

memorandum

DATE: December 9, 2024
TO: Lathrup Village Historic District Commission
FROM: Jill Bahm & Eric Pietsch, Giffels Webster
SUBJECT: Annie Lathrup School Redevelopment Site Plan Review

Introduction

What proposed activity requires consideration and action by the Lathrup Village Historic District Commission?

An application for site plan review and approval that includes the preservation, rehabilitation, and reuse of the historic building, referred to as the former Annie Lathrup School, located at 27700 Southfield Road.

This review by the HDC runs on a parallel track to review by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission will assess whether the project is consistent with the Master Plan and meets the standards of the Zoning Ordinance.

Review Criteria

According to the Historic District ordinance, the HDC shall first **approve the proposal** and then **approve the plans** if, in its judgement, the criteria below are **not adversely affected by the request**.

The ordinance provides that the commission may approve the proposal but reject the specific plans if it is determined that the plans are detrimental to the values embodied in the criteria. In that event, the applicant may submit revised, amended, or new plans for the commission's review and approval. **Denial of any applications shall be based only on the considerations set forth in subsections (d) and (e), which are provided below** (and again in the context of the full ordinance below):

(d) **Criteria for determination.** The HDC shall review such applications, giving specific consideration to the proposed action and proposed plans in light of the following criteria so that the decision will be consistent with the objectives set forth in this article:

- 1) The historical or architectural value and significance of the structure and its relationship to the historical value of the surrounding area;
- 2) The relationship of the exterior architectural features of the structure to the rest of the structure and of the surrounding areas;
- 3) The general compatibility of the exterior design, arrangement, texture, and materials proposed to be used;
- 4) Those features of the particular structure identified in the report of the ad hoc historic district study committee of the historic district commission which supported its recommendation of the site or structure for inclusion within a historic district.

- (e) **Guidelines for construction, restoration, etc.** Any and all construction, restoration, alteration, modification, maintenance, repair, or rehabilitation of the **exterior** of any house and/or structure or a part thereof in a historic district shall be done in accordance with the following guidelines:
- 1) Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use of a property which requires minimal alteration of the structure or site.
 - 2) The distinguishing original qualities or character of a structure or site shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive features shall be avoided.
 - 3) All buildings shall be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations that have no historical basis and which seek to create an earlier appearance shall be discouraged.
 - 4) Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance should be recognized and respected.
 - 5) Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize a building shall be treated with sensitivity.
 - 6) Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible. If replacement is needed, the new material should match the material being replaced in color, composition, texture, design and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing features should be based on accurate duplications of features or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other sources.
 - 7) The surface cleaning of structures shall be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that damage the building materials shall not be undertaken.
 - 8) Contemporary design for alteration and additions to existing properties will not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural or cultural material and such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material and character of the property or neighborhood.
 - 9) Whenever possible, new additions or alterations to structures shall be done in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the structure would be unimpaired.
 - 10) The Secretary of the Interior's "Standards for Rehabilitation" as presently promulgated in the Code of Federal Regulations or as they may be amended in the future. Copies of said "Standards for Rehabilitation" shall be maintained in the office of the city clerk and shall be subject to an examination by the public during normal business hours.

Background for Consideration by the Historic District Commission

According to the US Secretary of the Interior, historic preservation standards were codified in the Federal Register in 1995, the same year that they were published with guidelines as The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the **four** historic treatments, all of which have been updated since 1995:

1. **Preservation**

Defined as the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property.

2. Restoration

Defined as the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period.

3. Reconstruction

Defined as the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.

4. Rehabilitation

Defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings *(incl. the addition of new construction)*

- Identify, retain, and preserve historic materials and features
- Protect and maintain historic materials and features
- Repair historic materials and features
- Replace deteriorated historic materials and features
- Design for the replacement of missing historic features
- Minimal alterations
- Code-required work: accessibility and life safety
- Resilience to natural hazards
- Sustainability
- New exterior additions and related new construction

These standards and guidelines provide a critical part of the framework of the national preservation program. They are widely used at the federal, state, and local levels to guide work on historic buildings, and they also have been adopted by Certified Local Governments and historic preservation commissions across the nation. ***For standards that apply to the proposed development, refer to the criteria of the local Historic Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 40, which are further explained below.***

Lathrup Village Historic District Ordinance and Application

The purpose of the Lathrup Village Historic District Commission is to:

- (1) Safeguard the heritage of the city by preserving the cultural, social, economic, political, and architectural elements having historic significance.
- (2) Stabilize and improve property values in such districts.
- (3) Foster and promote property values in such districts.
- (4) Promote the use of local history for education, pleasure, and the welfare of the citizens of the city.

