

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2013
COUNCIL COMMITTEE ROOM**

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

2. Roll call:

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

3. Approval of the agenda:

Chairman Smunt requested Item #7 be moved up as Item #4a. He added Item# 8a. Fine Arts Show Bus Tour. Mr. Pretz added Item #8b. Expansion of Historic Landmarks.

A motion was made by Mr. Bobowiec and seconded by Mr. Prestidge with a unanimous voice vote to approve the agenda as amended.

4. Presentation of minutes from December 19, 2012 meeting:

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

4a. Façade Improvement Plan Review: 314 W. Main St.

Al Justiniano, owner and grant applicant, and Dan Marshall, architect, were present. Mr. Marshall presented the concept for reconfiguring the front entrance ways by removing the metal stairs for replacement with a brick stairwell turned to the east, adding a new second entrance into the ground level to separate the residential and commercial space entry doors, and removing the existing awning and replacing it with a horizontal, standing seam metal canopy over the ground level entrances. A gable hood would be placed over the second floor entry door. The new stairs would be constructed of matching brick.

Mr. Pretz asked about the leaded glass windows on the second floor, which do not appear to be protected. Mr. Marshall said those windows are in good shape and could be protected. Mr. Justiniano said the other windows on the front elevation would either be repaired or replaced.

Mr. Norris asked about the gable hood over the second floor entry door and questioned if a gable was appropriate for the building's architecture. Mr. Marshall stated that he had tried a number of alternatives such as an arch or horizontal shape and all of them looked out of place. He noted the gable is seen with all architectural styles and he felt it was the best option. The Commission discussed that they would prefer to see an alternate design to compare with what is proposed.

The Commission discussed the windows on the building, which are original wood casements on the second floor and what appears to be replacement vinyl double hungs on the third floor. The mix of casement and double hung styles were original to the building. Chairman Smunt stated they prefer repair of windows, but in this case, repair vs. a good replacement would be impossible to discern from the street. He stated the preference is for like in kind replacement with a wood frame. Mr. Marshall asked about the casement windows, which currently swing in and have a double-hung storm window on the outside. He asked if the Commission preferred using a single casement in each opening, a double casement to maintain a larger vertical muntin at the center, or use of a double hung. The Commission indicated a casement was preferred as shown on the elevation drawing, and they would like to see more details on the actual window to be used. There was no strong opinion about a double vs. single casement as long as the appearance was the same.

Kim Malay asked Mr. Marshall if he considered incorporating the brick designs above the third floor windows into the front brick wall for the new staircase. Mr. Marshall said he considered it, but was unsure about trying to fit the rectilinear shape into the shape of the stairwell.

Chairman Smunt noted the building may qualify for tax incentives through the state. Mr. Colby will send Mr. Justiniano more information on this.

Overall, the Commission was favorable to the proposal but asked the applicant to refine the design based on the comments and return with more detail at a future meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Pretz and seconded by Mr. Bobowiec with a unanimous voice vote to table the item.

5. COA: 200 W. Main St. (wall signs):

Brice Soltys, applicant, stated the owners have changed the name of the firm and will be modifying the existing sign on the south elevation facing Main Street. The existing lettering will

be removed. The owners decided that instead of pin mounting the letters, which leaves a lot of holes in the marble, they would rather install a bronze aluminum backing plate and mount satin brass letters on the plate in the same location as the existing sign. No changes are proposed to the lighting. Chairman Smunt noted the building has bronze aluminum on the window and door systems on the same elevation, which would match the panel. Mr. Soltys noted another sign on the east elevation facing Second St. will be removed and not replaced, as it has limited visibility.

