

Thomas Pretz

214 Chestnut Avenue

Good evening and thank you for the opportunity to speak before the Zoning Board of Appeals.

I, along with my wife, Patricia, are the owners and residents of 214 Chestnut Avenue which is lot 7 of block 33 in the original town of St. Charles. We are directly west of the lot line for 303 N. Third Avenue.

I will be speaking to you as an owner/resident, but I would like to state that I am a retired City of St. Charles Planning Commissioner (10 years) and a sitting Historic Preservation Commissioner (15 years). Never, after reviewing hundreds of COAs and countless exception requests as a commissioner, did I think I would be standing as a resident, before this Board, regarding my next-door property in the Central Historic District.

Pat and I are excited, like our other neighbors, to see a change in ownership from a neglected, rental property since January 2006 to the Sweeney family home. But before I go too far with this excitement the reality is that this is business...

Matt and Bernadette Sweeney have stated in the criteria that "this will be our primary residence", but this is also Red Oak Builders & Remodelers, the family business. The Sweeney family has been buying and flipping homes within the tri-city area (examples attached). The understanding is that 2 adults and either 5 to 7 children will be living at this site, but the question is for how long?

I have already provided information contained within the packet. The areas are:

Neighborhood Profile

Drainage – Water Runoff

Driveway

Criteria – Denial or Modification of the Proposal

City Code – Mass, Scale, and Size

Sales Examples

If you would like I can read each of these or if you have already read these items and have any questions, I should have your answers.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Tom and Pat Pretz

Neighborhood Profile

303 N. Third Avenue is located at the intersection of Third and Chestnut Avenues. This structure is in the heart of the Central Historic District (see landmark map) which was created in 1995 and includes the original town of St. Charles as laid out in the 1830's. The original structure was built c1853 and moved to the current site, block 33 lot 8, between 1908-12. The home at 214 Chestnut Avenue was built c1852 and moved to its present site between 1900-1903, block 33 lot 7. Moving a structure such as these was a frequent practice at the time. Within the surrounding 250' notification area bounded by Park, 4th, State, and 2nd Avenues, are 10 (or 16%) National and City of St. Charles landmarks. If we expand the area 500' there are 18 (or 28%) of the City landmarks. I will concentrate on the 7 homes that either touch the 303 N. Third Avenue lot line or located across the street from 303 N. Third Avenue, or within 100' of lot 8, 303 N. Third Avenue. Two (2) are National Historic Register homes, dating 1853 & 54 respectively, and three (3) are City of St Charles landmarks, c1852, c1892, and 1898. Two additional properties within this distance are dated 1859 and c1850-1880 but are not landmarked. All are located within the Original Town of St Charles (see 1860 City map).

303 N. Third Avenue: (Sweeny – owner less than 1 year)

built c1853, block 33, **single** lot 8. Square footage 1500 of living space (LS) with a single detached garage. Limited parking options.

214 Chestnut Avenue: (Pretz – owner 18 years)

built c1852, block 33, **single** lot 7. Square footage 1500 LS with a single garage. Limited parking options. City Landmark.

304 N. Second Avenue: (Bemis – owner 40 years)

built 1854, block 33, **multiple** lots 5 & 6. Square footage 2000 LS with no garage. Limited parking options. National Landmark.

312 N. Second Avenue: (Izzo – owner 15 years)

built 1853, block 33, **single** lot 4 but also owns interior, not accessible lots 1-3 due to the elevation of the third avenue bridge. Square footage is 1400 LS with a detached garage and adequate parking. National Landmark.

215 N Third Avenue: (Suwanski – owner 5 years)

built 1898, block 27, **multiple** lots 1 & 2. Square footage 2000 LS with detached garage and adequate parking. City Landmark.

201 Chestnut Avenue: (Roach – owner 15 years)

built c1892, block 27, **multiple** lots 3 & 4. Square footage 2000 LS with detached garage and adequate parking. City Landmark.

