, NCARB, Planning & Design Supervisor
From: Savannah Darr, Historic Preservation Specialist
Date: April 21, 2017

Case No: 16COA1091
Classification: Committee Review

GENERAL INFORMATION

Property Address: 621 W. Kentucky Street

Applicant: Carrie Fry
Vacant and Public Property Administration
Develop Louisville
444 S. 5th Street, Suite 500
Louisville, KY 40202
502-574-2879
carrie.fry@louisvilleky.gov

Owner: Carl and LaShonda Fletcher
304 Doe Run Road
Sellersburg, IN 47172

Estimated Project Cost: \$12,000+/-

Description of proposed exterior alteration:

The applicant requests approval to demolish the primary structure at 621 W. Kentucky Street due to its severe state of deterioration and the inability of the property owner to come into compliance. The Vacant and Public Property Administration (VPPA) handles demolition requests per Chapter 156.807 of the Property Maintenance Code.

Communications with Applicant, Completion of Application

The application was received on April 13, 2017 and considered complete and requiring committee level review on April 17, 2017. Staff has been in consultation with the applicant and VPPA since the original demolition review was requested on February 14, 2017. Staff conducted a site visit on February 23, 2017 to

assess the integrity of the building with Bob Keesaer, Carrie Fry, and Building Inspector Allen Porter.

The case is scheduled to be heard by the Limerick Architectural Review Committee on April 26, 2017 at 5:30 pm, at 444 South Fifth Street, Conference Room 101.

FINDINGS

Guidelines

The following design review guidelines, approved for the Limerick Preservation District, are applicable to the proposed exterior alterations: **Demolition**. The report of the Commission Staff's findings of fact and conclusions with respect to these guidelines is attached to this report.

The following additional findings are incorporated in this report:

Site Context/ Background

The TNZD zoned property in the Traditional Neighborhood Form District is located on the north side of W. Kentucky Street, just east of 967 S. 7th Street. The building is situated across two separate parcels (965 and 967 S. 7th Street). The two-story frame building was constructed sometime between 1905 and 1941. The front gabled frame building was likely constructed as an accessory structure. The 1941 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map labeled it as woodworking (see attached). From older, undated Property Valuation Administration (PVA) photos, it appears that the structure was clad in vertical wood planking much like a barn, then insulbrick was applied over that, and finally vinyl siding was applied over that (see attached). This building does not appear in the city directories until 1949, when it was a multi-family residence.

The current owners, Carl and LaShonda Fletcher, purchased the property in 2000. The structure has been vacant since 2013 and code enforcement has inspected it over 90 times in the last 17 years. The property has accumulated over \$27,000 in property maintenance fines and violations.

Conclusions

Staff did not find historic photographs of the structure; however, it appeared to be constructed as an accessory structure, like a barn, with vertical wood planking. At some point the structure was converted to a multifamily use and was covered with insulbrick and vinyl siding. From the field inspection, it is clear that most of the wood on the building is rotted. Building Inspector Allen Porter could move portions of the exterior walls with his hands. He also used a Wohler borescope inspection camera to see the foundation. However, the inspection showed that there was no continuous foundation and that there were gaps between the walls and ground surface. Thus, there is very little material integrity remaining.

This is technically a case of demolition by neglect, which is defined in the Demolition Design Guidelines as "The deteriorated condition of a historic building attributable to the owner's failure to provide proper maintenance over an

extended period of time.” Cases of demolition by neglect are typically not approved by the ARC, and demolition by neglect is not a factor considered when an applicant applies for economic hardship to demolish a structure. However, as the property owner waits to go into foreclosure to be released of the liens and mortgages against the property, the building will continue to deteriorate. The unfortunate disrepair of this house is so severe that if left standing it will likely become an emergency demolition within the next year and have to be demolished anyway.

The Demolition Design Guidelines state,

“Unless the City has determined that it poses an imminent threat to life or property, do not demolish any historic structure or part of a historic structure that contributes to the integrity of any historic district or individual landmark unless:

- 1) the demolition will not adversely affect the district's (or the landmark's) distinctive characteristics, taken as a whole, retained over time;
- 2) the demolition will not adversely affect the district's importance as a 'unified entity' composed of interrelated resources united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development; and
- 3) the proposed replacement structure and development will strengthen the viability of the district as a whole.”

