

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2015
COUNCIL COMMITTEE ROOM**

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

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Russell Colby, Planning Division Manager

1. Call to order

Chairman Smunt called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll call

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

3. Approval of the agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

4. Presentation of minutes of the January 21, 2015 meeting

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

5. COA: 116 W. Main St. (windows)

Renee Hanlon and Chuck Hanlon of WBK Associates were present.

Ms. Hanlon said the second level office space is being remodeled. She noted the eastern portion of the building was previously remodeled about 14 years ago and those windows were replaced at that time. The remainder of the second floor windows will be replaced with windows to match the newer windows.

Chairman Smunt noted some of the windows have a blocked upper panel. Mr. Hanlon said these windows were installed when a drop ceiling was installed in the 1970s, and with the renovation, the drop ceiling will be removed and the entire window opening will be opened up.

Historic Preservation Commission

Minutes – February 4, 2015

Page 2

Chairman Smunt asked about the replacement windows. Mr. Hanlon said they are one-over-one double hung vinyl windows that will match the existing windows in color.

Ms. Malay questioned if the Commission reviewed and approved the previously installed replacement windows. Mr. Colby said he didn't recall this and did see any recent permit information. Chairman Smunt recalled reviewing the awnings on the first floor.

Mr. Hanlon clarified the existing windows proposed for replacement are aluminum and are not operable. Chairman Smunt asked if consideration was given to a commercial grade aluminum window. Mr. Hanlon said the goal was to match what was existing, given that there are quite a few windows on the rear portion of the building that were previously replaced.

Chairman Smunt asked if the windows are a commercial grade vinyl. Mr. Hanlon said he hasn't observed any degradation of the existing vinyl windows in 14 years.

Mr. Bobowiec asked if the vinyl windows have storm panels. Mr. Hanlon said they are screen panels only and the replacement windows will have the same type of screen panel. Ms. Malay said it would be nice if the screen panel frames matched the window color and suggested painting the existing screens to match.

Mr. Hanlon noted the older windows also have a reflective material on the glass that is unattractive.

Ms. Malay asked what percentage of the second floor windows have already been replaced with vinyl double hung windows. Mr. Hanlon said about half of the second floor windows have been replaced. Ms. Malay said she has generally not supported use of vinyl windows, but if they are already there, then trying to match makes sense. Chairman Smunt noted nothing there is original, but the proposal would match existing materials and improve architecture.

Mr. Pretz stated he had a concern about ensuring the replacement windows will match the existing and not look like two generations of replacement windows.

Ms. Malay asked that the minutes reflect that the Commission is not condoning vinyl windows in most cases, and that this is being supported because the vinyl windows are already there. She said she doesn't want this to set a precedent.

Mr. Pretz suggested including a condition regarding matching the existing windows for a cohesive appearance. Mr. Hanlon thought the new manufacturer may be able to produce screens for the existing windows.

Historic Preservation Commission

Minutes – February 4, 2015

Page 3

A motion was made by Ms. Malay and seconded by Mr. Bobowiec with a unanimous voice vote to approve the COA, contingent upon making all reasonable attempts to match the existing screens to the new screens.

6. COA: 312 W. Main St. (exterior renovation)

Chuck Bleck, architect, and Aleks Dupor, business owner of Shakou, were present.

Mr. Bleck described the proposed changes vs. the approved plan: A darker composite siding is being used between the first floor storefront windows; a single wall sign is being proposed with no projecting sign; on the second floor a limestone surround and the three existing window openings will be utilized. He said the revised renderings show the proposed change to the projection (reduced from 3 ft. to 8 inches) that was discussed at the previous meeting. He said the revised design has the same overall appearance and the sign will now be more visible.

Mr. Bleck referenced a discussion regarding the steel that was removed when the original canopy was demolished. He displayed pictures showing the wood soffit joists and said they were cut off because they were rotted on the outside. He said the steel beams had a 2 inch deflection and he would not have recommended reutilizing the beams. He said they are lucky that the steel hasn't caused rotation which would buckle out the wall. He shared the sample of the thermally modified wood proposed for the projection cladding.

Mr. Gibson asked if the wood is wrapping underneath at the front door. Mr. Bleck said yes, that is the intent.

