

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
Butte Silver Bow Council Chambers  
5:30 P.M.**

**July 11, 2023**

**Members Present:** Steve Hinick, Mitzi Rossillon, Bobbi Stauffer, John Weitzel, John Riordan, Jennifer Petersen, and Tracy Miller

**Excused Absence:** None

**Staff:** Kate McCourt, HPO

- i. **Call to Order:** The Historic Preservation Commission Meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM
- ii. **Roll Call:** All members present, quorum established.
- iii. **Reading/Approval of Minutes:** June 6<sup>th</sup> and SPECIAL June 20<sup>th</sup> HPC meeting minutes: Mr. Hinick moved to accept them with no changes, John Weitzel seconded. Motion carried.
- iv. **Public Comment – Items on Agenda:** None
- v. **Basin Creek Caretaker’s House Project Update**

Ms. McCourt said that the Basin Creek Caretaker’s House reports will be winding down, as the project is pretty much finished. The HPO prepared the final report for the SARTA funds received (\$11,000), and the large SHPO grant funds were already received and that final report is due September 15<sup>th</sup>. The contractor, John Snider, is finished with the project but will be installing the two new windows when they arrive so that all the work is uniform. He will be showing the HPO how to get in all the keypads that have been installed on the doors. Surveillance signs are up, and the three remote sensing solar lights have also been installed. The building is entirely secure. BSB has to complete paperwork for a conservation easement with the State of Montana as part of the grant requirement. All precautions are being taken; the windows are covered in plywood with differing screws, and it no longer looks pretty because BSB can’t risk having it opened so the public can see all of the work that has been done because of the penchant for vandalism.

Chairman Hinick said that his only question is, “What next?” It surely can’t stay this way forever, but the work that has been done has been great. John Riordan said that as he recalls, the Natural Resource Damage Program is involved in this project somehow. He believes there was a grant, or some money set aside for the park, and asked the HPO if she knew anything about this. She did not. She asked if the funds were to go directly to the house, and Mr. Riordan said that it was for the park.

Ms. Rossillon answered the question for the HPO. She said that it was Butte NRDP, and it was an agreement involving the new Basin Creek water treatment plant and stems from ARCO giving the state money for the post-mining clean-up; one pot was for the Clark Fork, and one was for Butte. The agreement was that the park and reservoirs would be open to the public. She said that they presented before Council that the only thing they were going to do in that park that she recalled was to fix the pavilion. Since then, nothing has been said in a public setting regarding this money. The HPO commented that having the whole park listed on the National Register will be a good thing, but as of right now no one can get up to the reservoir because the fear of fire is still too great. But BSB is working with the US Forest Service to mitigate that.

**vi. Staff/Member Report**

- The Lexington Hoist House was a hit during Dust to Dazzle, and the event seemed to be a success event all-around.
- BSB had a kick-off meeting for the Silver Lake Water System Improvement Project with HDR and WET. The HPO is going to continue to be the cultural liaison for the project as she has a working document already prepared as a contingency for the receipt of the grant from the EDA. The next step is to prepare an MOU with the SHPO when the design is completed.
- HPO is working with the owner and the architect on the recently purchased Socialist Hall. They are planning to keep commercial storefronts downstairs and redo the apartment above. This is a National Register property of major significance in Butte. The owner is not seeking any public incentives, and there will be some changes to the fenestration of the building that will not be reviewed by this body. The HPO will watch closely and consult with the owners as needed, already sharing the earliest images that she can find with them.
- The Summit Group, Inc out of Missoula has purchased the Grand Hotel/Wheeler Block (120 W. Broadway St) and will be seeking Historic Tax Credits for their project. They plan on keeping Quarry Brewing and commercial entities but creating affordable housing on the upper floors. The HPO just wrote a letter of support for their endeavor. This building is within URA District, so any exterior work will likely come before HPC.
- The HPO toured the Mansfield (Federal) Building recently, and discussed some future projects with them, mostly interior work but also some exterior work around the parking lot, as they have some accessibility issues.
- The Jacobs House is losing The Root & The Bloom as a tenant after the building flooded. The next step is unknown. The Chief Executive will meet with the Community Development and Government Buildings Departments to discuss options. - It is a great building and BSB does not want it to have to “mothball” it.

Ms. Rossillon inquired as to who the architect is for the Socialist Hall project. The HPO said that his name is Steven Miles, and he is out of Reno, Nevada. The owner, Rick Joseph, lives in Reno and is using his local architect. Rick has family roots in Butte, and they come to Butte quite often.

**vii. New/Old Business:**

- **Demolition Review COA: 928 Colorado Street**

Ms. McCourt introduced the project, a 1916 Craftsman bungalow rental home that had recently burned. It was considered a dangerous building due to the tenuous nature of the burned boards on the porch, but it was not declared dangerous enough to utilize the Safety Exclusion to advance demolition. On the HPO's initial visit, she found the building to be in nearly good condition, with only the front porch badly burnt. From the rear view, the building looks like no event had happened. The HPO would not have recommended that such a house be demolished entirely, based on the exterior appearance. However, when revisiting the site with several Commissioners, the group was able to see the inside, where it became apparent that nothing was unaffected by this intensely hot fire. The front rooms were entirely destroyed, and the rooms to the rear that were not charred were streaked with soot, and everything, even the ceiling fan, was melted. The fire was exacerbated by the explosion of oxygen tanks in the front room. Even if the interior lath was removed and replaced with sheetrock, the smell would permeate the home, no matter what. Further, the HPO said that it was a testament to the strength of the exterior materials that were used in 1916 that the damage was undetectable on the outside. The juxtaposition from the exterior to the interior was shocking. The HPO's original recommendation was to follow the Ordinance's demolition alternatives, but she has changed it to allow the signing of the demolition permit, with the condition that the design of any new construction on the lot be reviewed by HPC per the Ordinance.