In its current condition, this building does not contribute to the integrity of the Limerick Preservation District. Likely constructed as an accessory structure behind 965 and 967 S. 7th Streets, this building was never an important feature of W. Kentucky Street. It is situated closer to the street than the historic homes (now demolished) and eventual commercial buildings to the east, which sets it apart. The building was constructed in a vernacular style with no distinctive architectural details. Unfortunately, the layers of insulbrick and vinyl siding have rotted the wood cladding below losing all material integrity.

Staff does not take demolition of primary structures in a preservation district lightly. However, this particular building is in such a state of deterioration that any rehabilitation would be more like reconstruction. At that point, this building would no longer have any material or historic integrity. Furthermore, this was an accessory structure that was likely built to be temporary in nature. It is for these reasons that staff recommends approval of the application for demolition. However, this is not carte blanche for other property owners to follow suit with cases for demolition by neglect. The specific situation of this particular building is very different from other vacant properties in the District.

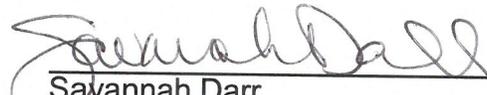
RECOMMENDATION

On the basis of the information furnished by the applicant, staff recommends the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness be **approved** with the following conditions:

1. The demolition shall not disturb any of the adjacent buildings.
2. A state survey form shall be submitted to the Kentucky Heritage Council to document the building prior to its demolition.
3. Photographic documentation shall be submitted to staff so that historic records can be maintained.
4. During demolition, topography shall be made consistent with that of adjacent properties. The slope and grades of land left vacant after demolition shall continue and be consistent with those features on adjacent properties.
5. If the plan changes, the applicant shall contact staff.

The foregoing information is hereby incorporated in the Certificate of Appropriateness as approved and is binding upon the applicant, his successors, heirs or assigns. This Certificate does not relieve the applicant of responsibility for obtaining the necessary permits and approvals required by other governing agencies or authorities.

4/21/17
Date


Savannah Darr
Historic Preservation Specialist

DEMOLITION

Design Guideline Checklist From Economic Hardship Exemption

- + Meets Guidelines
- Does Not Meet Guidelines
- +/- Meets Guidelines with Conditions as Noted
- NA Not Applicable
- NSI Not Sufficient Information

Introduction

Unless the city has determined that it poses an imminent threat to life or property, do not demolish any historic structure or part of a historic structure that contributes to the integrity of any historic district, or any individual landmark or part of an individual landmark.

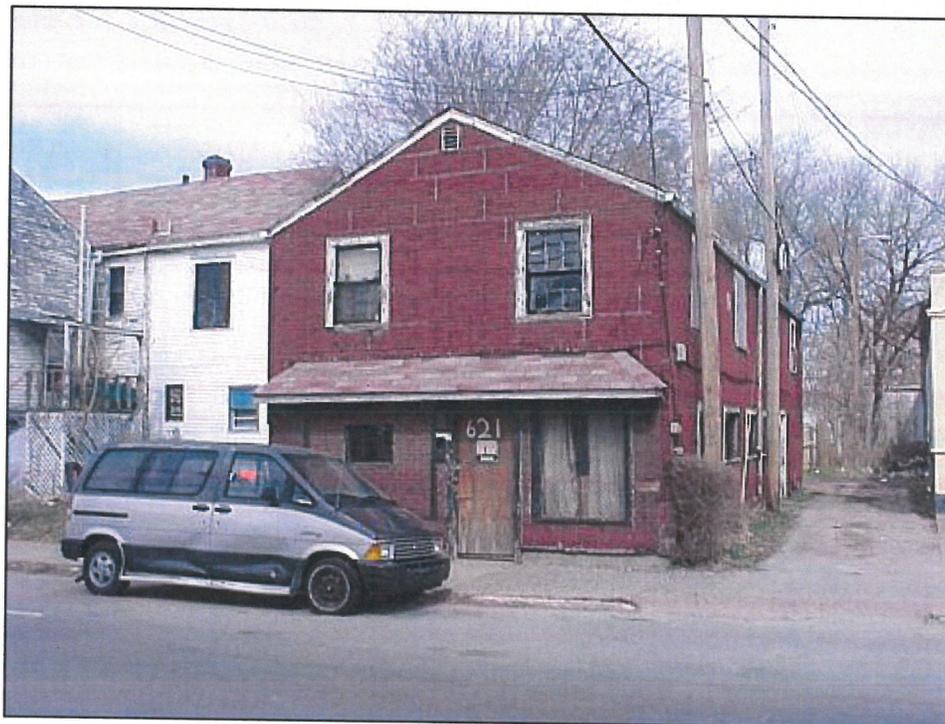
Demolition by Neglect

The deteriorated condition of a historic building attributable to the owner's failure to provide proper maintenance over an extended period of time will not be considered a mitigating circumstance in evaluations of economic hardship. Hardship that is attributable to a building's being allowed to deteriorate will be considered self-imposed; restoration costs incurred to remediate such neglect will not be considered.

