

CITY OF CLEVELAND HEIGHTS LANDMARK COMMISSION

MINUTES FOR THE MAY 6, 2025 REGULAR MEETING

At 5:30 P.M. on Tuesday, May 6, 2025, a regular meeting of the Landmark Commission was held in the Executive Conference Room in City Hall.

LANDMARK COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Mazie Adams
Dani Cohen
Ken Goldberg
Margaret Lann
Jim Nemastil
Tom Veider

LANDMARK COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT

None

STAFF PRESENT

Brooke Siggers, City Planner

COUNCIL PRESENT

None

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Adams called the meeting to order at 5:32 P.M.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Goldberg presented edits to the March 3, 2025 meeting of the Landmark Commission minutes. Commissioner Lann moved to approve the minutes with the submitted corrections, and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Jim Nemastil. The meeting minutes were approved 6-0.

Commissioner Goldberg presented edits to the April 1, 2025 meeting of the Landmark Commission minutes. Commissioner Nemastil moved to approve the minutes with the submitted corrections, and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Goldberg. The meeting minutes were approved 6-0.

STAFF REPORT & OLD BUSINESS

Landmark Properties

PROJ. NO. 24-05: request for certificate of appropriateness to (1) restoration of synagogue; (2) mechanical room expansion; (3) demolition of the boiler house, caretaker apartment, and service garage; (4) demolition of Kangesser Hall.

Representative of the Park Synagogue restoration, Larissa Burlij, began their presentation on the requests for certificates of appropriateness to (3) demolish the boiler house, caretaker apartment, and service garage, and (4) demolish Kangesser Hall. The first two (2) requests to restore the synagogue and expand the mechanical room were granted approvals at the prior Special Meeting of the Landmark Commission on April 1, 2025. All proposed plans are created according to and in coordination with the National Park Service's requirements and standards.

Burlij began by explaining that the boiler house and caretaker house were constructed and completed in 1950 with Mendelsohn's original Synagogue. It has always been considered a separate outside of the historic fabric of the synagogue. It was originally designed to be located closer to the synagogue's school wing, but the final site plans from 1949 show that it was moved to be closer to the site's interior indicating that it was never meant to be showcased or visible as a prominent feature.

Original drawings also show that a garage was added to the plans in about 1954 for additional storage space, which is also considered outside of the historic fabric of the synagogue. The boiler house is now obsolete given that the site is moving to a geothermal system. The garage is no longer needed for storage. The caretaker apartment is in such poor condition that it is too hazardous to enter due to mold and unstable floors. It is currently completely boarded up. This area is being considered for future housing construction if the demolition request is approved. The National Park Service has approved the demolition of this structure, as they did not believe it to be significant to the original intent of the architecture.

Commissioner Nemastil inquired if the boiler was still functional. Ms. Burlij stated that it was no longer functional, but worked up until about two (2) or three (3) years ago. When a girl's school was located in the building, they had to relocate the school because the boiler repair was too cost-prohibitive. Temporary heat and fans have since been utilized since to address humidity and to keep the structure at a certain temperature so that it remains stable.

Commissioner Goldberg explained that he has mixed feelings on the request due to it being designed by Mendelsohn and because with financial resources, it could be cleaned up and utilized.

Landmark Commission Chair Adams clarified that this structure included three buildings: (1) the caretaker apartment, (2) the boiler house, and (3) the garage. The Landmark Commission considers this to be three (3) connected buildings in one (1) structure.

Mrs. Adams moved to approve The Applicant's request and issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish the boiler house, garage, and caretaker apartment. Commissioner Lann seconded this motion and it was approved 5-0.

Commissioner Veider noted that he agrees with Commissioner Goldberg's preference for the structure to be restored, but that he understands that it is not feasible for the overall project.

Burlij then began presenting her demolition request for Kangesser Hall. She mentioned that Commissioner Goldberg provided materials detailing the history of Kangesser Hall, but they ultimately have not found a use for the space which makes the upkeep of the building financially difficult.

Kangesser Hall was constructed in 1968 in result of the success of the synagogue. Many iterations of plans were designed exploring what kind of structure will be located at the other end of the bridge. Kangesser Hall was finalized when it was decided that additional space was needed for overflow of services' attendees.

They will be installing new windows and doors in the bridge leading to Kangesser Hall. Very few windows actually introduce natural light into the interior of the building. Some of the newly installed windows will be operable in order to let in fresh air. She discussed that they will be updating the glazing, bringing the balcony to Code, and replacing windows. Tenants have expressed that they would like to use the bridge, which they believe can accommodate up to two hundred (200) people for an event such as a wedding reception. They will also be adding louvers about ten (10) feet apart that match the historic brick color in order to right-size the mechanical system.

