

**IDAHO FALLS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**  
**Special Design Review Meeting**  
**September 24, 2015**  
**Noon**  
**City Annex Conference Room**

**Minutes**

**Attending:** Rox Mitro, Judy Mortimer, Hersh Mynarcik, Kim Smith, Krisi Staten, Graham Whipple, and Julie Williams. Department Director Brad Cramer, and Recording Secretary Debra Petty.

**Applicant(s):** Julie and Carey Heaton.

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 12:00 PM.

**Façade Improvement Project(s):** Williams reviewed the intent of a design review. She said the Historic Preservation Commission compares the CDBG projects with the *Downtown Design Guidelines*. The comparison is done to determine if the project aligns with the *Guidelines*. If so, the Commission makes a recommendation of approval to the Idaho Falls Downtown Development Corporation Board. This Board has the final say whether to approve or not approve the project.

Romaine's Mattress King  
Julie and Carey Heaton  
401 E Street  
Idaho Falls, ID 83402

Farris said the request is for improvements to the east and south façades of Romaine's Mattress King. She said the metal awning on the east side will be removed. In lieu of replacing the awning, rain gutters would be installed to match the existing gutters. The eastern storefront doors and windows would be upgraded to standard low-e with a bronze frame. The east side would be plastered to match the front of the building. The south side would be painted to match the front for consistency. Farris gave a brief history of the building. She said original construction was in 1948. It has been a family-owned business since 1960. Some modifications have been done to improve the appearance of the building over the years. She said the request is for 2015 CDBG funds in the amount of \$14,296 to complete the proposed updates.

Williams drove by the building and expressed appreciation for the use of rain gutters to prevent pooling of water and moisture getting in the building. The *Design Guidelines*, page 22, addresses the required elements. One prohibited material is stucco, whether real or some version of stucco. She would like more detail regarding the reference to plaster in the project description. It was confirmed the applicant will use an efface product which is ineligible. Whipple said based on the scale of the photo the east façade is brick. Mr. Heaton told Mynarcik the metal awning was installed when Variety Mart occupied the building. Williams said the building maintains many mid-century modern characteristics, as reflected in the windows and flat roof. Whipple said his concern is taking the character from the building by using an efface system or even traditional plaster and lose the scale of the texture from the masonry coursing. He said this is heavily emphasized in the *Guidelines*, for preservation of materials that give a sense of scale to the downtown and historic buildings. Although the east façade brick has been painted, you can still see the texture of the materials. He doesn't want to lose the level of texture and detail.

Mitro said the south side of the building, or alley side, is visible to the public. According to the *Guidelines* unfinished or bare concrete masonry elevations are not allowed in elevations. She said the preference is to do something to the alley side. Whipple said it is not a primary or secondary shopping street. He said it is an alley view and that elevation would not be visible if there were an adjacent building through infill construction. As well, it isn't bare or unfinished CMU because it has been painted. Whipple told Mitro the existing photos show brick on the east side and there is a level of detail associated with brick because of the mortar joints. The texture from the base of the sill upward would

be lost with the use of efface and it creates a plain box in the downtown. Historically there are no plain boxes in the downtown. Whipple said it appears to be coursing of a larger from the ledge of the sill below that has been painted. Mitro said in looking at the alley photo it gives the appearance of concrete to a certain point and masonry above. Williams referenced the *Secretary of the Interior's Standard for Rehabilitation*, page 32 of the *Guidelines*. She read numbers 2 and 5 into the record. The *Guidelines* are based on these standards. Whipple confirmed for Mortimer it is acceptable to paint over a previously painted façade. He said if masonry has not been painted, painting is discouraged.

Mitro asked the applicant if the east wall is well insulated. Mrs. Heaton said there may be some insulation, but the wall is mostly window. Mr. Heaton said the south wall is not insulated. The block or masonry has been plastered over. Mitro said efface would provide some insulation. Mr. Heaton told Staten there is full brick beneath the awning but the condition is questionable due to previous signage. He has future plans to replace the metal awning with a cloth/canvas awning. Mitro said a cloth/canvas awning is preferable. Mr. Heaton said the section of the south wall with the garage was an addition done a few years ago. The right hand side of the building is brick. From the seam to the far left is cinderblock. He told Mortimer he plans to do something with the unsightly rear door. Mitro commended him for changing out the arched windows. Whipple said the north side improvements clean up that portion of the building. And the Commission has never seen an application this far north in the downtown. Mitro said the property falls within the downtown boundary. Whipple said it is positive to see business owners outside the core downtown show interest in the opportunity for grant monies to make improvements. Staten asked if the stucco is to tie the two buildings together or used as an insulation factor. Mr. Heaton said he wants to make the buildings look as one because presently it is confusing to customers. He told Staten the east entrance is not used by the public and plans to keep the same window configuration on the east. He is only replacing the glass. She asked when the brick is covered over with stucco where the separation line would occur between the two paint colors. He said he relies on the contractor. Mrs. Heaton appreciates the history of the city. Mr. Heaton said the bottom grade is concrete that was textured in the past, with brick between the windows up to the top.