304 Chestnut Avenue: (McMahon – owner 40 years)

built c1859, block 34, **multiple** lots 3 – 6. Square footage 2000 LS with single garage and adequate parking.

218 N. Third Avenue: (Jarosz – owner 40 years)

c1850-1880, block 28, **multiple** lots 3 & 4. Square footage 2000 LS with detached garage and limited parking.

What is the neighborhood profile? The 7 homes highlighted that are 2000 + square feet are located on **multiple**, Original Town of St Charles lots, while those that are 1500 square feet are on a **single** lot. Seven homes, including 303 N. Third Avenue, have similar lot challenges because of the abandoned railroad spur on the north boundary and the Second and Third Avenues bridge elevations. The request to add a stated 573.63 square feet of building coverage and increase this lot coverage to 34.83% on this single lot to create a 5-bedroom, 5-bathroom, 2300 square foot living space (LS) home is out of place with the character of this neighborhood. The proposed structure violates the City Code (see attached) covering mass, space, and scale. No existing garage contains living space above its structure.

Consider: I ask the Zoning Board of Appeals to deny this request entirely or modify the request to a reduced lot coverage model more appropriate for mass

(height), space (open area), and scale (vertical). Move the proposed setbacks on the West and North lot boundaries closer to the existing structure as is today, and only grant what currently is permitted by code without exception.

Drainage – Water Runoff

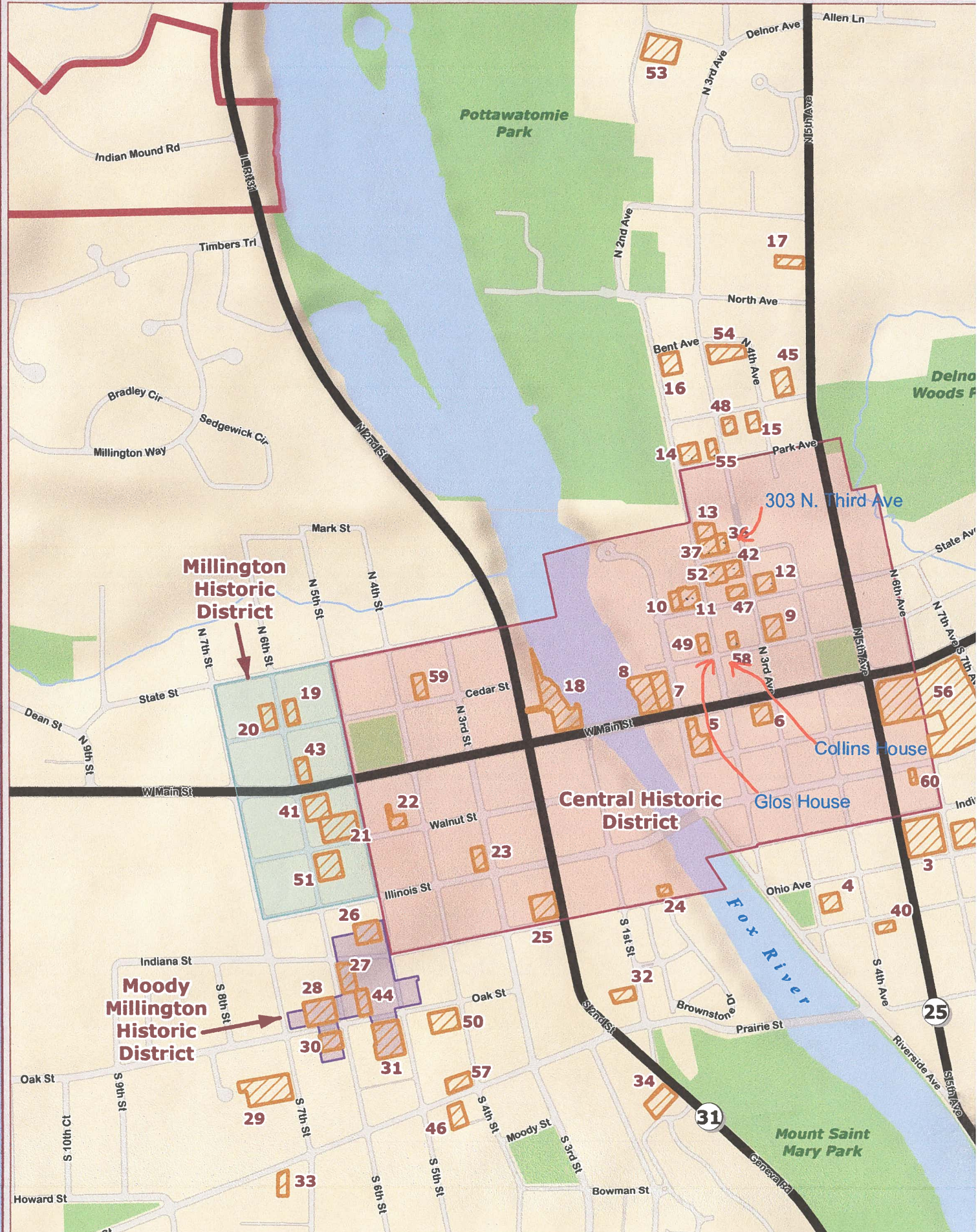
303 N. Third Avenue currently causes a severe water runoff problem to both 214 Chestnut Avenue on the west and 312 N. Second Avenue on the north. Both border the property that is before this Board today. This was confirmed by Todd Surveying, who conducted the survey you see in this package and who was hired by the owner of 303 N. Third Avenue. During the survey by Todd Surveying, a gentleman from that company asked if he could come into my backyard at 214 Chestnut Avenue to verify a finding. Upon completion the gentleman told me what I already knew. The 303 N. Third Avenue lot 8 was draining its runoff water into my yard and that of 312 N. Second Avenue. I stated that when it rains the east side of my yard accumulates water, my garage floor is saturated, as well as my basement floor. The gentleman stated he would indicate this on the drawings and that besides an expectation that the City of St. Charles engineering would require corrections, that I should mention this situation to the city. About 10 years prior, the city helped me discover there was a less than ½” pitch from my garage door to the sidewalk on Chestnut Avenue. During a driveway replacement I hired an onsite contractor to sit and measure to ensure the ½” pitch would be accomplished. This in no way relieved any other runoff into my yard (see recent pictures) as the city stated the only relief I could gain, is if the home next door, 303 N. Third Avenue, ever required an engineering review to force the correction. This is that time...

