

**Regarding:** 144 W Johnson Street – Mansion Hill Historic District – Adaptive reuse of Holy Redeemer School (designated landmark) to include restoration of the existing building and the construction of an addition to the west and the subdivision of the landmark site. 4th Ald. District  
**Contact:** Stephen Mar-Pohl  
**Legistar #29258**

**Date:** March 11, 2013  
**Prepared By:** Amy Scanlon, Preservation Planner

### General Information:

The Applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the exterior alterations to the designated landmark located at 144 West Johnson Street in the Mansion Hill Historic District. The property is also located within the Mansion Hill National Register Historic District. The Applicant has met with Staff numerous times about the proposal to adaptively reuse the Holy Redeemer School Building as student housing. The Applicant is proposing to restore the exterior of the building and construct an addition on the west elevation. In addition, the portion of the existing landmark site directly adjacent to the Holy Redeemer School building is proposed for subdivision. The Landmarks Commission is charged with reviewing the proposal to grant or deny a Certificate of Appropriateness and to recommend approval or denial of the subdivision to the Plan Commission.

### Relevant Landmarks Ordinance sections:

33.19(8) Maintenance of Landmarks, Landmark Sites and Historic Districts.

- (a) Every person in charge of an improvement on a landmark site or in an Historic District shall keep in good repair all of the exterior portions of such improvement and all interior portions thereof which, if not so maintained, may cause or tend to cause the exterior portions of such improvement to fall into a state of disrepair. This provision shall be in addition to all other provisions of law requiring such improvement to be kept in good repair.

33.19(10)(d) Regulation of Construction, Reconstruction, Exterior Alteration and Demolition.

The Commission shall act in these matters specifically as they regard the Mansion Hill Historic District in the manner specified by Madison General Ordinance, Sections 33.19(5)(b) and (c).

33.19(5)(b) Regulation of Construction, Reconstruction and Exterior Alteration.

1. *[Not applicable for Landmarks Commission review.]*
2. *[Not applicable for Landmarks Commission review.]*
3. *[Not applicable for Landmarks Commission review.]*
4. Upon filing of any application with the Landmarks Commission, the Landmarks Commission shall determine:
  - a. Whether, in the case of a designated landmark or landmark site, the proposed work would detrimentally change, destroy or adversely affect any exterior architectural feature of the improvement upon which said work is to be done; and
  - b. Whether, in the case of the construction of a new improvement upon a landmark site, the exterior of such improvement would adversely affect or

- not harmonize with the external appearance of other neighboring improvements on such site; and
- c. Whether, in the case of any property located in an Historic District designated pursuant to the terms of Subsection (6)(d) hereunder, the proposed construction, reconstruction or exterior alteration does not conform to the objectives and design criteria of the historic preservation plan for said district as duly adopted by the Common Council.
5. *[Not applicable for Landmarks Commission review.]*
6. *[Not applicable for Landmarks Commission review.]*
- 33.19(5)(c) Regulation of Demolition.  
*[Not applicable for Landmarks Commission review.]*
- 33.19(10)(e) Guideline Criteria for new Development in the Mansion Hill Historic District.
1. The gross volume of any new structure shall be visually compatible with the buildings and environment with which it is visually related (visually related area).
  2. In the street elevation(s) of a new building, the proportion between the width and the height in the facade(s) shall be visually compatible with the buildings and the environment with which it is visually related (visually related area).
  3. The proportions and relationships between width and height of the doors and windows in new street facade(s) shall be visually compatible with the buildings and environment with which it is visually related (visually related area).
  4. The rhythm of solids to voids created by openings in the facade of the new structure should be visually compatible with the buildings and environment with which it is visually related (visually related area).
  5. All new street facades should blend with other buildings via directional expression. When adjacent buildings have a dominant vertical or horizontal expression, this expression should be carried over and reflected.
- 33.19(5)(i)1. Review proposed land divisions and subdivision plats of landmark sites and properties in Historic Districts to determine whether the proposed lot sizes negatively impact the historic character or significance of a landmark or landmark site and whether the proposed lot sizes are compatible with adjacent lot sizes and maintain the general lot size pattern of the Historic District. The Landmarks Commission review shall be advisory to the Plan Commission.
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### **Staff Evaluation and Recommendations:**

In response to 33.19(8)(a), Staff believes the proposal to adaptively reuse this building will require cyclical maintenance to ensure the viability of the rental units and the health of the landmark building. In addition, this proposal seeks to restore the exterior of the building which will correct years of deferred maintenance and historically inappropriate repairs.

