

MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2016
COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Members Present: Chairman Smunt, Malay, Pretz, Withey, Norris

Members Absent: Bobowiec, Gibson

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

1. Call to order

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

2. Roll call

Chairman Smunt called roll with five members present. There was a quorum.

3. Approval of agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

4. Presentation of minutes of the January 20, 2016 meeting

A motion was made by Mr. Withey and seconded by Mr. Norris with a unanimous voice vote to approve the minutes.

5. COA: 203 N. 3rd Ave. (addition)

Christopher Rosati, applicant, was present.

Mr. Colby noted the Commission conducted a preliminary review of this project at the November 4th, 2015 meeting.

Mr. Rosati said they took the Commission's suggestions to incorporate a one-story open porch in front of the residence. He said they are trying to keep within the Italianate style without being too ornate. The porch will consist of square columns and simple bracketry. The addition will be located on the second floor in the back of the house and on the first floor above the garage.

Mr. Rosati said all the windows and window trim on the exterior will match the existing clad window material. Cedar lap siding will be used to match the existing. Azek board will be used for the trim material and the porch decking.

Mr. Pretz asked if the material being used consists of a flat surface. Mr. Rosati said it is smooth.

Chairman Smunt asked if they will be removing the current trim. Mr. Rosati clarified they will be keeping the original trim and adding new trim on the addition. Chairman Smunt asked if they thought the existing wood trim was original to the building. Mr. Rosati felt it was.

Several Commissioners commended Mr. Rosati and Mr. Stockman for doing a great job on the plans.

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

After the vote, the Mr. Stockman asked for clarification on the wording on the COA form that mentions “historic features and concealed structural elements”. Chairman Smunt said the intent of that statement is to save historical features on a structure. He said they would like applicants to communicate with the Commission if they uncover original features so they can evaluate the integrity of the feature.

6. Preliminary Review: Baker Community Center, 101 S. 2nd St.

Jeff Bruns and Mike Elliot from Kluber Architects & Engineers, and Dan Marshall, a member of the Baker Board and a local architect, were present.

Mr. Elliot spoke about their plans. He said they would like to install an elevator in the building in order to provide greater access throughout the building. He stated their plan is to keep the interior structure of the elevator from impacting the outside, but noted they do need to push through the roof in order to get to the third floor.

Mr. Elliot said they would also like to remove some of the rear existing windows and install a new set of doors on the rear to make the existing terrace more accessible. They are also planning on improving the safety of that terrace by removing the ladder style stairway and replacing it with a new full stairway.

Mr. Pretz asked if they intended on keeping the new design complimentary to the existing structure. Mr. Elliot confirmed that is their intent.

Mr. Norris asked if the dormer on top on the building will be made of brick, and if it would be load-bearing. Mr. Elliot said it will be concrete block and steel and will rest on the hoist weight going up in the elevator. Mr. Norris also asked about the stairway off the rear. He was concerned with them trying to put an exit where there wasn't one before. He asked if they could keep it from having too much of a presence. Mr. Norris suggested they consider adding a better stairway if it was going to be a grander exit.

Mr. Norris also suggested they consider using a canvas cover for the front accessible entrance, rather than the proposed wood pergola. Mr. Elliot was open to looking into that as an alternate cover. He said their initial idea was to provide some kind of weather cover for the existing ramp that goes into the accessible entrance. They intended to go with a garden structure to pull the tudor garden piece together. Chairman Smunt asked how much use this ramp gets. Mr. Marshall stated it gets used quite a bit, especially with the elderly population.

Mr. Pretz stated he was fine with the overall plan.

Chairman Smunt noted the only concern was with the entrance cover.

7. Additional Business from Commissioners or Staff

a. 214 S. 2nd Ave.

Mr. Stevenson explained the property is rented out as a three flat, but is now run-down and an eye-sore. He said they are looking for feedback as to what can be done with the property, and also what architectural elements the Commission was looking for.

Ms. Malay asked if they had any idea as to what they wanted to use the property for. Mr. Stevenson said they would like to rebuild another multi-family unit on that property. He mentioned doing some brownstones like already exists in the downtown area. Chairman Smunt noted existing townhomes are not brownstones. He felt they would not be able to take a three story building and recreate a brownstone look.

Mr. Stevenson asked if the porches or gable were elements the Commission would want them to maintain on the new unit. Ms. Malay asked Mr. Colby if there was any ability to add to this property. Mr. Colby noted the property is on a double lot and there is room in the rear to add square footage to the existing structure. Ms. Malay mentioned the owner may have an issue if they try and remove the porch and add livable space to the front of the property.

Ms. Malay suggested they try and keep intact what they already have and consider adding to the back of the structure if they want to add another unit. Chairman Smunt said he would prefer they add one or two units and stay within the gable style of the structure.

Ms. Malay asked if they want the addition to enlarge some of the current space. She noted it might be better to try for three units versus four, and reconfigure the interior space. Mr. Norris stated it might be challenging to do that because the space is so tight. He said the ceiling height makes it difficult to have any type of grand space inside what they have. He said the Commission needs to decide if they want to help with developing a new structure, or do they think it's worth saving what is already there. He was concerned that a new addition may be too big for the neighborhood.

Mr. Colby stated the existing zoning only permits two units, but it is sized as a double lot. The current three unit structure is grandfathered in. Mr. Pretz clarified they would not be able to add additional units unless the zoning gets changed.

Chairman Smunt explained the building is considered architecturally “contributing” to the Central Historic District. He said the structure contains elements of the 19th Century style of architecture, which is the main era of construction of the Central Historic District. Therefore, he would be opposed to demolishing the building.

b. Landmarks research

Chairman Smunt advised the group that he went to the County Clerk's office to look into probate records. He said he was trying to get some dates to determine the age of the house he is researching. He said he will soon be ready to move forward with his nomination.

c. Discussion on Architectural Significance of Verified Catalog Homes

The Commission viewed a PowerPoint presentation and discussed the architectural significance of the verified catalog homes, located at the addresses listed below. They categorized each as follows:

715 N. 3rd Ave. – contributing

310 S. 4th St. – non-contributing

315 S. 12th Ave. – contributing

509 Indiana St. – contributing

306 S. 7th St. – significant

408 S. 11th Ave. – contributing (needs small adjustments to make significant, like hanging shutters properly, changing columns and removing gutter)

125 S. 11th St. – contributing

319 S. 12th Ave. – contributing

708 Cedar Ave. – contributing

513 Illinois – significant

308 Indiana Ave. – contributing (front porch has been enclosed)

408 Jackson Ave. – contributing

504 Jackson Ave. – significant (although main gable window has been changed)

1109 W. Main St. – contributing

1203 W. Main St. – contributing

716 Mosedale – significant

720 Mosedale – contributing

1508 Riverside Ave. – contributing

717 South Ave. – contributing

8. Meeting Announcements: Historic Preservation Commission meeting Wednesday, March 2, 2016 at 7:00 P.M. in the Committee Room.

9. Public Comment

10. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.