

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2014
COUNCIL COMMITTEE ROOM**

Members Present: Chairman Smunt, Bobowiec, Gibson, Norris, Pretz, Withey

Members Absent: Malay

Also Present: Russell Colby, Planning Division Manager

1. Call to order

Chairman Smunt called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

2. Roll call

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

3. Approval of the agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

4. Presentation of minutes of the November 5, 2014 meeting

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

5. PUD Preliminary Plan Application for First Street Phase 3

Mr. Colby stated the Commission last reviewed a Concept Plan for the Phase 3 site in December 2013, and the proposal has now been submitted for formal approval. The site plan is similar but there have been some changes to the building program.

Bob Rasmussen, applicant, and Dan Marshall, architect, were present. Mr. Rasmussen summarized the building program: Building 1 is now proposed as first floor retail/upper level office, Building 2 remains first floor retail/upper level rental residential, and future Building 3 is planned as first floor retail/upper level condo residential. The elevations of Building 2 are similar to what was presented last fall.

Mr. Rasmussen referenced the Piano Factory and older warehouse/factory buildings as inspirations for the overall architectural design. He said Building 1 originally had the tower centered on the First St. elevation, but this was relocated to the Illinois/First St. corner of the building. He referenced the perspective drawings showing the corner of the building. He noted corners were often the locations used to accentuate historic buildings. Building 3, which is shown only as a block on the plans, will be five stories but the building is not yet designed.

Mr. Rasmussen referenced the perspective drawing showing the appearance of the parking deck from across the river and from the Main St. bridge, noting the structure is non-descript and the parking is generally hidden. He also noted that designated outdoor dining areas are planned adjacent to the parking deck.

Mr. Marshall passed around a set of photos and drawings used as the inspiration for the designs. The Commission reviewed a clay roof tile sample for the Building 1 tower.

Mr. Rasmussen said they will be before Plan Commission in mid-December and they are hoping for Council approval in February and construction starting in April. Construction of Building 2 will follow Building 1 by 6 to 12 months.

Chairman Smunt asked for comments from the Commission. Mr. Pretz asked about the window color on Building 1. Mr. Marshall said they will pick up the green color of the clay tile. Mr. Marshall said all 3 brick colors will be coordinated to work together.

Chairman Smunt asked about the parking, and whether an additional level could be added to the parking deck. Mr. Rasmussen said there is no internal ramping, so parking would be lost and the cost will go up. He clarified that basement level parking is provided under each building.

Mr. Marshall noted that there will be much better river views from the buildings, vs. the previous plan. He noted on the bridge view you can see through and around the buildings, which breaks down the mass. Chairman Smunt said the design pulls mass away from the river.

Mr. Pretz asked about water issues in the basement levels. Mr. Rasmussen said he has dealt with the same issue successfully at the Milestone Row building.

Chairman Smunt noted the picture window with double hungs on the side is associated with the 1950s or 60s, but in fact this is a design from earlier warehouse style buildings. Mr. Marshall said the double-hung windows will be operable, at the request of the office tenant. Mr. Rasmussen said he always uses operable windows in his properties and they sell and rent better than units with fixed windows.

Mr. Rasmussen pointed out the fourth floor pergola at the northeast corner of Building 1.

Mr. Gibson said his first thought was that a canyon effect would be created on the street, but the design actually looks like how the street could have looked in the past. He asked about the streetscape and parking. Mr. Marshall brought out the original building streetscape to show that a similar design with on-street diagonal parking will be provided along the buildings. Mr. Rasmussen noted the proposed building is about 20 ft. shorter than the original plan.

Chairman Smunt said this design has more of a horizontal feel to it. Mr. Pretz said the design is less overwhelming to a pedestrian. Mr. Marshall noted that a pedestrian wouldn't see the full elevation of the building from the street, including the existing Building 4 parking deck, which won't be as visible after Phase 3 is completed.

Mr. Rasmussen said overall the plan works and fits more for St. Charles, vs. urban Chicago, like the previous design. Mr. Marshall said First St. still needs a critical mass of people to support the retail.

Mr. Gibson said the massing is appropriate for what existed historically on First Street.

