

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, JULY 5, 2017
COMMITTEE ROOM**

Members Present: Chairman Norris, Smunt, Kessler, Malay, Krahenbuhl, Pretz

Members Absent: Gibson

Also Present: Russell Colby, Planning Division Manager

1. Call to order

Chairman Norris called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll call

Mr. Colby called roll with six members present. There was a quorum.

3. Approval of Agenda

No changes were made to the agenda.

4. Presentation of minutes of the June 21, 2017 meeting

A motion was made by Ms. Malay and seconded by Dr. Smunt with a unanimous voice vote to approve the minutes of the June 21, 2017 meeting.

5. COA: 11 S. 2nd Ave. (windows)

Item was moved to 9.5 to accommodate the arrival of the project presenter.

6. COA: 306 W. Main St.

Mr. Colby noted the owners are interested in applying for a Façade Improvement Grant. They would like to know if the Commission would need to see full architectural drawings for the brick work they may be doing; or would a sketch and description of the planned work suffice.

The Commissioners stated they do not need architectural drawings. However, they would prefer to see a detailed elevation showing the correct scale and proportion of the work that is being proposed.

A motion was made by Mr. Kessler and seconded by Mr. Pretz with a unanimous voice vote to table the item pending a scaled & proportional sketch with details.

7. COA & Façade Improvement Grant: 305 W. Main St.

The proposal is for the replacement of the storefront windows at *The Finery* restaurant with a type of double-hung windows. Mr. Colby presented drawings that showed the full elevation with the proposed windows installed, as previously requested by the Commission.

Ms. Malay felt it appeared too residential for the downtown retail area and suggested they remove all the muntins. Dr. Smunt said the current windows are hardly storefront commercial windows. He said their new proposal seems to blend fairly well with the architecture on the second floor, but he questioned whether or not the upper sash has true divided lights. He asked for clarity on this. Mr. Krahenbuhl noted the open window concept will help upgrade the restaurant's appeal and felt it was a good addition.

Ms. Malay questioned whether or not they should be considering the Façade Improvement Grant. She felt the project was not necessarily going to enhance the commercial appeal of the building.

A motion was made by Mr. Krahenbuhl and seconded by Mr. Pretz with a 4-1 voice vote to approve the COA with the condition they use integrated divided lights versus a snap on grill.

Dr. Smunt stated the new grant program amendments require funds to be used for true preservation projects where the building's significance rating would increase from the improvements made. He said changing these windows would not have any effect on the significance rating of the building. However, he noted there may be other categories it could be considered under. Mr. Colby said it could be considered as a new improvement to the building, but the Commission would need to determine if this would be an enhancement to the building. Dr. Smunt said it enhances the viability of the business to have windows that open.

Chairman Norris stated they should be looking at the overall historical preservation value of the project. Dr. Smunt noted it does not do anything negative or positive for historic value. This is for a new improvement to an existing building and the windows are an enhancement. He views this as contributing to the viability of the business district and a walkable downtown district.

A motion was made by Dr. Smunt and seconded by Mr. Krahenbuhl with a 4-0 voice vote to recommend to City Council approval of funding for a Façade Improvement Grant based upon proposed new improvement to the restaurant window system on the storefront elevation due to the enhancement of viability to the business and the downtown historic district. Ms. Malay abstained.

8. Additional Business and Observations from Commissioners or Staff

a. Architectural Survey Requirements

There were no updates.

9. Meeting Announcements: Historic Preservation Commission meeting Wednesday, July 19, 2017 at 7:00 P.M. in the Committee Room.

9.5 COA: 11 S. 2nd Ave. (windows)

Tom Tristano and Rebecca Strader, representatives from the Prairie Forge Group; and Paul Saha, a representative for the building owner, were present. Mr. Tristano said the owner had previously presented information on the proposal, but their firm is now engaged to assist with the Historic Preservation review of the proposal.

Mr. Tristano stated the windows are deteriorating and antiquated. He explained there has been significant water and air infiltration into the building. The goal is to improve the windows to stop this, and to enhance the inside of the building while complimenting the neighborhood and making it appealing to the neighbors.

The owner has looked at wood, steel and vinyl windows. The vinyl windows are the least costly and will solve the water and air seepage issues, along with providing greater energy efficiency. The vinyl windows they are proposing also have interior grids in the glass that will replicate the look of steel windows.

