
MEETING DATE: Thursday, February 22, 2007
MEETING TIME: 7:00 p.m.
MEETING LOCATION: City Council Chambers, 125 East 3rd Street, Salida, CO

Present: Chairman Kittleman, Chivvis, Boddy, Husen, Evaskovich, Bergin, Cronenwett, Shomion, City Planner MacDonald

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Kittleman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A motion and second were made to approve the minutes from the January 25, 2007 meeting. The motion was made by Bergin to approve the minutes and Boddy seconded the motion. All were in favor.

III. UNSCHEDULED CITIZENS

There were no unscheduled citizens at the meeting.

IV. AMENDMENT(S) TO AGENDA

Boddy and Evaskovich requested time to discuss the recent Saving Places Conference. All were in favor, time permitting.

V. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- 1. Unique Theater Partial Demolition** - The request is for a certificate of appropriateness to demolish the theater portion of the Salida Opera House local landmark at 129 W. 1st Street.

MacDonald provided a summary of the staff report and recommendation to allow demolition of the theater portion of the structure. **Kittleman** stated that the charge of the HPC is to review the application on its merits and that the Council has not directed the Commission to decide one way or the other.

Paul Irwin, P.E. of Ripple Design Studios gave a power point presentation summarizing his findings for a structural evaluation of the theater focusing primarily on the bowstring truss roof system. He stated he was not making a recommendation regarding demolition and that anything can be saved but he was showing how the structure is currently unsafe and what needs to be addressed immediately. He explained the mechanics of the roof system and showed photos of areas of concern including failure of metal brackets, frozen water at masonry connection and failing purlins. He explained that it is impossible to conduct a thorough analysis because all parts of the structure can not be accessed due to safety concerns and because of varying conditions of materials. He went on to discuss concerns about the potential effects of snow load and seismic activity. His opinions were that for the cost of repairing the existing roof, you could build a new roof that would be better designed for the function. It is possible to remove the existing roof and save enough of the masonry walls to rebuild. There are also issues with the front portion of the structure that will need to be addressed.

Evaskovich asked if the original design of the roof was adequate and **Irwin** answered that it was not and should be redesigned. He explained that there was no redundancy in the design so that if one point fails, it will likely all fall. **Boddy** asked why be concerned with earthquake design stating that if that is a concern most of Salida would have to be demolished. **Irwin** was asked if the 14 inch thick brick walls were adequate to support a new roof. He replied that he could not answer that without further investigation.

Hartslief summarized his application. He explained that vacant buildings hurt existing businesses and property owners and that his concern is that the Unique will remain vacant. Demolition costs range from \$336K to \$135K and has become necessary because the Unique is a public nuisance and is threatening other businesses. He explained the spreadsheet in his packet showing that the movie theater business is not economically viable. He listed some of the engineers, architects, demolition specialists and contractors who have been through the building in the last week and the costs of temporary shoring. He has brought an architect, Morey Bean and a contractor, Kevin Murphy, to discuss potential reuses and costs of repair.

Boddy doesn't agree that the economic argument presented is relevant. He is concerned about the emphasis on demolition of the structure and bothered that people don't think they can recoup costs of rehabilitation. He stated that there is grant money available for rehabilitation. **Hartslief** replied that the process of bringing the building back is very costly particularly because the occupancy is over 300 people and it is considered a place of assembly under the building codes. The compromise he is offering is to apply for State Historical Fund money to restore the front portion of the building. **Kittleman** commented that even with modern technology available, people still like to congregate and that Salida Aspen Concerts is too large for the Steam Plant and could utilize a larger venue such as the Unique.

Boddy thinks that there is a compromise and that the building does not need to be demolished and stated that tax credits are also available. **Hartslief** replied that tax credits are not the same as cash being provided to help pay the costs of the work and that in order to qualify you have to be doing restoration to the original architectural character. **Boddy** commented that tax credits can be traded and that they are a commodity that has value.