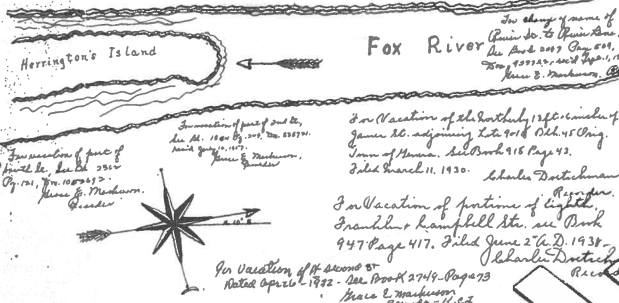
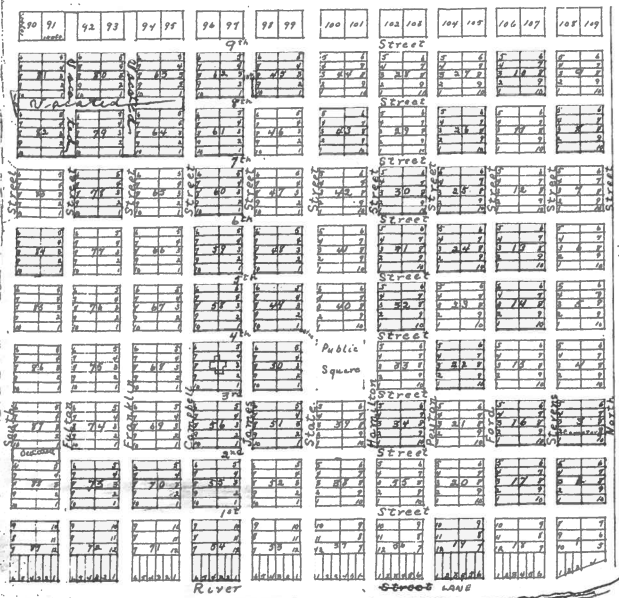
Consider: My request is, that not until approved engineering plans by the City of St. Charles are in place, no permit be granted for outside or exterior work on this lot. That would include demolition of the addition and/or existing garage or any other exterior work until such plan is in