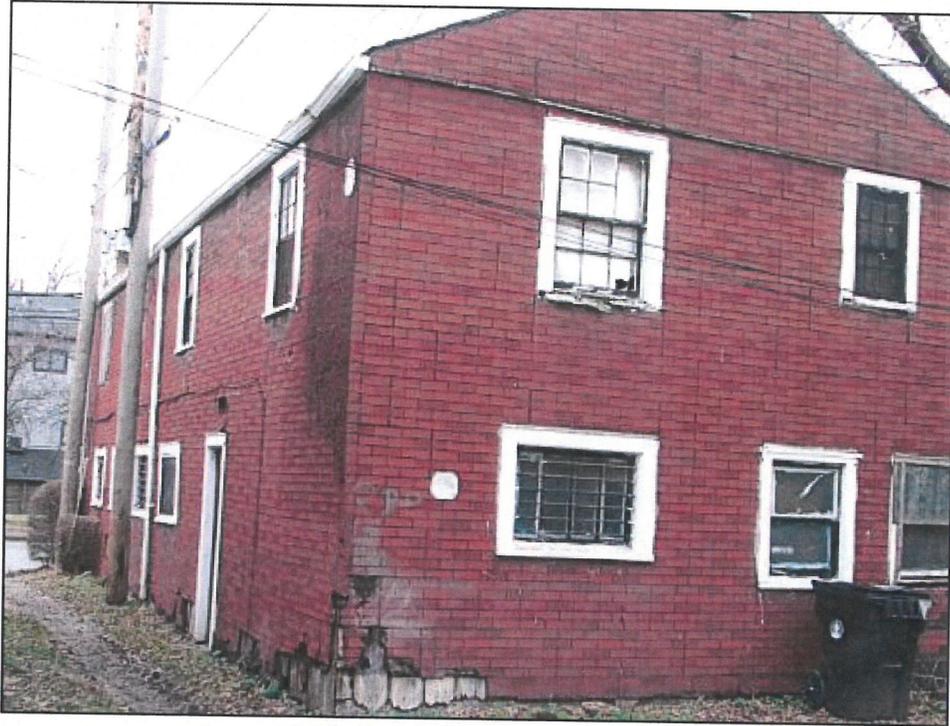
	Guideline	Finding	Comment
DE1	Do not demolish existing non-contributing buildings and additions in a manner that will threaten the integrity of existing contributing structures.	NA	
DE2	Do take steps to assure the integrity of a wall exposed to the elements by the removal of a non-historic addition.	NA	
DE3	Do remove non-historic interior finishes such as plaster, drywall, or paneling that may be exposed as a result of the removal of non-historic additions.	NA	
DE4	Do infill non-historic openings in historic walls, exposed as a result of the removal of the non-historic finishes.	NA	
DE5	Do landscape areas that are left vacant as the result of removals of non-contributing buildings and additions. Topography should be made consistent with that of adjacent properties. The slope and grades of land left vacant after demolition should continue and be consistent with those features on adjacent properties.	+	
DE6	Do take measures to reestablish the street wall after demolition through the use of low fences, walls, and/or vegetation.	-	This vacant lot shall be sold as-is.