In response to 33.19(10)(d) which references 33.19(5)(b) and (c), the proposed work will obviously alter the exterior appearance of the building. Because the proposed addition touches the existing building in a narrow area of the rear elevation, Staff believes the addition will not detrimentally change, destroy or adversely affect the overall character of the landmark. The proposed exterior restoration will highlight the architectural features and enhance the overall character of the landmark. Staff believes that the exterior appearance of the proposed addition will harmonize with other improvements on the current landmark site and that the proposed project conforms to the objectives and design criteria of the Mansion Hill Historic District as discussed below.

In response to 33.19(10)(e), Staff believes that “development” means any new structure or exterior alteration to an existing structure and that “structure” means any structure, place, landscape, work of art or other object constituting a physical betterment of real property. For the purposes of discussion and evaluation, Staff believes the proposed addition is a new structure that is being constructed as an addition to an existing structure and therefore, this section applies to the review of the proposal.

- (10)(e)1. Staff believes that the gross volume of the proposed addition is visually compatible with the buildings and environment with which it is visually related. Please review the visually related area (VRA) map that is attached to this report.
- (10)(e)2. The proposed addition does not affect the appearance of the street façade (West Johnson Street) as the addition is located on the rear; however, the rear elevation is visible from West Gorham Street so Staff believes this criterion should be evaluated. Staff finds that the proportion between the width and the height in the facades is visually compatible with the buildings and the environment with which it is visually related.
- (10)(e)3. For the same reason discussed above, Staff believes this criterion should be evaluated. Staff finds that the proportions and relationships between width and height of the doors and windows in new street facades are visually compatible with the buildings and environment with which it is visually related. The proposed window and door sizes match the existing windows and doors or are of a similar proportion or size factor.
- (10)(e)4. Staff believes the rhythm of solids to voids created by openings in the facade of the new structure is visually compatible with the buildings and environment with which it is visually related. The placement of windows and doors on the proposed addition reflects the architecture of the existing building. The proposed windows are grouped similarly to those of the existing building and wall space is adequate to provide visual rest while also providing some architectural feature/relief to large areas.
- (10)(e)5. For the same reason discussed above, Staff believes this criterion should be evaluated. Staff believes the new street facades blend with the existing building and other adjacent buildings via directional expression.

Staff believes that the standards for granting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the exterior alterations and the construction of the addition (new development) are met and recommends approval by the Landmarks Commission with the following conditions of approval:

1. The Applicant shall provide more detail for the appearance of the abandoned doors on the North elevation.
2. The Applicant shall provide more detail for the treatment of the blind panels as shown in the submission materials.
3. The Applicant shall consider the possibility of removing one window of the lobby at the first floor and basement on the west elevation and aligning the first floor and basement windows with the windows above.
4. The Applicant shall clarify the number of windows on the north side of the lobby. The elevation shows two, but the plans show four narrower windows.
5. The Applicant shall consider the possibility of aligning the east wall of the addition on the north elevation at the first and second floors. Staff would prefer that the east wall of the second and third floors be pushed to the east to align with the east wall of the first floor. This will also allow the windows to be more appropriately centered on each wall portion on the north elevation.
6. The Applicant shall provide more information about the site plan and site materials directly adjacent to the Holy Redeemer School building.
7. While not technically a condition of approval, it is prudent to request that a portion of the revenue generated by the adaptive reuse of the Holy Redeemer School Building be set aside specifically

for the cyclical maintenance and restoration of Holy Redeemer Church which will aid the Cathedral Parish in conformance with MGO 33.19(8)(a).

In response to 33.19(5)(i)1, Staff believes that the proposed lot size is of sufficient size to relate to the landmark that sits upon it and to the other adjacent lots in the historic district. Further, staff believes that the proposed lot size does not negatively impact the historic character or significance of the landmark or landmark site. The Landmarks Commission might discuss the possible future land use situations that might arise from this subdivision request.

Staff believes that the Landmarks Commission should recommend to the Plan Commission that the Landmarks Commission approves the subdivision as shown in the Certified Survey Map (undated).