- (5) Encourage the collection of records and objects that interpret the history of this city and cooperate in the establishment and operation of a museum or other appropriate center for the custody and display of such items.

The ordinance defines Historic Preservation as:

The protection, conservation, rehabilitation, restoration or reconstruction of historic districts and the sites, buildings, structures and objects contained therein, through implementation of the provisions of this article (Sec. 40-22).

Sec. 40-28: Duties, Powers, and Restraints of the Lathrup Village Historic District Commission.

As it pertains to the review of the proposed site plan, which includes the rehabilitation of the former Annie Lathrup School, the Historic District Commission shall:

- 1) Have the duty to review and approve the application, including proposals and plans for construction, alteration, repair, or demolition in historic districts as more fully set forth in section 40-29.
The proposed plans have been submitted for site plan review of the standards set forth in the Village Center Zoning District and will be considered for approval by the Planning Commission on December 17, 2024.
- 2) Have the authority to request periodic inspections of all designated historic districts by the city administrator or his or her representative for violations of this article.
- 3) Have the authority to call on experts to aid in its deliberations within the limits of its budget, or upon the approval of the council.
- 4) In cases where there is imminent danger of the loss or irreparable alteration of a site or structure protected by this article, the commission shall have the authority to request the city to seek such injunctive relief as it deems necessary to preserve the site or structure.
- 5) The commission shall have such other powers as are reasonable and necessary for the efficient administration and implementation of this article.

Sect. 48-29: Work affecting exterior appearance of structures; permission required; review procedure.

- (a) **Requests for permission.** Before construction, alteration, repair, moving, or demolition affecting the exterior appearance of a structure or the construction of a new structure or part thereof within the historic district, the person proposing to take such action shall apply for and obtain permission to do so from the historic district commission.

Review of the proposed improvements at the Annie Lathrup School is pending consideration and approval by the Historic District Commission.

- (b) **Application.** The application shall be on a form as prescribed by the city clerk. The application shall consist of two parts.
 - 1) A written proposal of the action for which commission approval is sought with an explanation of the reason for the requested action; and
 - 2) Plans and drawings sufficient to clearly illustrate the proposed actions and depicting the structure in question and its relation to adjacent structures.

The application shall be submitted to the city clerk before obtaining a building permit.

- (c) **Transmittal of application to commission; building division certification.** The application shall be transmitted to the building department and to the historic district commission immediately after filing with city clerk. No construction, alteration, repair, moving or demolition shall take place, nor a permit issued therefor, until the building department has certified to the commission that the plans and drawings meet the requirements of all applicable ordinances and regulations and the commission has acted on the application, as hereinafter provided.
- (d) **Criteria for determination.** The historic district commission shall review such applications giving specific consideration to the proposed action and proposed plans in light of the following criteria so that the decision will be consistent with the objectives set forth in this article:
- 1) The historical or architectural value and significance of the structure and its relationship to the historical value of the surrounding area;
 - 2) The relationship of the exterior architectural features of the structure to the rest of the structure and of the surrounding areas;
 - 3) The general compatibility of the exterior design, arrangement, texture, and materials proposed to be used;
 - 4) Those features of the particular structure identified in the report of the ad hoc historic district study committee of the historic district commission which supported its recommendation of the site or structure for inclusion within a historic district.
- (e) **Guidelines for construction, restoration, etc.** Any and all construction, restoration, alteration, modification, maintenance, repair, or rehabilitation of the **exterior** of any house and/or structure or a part thereof in a historic district shall be done in accordance with the following guidelines:
- 1) Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use of a property which requires minimal alteration of the structure or site.
 - 2) The distinguishing original qualities or character of a structure or site shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive features shall be avoided.
 - 3) All buildings shall be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations that have no historical basis and which seek to create an earlier appearance shall be discouraged.
 - 4) Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance should be recognized and respected.
 - 5) Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize a building shall be treated with sensitivity.
 - 6) Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible. If replacement is needed, the new material should match the material being replaced in color, composition, texture, design and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing features should be based on accurate duplications of features or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other sources.
 - 7) The surface cleaning of structures shall be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that damage the building materials shall not be undertaken.
 - 8) Contemporary design for alteration and additions to existing properties will not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural or cultural

material and such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material and character of the property or neighborhood.