1979 Designation Photograph.



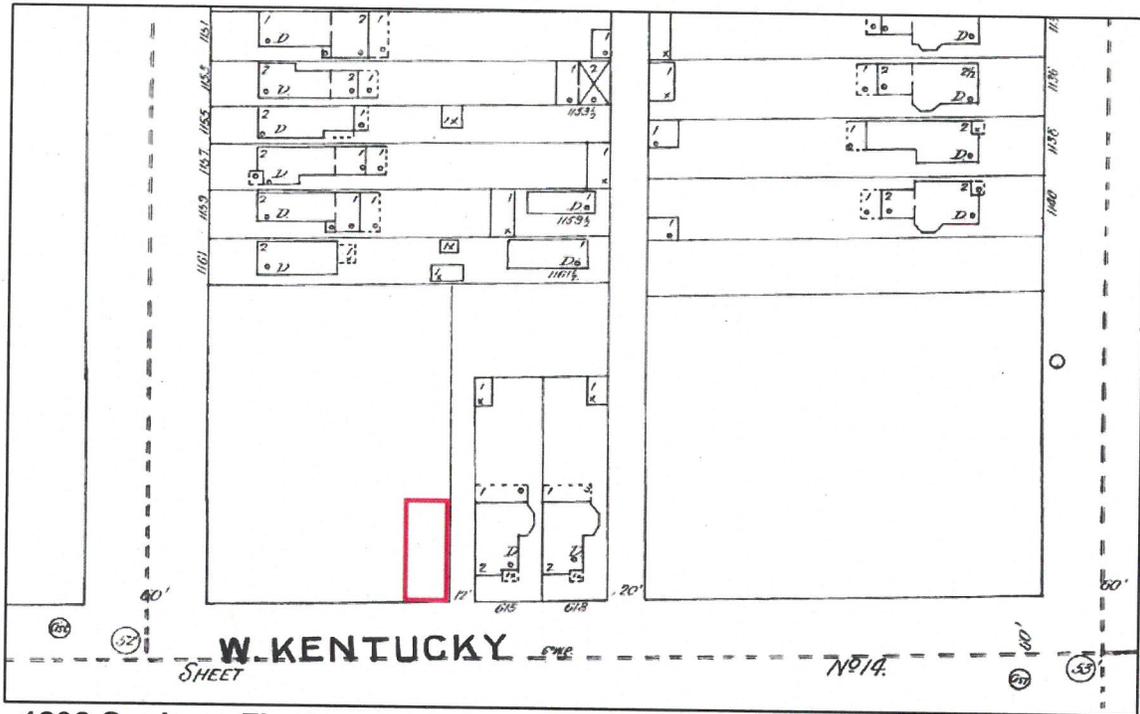
Undated PVA Photograph.