Mr. Soltys said a second sign is proposed on the north elevation of the building. This sign would be lettering pin mounted into the wall without a backing plate. Creating holes in this wall material is not a concern, as it is easy to patch. He stated the owners were considering utilizing an LED lighting system instead of the goosenecks used elsewhere on the building. He stated it is impossible to replace the bulbs in the gooseneck lights without using a lift, which is expensive. They found an LED which has a light color similar to incandescent that would be installed in a box above the sign and would not require frequent bulb replacement. The light would be diffused by white Plexiglas. Mr. Norris said this would appear as a long white light strip when viewed from below and would be similar to a neon strip light, like what is installed on the Arcada sign. He questioned if this was appropriate. Chairman Smunt noted an alternative would be to use channel letters with backlighting, but this would project a further distance off of the building. Mr. Prestidge said he felt the channel letters would look worse and felt the LED strip as proposed would be appropriate for this elevation, as it would be more subtle.

A motion was made by Mr. Bobowiec and seconded by Ms. Weals with a unanimous voice vote to approve the COA. Mr. Norris abstained.

6. Preliminary Review: 2 E. Main Street (Old City Hall Building)

Peter Suhr, Public Services Manager for the City, introduced the project scope of repairing and restoring the eastern elevations of the City Hall buildings to eliminate water infiltration that is damaging the masonry. He introduced representatives from the Prairie Forge Group, Robert Ezerins and Steve Vasilion. Mr. Vasilion summarized that the project involved the Old City Hall building, the South Annex and the Municipal Center east wall.

Mr. Vasilion described the proposal for the Old City Hall building. The lower portion of the brick along the streets has deteriorated due to water and salt from the street. The proposal is to grind all mortar and retuckpoint the entire façade. The brick from the first floor window sills downward would be entirely removed and replaced either with a limestone band and a similarly matched/stained brick, or replaced with an all limestone band and base. Brick salvaged from the lower portion of the wall would be used elsewhere for replacement and for filling in the planter box recess, which is not original to the building.

Chairman Smunt noted the building had been tuckpointed improperly in the past and noted the proper material would be a lime-based mortar, not concrete. Mr. Vasilion said they would be using the appropriate process and material and would be glad to bring in their masonry contractor once he is brought on board.

Chairman Smunt polled the Commission members regarding limestone vs. brick on the lower portion of the wall. Mr. Norris, Mr. Withey, Mr. Pretz, and Mr. Prestidge preferred all limestone. Mr. Vasilion clarified the limestone would be rusticated or split face to best match the appearance of the building. Ms. Weals and Mr. Bobowiec questioned if the brick could be maintained further down the elevation below the window sill level. Mr. Vasilion noted that brick up to the window sills is damaged and would need to be replaced. The Commission agreed that using a second type of brick was not preferred, but Ms. Weals stated that the appearance of the brick all the way down the wall is an important feature of the façade and should be maintained as low as possible.

Mr. Vasilion displayed the proposed window replacements on the first floor. The Commission's preference for the old garage door would be to use Scheme A with the taller double hung windows, as this would match what was previously on the north elevation. Chairman Smunt suggested lining up the meeting rail/muntins uniformly across the façade, following the line carried from the double hung windows and the top of the entry doors on the rest of the elevation. The Commission preferred lowering the limestone at the garage door so that it appears that it was once a garage entrance. Mr. Suhr noted that for maintenance, it would be best to still have some limestone there as an edge so that the window isn't damaged. Also, he mentioned that glass down to the floor may not be desirable for how the interior space could be used in the future. The Commission agreed that some limestone is fine, as is spandrel glass on the lower portion. Mr. Vasilion noted they will redesign this window element based on the previous comment and will determine how best to handle this.

Chairman Smunt said the Commission generally supports commercial window replacements with aluminum or aluminum clad wood. The upper windows are not proposed for replacement, but Mr. Vasilion said this could be included in the bid as an option if the budget allowed. Chairman Smunt noted that a darker anodized aluminum color would be more appropriate for the window framing, not the white that is currently used, and it was suggested that if the upper windows remain, they be repainted to match the new windows until they are later replaced.

Mr. Norris asked about the gutter systems and downspout locations. The south half of the roof drains in a downspout along the south edge of the elevation and discharges onto the street, while the north half wraps around the building and drains onto a lower roof. Mr. Norris suggested that this long gutter run on the north portion may overflow, causing water to fall on the sidewalk and

splash onto the lower wall, causing brick deterioration. Mr. Suhr noted that discharging onto the sidewalk did not make sense at this time, but at such time that the roadway is reconstructed, new downspouts could be installed and connected to the storm sewer, which would correct the issue.

