



**CITY OF OREGON CITY
HISTORIC REVIEW BOARD
MINUTES**

Commission Chambers, Libke Public Safety Building, 1234 Linn Ave, Oregon City

Tuesday, March 25, 2025, at 7:00 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Powell called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Present: 4 –Board Member Gordon Lawrence, Board Member Paul Edgar, Vice Chair Robert Green, Chair Tim Powell

Absent: 1- Board Member Julia Fulkerson

Staffers: 2 - Community Development Director Aquilla Hurd-Ravich, Senior Planner Christina Robertson-Gardiner

2. MEETING MINUTES

- a. Meeting Minutes approval for 2/25/25 WS, 2/25/25, 2/26/04, 3/11/04, 4/29/04, 7/29/04, 8/12/04, 10/14/04, 10/28/04

A motion was made by Board Member Edgar, seconded by Board Member Green to approve the Historic Review Board minutes.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Yea: 4 - Board Member Gordon Lawrence, Board Member Paul Edgar, Vice Chair Robert Green, Chair Tim Powell

Nay: 0

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- a. None

4. DESIGN ADVICE

- a. Senior Planner Christina Robertson-Gardiner introduced a proposed project for a detached triplex on a non-designated resource in the McLoughlin Conservation District at 914 Van Buren St. Existing home would stay and there would be 2 additional units built. There are not many designated resources in the area. The applicant will be looking to do a middle housing land division later in the process if the triplex is approved.

The applicant has already reduced the massing by building a 2 story rather than 3 story which would be allowed in the district and making them separate units without garages. Staff would just suggest addressing windows.

This is a free advice conversation, and the board members can give feedback as individuals not as a board. The applicant participated in the conversation and indicated that he copied design from other homes in the area.

There was a conversation about the balance of design and making the windows

1. more prominent by trimming out appropriately.
2. double-hung, not sliders
3. making single windows rather than double
4. bigger on the bigger expanse – right elevation
5. vertical rather than horizontal on the left upper elevation

There were also notes about:

1. front porch being changed to a hip roof to match the existing home
2. height of building – an option would be to make it look more like a 1 ½ story by changing out the truss structure.
3. the back unit being up on grade due to the topography but that would give some nice height differentiation between the units
4. the rock wall will be breached and needs to be rebuilt
5. the 1212 pitch is appropriate for the roof

There was intrigue about tiny homes and livability. It was said that it was a simple attractive design. Overall, the members liked the project and just wanted to see if the applicant would review and maybe make a few modifications as noted.

5. DISCUSSION

a. Compatible Change – New Construction Review in Historic Districts

Our consultant, Kristen, was present to help continue to narrow down this project. Christina reminded the board that this is a grant driven project and there needs to be direction for going to City Commission by this summer.

The packet the board received had exhibits that had details of the public outreach. She will be just summarizing the feedback in the meeting.

1. In general, people valued the historic homes and architecture, walkability and location of the McLoughlin District.
2. Most felt that the amount of change happening in the district was about right.
3. And about half thought the current level of regulation was right. The rest were split between too much and did not know.
4. For the question about a maximum square footage limit be added to the existing 30% threshold was answered that the current guideline was working fine.
5. Regarding adding a height limitation to the threshold for HRB review was answered “no” or added other factors to consider such as proportion and scale, proximity to neighbors and topography.
6. When asked if small dwelling units should be exempt from HRB review, many did not answer, but those who did said there should be some design controls.

Kristen then went over a summary of what she had heard from the Board so far.

1. HRB is open to new freestanding secondary dwellings be exempt from HRB review, IF some design controls are added and the size of new non-dwelling structures exempt from HRB reviews don’t have to stay at 200SF. Note: anything over 200 sq ft is going to require a building permit and they would be looking at the structure. Dwelling units will incur SDC

fees. Need to be careful not to constrain so tight that people would not want to do any of these projects because the cost does not work out.

2. HRB is not okay with the existing allowance for alterations that alter a roofline without adding much new SF area. They are supportive of adding in a height qualification.
3. HRB would like the definition of existing area as enclosed space to match the “gross floor area” definition in the code. However, Kristen pointed out that using that definition to new additions could create an issue because porches and decks would not be subject to review.

There was some discussion about this item with a variety of ideas. Thinking about the incentive to help people who want to develop small units. Creating a matrix would help and then have a checklist that makes it simple for staff and applicants. Need to keep costs down as well to enable more housing. There was an idea to create a new HRB policy #13 for small new dwelling units.

Next Questions for HRB

1. HRB seems to be open to having an exception for a potentially larger freestanding unit that does get specified in its use and meets all the criteria that are laid out in the policy.
2. For those freestanding other construction units that don’t follow the criteria would come before the Board. There was agreement that the single story is the desired limitation for height.
3. For additions and alterations on non-designated properties could be exempt from HRB review, if they met the following:
 - i. Footprint remains – should existing area be defined as area that existed at least a year ago?
 - ii. Existing roof form/pitch must not change more than 20%? Staff expressed some concern that the applicants and staff need to be able to easily calculate this.
 - iii. Height may not be taller than existing, or some small percentage could be taller?
 - iv. Should new construction in an addition be measured to include decks (more than 30” tall) over some size, and to include open but roofed areas? 2nd-story decks vs at grade? What about eaves?

Concern expressed about projects that fall through the cracks because they do not trigger a review – an alteration of an attic and adding a huge dormer. Concern that we are opening the door for more structures that don’t fit the district. Again, there is a desire to have a Matrix with examples to help fine tune what is being proposed.

b. New Construction – Window details and template condition of approval

Consultant Kristen also spoke about the window project.

1. Depth – Should the window glass pane always be inset from the face of finish siding? Thicker trims can help create a shadow line.
2. Material – HRB was open to the use of a product which is 60% vinyl but not open to 100% vinyl.
3. Profile – Is one “step back” enough to provide the “shadow line” noted in guidelines? Potentially a deeper setback in the wall might be an OK tradeoff for a window with a flat frame.
4. Grids – HRB confirmed that they want the use of exterior dimensional grids or none at all.
5. Trim – Is a projecting sill a minimal requirement in a new window opening? HRB agreed with this idea. Maybe we need to express what is not allowed if it is too hard to outline what we do want. Minimum is easy to come up with - 4.5” would be the ideal.
6. Cost – HRB expressed concern about creating extra cost for applicants.

Regarding the Depth and Trim items, Kristen is going to work with the two window companies to get some addresses and examples (photos) of windows to help the Board with these items.

There are not a lot of options in the marketplace. Energy code is a standard affecting. There are only 3 middle of the road options, and two of them don't offer grids. Because there is only one that offers the grids, it was noted that we must be careful not to constrain it so much that applicants have not choice but an expensive option.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

- a. Senior Planner Christina Robertson-Gardiner spoke about the upcoming City Commission meeting where the HRB annual report will be presented on Apr 2nd. Chair Powell will attend. Vice Chair Green will not be there, so one more board member could attend if they wanted.
- b. There are 2 applications for the next meeting in April. There was going to be legal training, but that might be moved to May if Carrie is available. There may be a 6:00 p.m. work session in April to do more Compatible Change work.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Powell adjourned the Meeting at 9:10 p.m.