9) Whenever possible, new additions or alterations to structures shall be done in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the structure would be unimpaired.

10) The Secretary of the Interior's "Standards for Rehabilitation" as presently promulgated in the Code of Federal Regulations or as they may be amended in the future. Copies of said "Standards for Rehabilitation" shall be maintained in the office of the city clerk and shall be subject to an examination by the public during normal business hours.

(f) **Decision of commission.** Upon its review, the commission shall:

First: approve the proposal and;

Secondly: approve the plans if, in its judgment, the criteria enumerated above are not adversely affected by the request.

The commission may approve the proposal but reject the specific plans if it is determined that the plans are detrimental to the values embodied in the criteria. In that event, the applicant may submit revised, amended, or new plans for the commission's review and approval. **Denial of any applications shall be based only on the considerations set forth in subsections (d) and (e) above.**

(g) **Review and limited exterior features.** The commission shall pass only on the exterior features of a structure and shall not consider interior arrangement or use of the structure.

(h) **Grounds for approving application.** In addition to approval of an application pursuant to subsection (e) above, an application for repair or alteration affecting the exterior appearance of a structure within a historic district or for its moving or demolition **shall be approved by the commission if any of the following conditions prevail**, and if, in the opinion of the commission, the proposed changes will materially improve or correct these conditions:

- 1) The structure constitutes a hazard to the safety of the public or occupants.
- 2) The structure is a deterrent to a major improvement program which will be of substantial benefit to the community.
- 3) Retention of the structure would cause undue financial hardship to the owner.
- 4) Retention of the structure would not be in the interest of the majority of the community.

(i) **Filing certificate of approval or rejection.** After due consideration, the commission shall file with the building department its certificate of approval or rejection of the application submitted to it for review. Such certificate shall be signed by the chairperson or secretary of the commission. **The commission, in issuing its certificate, shall state the reasons and grounds for its action in its minutes and on the date of its certificate.**

(j) **Compliance with approved plan.** After a certificate of approval has been issued and the building or demolition permit granted to the applicant, the building department shall take such action as is necessary to require compliance with the approved building plan.

(k) **Certificate of rejection; no permits issued; resubmittal after modification of plan.** A certificate of rejection shall be binding upon the building department and no permit shall be issued in such case. In the case of rejection, either before or after a rejection, the commission shall endeavor to work out a feasible plan for preservation with the applicant and may give suggestions regarding changes in the application it deems desirable to the applicant. The applicant may take

modifications to his or her plans and shall have the right to resubmit his or her application at any time after doing so.

- (l) **Failure of commission to act.** The failure of the commission to act within a maximum of 60 days after the date of application filed with it, unless an extension is agreed upon mutually by the applicant and the commission, shall be deemed to constitute approval.
- (m) **Plan for preservation of structures.** In case an application for repair or alteration affecting the exterior appearance of a structure or for moving or demolition of a structure which the commission deems so valuable to the city, state or nation that the loss thereof will adversely affect the public purpose of the city, state or nation, the commission shall endeavor to work out with the owner an economically feasible plan for the preservation of the structure.
- (n) **Demolition or moving of structures.** It shall be the public policy of this city to discourage the demolition, demolition by neglect, or moving of structures within a historic district which are of historic or architectural value.
- (o) **Hazardous structures.** If any structure within a historic district has deteriorated to the extent that the building department believes the structure should be demolished under chapter 14, sections 14-251 through 14-259, proceedings under such article may be commenced. Not less than fifteen days' notice of the hearing to be held by the council on the determination that the building is unsafe shall be given to the historic district commission by the building department. The commission shall be deemed to be an interested party for the purposes of the hearing before the council and may make recommendations to the council concerning the architectural and historical value of the structure to be considered.