

MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2017
COMMITTEE ROOM

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

Members Absent: Malay

Also Present: Russell Colby, Division Planning Manager
Ellen Johnson, Planner

1. Call to order

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

2. Roll call

Ms. Johnson called roll with five members present. There was a quorum. Mr. Krahenbuhl arrived at 7:15 p.m.

3. Approval of Agenda

No changes were made to the agenda.

4. Presentation of minutes of the August 16, 2017 meeting

A motion was made by Mr. Kessler and seconded by Dr. Smunt with a unanimous voice vote to approve the minutes of the August 16, 2017 meeting.

5. Façade Improvement Grant: 11 S. 2nd Ave.

Mr. Colby said the proposal is for the replacement of 23 windows on the building with steel replacements. The Commission previously approved the COA for the project.

A motion was made by Mr. Krahenbuhl and seconded by Mr. Pretz with a unanimous voice vote to recommend to City Council approval of the Façade Improvement Grant for 11 S. 2nd Ave.

6. COA: 117 W. Main St. (awning)

Mr. Colby said the proposal is for an awning at the rear entrance of The Diamondaire building.

Dr. Smunt asked why they are putting an awning underneath an upper level balcony. Mr. Colby said they have used up their maximum number of permitted wall signs.

A motion was made by Mr. Gibson and seconded by Mr. Kessler with a unanimous voice vote to approve the COA as presented.

7. COA: 425 W. Main St. (sign)

Vanessa Favia and Earl Vergara, representatives, were present.

The proposal is for an illuminated wall sign for the Vergara-Favia Law Firm. The sign will be made of brushed steel with back lit, LED lettering. The intent is to increase visibility for when it gets darker outside.

A motion was made by Mr. Gibson and seconded by Dr. Smunt with a unanimous voice vote to approve the COA as presented.

8. COA: 1 W. Illinois St. (signs)

Omar Musfi, owner of Eden on the River, was present.

Mr. Colby explained the proposal: a sign panel above the entrance door, facing Illinois St., replacement panel in the sign boxes facing Illinois St. and the river, and an illuminated sign on the Fox Island Square smokestack, facing 1st St.

Mr. Musfi explained the placement of the signs. Due to the somewhat hidden location of the business, they would like to increase the restaurant's visibility as much as possible.

Dr. Smunt and Mr. Kessler were both fine with the proposal.

Mr. Pretz expressed concern over the sign being placed on the smokestack stating they might be opening the door to potentially allowing this wall to be used as an advertising item for the other businesses in the mall. Mr. Musfi felt this was one of his most important signs. Mr. Colby said there is an ordinance provision that states you cannot place signs higher than the height of the building. It would be up to the building owner to determine if they would allow it, but the Commission would have an opportunity to review each sign.

Mr. Gibson shared the same concern. He said this wall was originally intended to be a centerpiece for the mall, as a remnant of the original factory, but it is now being considered as a post for advertising. He felt it would be difficult to say no to future requests for signage on this same smokestack.

Mr. Musfi stated Shodeen, the building owner, assured him they would not permit any other signs on the smokestack. Mr. Pretz said it would help if a representative from Shodeen were at the meeting to assure them of this.

A motion was made by Dr. Smunt and seconded by Mr. Kessler to approve the COA as presented. The motion failed by a vote of 2-3.

Mr. Gibson suggested Mr. Musfi attend the next meeting with a representative from Shodeen to assure the Commission this was a unique situation for his business and no other signs will be placed on the smokestack. Mr. Musfi can present a separate COA for the smokestack signage at that time.

A motion was made by Mr. Gibson and seconded by Mr. Pretz with a unanimous voice vote to approve the COA as presented, but without the signage on the smokestack.

Mr. Musfi asked if he could bring something in writing from Shodeen instead of an actual representative. Mr. Gibson said the Commission may have questions regarding something in the letter, and without a representative to explain their intent, they may have to delay the vote again. However, Mr. Musfi is free to choose either option.

9. COA: 101 E. Main St. (façade renovation)

Gordon Simic, the petitioner, was present.

Mr. Simic said he would like to replace the tile beneath the storefront windows with stone and change the single-pane glass to double-pane. He would also like to install two black lanterns on the front entrance.

Dr. Smunt said lanterns are not usually used on mission revival style architecture. Mr. Gibson noted the lanterns are not included in the COA so Mr. Simic will need to return with another proposal for those.

Mr. Pretz asked if the style of the stone tied in correctly with the style of the building. Mr. Simic offered to return with a 3D image. He noted it would be difficult to find the exact tile that is currently on the building. The stone being considered has a buff or yellow tint to it. The Commissioners discussed the scale and proportion of the stone and stated concerns about using the stone up the columns and on the walls next to the windows.

Mr. Simic asked if they could do the posts in wood to give it an “old world” feel. Chairman Norris said that is a consideration.