place and a remedy detailed and approved by the City of St Charles engineering department.









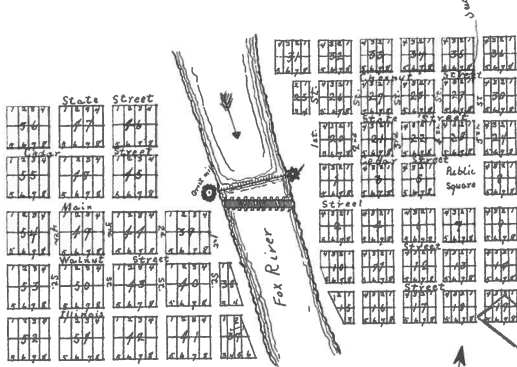
Lots fronting River Street 50 feet front 150 ft. deep except fractional lots in Block 1, all other lots in the same corner of Block 1 70 ft by 150 feet, all other lots 60 feet by 150 feet, State Street 100 ft wide North and South streets 40 ft wide 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th Streets 60 ft wide, all other streets 80 ft wide. Town laid out by a variation of 4 1/2' East. Corner stone on lot 1 Block 49 corner of 4th and State. I certify that the Town of Geneva was laid out and surveyed by me agreeable to this Plat. M.W. Fletcher, County Surveyor. May 8th, 1837. Kane County.

This day personally appeared before the subscriber James Herrington and Richard J. Hamilton to me personally known who duly acknowledged themselves to be the proprietors of the Town of Geneva and that they have laid off said Town agreeable to which this annexed. Given under my hand and seal this second day of May, A. D. 1837.

Mark Daniels
Justice of the Peace

Recorded May 8th, A. D. 1837, at 11 o'clock A.M.
David Dunham, Recorder

This certifies that the above is a true and complete copy of plat entitled "Geneva" recorded May 8th, 1837, in Record Book 1 on Page 9.



ORDINANCE # 1976-2-22
VACATING STATE ST. LYING
BETWEEN 1st ST. + FOX RIVER
REC. 4-25-1979
Doc. 1453861

Ordinance # 1987-49
Vacating State St. lying
East of Block 49
REC. 4-22-87
Doc. 149890

Main Street 80 ft wide, all other streets 60 ft wide. Lots on the West side of the river 66 ft. front 132 ft. deep, on the east side 80 ft. front 100 ft. deep except the Fractional Lot Variation 6 1/2' East. Town layed out N. 11 1/4' W. Corner Stone Lot 1 Block 5 corner of Main and 4th Streets.

I certify that the Town of Charleston has been surveyed by me agreeable to the within Plat, as far as fifty six Blocks. May 8th, 1837.

Mark W. Fletcher
County Surveyor of Kane County

State of Illinois,
Kane County.

I, Elijah S. Town, Justice of the Peace, with in and for the county of Kane, do hereby certify that Ira Minard, Reed Ferson, Calvin Ward and Gideon Young personally appeared before me and to me personally known who duly acknowledged themselves to be the proprietors of the Town of Charleston and that they had the said Town laid off agreeable to the within Plat. Given under my hand and seal, this 8th day of May, A. D. 1837.

Elijah S. Town,
Justice of the Peace.