Ms. Stauffer said they usually also incorporate architectural salvage in decisions like these, but the HPO responded that she did not include a recommendation for salvage because she did not see salvageable materials. Mr. Hinick considered that it is a wood-framed building without much decoration but commented that there are some brackets that could be saved. He said that we do not know what the timeline is for demolition, but invited the owner, John Silvernale, to the podium. He asked him about salvage. Mr. Silvernale said that there is nothing special about the inside, no ornamental trim of any sort.

Mr. Riordan mentioned the demolition grant fund application and said this situation would be applicable. Ms. Rossillon asked if the smaller alley house behind the burned home will be kept, and Mr. Silvernale said that the "mother-in-law house" is currently being rented. She said that she doesn't know if a new building would be allowed to go on such a narrow lot, and that this is a problem Habitat for Humanity has been experiencing lately. As a result, she suggested that any motion made say that whatever is put in this place, even a fence, be approved by the HPC, so that it is historically compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, be it picket or wrought iron. Mr. Silvernale said that he spoke with the BSB Planning Dept., and they said he could build on the same footprint, but they would like him to keep the plan of the new building similar to the existing façade. He has up to one year to build on this footprint. The HPO said that vacant historic building lots can be "grandfathered in" with new buildings on existing footprints for one year, and after a year the lot reverts to modern zoning standards.

Mr. Hinick moved that the HPC approve the COA with the provisions that salvage be allowed and that HPC reviews the design of any structure put in 928 Colorado Street's place. Mr. Weitzel seconded. Motion carried.

- **Design Review COA: 100 East Broadway – Finlen Motel (Mural Project)**

Ms. McCourt added the project to agenda at the last moment, when she was provided a COA and determined that it seemed to follow the guidelines for murals proposed by the HPC. It does not overwhelm the building, and it faces the parking lot rather than the street. Incorporating some Butte imagery into the rendering would be interesting; the image shown is to give an idea of what it will look like, not an exact copy. It will be painted on a concrete block wall rather than historic brick. She showed images of the location. Mr. Hinick pointed out that in recent years, the Finlen had been having a beer garden in the lot where the mural would be, but they haven't done it yet this year. He pointed out that the wall faces a historic building that shows a more traditional painted mural and said that incorporating some Butte details would be important. He invited Gary from the Finlen Hotel to the podium and asked him to share more details about this plan. He asked who would be painting the mural.

Gary said that the artist, Peregrin Heathcote, is based in London, and he is very well-known. The wall is twenty by sixteen in size. The mural would be about twelve by fifteen. The picture of the mural is intended to show the style and theme, but the final version is going to be more localized. It is intended to evoke an upscale nature. When the artist comes to the site, he will produce a series of sketches. Mr. Weitzel spoke about using quality paints – no latex –so that it will last for years. Gary said that this will all be considered, and that the muralist has done many murals that are still in good shape. Ms. Rossillon looked up the artist online and did not see any murals, but the art is intriguing. Her concern is not so much with the size, although she did not see any murals of that size on the internet search, but with the materials. She said that the community depends on Mr. Weitzel's knowledge of the right materials to use in this community, and only those materials should be used. She asked Mr. Weitzel to speak about a mural of that complexity and the type of paint that should be used. He said that he has been in the sign-making business for 47 years here in Butte. He uses enamel paint, a brand that has been in business since 1912 and one that is very heavy in thickness and nowadays, they put UV-inhibitors in it. It is oil-based, not latex, and includes UV-Clear Ultra coating; he just used it recently. After running through some of the signs that he has made around town, Mr. Weitzel said that Bulletin One Shot paints with UV protection are what he recommends. Mr. Hinick asked if there would be some dry brush work on a CMU building such as this, and Mr. Weitzel said there would be. Gary said that the folks at the Finlen would have no problem with the artist consulting with Mr. Weitzel.

Mr. Riordan commented that, while he knows that HPC does not comment on artwork, he wonders if this type of image will be a concept that will carry through Uptown Butte. Mr. Hinick said he does not feel that this image will affect the Uptown because it is on a non-historic building. He mentioned a past idea of painting a large elk on the side of the Hirbour Tower building, which would be a nod to the past and evoke historic nostalgia. He elaborated that what Gary is saying is that this image shows the technique, but not necessarily the exact image that will be painted. Mr.

Hinick said that they would love to have Gary come back with an updated version once the final mural is drawn. He asked for a motion to approve the mural project.

Ms. Rossillon moved that HPC approve the mural project with the condition that John Weitzel approves- not advises on- the paint materials that are used. Mr. Riordan seconded. Mr. Weitzel agreed. Motion carried.

**viii. Announcements**

Mr. Weitzel and his niece submitted the Sláinte sign into the Sign of the Times competition for the National Sign Conference.

**VII. Public Comment not on the agenda**

None.

**Adjournment:** Mr. Hinick adjourned the meeting. 6:42 PM

Respectfully submitted, Kate McCourt HPO