

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2014
COUNCIL COMMITTEE ROOM**

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

Members Absent: Withey

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 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 19, 2014 meeting

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

5. Preliminary Review: 111 E. Main St.

Mr. Colby explained the applicant is applying for a Façade Improvement Grant for next year's budget year. The Commission cannot take action on it at this point so the project is being presented for preliminary review.

Applicants Doug and Cheryl Denz, building owners, were present. They provided photos of the building showing areas of façade deterioration. Ms. Denz said she is the owner of Riverview Counseling Services which occupies the building. The building's exterior was renovated in 2008. The upper story is in good condition, but the bottom half where plywood is used is in disrepair. Mr. and Ms. Denz explained the proposal:

- Extension of the dryvit material from the upper floor down to replace the plywood above the windows
- Use of brick veneer to cover the area under the windows.
- Addition of five gooseneck lights above the sign.
- Restoration of the two existing steel columns.
- Addition of a cornice dividing the first and second floors.
- Replacement of the aluminum wrapped window sill with limestone.

Mr. Denz presented a sample of the brick veneer they plan to use under the windows. He tried to match the building's existing brick. He stated that using brick for the entire first floor façade was too expensive.

Ms. Malay stated support for the brick under the windows. She expressed concern regarding the use of additional dryvit on the building and the negative effects that penetrating the dryvit for lighting and signage may have on its integrity.

Mr. Denz said there are no drainage issues with the existing dryvit. From a cost perspective, it was either dryvit or exterior grade plywood, which does not hold up well.

Mr. Norris said since there is so much dryvit already on the building, he would support this project to keep the materials consistent. He suggested lining up the panels above the windows with the window panes to keep the look symmetrical.

Chairman Smunt agreed that the change from plywood to dryvit is acceptable because it is compatible with the rest of the building. He said the concern about penetrating the dryvit is legitimate. Keeping it well sealed and maintained will be key. He stated support for the cornice and the new sign, as well as the brick.

Commissioners expressed support for restoring the steel columns.

Chairman Smunt asked about the rotted vertical board on the right side of the windows, to the left of the entry alcove. Mr. Denz said that will be removed and wrapped in dryvit. Chairman Smunt said a quality casing material like wood or synthetic fiberboard instead of dryvit is more appropriate and would be more durable. He suggested using the same material for the vertical trim on the other side of the front windows, as well as on the area in the alcove between the door casing and the corner.

Chairman Smunt said overall, he would support a recommendation to City Council to fund a Façade Grant for the project. Commissioners agreed that it will be a positive improvement.

Mr. Denz provided information on the history of the building. It was built in 1902 as a grocery store, owned by John Fritz, and was used as a grocery store until 1966.

Mr. Pretz suggested the applicant look into federal historic tax credits for commercial building renovation.

6. Preliminary Review: 312 W. Main St.

Bob Bleck, architect, was present as representative for Shakou Restaurant, which will be opening a location in St. Charles. He went over the proposed renovations to the building exterior. He said the current decoration applied to the building does not work with the mid-century modern structure. The following renovations are planned:

- A complete ribbon of windows on the second floor.
- Canopy wrap made of thermally-modified wood, a process that was developed in Finland which involves baking the wood until it is rot proof. Red Oak will likely be used due to its rich color.
- Preservation of the planter near the entry.
- Sign installation on the canopy with an additional vertical projecting sign.

Chairman Smunt explained that the historic district's period of significance is 1850-1930. Post-1930 buildings tend to be non-contributing to the historic district. The casings previously added to the building brought in elements reflecting the period of significance.

Ms. Malay said the proposal is fitting for the building and honors its architecture. Commissioners agreed and expressed support for the project.

Chairman Smunt said that incorporating Craftsman style elements would help relate the design to the historic district's period of significance.

Mr. Bleck said the wood canopy wrap bridges the gap between Craftsman and mid-century modern design. The wrap will be treated more like a piece of furniture rather than wall cladding. The most important things for the streetscape are the window transparency and entrance location, which will remain.

Mr. Pretz said what was done to the existing building was incorrect. The building is freestanding and the project will be an improvement to the building's mid-century modern style.

Mr. Bleck said they plan to remove the two-story deck in the rear and add a fenced patio on the ground level. A new stairway closer to the building will be installed.

Commissioners expressed overall support for the project and stated it will be a positive addition to downtown.

7. Additional Business

a. Mobile Tour App Project

Mr. Gibson said he is continuing to work on the example app. He will start putting his research on different options together.

Ms. Malay said she met with Alderman Dan Stellato. He expressed support for the project and for including other groups like the Park District in the future.

Commissioners discussed the fact that heritage tourism needs to be promoted in St. Charles, like has been done in Galena.

b. Landmarks Research

Chairman Smunt said the next meeting is the deadline.

Mr. Pretz provided a handout of materials he prepared for the Haines house. He said his goal is to speak with the property owner in January after he revises the application.

c. Jones Law Office

Mr. Colby said the City is in the process of getting quotes for the legal description.

Commissioners discussed the merits of filing separate landmark applications for the Law Office and Camp Kane vs. a single application that includes both sites. They concluded that in order to call attention to the unique historic value of each element, two separate landmark applications should be filed. However, each will use the same legal description. Otherwise, the Law Office would not be able to be moved elsewhere on the site in the future.

8. Announcements: Historic Preservation Commission meeting Wednesday, December 17, 2014 at 7:00 pm in the Committee Room.

9. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.