Whipple asked if the applicants were given a set of the *Guidelines*. Mrs. Heaton said Farris was very good about providing the necessary information but did not recognize all that was required. Whipple said the *Guidelines* are the only measuring tool the Commission has to base an application on. In the past the Commission received a summary stating how the project complies with the *Guidelines*. He starts to question whether the applicant saw the *Guidelines* and if they considered them as they put the proposal together. He struggles with what was heard in the presentation and what he can see based on his limited involvement until now. He doesn't see how the application adheres to the *Guidelines*. Mrs. Heaton understands his point of view based on her application request for another building. She said she understands wanting to preserve historic features, but would like to somehow make it look like one facility and more appealing to their customers. Customers cannot tell how large the facility is because it looks like it is broken into several storefronts. She doesn't believe the awning is historic because it was added in the recent past to protect the merchandise in front of the windows. She checked with Valley Glass to see if a tint could be added and found it is very costly. The new windows have low-e and will keep the sun off merchandise. She asked if changing the paint color would make the building look more continuous and fit the *Guidelines*. Mortimer can see how similar colors with a sign and possibly incorporate some orange would work. Mr. Heaton said he plans to install a new awning and possibly have the signage on the awning. Williams suggested carrying the color scheme to the back of the building. Mrs. Heaton confirmed with the Commission they would like the mortar and brick preserved and carry the color around the building.

Whipple said as a Commission they need to be careful not to give design guidance as part of the review. Their responsibility is to review the application as it relates to the *Guidelines*. In the past he given his opinion but the only tool to measure against are the *Guidelines*. It is not up to them to tell the applicant what to do. If it doesn't comply with the *Guidelines*, that is the only basis for the discussion and recommendations. Farris asked if the applicant reconsiders their design if they have to come back through the process. Whipple said they do. Farris asked how soon they can schedule another meeting. Williams said when they are ready. Whipple said going back in the history of the façade grant program and the applications, has the applicant had any professional help? It was confirmed they have not. Whipple said other projects were approved with limited use of grant monies for professional assistant. He said

that could have been as far back as 8 years. The applicant admitted they received a copy of the *Guidelines* and didn't work through it. Whipple struggles based on what is in the documentation and what is known in the *Guidelines* for recommendation to the application. The application doesn't reference how they have met the *Guidelines* through the use of materials, colors, and texture. The application says the use of drawings and physical samples along with some context be presented so the Commission knows what they are doing. Whipple said recognizing the building is not contributing in the District, the *Guidelines* are still applicable. Williams recognized what Whipple said and restated the Commission can only go by the *Guidelines* by comparing them with the application. She said stucco on exterior installation is not appropriate. However, she thinks they are also able to say this would comply with the *Guidelines* if they paint over what is already painted.

Mr. Heaton asked if they abide by the *Guidelines* and paint what the Commission wants painted if it would prevent him from doing what he wants to do sometime down the road by plastering the building. Williams said he could if he used his own money. He said it is okay with him to paint the building to make it look like one, but he is sure down the road he will re-plaster. Farris said because it is Community Development Block Grant money it is a Federal grant and they must go through these reviews, even the State Historic Preservation Office review for use of Federal dollars. He can make changes later but not with Federal funds. Mrs. Heaton said the windows seem to fit into the *Guidelines*. They would upgrade everything and the painting would get them by until they can afford to make additional changes. The painting is not a big cost but the windows are. She said stucco is the largest cost. At some point the brick will be covered because it isn't in the best condition. In the long run the stucco will preserve the brick and the foundation.

Whipple struggles with the sketch of the windows because the application doesn't show the level of detail that normally they would see. How do they know the sketch of the windows match the dimensions of the existing windows? Mr. Heaton said Valley Glass took the measurements. Whipple said there is a lot of information missing. He is familiar with the building but didn't walk by it before the meeting. He said the application was extremely thin on information. His understanding is the application tells the applicant what they have to have. Farris said the application has not changed. Whipple said there are specific things such as samples, drawings, and existing and proposed elevations that should be provided. Farris said the application has paint colors, window measurements, and the type of product.

