

City of St. Charles, Illinois

Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. 4-2023

**A Resolution Recommending Approval of a Zoning Variation
(303 N. 3rd Ave.)**

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the St. Charles Historic Preservation Commission to review applications for the Zoning Variations for property within Historic Districts; and

WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission has reviewed the Zoning Variation Application for 303 N. 3rd Ave. and has found that the planned house with a breezeway connection to a detached carriage house is historically and architecturally accurate for Greek Revival and to accomplish this architecture this lot coverage and setback will have to be changed to permit the construction of the carriage house as designed.

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved by the St. Charles Historic Preservation Commission to recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals approval of the Zoning Variation Application for 303 N. 3rd Ave.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Smunt, Rice, Kramer, Malay, Kessler

Nays: None.

Abstain: Pretz

Absent: Dickerson

Motion Carried.

PASSED, this 19th day of April, 2023.

Chairperson

MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19, 2023 – 7:00 P.M.

Members Present: Rice, Smunt, Kessler, Pretz, Kramer, Malay

Members Absent: Dickerson

Also Present: Rachel Hitzemann, Planner, Russell Colby, Director of Community Development, Derek Conley, Director of Economic Development, Cindy Kaleta, Administrative Assistant

a. Variance Recommendation- 303 N 3rd Ave.

Ms. Hitzemann presented the Variation Application requesting to reduce the rear yard setback and increase the building coverage to construct an addition comprised of an enclosed breezeway and garage. The applicant, Matthew Sweeney, was present.

Ms. Rice questioned if the Commission could approve the doors to enclose the breezeway but not the extra height on the garage.

Ms. Hitzemann advised the garage is within the height requirements and does not need a variance on height.

Mr. Pretz reviewed 7 homes within 250 feet of 303 N. 3rd Avenue. Two of the homes are National Historic Register homes dating 1853 to 1855. Three homes are City of St. Charles landmarks circa 1852, 1892, and 1898. Two additional properties are dated circa 1859 and second between 1850 and 1880. All are within the original town of St. Charles. Mr. Pretz gave a description of each of the 7 homes.

Ms. Kramer stated she supports the variance.

Mr. Kessler stated recently in his neighborhood he voted against a variance that he believes had a similar variance request.

Ms. Kramer asked if the breezeway is now enclosed could the applicant reduce the width of the breezeway?

Ms. Hitzemann responded that yes, because it is an attached structure it could be reduced [10 ft. separation distance from the house to a detached garage would not apply to an attached garage].

Dr. Smunt stated he is in favor of granting the variance. He stated the planned house with the breezeway connection to a detached carriage house is historically and architecturally accurate for Greek Revival because it has the feel of a detached carriage house. Comparing this house on the corner, we looked at square footage of houses as well as lots, and all the houses on this square block are small. Going across the street we have double lot houses, the house across the street is about 2400 sq. ft. and the house immediately across the street to the east is another approximately 2400 sq. ft. house. This house is approximately 2200 sq. ft. Larger homes are on the block across the street but still the same neighborhood. The Historic District does not distinguish by square block.

Mr. Pretz added the square footage of living space above the garage does not count. Ms. Hitzemann

advised the area above the garage is included in the 2200 sq. ft. size of the home. Mr. Pretz added the houses across the street are on larger lots.

Ms. Malay opened the floor to public comment.

Ms. Pat Pretz, 214 Chestnut Ave., read a letter from Mike Dixon, architect, who worked on the Historic District survey in 1990, stating the breezeway does not meet the definition in the code as it is not open sided, has a ceiling and continuous exterior wall of windows and screens.

Mr. Dean Bemis, 304 N. 2nd Ave., stated his issue is if the Historic Commission makes recommendation to approve this it sets a precedent. Every single lot can become an exception. My hope is the Historic Commission does not make a recommendation and lets the Zoning Board do its work.

Mr. Paul McMahon, 304 Chestnut Ave., asked if the square footage includes the above the garage square footage. Ms. Hitzemann responded for the variance the Zoning Board will only be looking at the building coverage of the house on the lot; building coverage does not include the second floor or above the garage. Mr. Sweeney, applicant, noted the house would be approximately 2200 square feet including the breezeway and the space above the garage.

Mr. Sweeney, applicant, stated he believes there is a misconception on the size and style of the house. The left wing is being built on top of the original foundation. The new garage is being placed just 5 feet beyond where the existing garage is currently situated. Within the zoning there is a bonus given for building coverage if you do a detached garage because it is a preferential design feature. The breezeway is just a connection between the house and the garage. If we didn't have the doors to enclose the breezeway it wouldn't be a discussion because the design would then meet the Zoning Code.

Mr. McMahon stated the garage is 5 feet farther north and it is a larger garage.

Mr. Chuck Izzo, 312 N 2nd Ave., stated he thought about purchasing this home to restore, not enlarge the home.

Ms. Malay added that this commission has worked very hard on preventing teardowns. The way we have had to do this was to work with people to preserve the existing home and make it useful at the same time. We realize we can't preserve everything in its original form and fashion, we had to allow for things to change to preserve most of the home and property.

Mr. Pretz asked Staff if we decide not to recommend to the Zoning Board, this is still going to the Zoning Board? Ms. Hitzemann responded yes, the Zoning Board of Appeals will review the Variation application regardless of the Historic Commission action. She noted that Zoning Board will review the entire Variation application which has a broader scope than what Historic Commission reviews.

Dr. Smunt made a motion to recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals approval of the Variation Application for 303 N. 3rd Ave., because the planned house with an enclosed breezeway connection to a detached carriage house is historically and architecturally accurate for Greek Revival, and to accomplish this architecture the lot coverage and setback will have to be changed to permit the construction of the carriage house as designed. Seconded by Ms. Kramer.

Roll was called:

Ayes: Rice, Smunt, Kramer, Kessler, Malay

Absent:

Abstain: Pretz

Nays:

Motion passed: 5-0