Recorded May 8th, A. D. 1837, at 2 o'clock P.M.
David Dunham,
Recorder.

This certifies that the above is a true and complete copy of plat entitled "Charleston" recorded May 8th, 1837, in Record Book 1 on Page 11.

Sept. 27th, 1907.
Frank E. George,
Recorder.
B.C.



Streets 60 ft. wide except Main St. which is 80 ft. wide. All lots 60 ft. front 150 ft. deep, except lots fronting the Public Square in blocks No. 11 & 12, which are 60 ft. front by 120 ft. deep and fractional lots. Corner Stone on Lot 5 Block 4 corner of Main and 4th Streets, variation 6 1/2' east.

On the 29th day of May 1837, personally appeared before the subscriber, a Justice of the Peace of Kane County, John Datman, Proprietor of the Town of Dundee, and duly acknowledged that he had laid out the same agreeable to the within Plat. In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal the day and year first above written.

Seth Green, J.P. (Seal)

This may certify that I surveyed and laid out the this Town agreeably to this plat, June 5th, 1837.

M.W. Fletcher
County Surveyor of Kane County

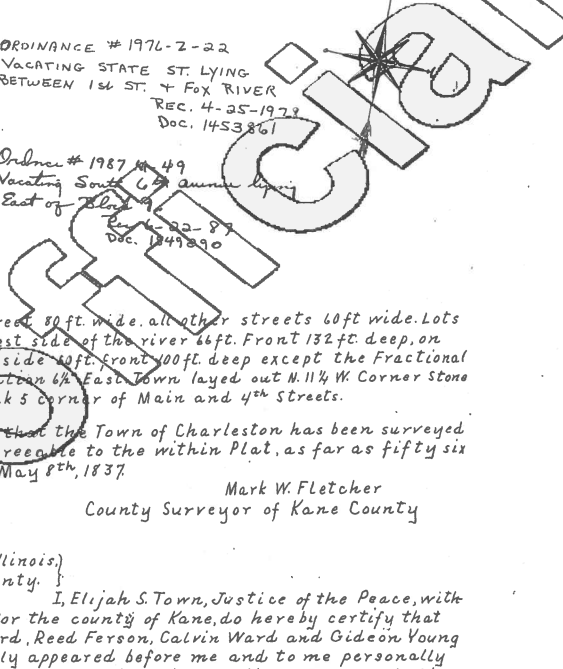
Received this Plat for record on the 5th day of June A.D. 1837, at 7 o'clock A.M. and recorded at 12 o'clock of the same day.

David Dunham, Recorder

This certifies that the above is a true and complete copy of plat entitled "Plat of Dundee", recorded 5th, 1837, in Record Book I on Page 13.

Frank E. George,
Recorder
B.C.

Oct. 23rd, 1907.