Mr. Tristano said steel windows would provide a more exact match to the current windows, but they do not meet proper insulation criteria. Wood is less expensive than steel, but more than vinyl. Wood would provide similar insulation values, but require more maintenance. Vinyl is least costly and solves all the performance issues, while still improving the image of the building.

Dr. Smunt asked if they would be able to duplicate the exact size, scale and proportion of the existing lights that are on the building now with the vinyl construction. He felt the vinyl option would need to be shrunk down and would look too residential. He noted the like and kind definition applies to materials, but also to scale & proportion. Mr. Tristano said there would be a ½ inch to ¾ inch increase in the reveal, and felt in relation to the cost of improving upon that, it should be acceptable. When viewed from the street you will not be able to tell the difference.

Ms. Malay expressed concern over setting a precedent if they allow a change in building materials. She would consider a wood replacement, but could not support vinyl.

Mr. Kessler noted there is a very large border around the outside of the sash, which along with the frame, brings in more visible light. He said that is not what they wanted it to be. He felt the measurement provided does not include the border. He said there are manufacturers that offer a narrow line window. They already established steel could provide the proper thermal grades.

Mr. Krahenbuhl felt the thickness and materials on the newer windows lack an historic feel. He understands cost is a factor, but he would like to hear more about the steel options that exist that would help preserve the historic look; and also why that cannot be done.

Chairman Norris advised the building is rated as Contributing. Dr. Smunt said that rating only applies to part of the building. The changes being proposed are on the non-contributing elevations. He said there is no evidence that wood ever existed on these windows. They need to consider if these windows are considered significant components of the building's architecture; or are they just utilitarian window systems. Mr. Pretz felt they are utilitarian. Dr. Smunt said if they decide to keep it original, then they need to be looking at some type of metal alloy material. Or they consider the proposal to be for changes to the utilitarian area of the building only, and not the contributing façade.

Dr. Smunt questioned why aluminum hasn't been considered. Ms. Malay said regardless of the material being used, the look still needs to be replicated. Mr. Saha said the Commission did not suggest aluminum at the previous meeting.

Mr. Tristano asked if the project would qualify for Facade Improvement Grant funding. Mr. Colby said the alleyway side would not be directly eligible, but the overall project cost could be included based on the fact they are replacing the entire window system on the building and some of the alleyway windows are visible from the street. Mr. Tristano suggested working with the owner to get further window bids, including aluminum, and pursue the grant funding.

Mr. Kessler asked why the Commission has a stigma against vinyl. Chairman Norris said they have been asked to follow the *Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation* criteria. He referred to item "B" which states the "distinguishing original qualities or historical characteristics of a building, structure, or site and the environment, shall be retained and preserved. The removal or alteration of any historical materials or distinctive architectural features should be avoided whenever possible."

Dr. Smunt referenced item "F" which states: "Deteriorated historical features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials." He noted the standards state that whenever historical material has deteriorated beyond repair, the first choice in replacing it should be with like and kind materials. Wood and vinyl are the least desirable for this project. His concern is that these materials cannot duplicate the current look without changing the dimensions. He noted that item "F" places more importance on the design, color, texture and visual qualities, rather than the materials.

Mr. Tristano said they received quotes for steel windows which ranged from \$97,000 to \$150,000. He said wood is roughly \$51,000 and vinyl is \$20,000. He felt aluminum would not come close to the \$20,000. Mr. Pretz noted his concern is with the proportions. He understands the cost structure and is willing to be a little flexible with the materials. However, he said the Commission is also being asked to consider a change in the look and that is where his struggle is.

Dr. Smunt said they have not been convinced that using vinyl will duplicate the existing appearance. He understands the functionality and energy efficiency of using vinyl and he is in favor of that. He requested detailed specifications to see exactly how much of a change there will be with the use of vinyl. He would prefer to look at a metal option. It does not have to be steel. Mr. Tristano will endeavor to get answers to these questions. Dr. Smunt thanked him for his efforts in helping to find a win-win solution.

A motion was made by Ms. Malay and seconded by Mr. Pretz with a unanimous voice vote to table the item pending the specifications and design of the window; and further details on using commercial aluminum.

10. Public Comment

Mr. Kessler asked about the former George's building. Mr. Colby said the review of the RFP and marketing materials at Government Services committee was delayed. He was not sure of the next steps.

11. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.