Farris asked if the applicant is willing to scale back on their project at present, whether the Commission can consider those features they are willing to incorporate such as windows, removing the awning, and the addition of the rain gutters today? Whipple said to approve the windows based on a sketch of what is proposed they have no idea what the existing proportions are. The struggle he has is he knows the application requires you show what is existing and what is proposed with samples. He struggles with approving the application. He said the rain gutter, based on the alley view, is pointless on the east façade because it appears the roof slopes to the west and sheds water to the southwest corner of the building. It does nothing. He said a coping cap on the top of the parapet wall would prevent deterioration. Whipple is weighing what is in the application and what is in the *Guidelines*. He said the applications has not been thought through and he cannot support it. Smith would like more information. Farris asked for other comments from the Commission. There were none. Williams called for a motion. Mrs. Heaton said Valley Glass took the exact measurements. Would that take away the concern of the Commission? Whipple said in past projects they have had the application that outlines each requirement. He said that information is lacking. **Whipple moved to deny approval of the application.** Mitro they are a recommending body. **Whipple moved to not recommend approval of the application, as it now stands.** Whipple's reasoning is that the application is adequate. The Commission does not have adequate information to fully evaluate the project based on the criteria. He said they don't have all the things mapped out in the application or references as to how it complies with the *Guidelines*. He said color samples, etc. are missing. There is just not enough information to say, "Yes, this looks great"! He said there is not one piece of the application that has sufficient information to be able to recommend approval. **Smith seconded the motion and passed.**

Cramer asked if the application referenced is different from the façade grant application. He said it seems to be a simple application. Whipple said there is a different one. They have had a different application in the past and it is

several pages. Farris said the application she uses is the same one from 2010. The only change is to update the date. Mitro believes what is lacking is the staff report. Whipple said in the past they have had samples. Mitro said what he is talking about is in the past most applicants have had a professional to assist with preparation of the application. She said the application is the same and was used by her clients. Farris said if they want to scale back on their project some of the grant funds can be used toward professional services. Mrs. Heaton said she would go back and address page 22 and 32 of the Guidelines. Whipple said in the past they have had a staff report. He does know that efface is one material that is highly discouraged. On rare occasions have they approved its use and only on a limited basis. It is his professional opinion that the *Guidelines* were trying to prevent a large box in the downtown because you create an anomaly in the fabric of downtown. You are striping that building of its character. Mrs. Heaton understands and needs to decide what they want to do.

Idaho Mountain Trading  
Richard L. Napier  
478 Shoup Avenue  
Idaho Falls, ID

Farris said owner, Mr. Richard Napier, was not in attendance due to another commitment. She said in 2014, the Commission reviewed façade improvements for cleaning, painting, and signage for Idaho Mountain Trading. One feature on the application, the east/west entry and alcove were excluded from the review due to lack of information and because the Building Official required a site plan with the application. Farris presented a photo of the west face alcove showing more detail of what is being proposed. The alcove poses security issues. It has become a place of loitering and unsightly litter. Farris confirmed for Whipple the alcove door opens to a staircase. Staten understood the alcove was going to be flush with the outside of the building. Mitro said, per the drawing, the alcove is slightly recessed to meet code.

Farris told Whipple the frame, doors, and glass will be removed on the east entry and replaced with new framing, a 42” door, and the addition of north and south sidelights. Mitro said it is difficult to understand what is being done without more information. She would like to have floor plans, and photos/renderings of the existing facade and what is being proposed. Whipple commented the east entry storefront is not very old and questioned the need to replace it. Mitro suggested it may be an issue with seals. Whipple believes new hardware could be the solution rather than replacing the entire storefront. Mitro said much of the discussion is assumed. Williams said the Commission needs to adhere to the *Guidelines* and more information is required to make a comparison. Whipple said vestibules are a key characteristic of downtown buildings and has concerns about blocking in the west alcove. Mitro said it is not an entrance. Whipple said historically it was an entrance. It was noted by a member it is not the main entrance. Whipple said if it is a security issue, it is possible to modify the alcove without closing it off. He would like to preserve the alcove to maintain the character of the downtown and in the future the existing stairs could serve another use. Williams said they shouldn’t comment without more information. Mitro believes a better solution is put a storefront display in the alcove and have access to the upstairs from the rear of the building. **Mitro moved to table the application until they have more information. Staten seconded the motion and passed.**

Mynarcik wants the applicant to address the proposed lighting. Whipple told Farris the Commission needs to see accurate drawings for both elevations. Mitro said they would like to see the present elevation and proposed elevation. She said the front is difficult because it hasn’t been an entry for a long time. Williams said it was an entry and could be an entry again. She said when you go down the street there are recessed entryways. Mitro said it is possible to put in a storefront and later replace the door to re-establish the alcove. Whipple said once you lose a feature you never get it back.

The meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Debra Petty, Recording Secretary