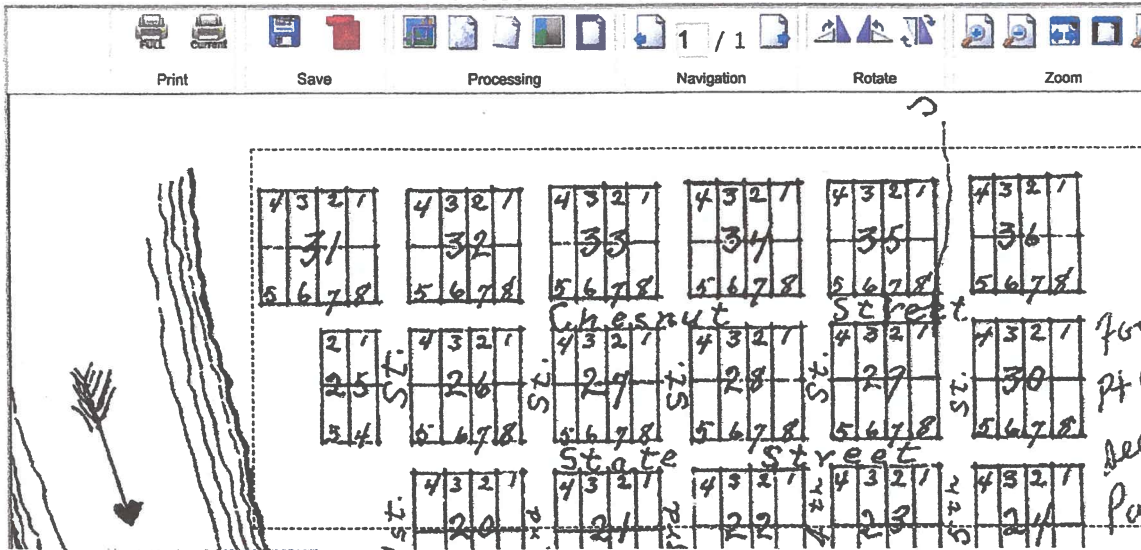
1837 ORIGINAL TOWN MAP

BLOCKS 33, 34, 28, & 27

Document Image

Prev Next

Document: BOOK 0019 PAGE 0002



1860 ORIGINAL TOWN MAP



Driveway

Today, 303 N. Third Avenue has a curb cut on Third Avenue and one on Chestnut Avenue. I have included four pictures provided by the Kane County Recorder's office. The 1972 photo shows the earliest indication when the Chestnut Avenue curb cut was created and the picture dated 1987, is the last year the wooden Third Avenue bridge existed followed by the photo dated 1988 of the completed replacement of that bridge. The impetus to move the driveways to Chestnut Avenue and add a second curb cut, could be a solution to increased traffic and a future bridge replacement during the 1970's. The approximate time does coincide with the 5th Avenue followed by 2nd and 3rd Avenues bridge replacements as they were taking place. Three other homes on this intersection have driveways located off Chestnut Avenue.

Consider: I would recommend that the curb cut on Third Avenue be eliminated and that the curb cut off Chestnut be used. While this is near my home and least desirable to me, it may make sense to do.

1973

- Identify
- D
- Reports
- Print
- Clear
- FullScreen
- About
- Help
- Layers

Kane County Illinois (4/21/2023)

Address Search Results

Pictometry

PinList

Acreage Widget

SubRealign Widget

Change Widget

Oblique Widget

PinList Widget

1973Aerials

X: 990541.5595340537 Y: 1912143.6812444655 Lat: 41.916454 Lng: -88.310223

XMin: 990136.74 YMin: 1911833.51 XMax: 990728.82 YMax: 1912266.59 (392)

Developed by GIS-Technologies

1973

- Identify
- D
- Reports
- Print
- Clear
- FullScreen
- About
- Help
- Layers

Kane County Illinois (4/21/2023)

ST. CHARLES ORIGINAL TOWN (Null/1/11)



PinList

- Acreage Widget
- SubRealign Widget
- Change Widget
- Oblique Widget
- Census Widget

Pin Name

303 Pictometry

Tax Parcel Information (2)

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Parcel | 09-27-336-00 (0927336005) |
| Construx/Ag | Active / N |
| Owner | SWEENEY, MATTHEW & BERNADETT |
| Township | ST CHARLES |
| UseCode | 0040 Resider Improved Lot |
| TaxCode | SC005 |
| Acreage | 0.12 / 5,227.2 (measured acreage) |
| Document | 2022K036221 7/14/2022 |
| Legal | LOT 8 IN BLK OF THE ORIGINAL TOWNSHIP OF ST CHARLES |
| CountyBoard | 12 Bill Rot |
| Municipality | Saint |
| CensusTract | 85230C |
| Permanent Address (GI) | |
| Address | 303 N 3RD A |
| City | SAINT CHARLES IL 60174-200 |
| Mailing Address (Tax Rec) | |
| Address1 | 41W847 BEI RD |
| Address2 | |
| City | CAMPTON HILLS, IL, 60119-9566 |