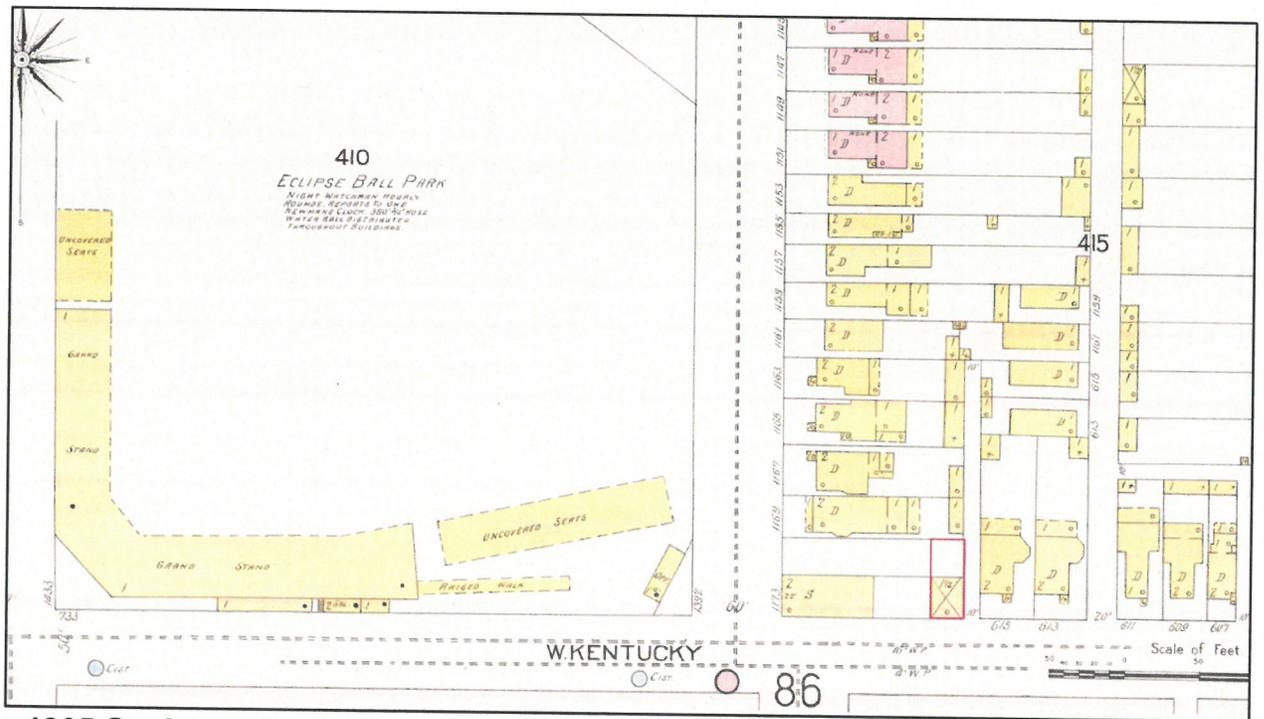
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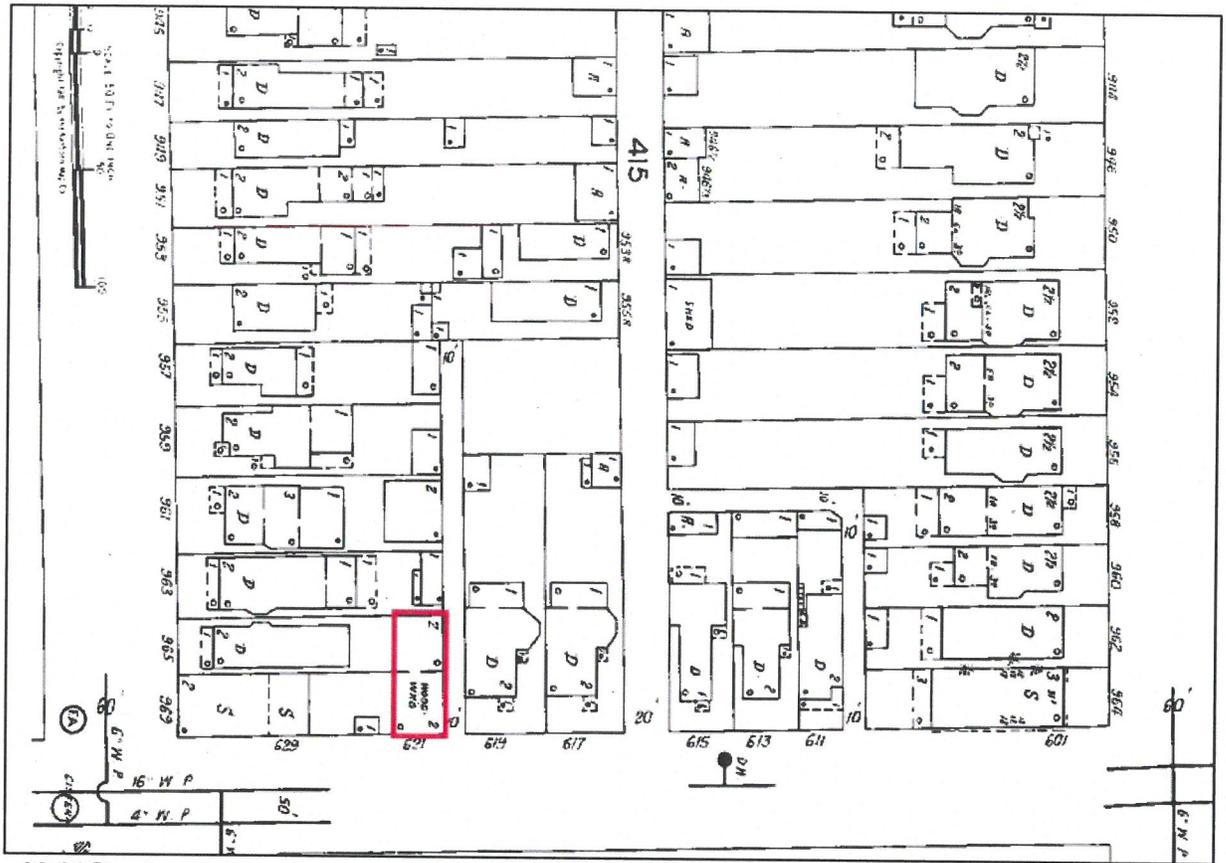
Undated PVA Photograph.



1892 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing the approximate location (red line) of 621 W. Kentucky Street, which was not constructed yet.



1905 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing the approximate location (red line) of 621 W. Kentucky Street, which was likely not constructed yet.



1941 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing the location (red line) of 621 W. Kentucky Street.