The Commission discussed the north elevation, which is covered in EIFS, and questioned if the façade is intact below the EIFS. Commission members recalled that the façade may not be intact; also, the side elevation is common brick, which would not match the east elevation.

The Commission discussed the cupola. Mr. Vasilion said the structure is deteriorated and would need to be replaced, but he questioned whether it should appear open as it originally did. The Commission did not have a strong opinion about the material, but it was suggested it match the original design in size/shape and that translucent sides could allow the cupola to be closed/weather tight but appear open and could be lit up at night.

Mr. Vasilion presented the proposal for the South Annex building. The building would be tuckpointed, the lower windows replaced as shown in the drawing, and a limestone sill installed below the window openings. The roof would be replaced and the limestone caps reset. The Commission supported the elevation as drawn, but suggested the limestone sill be set in within the openings. Chairman Smunt suggested that concrete may be more appropriate based on the era of the building, but Mr. Vasilion noted the existing base is limestone. The Commission agreed the existing deteriorated limestone base could also be replaced.

Mr. Vasilion presented the proposal for the Municipal Center (Zook building) east wall. He said the brick is deteriorated and needs to be entirely replaced. The proposal is to replace the wall entirely with a similar tone and finish of brick. All windows would remain. Mr. Norris suggested considering other alternatives to the brick, since this was originally not a visible elevation. The Commission discussed whether marble or another product like the terraneo finish would be desirable. Mr. Prestidge stated that the wall is original to the building and it is what people recognize, therefore he did not feel an alternate material would be appropriate. Ms. Weals expressed concern that the proposal was not addressing the larger issue of the adjacent walls covered in EIFS, and the Commission was being asked to accept the project without addressing the other walls, which was not the correct approach. She noted that the buildings already have a number of different façade materials that are mismatched, and this was not doing anything to address the issue. Mr. Vasilion noted replacement of the EIFS is not necessary at this time. Mr. Suhr stated the project objective is to seal out water from the building, and the brick wall is in immediate need of repair, while the EIFS wall is serviceable for another couple of years. Ms. Malay recalled the Municipal Center brick wall was deteriorated some years ago and needs attention, but she suggested maybe presenting the project more comprehensively and show what future improvements will be along the other walls. At the conclusion of the discussion, the

majority of the Commission members felt the replacement of brick with like-in-kind material was appropriate.

Chairman Smunt thanked the representative for presenting the project for preliminary review, and Mr. Suhr, Mr. Vasilion and Mr. Ezerins thanked the Commission for their comments.

Chairman Smunt noted that Mr. Suhr was responsible for completing initiating the Historic District signage program and accommodating this in the Public Works budget.

7. Façade Improvement Plan Review: 314 W. Main St.

This item was discussed as Item #4a.

8. Additional Business

8a. Fine Arts Show Bus Tour- Chairman Smunt stated he is again looking for volunteers to lead a talk on the bus tour of historic buildings. He said all of the information was prepared and volunteers would commit for an hour. Mr. Pretz noted it might be helpful to coordinate with the bus driver beforehand in terms of where to stop and for how long. Also, standardizing basic presentation information would be beneficial.

8b. Expansion of Historic Landmarks- Mr. Pretz presented his idea of recognizing significant buildings within the Historic District that are not landmarks with an inexpensive plaque with a date of construction. The Commission could use this offer to entice owners to landmark the structures. Mr. Bobowiec suggested using the type of signs that stake into the ground vs. attaching to buildings, as these may be more appealing to some homeowners. Mr. Pretz said this initiative would be a way of slowly expanding the district by raising awareness. Mr. Colby stated he could provide a list of significant structure in the districts that are not landmarked. Chairman Smunt asked Mr. Pretz to prepare a program summary for the Commission to discuss further.

9. Announcements: Historic Preservation Commission meeting Wednesday, February 20, 2013 at 7:00pm in the Committee Room.

10. Adjournment:

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

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.

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

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