Morey Bean, architect from Denver, has some experience with historic preservation projects and state historical funds. He explained that preservation is a motivator for economic investment in a community and discussed some of the adaptive reuse projects he has been involved with. He feels the roof must be removed to abate the safety concerns and that the façade and front portion of the building are appropriate to save. **Kittleman** asked about the use of the Business for the Arts building and if the façade had been placed in an easement in perpetuity as a condition of SHF funding. **Cronenwett** stated that the façade restoration would be a public benefit. **Bobby** asked if only the front portion had historical significance and stated he felt the building was significant because of the historical use as an opera house. He agreed that the only architecturally significant portion was the front and stated that if the back is lost because Hartslief tears it down it will be gone but if the City demolishes it could still be available for a gathering place. **MacDonald** explained that if the City is pushed to demolish the building that it would still be privately owned and that the

City can not determine the future of the site.

Bean explained that removal of the roof does not preclude reuse as a theater but it is necessary for immediate safety concerns and in order to repair. **Cronenwett** asked whether the proposal was to just remove the roof or to completely demolish the theater. **Bean** stated that has not yet been determined but that the roof should be removed for now and that if the walls were deemed sound, they could be reused. **Cronenwett** stated that the charge of the Commission is historic preservation but the concern here is health, safety and welfare.

Kittleman asked how they would proceed with the design process. **Bean** answered that investigation could be done to determine if there was an economically viable way to provide life to the old building, it should be done. **Boddy** stated that demolition could sacrifice SHF funding. **Husen** asked if the HPC hadn't just approved changes at the Sherman because it was not in a visible area from the street.

Kevin Murphy introduced his construction company and examples of historic preservation projects they have been involved with including the Cliff House in Manitou Springs. He explained the emphasis on fire safety of modern building codes particularly in assembly type construction and that historic preservation can be very expensive. It will be expensive even to save the front of the building and that tax credits and SHF grant money are both difficult to obtain and that their standards are rigid. He estimated that it would take \$1 million to restore the theater so that it could be reused as a place of assembly. **Boddy** stated that the Cliff House may have cost a lot but that they also made a lot of money.

Public Comment – 8:55 p.m. - Brock Olyer explained how Salida has come to value its treasures and cultural heritage and that demolition would be a mistake without exhausting every possible option. The vision for the space should be for more than just a movie theater and he commends Hartsliel for not wanting to see vacant buildings. Suggested that maybe someone else could step in and save the structure and that the building should be stabilized to but time to look at the option of saving it. History can not be rewritten and buildings can not be rebuilt.

Paul Byers stated he has worked on restoring buildings that were very damaged and has confidence the Unique could be rebuilt to be sold for a profit. Stated that John Groy wants the building to be saved and that the community can save this building. Stated that the City could fund rehabilitation. It is the right of the property owner to do nothing with their building or to fix it up and doesn't think it is right to take Groy's building from him. **Carey Hallett** stated that Salida is in need of creating revenue and attractions and this would be a good building for that. If the building needs to be shored to be demolished then it should be stabilized and time taken to look at what can be done. He stated that the building should be saved. **Mike Pollock** stated that it has become apparent that nothing is being done to save this building and there is support for a large venue like this. A non-profit could raise money to support the theater and that aspect should be explored. People have already pledged money to stabilize the theater and the City Council did not have adequate information. We need to think big-picture and long-term. **Carlo Boyd** stated that All Booked Up was saved from serious disrepair. He explained other stories of saving theaters in other communities and stated that John Groy was interested in restoration and saving the building. Emphasized the need to save the cultural history of the community and that there

are options to accomplish this. He suggested a parking garage be constructed at the Safeway to help with parking at the theater and that the community could come together to save the building.

Murphy noted the need to address safety with current utilities and the mitigation necessary for asbestos. **Irwin** commented that the building would likely need to be shored to be torn down and that the integrity could be evaluated at that time. **John Groy** agreed with the public comment and that the best thing would be restoration, not demolition. **Amy Helm**, Storyville Cinema, stated that this situation was affecting other businesses and that she had been instructed by her insurance company to close. A decision needs to be made soon and action needs to be taken because you can not ask people to be closed indefinitely. Her closure has affected employees and bands that had been booked for performances. **David Meyer** stated that he believes that Hartsliel does not want to shore up the building for long process of fundraising and that 2-3 years of having the building boarded up is unacceptable. The best thing for the community is to get the front portion open and active again.

