

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2012
COUNCIL COMMITTEE ROOM**

Members Present: Chairman Smunt, Boboweic, Norris, Weals, Prestidge, Pretz, Withey

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Russell Colby, Planning Division Manager

1. Call to order:

Chairman Smunt called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and requested that all cell phones be turned off or placed in silent mode.

2. Roll call:

Chairman Smunt called roll with the seven members present and no members absent.

3. Approval of the agenda:

There were no changes to the agenda

4. Presentation of minutes from October 17, 2012 meeting:

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

5. COA: 109 S. 4th Avenue (sign):

Kevin Pirok, applicant, stated the proposed wall sign is high density urethane and is proposed to be installed above the three window bay on the west elevation.

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

6. COA: 321 S. 5th Street (fence):

Michelle Marquardt, applicant, stated that proposed is a 6 ft. tall gothic style fence, and she referenced the pictures provided. Mr. Colby noted the Commission packet contained design drawings of the fence, a survey of the proposed location, and an image showing how the fence would appear, but without the stone base shown.

A motion was made by Mr. Prestidge and seconded by Mr. Pretz with a unanimous voice vote to approve the COA.

7. COA: 109 S. 4th St. (chimney):

Mr. Colby noted that the applicant, Steven Kolanowski, informed him he is in traffic and would arrive late, therefore he suggests moving to the next item and returning to this item at the end of the meeting.

8. Discussion on 309 S. 6th Avenue (Judd House):

The Commission had the opportunity to view the interior of the house earlier in the day.

Charles Hager and Jeff Wolf, prospective purchasers and developers of the site, were present. They described the current condition of the building, noting it had been left in an abandoned state for approximately the last ten years, and had continued to deteriorate to a point where it would be prohibitively expensive to rehabilitate the building. Mr. Hager described a number of potential structural issues, including the south brick wall showing signs of deterioration, drainage undermining the foundation, and inadequately supported loads due to the brick cladding that was added. In his opinion the structure is not sufficient to support the load of the brick, and as a result, the building is collapsing in on itself. Mr. Hager and Mr. Wolf stated that due to the townhome building being constructed immediately in front of the house in very close proximity, it would not be financially feasible to rehab the house as is and sell it.

The Commission discussed that the entire development site, including the house and 4 vacant townhome building lots, is for sale. The mansion itself is for sale for \$750,000. The two existing townhomes are occupied and under separate ownership. Mr. Hager and Mr. Wolf stated they would only pursue the project if the mansion can be removed, because they do not believe the other units would sell if the mansion remained. They indicated they would consider redesigning the remainder of the site and perhaps replacing the mansion building with another type of structure.

Chairman Smunt described the history of development proposals for the site and recalled that the last time this was discussed, there was discussion of putting an addition on the back and extending the building. He said that demolishing the building would be controversial and the decision process should involve other entities outside the Commission, including the City Council members, neighbors and outside groups who may be interested, like Preservation Partners. Chairman Smunt asked the Commission to weigh in.

Mr. Norris recalled that the Commission already had compromised with a previous developer to allow for the townhomes to be built, provided the mansion building was saved. He said now, this compromise made by the Commission is being used as a reason to demolish the building. He stated that as a Historic Commission, they cannot condone the building being torn down, as he saw that as more of a decision for the City Council. If the Council were to agree to this idea, the Commission could work with the developer, but this was outside of their charge as a Commission.

Mr. Withey stated he toured the building and believed it was in a deteriorated state. He noted the townhome buildings are very close to the structure, which detracts from the mansion building. He felt the townhomes were high quality, and completing the project would be a better improvement for the neighborhood. He would support demolition of the building.

Mr. Pretz stated that being a member of the Historic Commission, he cannot support demolition of the building, as the Commission's specific charge is preservation. He stated that he understands what the developers have presented and he agrees it is a difficult situation, but he doesn't feel the Commission should be making decisions based on the asking price of the building. He feels that the bank and a purchaser would need to work out a deal based on the value of the existing site and what had been approved and partially constructed.

Mr. Prestidge noted he toured the building and it would be very expensive to rehabilitate. He suggested that the building should be given to the developers for free, to account for the cost of restoring the building. He would be open to allowing demolition.

Ms. Weals stated that her position has been that she would support demolition in exchange for the site being redeveloped in an appropriate manner.

Mr. Bobowiec agreed with Ms. Weals. He further suggested that the developer look into reusing parts of the structure in the new buildings on the site, as a way to show a preservation effort vs. discarding the materials.

Chairman Smunt reiterated that other groups need to be involved in the decision making process. Additionally, the Commission will need more information on your proposal to consider what is being proposed to go in place of the mansion.

Mr. Colby stated the next appropriate step would be for the developers to file a Concept Plan application. This would start a process to receive feedback from the Historic Commission, Plan Commission, the City Council, and neighboring property owners, who would be notified of the meetings. He stated that he would discuss this with Mr. Hager and Mr. Wolf outside of the meeting.

Mr. Hager and Mr. Wolf stated that they would not pursue this project further without at least some consensus that the Commission could support demolition. Chairman Smunt stated that based on what he heard, the majority of the Commission is open to entertaining the concept, but they will need more details and information to make a decision.

The Commission returned to Item #7.

7. COA: 109 S. 4th Street (chimney)

Steven Kolanowski, applicant, explained that he had found the chimney to be unlined and in a deteriorated condition, noting the while it was tuck-pointed out the outside, all of the mortar had fallen on the inside and the chimney was not stable.

Chairman Smunt noted the Commission had previously discussed the exterior cladding and expressed a preference for thin brick. He noted the Commission wanted to discuss the crown and cap. Mr. Kolanowski described and sketched out his plan for a custom metal crown, which would be sloped down from the vent and extend down the sides of the chimney. A metal basket and cap would be installed on top of the crown. The finish would be matte black.

Mr. Prestidge stated that he did not find the metal crown to be appropriate and suggested another type of material be used for the crown that would appear like a cast concrete crown. Chairman Smunt described using a resin or polymer material to form a crown, which would look like concrete. The Commission discussed possibly installing a clay flue pipe end to extend up through the crown to give the appearance of a clay tile flue. Mr. Kolanowski agreed with the suggestion but clarified he wanted to still use a metal basket and cap. The Commission agreed this was appropriate.

A motion was made by Mr. Prestidge and seconded by Mr. Pretz with a unanimous voice vote to approve the COA for the chimney reconstruction with thin brick cladding, a resin chimney crown, and a matte black metal chimney cap.

9. Additional Business

None.

10. Announcements: Historic Preservation Commission meeting Wednesday, November 21, 2012 at 7:00pm in the Committee Room.

Mr. Colby stated that if possible, this meeting will be cancelled, depending if any COAs require review on this date.

11. Adjournment:

A motion was made by Mr. Prestidge and seconded by Mr. Norris, with a unanimous voice vote to adjourn the meeting.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Dr. Steven Smunt, Chairman
St. Charles Historic Preservation Commission

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