1973Aerials

XMin: 990029.32 YMin: 191592.46 XMax: 991213.48 YMax: 1912458.62 (784)
 X: 990362.3017927929 Y: 1912237.3106439842 Lat: 41.916711 Lng: -88.310881
 Developed by GIS-Technologies

1987

- Identify
- D
- Reports
- Print
- Clear
- FullScreen
- About
- Help
- Layers

Kane County Illinois (4/21/2023)

ST. CHARLES ORIGINAL TOWN (Null/1/11)



Acreage Widget

SubRealign Widget

Change Widget

Oblique Widget

PinList

| Pin | Name |
|-----|------------|
| 303 | Pictometry |

| Tax Parcel Information (2) | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Parcel | 09-27-336-00 (0927336005) |
| Construx/Ag | Active / N |
| Owner | SWEENEY, MATTHEW & BERNADETT |
| Township | ST CHARLES |
| UseCode | 0040 Resider Improved Lot |
| TaxCode | SC005 |
| Acreage | 0.12 / 5,227.2 (measured acreage) |
| Document | 2022K03622 7/14/2022 |
| Legal | LOT 8 IN BLK OF THE ORIGINAL TO OF ST CHAR |
| CountyBoard | 12 Bill Rott |
| Municipality | Saint |
| CensusTract | 85230C |
| Permanent Address (GI) | |
| Address | 303 N 3RD A |
| City | SAINT CHARLES IL 60174-200 |
| Mailing Address (Tax Rec) | |
| Address1 | 41W847 BELMONT RD |
| Address2 | |
| City | CAMPTON HILLS, IL, 60119-9566 |

1987Aerials

X: 991063.6711128259 Y: 1912526.7106061338 Lat: 41.917505 Lng: -88.308304
 XMin: 989995.27 YMin: 1911683.02 XMax: 991179.43 YMax: 1912549.18 (784)
 Developed by GIS-Technologies

- Identify
- D
- Reports
- Print
- Clear
- FullScreen
- About
- Help
- Layers

Kane County Illinois (4/21/2023)

ST. CHARLES ORIGINAL TOWN (Null/1/11)



PinList

Acreage Widget

SubRealign Widget

Change Widget

Oblique Widget

census Widget

1988Aerials

| Pin | Name |
|-----|------------|
| 303 | Pictometry |

Tax Parcel Information (2)

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Parcel | 09-27-336-00 (0927336005) |
| Construx/Ag | Active / N |
| Owner | SWEENEY, MATTHEW & BERNADETT |
| Township | ST CHARLES |
| UseCode | 0040 Resider Improved Lot |
| TaxCode | SC005 |
| Acreage | 0.12 / 5,227.2 (measured acreage) |
| Document | 2022K036221 7/14/2022 |
| Legal | LOT 8 IN BLK OF THE ORIGINAL T OF ST CHAF |
| CountyBoard | 12 Bill Rotl |
| Municipality | Saint |
| CensusTract | 85230C |
| Permanent Address (GI | |
| Address | 303 N 3RD A |
| City | SAINT CHAF IL 60174-200 |
| Mailing Address (Tax Rec | |
| Address1 | 41W847 BEI RD |
| Address2 | |
| City | CAMPTON HILLS, IL, 60119-9566 |

X: 990620.3784649215 Y: 1912456.5736741305 Lat: 41.917313 Lng: -88.309933
 XMin: 989995.27 YMin: 911683.02 XMax: 991179.43 YMax: 1912549.18 (784)

