

Factors for Consideration of a Certificate of Appropriateness Application:

5.1. Compatibility With District Character: The Commission and Zoning Administrator shall consider the compatibility of the proposed improvement with the character of the historic district in terms of scale, style, exterior features, building placement and site access, as related to the primary facade(s), in rendering a decision to grant or deny a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Analysis: The proposed improvement requires (1) approval of a conditional use in the R2 zoning district to permit townhomes on the subject property and (2) variances to the required front yard setbacks, required lot area per unit, and maximum number of stories to accommodate the proposed townhome design. Upon review of the proposed improvement, the majority of the HPC found that the townhomes would be inconsistent and incompatible with the character of the historic district, which is largely comprised of single-family residential structures. In addition, the majority of the HPC felt the proposed townhome design is incompatible with the typical size, number of stories, and number of units that are found within existing residential homes/blocks located within the district.

However, other commissioners questioned if any new construction would fully satisfy all parties. One commissioner felt that this may be our best option with a few more compromises such as reduction in density and more variety of height and setbacks. They complimented the effort to provide open space, a playground and rose garden which the district has been asking for since the removal of College Park.

5.2. Compatibility With Architectural Style: The Commission and Zoning Administrator shall consider the compatibility of the proposed improvement with the historic architectural style of the building or structure to be modified by the Certificate of Appropriateness request.

Analysis: The majority of the Commission found the proposed rowhouse style had elements which complemented the design of the Kroehler Mansion, but was not in keeping with single family home nature of the historic district. Commissioners found that the proposed improvement's architectural incompatibility is further demonstrated by the number of variances required to accommodate the proposed building design. The Commissioners who opposed the COA recommended single family homes instead of townhomes and indicated they should be constructed with an architectural design which mimics existing architectural styles found in the neighborhood.

Other Commissioners who supported approval of the COA found that the proposed Mansion will be restored back to its original style and that the townhome design is complementary to the Mansion.

5.3. Economic Reasonableness: The Commission and the Zoning Administrator shall consider the economic reasonableness of any recommended changes determined to be necessary to bring the application into conformity with the character of the historic district.

Analysis: The majority of the Commission found the footprint of the rowhomes to be too large in comparison with typical homes that are found in the district and that the overall proposal is too dense. The Commission found that the proposed improvement could be modified in a manner to be compatible with the development pattern within the district and that these modifications could still result in a development which is economically viable. Accordingly, the Commission finds that their recommended changes to the proposed improvement are economically reasonable.

5.4. Energy Conservation Effect: In making its determinations, the Commission and Zoning Administrator shall consider the effect that any recommended changes may have on energy conservation.

Analysis: The majority of the Commission found the overall footprint of the proposed townhome units to be too large in comparison to existing homes in the historic district, and found the proposed number of units to be too dense. If the size and number of the units were to be reduced in accord with the Commission's suggestions, no adverse impact on energy conservation for the development would be anticipated.

5.6. The City's Historic Building Design and Resource Manual may be used as a resource in consideration of the above.

Analysis: The majority of the Commissioners felt the proposal did not meet the specifications listed in the Historic Building Design and Resource Manual (HBDRM) raising concern with the scale, massing, density, and the proposed style. Commissioners noted the HBDRM specifically provides recommendations on single family home development and does not consider townhomes. Therefore, Commissioners concluded the townhome development is not consistent with the recommendations found within the HBDRM.

Other Commissioners felt the proposal complied with the guidelines in the HBDRM for construction of new single-family attached units, noting the manual is lean on recommendations for new construction and commercial properties and did not take the redevelopment of an entire City block into account when making recommendations on infill development.