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RESOLUTION OF  
THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION OF OCEAN CITY  
615 WESLEY AVENUE  
Block 602, Lot 11  
Applicant: RJGVB, LLC  
Application No.: HPC20-002

**WHEREAS**, RJGVB, LLC is the owner of 615 Wesley Avenue also known as Block 602, Lot 11, which is located in the Historic Preservation District of Ocean City; and

**WHEREAS**, the applicant was represented by Avery S. Teitler, Esquire before the Historic Preservation Commission; and

**WHEREAS**, Andrew C. Bechtold, RA, of the firm of George Wray Thomas, Somers Point, NJ, testified as an expert witness on behalf of the application; and

**WHEREAS**, RJGVB, LLC is seeking the approval to demolish the existing structure on the subject property and constructing a fully conforming two-family residential structure; and

**WHEREAS**, the applicant's expert and attorney testified that the building footprint is 1,819 square feet, constructed of a four-story masonry building with framing system for the second, third and fourth floors and a slab on the grade ground floor; and

**WHEREAS**, the applicant's expert and attorney further testified that the finished elevation is at 13.2 NAVD; and

**WHEREAS**, the applicant's expert and attorney further testified that the building has three habitable floors consisting primarily of dormitory-like units; and

**WHEREAS**, the applicant's expert and attorney further testified that there is some evidence that the ground floor was also used habitable living space; and

**WHEREAS**, the applicant further provided testimony that the interior of the building has been altered, modified and reconstructed many times over the years and all original floor finishes no longer exist and all of the windows have been replaced with vinyl replacement windows; and

**WHEREAS**, the applicant further provided testimony that the original plaster finish on the interior walls have been removed and replaced with gypsum wall sheeting; and

**WHEREAS**, the applicant further provided testimony that the remaining first and second floor units have carpet and laminate floors, tiled bathrooms, painted floors, none of which have any of the original materials or finishes, shower units have been installed in a majority of the bedrooms; and

**WHEREAS**, the applicant further provided testimony that the exterior of the building is clad in horizontal siding which is not original to the building, the Mansard roof, the applicant alleged, is the only historical feature remaining and that original slate has been replaced with asphalt shingles; and

**WHEREAS**, the applicant further provided testimony that as to the exterior of the building historical decorative detail, such as iron cresting on the roof, heavily bracketed cornices, quoins and balustrades have been removed or destroyed; and

**WHEREAS**, the applicant further indicated that there was noticeable deterioration on the structure as a result of prolonged vacancy and little to no maintenance; and

**WHEREAS**, the applicant further indicated that the original brick located on the ground floor has damage due to repeated flooding; and

**WHEREAS**, the applicant further indicated that there is black mold on the ground floor on multiple surfaces, including the framing for which would need remediation, if not complete restoration; and

**WHEREAS**, the applicant provided a number of exhibits showing areas of damage to the structure, which included ten (10) digital photographs and two (2) letters from George Wray Thomas, RA, provided by the applicant's attorney by way of email that has become part of the application package; and

**WHEREAS**, there was some testimony that there was a period of time where rain got into the building as a result of a roof opening and a tarp being placed over same, which was blown away and rain entered the property for a period of time further exacerbating any mold issues; and

**WHEREAS**, the applicant provided testimony and reports showing the nature and the extent of the mold and further indicated that the property was not savable, needed to be demolished as a result of the black mold as it could not be properly disposed of and/or the amount of work needed to remove the mold would basically reduce the building to a shell, thereby making the amount of remediation akin to demolition; and

**WHEREAS**, the application was reviewed by Michael Calafati, RA, the architect for the Historic Preservation Commission; and

**WHEREAS**, in his report of July 22, 2020, which has become a part of the file and the record, indicates, as well as his testimony, that the existing building occupies a portion of the block in which a streetscape of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century residential buildings prevail;

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Calafati further testified that this characteristic and valuable streetscape aspect of the block is becoming increasingly rare in the historic district and needs to be preserved; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Calafati further indicated in his report that despite the fact that the applicant indicates the mold is a hazardous environmental condition remediation of hazardous environmental conditions are a routine undertaking when restoring old structures for a new life, this includes remediation of pervasive mold; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Calafati further indicates in his report that the application does not provide an appropriate structural assessment much less an adequate description of the building's structural system; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Calafati's report went on to state that the strategic replacement, repair and reinforcement of existing structural assemblies are routine undertakings when restoring an old structure for a new life; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Calafati's report went on to state that despite the many changes over time to the building the original building fabric does remain and the building's original shape, form and massing immediately convey the image of a late 19<sup>th</sup> century Second French Empire Style house with a Mansard roof; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Calafati's report went on to state that the lost aspects listed by the applicant are often replicated and reinstalled as part of a renovation; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Calafati rendered the opinion and recommendation that the Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Ocean City is charged with preserving the historic and history of the resort; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Calafati further rendered the opinion that these goals are not advanced by this application, he does not recommend its approval as he believes that the building should be preserved, rehabilitated and re-occupied; and

**WHEREAS**, Dominic Berenato testified as a witness for the applicant regarding the mold and rendered his opinion the inability to effectively remove the mold with any guarantee; and

**WHEREAS**, no members of the public testified regarding this application; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commission discussed the application, reviewed the attachments and photos presented with the application and made the following findings of fact and conclusions of law:

1. Although the structure has sustained damaged and is not as historic as it originally was it is the Commission's belief that the project can be saved.

2. That there is enough historic architecture remaining for the structure to be saved.

3. The goals of the Historic Preservation District are not advanced by this application, in point of fact, the goals are harmed by this application.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Historic Preservation Commission of Ocean City at its meeting of September 1, 2020 that based upon the testimony given and the exhibits presented at the said hearing the proposed demolition request is hereby denied.

**WHEREAS**, John Loeper made a motion to grant the demolition of the structure on the subject property as outlined above, Ken Cooper seconded the motion, Dean Chorin voted in favor and members Ken Cooper, John Loeper, Susan Matthews and Robert Williams were opposed. Motion denied by a vote of 1-4.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
COMMISSION OF OCEAN CITY

\_\_\_\_\_  
, Chairman

The foregoing is a true copy of the Resolution adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission of Ocean City at its meeting on \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2020.

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Terri L. Ney, Secretary  
Historic Preservation Commission  
Of Ocean City