Cronenwett asked about the plan for rehabilitation of the front portion of the structure. **Hartsliel** explained that the financing agreement with the City sets deadlines for grant application and rehabilitation. He is requesting the latitude to move forward. **Kimberly ??** thinks this should be a community owned venue so that more than one person's desire can be fulfilled and that this encourages the gap between rich and poor. **Boddy** asked if the primary concern is to save the rear walls and **Hartsliel** explained that his primary concern is to restore the First Street façade. There was further discussion of Mr. Groy's desires and alternative methods of shoring the building.

The Public Hearing Was closed at 9:45 p.m. and the HPC took a break

Reconvened at 9:50 p.m.

Boddy stated that his heart was broken when he saw the building had been demolished for what is now the Pueblo Bank and Trust building and he has heard the justification was the same for that demolition. He hopes we won't look back and see this decision with regret. Unfortunately, no one has helped Mr. Groy save the building and he thinks this application needs to be taken seriously. **Evaskovich** agrees that it is heartbreaking to see buildings go. All of the railroad buildings have been lost. However, until someone steps up to save it he thinks Hartsliel is the last best hope to save any of the building. **Chivvis** thinks that the HPC is backed into a corner. Mr. Groy let his roof go. Other people stepped up and did necessary maintenance to their buildings and businesses are being adversely affected by Groy's lack of maintenance. It is gut wrenching but if the façade and maybe the walls can be saved, that would be great. It may be cheaper to demolish and rebuild from scratch. Unfortunately we are out of time and something needs to be done. Commends Hartsliel for stepping up to take this on.

Bergin agrees with Chivvis. For Hartsliel to step up and take over the liability and responsibility should be commended. The application should be approved. **Shomion** stated that he felt there are still a lot of unknowns and that a compromise should be the removal of the roof and stabilization of the walls. **Cronenwett** agrees that the Corbin building losing its second story was tragic and don't want to see that happen to the Unique. It is primo to save

what can be saved and restored. Trusts Hartsliel to do the best that can be done with the rear of the building. **Husen** stated that the important part is the front of the building so if the back needs to come down that is alright. Grant funding can take a lot of time and Hartsliel should be applauded and help in whatever way.

Kittleman applauded Hartsliel and wants the City to step forward. There must be a way to stabilize it and alleviate the pressure to demolish. The theater does have tremendous significance to Salida and he does not want to grant this request. He would prefer stabilization to buy time for the city to step up and help with organizing funding.

Recommends stabilizing and then letting the public have the opportunity to contribute.

Bergin asked who is the “us”? Hartsliel has come for permission to demolish. Revitalizing the storefront is extremely beneficial. A partnership could take an extremely long time and in the meantime, there is risk and lack of return. How can Hartsliel be asked to take on that risk? **Kittleman** stated it is difficult to consider demolition when stabilization is an option. There was further discussion of the costs of stabilization and demolition and the unknowns with the structure. **Bergin** stated the rehabilitation of the façade would make the building a contributing asset to the city. **Boddy** encouraged people to help Hartsliel with funding.

Cronenwett made a motion to approve the partial demolition if necessary, but hopefully not. She stated she feel this is what needs to be done and she has faith in the only person who has stepped up. **Husen** seconded the motion. **Shomion** suggested an amendment added to the motion “if deemed economically necessary by the applicant” in place of “but hopefully not”. The amendment was accepted. The motion carried with Kittleman opposed.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. **Discussion about Minor Certificate of Appropriateness application for the old American Red Cross Hospital** – MacDonald distributed the staff report for this minor CA for the information of the Commissioners. They were asked to contact her if they had any questions.

VIII. COMMISSIONER’S COMMENTS

IX. ADJOURN.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:24 p.m.