The bridge will be embraced and the multipurpose room, lounge and gallery, and prep room will be maintained for future events and tenants. Mr. Veider asked if they have considered making the bridge one continuous space and removing the separate rooms that currently exist, but Burlij explained that keeping the rooms would most efficiently optimize the use of the space.

Burlij also explained that the initial plan for this part of the site is to demolish Kangesser Hall and that in future phases, they are considering constructing new housing. For now, it would be an open field with a temporary concrete road leading to the street.

Nemastil asked if any of the bricks from the demolished structures can be reused for the new construction and restoration for other parts of the synagogue and site. A team came out and attempted to take apart a wall in order to salvage bricks, and the brick began to come apart due to its porosity and exposure to moisture. They plan to still try to do so, but the bricks are very brittle and difficult to extract due to the strength and durability of the mortar. They are currently working with a brick manufacturer to find a brick that matches those of the synagogue in color and tone as much as possible. He also asked if the Kangesser Hall bricks were curved around the windows. Burlij confirmed that they were not curved, but rather trapezoidal.

Commissioner Veider asked about the plans for the salvaged brick. Burlij explained that any bricks that can be salvaged will be used for restoration of planter walls and similar locations. There are currently no specific structures or areas for which the salvaged brick is intended for.

Commissioner Veider also asked about the restoration of the Mayfield Road and Euclid Heights Boulevard drive entry gates. Burlij explained that the Mayfield Road gate is not part of the

Phase 1 scope, but that the Euclid Heights Boulevard entry will be restored during the first phase.

Commissioner Lann moved to approve the request and issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of Kangesser Hall with the condition that as many bricks as possible are salvaged. The motion was approved 4-1.

Commissioner Goldberg explained his opposing vote, explaining that the ultimately decided to vote against it because the structure had been around since the 1970s, he has written a lot about the history of it, and it has significant connections to Mendelsohn.

Commissioner Veider asked about the timeframe that in which the structure would be demolished. Burlij stated that they do not have any upcoming plans to do so soon and that demolition would come later. Commissioner Nemastil asked, hypothetically, if a potential occupant expressed interest offering millions to use the space if they would consider keeping and maintaining the structure. Burlij responded by stating that she is not able to provide an answer to that on behalf of the developer.

Potential Landmarks

Commission Chair Adams has not heard anything from the Heights Theater since their visit. Planner Siggers has not heard from them either.

Preservation Activities & Lectures

Mazie did a History of Cleveland Heights lecture two (2) weeks ago and it had a great turnout.

Commissioner Veider announce that the Cleveland Restoration Society has an upcoming presentation called Preservation is Sustainable on May 27, 2025 from 7:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M.

National Register of Historic Places, District Updates

No updates.

Development Updates

Siggers reported that Matt Wymer from WXZ is hoping to allow the Landmark Commissioners to visit Taylor Tudor, but that there are some safety hazards that need to be addressed first because the building is in very poor condition.

Grant Updates

Siggers reported that two (2) grants that the City intended to apply for were defunded so the archiving project will take longer and have much fewer resources.

50th Anniversary of the Landmark Commission Event

Adams explained that City custodial staff will be cleaning the Superior Schoolhouse where the event will be held. Commissioner Lann will put together a brief presentation about the history of the schoolhouse, the history of the Landmark Commission, and history of Landmarked properties. Siggers reported that a photographer was hired to photograph all local Landmarks and that they would be edited and sent to us on Friday. Communications is unsure that the book will be done in time for the event, but they will try. Siggers asked if there were any other

people to whom she should mail event invitations. Commissioners named prior planner and historic preservationist Kara Hamley O'Donnell and City Councilors. Commissioner Goldberg asked if the new walking tour brochures were made, and Siggers stated that she did not receive an update on this.

Siggers presented the new 50th Anniversary Landmark Commission pins that will be given away at the event and gave one to each Commissioner.

NEW BUSINESS

Update on Local Landmark Recertifications

No updates.

Landmark Plaques

Commission Chair Adams asked about the status of plaques for Landmarked properties that are missing them. Siggers reported that Director Zamft stated that they were in the office somewhere but Planning Staff has not yet been able to locate them. They will continue to search for them and report back.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Commission adjourned at 6:38 P.M. The next regular meeting date will be Tuesday, July 1, 2025, at 5:30 P.M. in the Executive Conference Room on the second floor of City Hall.

Respectfully submitted,



Brooke Siggers, Secretary to the Landmark Commission

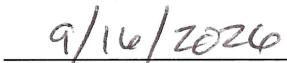


Date

Approved,



Mazie Adams, Landmark Commission Chair



Date