Mr. Colby clarified the proposal is a PUD Preliminary Plan and the Commission needs to provide a recommendation to Plan Commission on the impact of the project on the Historic District.

Chairman Smunt listed a number of favorable comments for the plan:

- Less obtrusive parking deck
- Tunnel effect on First St. is lessened
- Impact of too tall of a parking deck is eliminated
- Opens visual opportunities for tenants to view the river
- Not a monolithic building

Mr. Rasmussen noted having the Historic Commission endorse the use of a more horizontal design/dimension is important, vs. the vertical design.

Mr. Gibson noted details of Hotel Baker are reflected in the plan. He said it looks like the reuse of industrial buildings in St. Charles.

Mr. Pretz asked about the issue of looking down at the parking garage. Mr. Rasmussen said parking lots next to a building are no different than what is proposed in this plan, and you will be able to see the river in the distance.

Chairman Smunt suggested a motion state that the project will have a positive impact on the historical nature of downtown.

A motion was made by Mr. Norris and seconded by Mr. Pretz with a unanimous voice vote to recommend to the Plan Commission approval of the PUD Preliminary Plan for First Street Phase 3, with a comment that the proposal will have a positive impact on the historical nature of Downtown St. Charles.

6. Preliminary Review: Foxwood Square PUD

Mr. Rasmussen and Mr. Marshall were present for this item as well.

Mr. Rasmussen said he has the property under contract. He walked through his concept:

- Keep the mansion, but remove the curved porch on the south and the porte cochere on the north side.
- Turn the mansion into 4 rental residential units
- Parking in front of the mansion for the rental units
- Replacing the mansion's window sashes but keeping all of the window framing. The sashes will be Marvin red aluminum clad windows
- Interior will be gutted, but the exterior will be restored and not change appearance
- No addition to the rear of the mansion
- Leave the 5th Ave. townhome lot open for greenspace
- Construct 2, 3-unit townhome buildings fronting on Ohio Ave.
- Construct 1, 3-unit townhome building on Indiana Ave.
- Open up views for the old house
- Driveways along the back of the townhome buildings only (no connection behind the mansion)

The Commission discussed the architecture of the townhomes. Mr. Rasmussen said trying to complement or look like the mansion will be challenging, so he would like to visually separate the mansion from the townhomes to diminish the appearance of the townhomes.

Mr. Marshall said his opinion is there is nothing good about matching a historical building; it is better to let the new buildings be different and organic. Chairman Smunt said the buildings can be modern, but have a vintage design that varies, like the older neighborhoods of St. Charles.

Mr. Rasmussen asked whether the Commission would want the three townhome units to be distinguished from each other, or should each building be consistent. Chairman Smunt said each building should be unified, but the next building could be the same style, but they would have differences in color or detail.

The Commission supported using a unified design for each building, and each could have the same massing, but with variation in the architectural details, which fits what exists in the neighborhood.

7. Mobile Tour App Project

No update.

8. Additional Business

Landmark Nomination for 521 W. Main St. (Haines House)

Mr. Pretz asked the Commission to review the application, including the building materials. The Commission discussion:

- The porch roof appears to be metal and the main roof is asphalt shingle.
- A plat of survey is needed for the legal description of the property, which the owner should have.
- The style of the building is Gothic Revival in the survey, but there are few elements visible, so the Commission recommended National Style on the application.
- From the aerial photo, the original footprint appears to be an L shape, with an additional to the rear.

Mail Order Homes

Mr. Gibson asked about the Mail Order Homes survey. Mr. Colby said there is a binder compiled with addresses, catalogue model pages, photos of the houses, and survey responses for each address. The Commission discussed digitizing the information and making it available on the website or at the library. Mr. Colby said there were about 15 survey replies but they didn't supply much information. Mr. Bobowiec suggested an inexpensive medallion be provided to identify the catalogue houses.

Camp Kane/Jones Law Office

Mr. Colby stated that on Monday, City Council approved filing the landmark nomination for Camp Kane and the Jones Law Office based on the boundaries provided by the Commission. He noted a couple of the alderman expressed some concern about the size of the area being designated.

9. Announcements: Historic Preservation Commission meeting Wednesday, December 3, 2014 at 7:00 pm in the Committee Room.

10. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:20.