Developed by GIS-Technologies

Criteria for Denial or Modification of Proposal

1. This is a mere inconvenience not a hardship. The Third Ave bridge, as seen today, has been there since 1988. Many owners of this specific property have come and gone during the past 40 years. Three other homes located at the intersection of Third and Chestnut Avenues experience similar inconveniences such as limited parking or limited home expansion options. Additionally, all 7 homes, including 303 N. Third Avenue, on the north side of Chestnut Avenue have similar restrictions due to the abandoned railroad location and the two bridges located on Second and Third Avenues. These addresses are: 312 N. Second Ave, 304 N. Second Ave, 214 Chestnut Ave, 304 Chestnut Ave, 312 Chestnut Ave (c1860-1870), and 318 Chestnut Ave (c1870-1880). When each current owner purchased their home/lot we did so knowing there were limitations, or discovered these limitations exist since our purchases. The current owner who purchased this home at a below market value, should not have special considerations above those who are current residents and owners, by simply stating non-conformity to the current code.
2. These lots are all Original Town of St Charles lots which tend to be smaller and date back to the 1830's. No other neighboring property would be given the same opportunity to utilize this variation.
3. Yes, owners come and go but the structure will be here for decades. Nobody intends to make less money than their investment when it is time to sell, and it is not if but when that sale will occur.
4. Does not apply.

5. Yes, allowing a 2000 sq ft home on a single Original Town of St Charles lot is contrary to the neighborhood, and thus becomes too large in mass, space, and scale for the lot (see attached).
6. Granting the variation is detrimental to the public welfare as it will set the trend and example that a multi-lot sized home can be built on a single city historic district lot overpowering existing area landmarked historic homes and thus entire historic neighborhood districts themselves.
7. The new home will impair an adequate light supply to both 214 Chestnut Ave and lots 1-3 for 312 N. Second Avenue. 312 N. Second Avenue is a Pottawatomie Garden Club featured garden that benefits the community more than just the owners. Four years ago, I hired Turf Care Enterprises to help grow a lawn in my back yard using specialized seeds, etc. Four years later, including tree trimming, and many dollars spent, it still is an uphill climb to maintain an established lawn. There is not enough sunlight in the yard even today. The few plants that do grow, hostas, give me green, but I am thankful for this. If this home with its massive size is permitted the partial sun this yard gets on the east will be greatly reduced or gone.

U.S. Department of the Interior/National Park Service
National Historic Preservation Act – 1966

City Code:

17.32 Historic Preservation

17.32.080 Certificate of Appropriateness

G.

2.

D. Relationship of Building Masses and Spaces

The relationship of a structure to the open space between it and adjoining structures should be compatible.

F. Scale

The scale of the structure after alteration, construction or partial demolition should be compatible with its architectural style and character and with surrounding structures.

Sale Examples

411 Park Street, Batavia 12-15-482-012 purchased in 2021 sold in 2022.

122 Fifth Street, St. Charles 09-34-107-005 purchased in 2022 near completion to be listed for sale.

303 N. Third Avenue, St. Charles 09-27-336-005 purchased 2022 and is the subject property.

Something in common?



Michael A. Dixon, FAIA/architect
32 Grant Street / St. Augustine, Florida 32084
847.502.3136 / madixon1166@gmail.com

RE: 303 N. 3rd Avenue/St. Charles, Illinois

The structure at 303 North Third Avenue is listed as an excellent Greek Revival example built in the late 1800's. It is interesting that, for this property, the proposed "breezeway" in the submitted application for a variance does not relate to the definition in article 17.30 of the City of St. Charles Municipal Code as it is shown in the drawings as a totally enclosed structure with glass walls (not "open sided" per the "breezeway" definition) and will make the proposed garage with its bedroom and bathroom a totally attached addition to the house and definitely not an "accessory building," which is defined as a garage and/or storage building. This does not, by definition, in Section 17.30, indicate that this is a detached building. It is defined as being "enclosed by a permanent roof and continuous exterior walls having openings for windows, screens and entrance or exit doors." This is not compatible with this indent of the Historic District even without addressing the proposed violations of the allowed lot coverage and reduced rear yard setback.

Michael A. Dixon

Michael A. Dixon, FAIA

Historic Preservation Architect

April 18, 2023



Navigation



RED OAK

Builders & Remodelers

Name *

First

Submit

Contact Us

Main Office: 331-248-0272

Mike Sweeney: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Matt Sweeney: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]