A motion was made by Mr. Kessler and seconded by Mr. Krahenbuhl with a unanimous voice vote to approve the replacement of the storefront windows with the bronze, aluminum anodized frame material.

A motion was made by Mr. Kessler and seconded by Mr. Krahenbuhl with a unanimous voice vote to table consideration of the storefront door replacement.

Dr. Smunt suggested carrying the stone knee wall with a limestone cap at the same height across the storefront and columns, and then using wood panels above on the columns and walls. It would be similar to the dark tile currently on the columns. Mr. Pretz felt that was a good idea because using the wood all the way to the ground could present separate issues. Mr. Simic said he would consider that option as long as it pops out and looks new. He was concerned about how to insert wood into the bigger panel on the right side.

Mr. Krahenbuhl stated concern about approving the proposal without having a picture that shows the wood, the color, and the design of the panels on the sides.

A motion was made by Mr. Kessler and seconded by Mr. Gibson with a 4-1 voice vote to approve the replacement of the existing tile on the knee wall with the stone veneer and limestone sill as shown, or in a more uniform pattern, if available; use of wood panels on columns above stone knee wall with limestone sill; and use wood panels above knee wall on remainder of walls. Motion passed. Mr. Krahenbuhl voted nay.

10. Façade Improvement Grant: 201 Chestnut Ave.

Mr. Colby advised the applicant requested the item be tabled. Dr. Smunt asked for an opportunity to include feedback from the onsite visit. His overall impression from the visit was that 80% of the project is maintenance work, due to paint failure and moisture problems within the walls, and 20% is siding replacement. He noted it requires proper installation of the siding and proper paint. In addition, both porch decks need some kind of wood replacement and he felt the Commission could support that part of the work. Dr. Smunt said the west elevation needs the most attention. Unless they are going to spend a fortune on a siding restoration specialist, he felt they would be better off re-siding it with new wood and properly painting it. The southwest corner has similar siding issues as the west elevation and should be re-sided. The gutter has caused some moisture issues that contributed to the noted failures, but this is a maintenance issue.

From Dr. Smunt's observations, he said the Commission could recommend funding for the smaller issues which include replacing the siding and deck materials. He said the remaining work should be considered paint job maintenance.

Mr. Gibson asked if the Commission recommended approving funds for the siding issues, would the Commission also be asking the homeowner to take the additional steps to complete the other work that is needed so that the City's funds weren't spent frivolously. Dr. Smunt said it's possible to selectively replace some of the boards on the siding, but they should get a carpenter's bid to fully assess the work needed.

Chairman Norris asked staff to relay the Commission's concerns to the owner and ask that she revise her presentation. Mr. Pretz also asked if the individual doing the work could attend the meeting so they could provide answers to very specific questions.

A motion was made by Mr. Gibson and seconded by Dr. Smunt with a unanimous voice vote to table the discussion.

11. PUD Preliminary Plan: First Street Building #2

Bob Rasmussen, First Street Development II, LLC, and Dan Marshall, architect, were present.

Mr. Rasmussen presented background on the project. The Commission previously approved a 4-story apartment building on this site, which included balconies on all facades and restaurant/retail space on the first floor. A year later, a revised concept for a hotel was presented. The current building plan includes retail/restaurant uses on the 1st floor, office use on the 2nd floor, and for-sale residential living on floors 3 through 5.

Mr. Marshall reviewed the architectural elements of the building. The building will have different types of parapets, different heights, and different brick color, so that there isn't one strong overall composition from side to side. It is a single building with broken down mass. He plans to break down the mass by splitting off compositions on the ends that hold the entire middle together. The proposal also includes a roof deck and a greenhouse that will hold the stairs and elevator. The 1st floor is a series of storefronts that can be altered to accommodate the needs of the tenants.

The Commissioners discussed different aspects of the project. The overall impression was favorable. Support was expressed for the more modern aspects of the building, including the greenhouse and projecting bays on the sides of the structure.

A motion was made by Dr. Smunt and seconded by Mr. Kessler with a unanimous voice vote to recommend to the Plan Commission approval of the PUD Preliminary Plan for Building #2 as presented.

12. Additional Business and Observations from Commissioners or Staff

a. Residential Façade Grant

Mr. Pretz provided a list of suggestions for reviewing Residential Façade Grants. He suggested putting together some guidelines for the Commissioners to use when reviewing future requests. He felt they need to provide a clear understanding of the difference between maintenance and

restoration work. Dr. Smunt recommended the Commissioners become familiar with the Secretary of Interior Standards. He felt these standards should be a main component of their decision making. Mr. Kessler felt they should consider having an historic preservation specialist involved.

Chairman Norris suggested putting this on the agenda for the September 20th meeting with sub-categories regarding the Secretary of Interior Standards and how the grants will be distributed.

b. Architectural Survey requirements

There were no updates.

13. Meeting Announcements: Historic Preservation Commission meeting Wednesday, September 20, 2017 at 7:00 P.M. in the Committee Room.

14. Public Comment

15. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:54 p.m.