Chairman Smunt said at the previous meeing, they were only reviewing the original drawing, and they didn't have the benefit of a rendering. He also noted they didn't have information on why the structural elements were removed. Mr. Bleck said there will still be a sharp shadow line with the 8 inch projection.

Mr. Gibson asked if the front entrance will be main entrance. Mr. Bleck said yes, the front door is the main entrance for people parking in the back also.

Mr. Norris asked if the masonry will be removed for the black granite to be installed. Mr. Bleck said the granite will be attached to the brick. Mr. Norris confirmed it could be removed later.

Ms. Malay said she understands scaling the projection back, but feels 8 inch is a drastic change. Mr. Bleck said the demolition process has revealed a lot of unforeseen costs in the building which has caused the need to scale things back for the sake of life safety issues. He said he thinks

Historic Preservation Commission

Minutes – February 4, 2015

Page 4

the proposed look is still in keeping with what was originally proposed. He said this design works better for light inside and signage visibility.

Ms. Malay said this is a chance to make this façade looks great, but feels some of it will be lost without at least extending the projection out half way to 18 inches.

Mr. Pretz said he understands the dilemma with costs, but since the first discussion, it was assumed the structure of the building would be preserved and enhanced, and the projection would be the visually dominant element. He said he understands the 3 or 4 ft. doesn't work, but he feels the 8 inches is too short.

Mr. Norris said 3 ft. has more of shadow line and would have more of an impact, but 8 inches is similar to putting a sign on a building. He asked about the method of construction to attach the projection. Mr. Bleck said they would use steel stud material, but the larger projection would be much more involved with roofing as opposed to just using flashing.

Mr. Gibson said part of the problem is that the Commission saw the rendering the other way and they have the image in their heads. He said just looking at the building as it is today, with the proposed improvement, without knowing of the proposal for a 3 ft. projection, he said it is a similar façade, and the appearance may end up a little bit cleaner. Mr. Bleck said the 3 ft. projection might look inconsistent with the neighboring buildings.

Mr. Withey said he is OK with the revised plans. Mr. Bobowiec said he agrees with Mr. Gibson and noted as a non-contributing building, the Commission has the most leniency, and he sees it as a vast improvement vs. what the building looked like previously.

Mr. Pretz said the photos provided were helpful to understand the structural issues, but the Commission wasn't able to see the condition before demolition. Ms. Malay said the Commission would have liked to have been told the structure would be removed.

Mr. Dupor said they were trying to work quickly with the goal of opening by Restaurant Week, and things moved faster than they should have been going. He said this is why the demolition proceeded fast; there was no attempt to hide anything. He said overall the façade will look substantially the same.

Chairman Smunt said if the owner came before the Commission with this design from the start he would have voted to approve it. He said it is an enhancement to a Mid Century modern building. He said either way would have been an appropriate enhancement that is complementary to the architecture of the building. He asked for a motion.

Historic Preservation Commission

Minutes – February 4, 2015

Page 5

A motion was made by Ms. Malay and seconded by Mr. Gibson with a 5 to 1 voice vote to approve the modifications to the COA as proposed. Mr. Pretz voted no.

7. Preliminary Review: 9 S. 3rd St. / 301-305 W. Main St.

Oleg Shulzhenko, owner of 301-305 W. Main St., was present.

Mr. Shulzhenko said he is under contract to purchase the adjacent building at 9 S. 3rd St., which was gutted following a water leak. He would like to demolish the building and construct an addition to the rear of the 301-305 W. Main St. building. He described possible changes to the rear elevation and showed plans for an outside patio area.

Ms. Malay asked if there is any information on the structural condition of the house. Mr. Colby said there is no information available. Ms. Malay said the number one question is whether the house is salvageable, as it is a contributing structure. Chairman Smunt said now it would more likely be considered significant based on its condition.

Chairman Smunt said in Geneva they have allowed structures to be moved in similar situations. He asked if there was a site this building could be relocated to. Mr. Shulzhenko said Eric Larson is considering moving the house to his property on West Main Street. He said given the building's condition, he isn't asking for any money for the building, just for it to be moved. Mr. Pretz noted it would be a good time to move the building while it has been gutted.

Mr. Shulzhenko said he has no interest or use for the house, but his proposal would make use of the property to benefit the City.

Mr. Pretz said moving the house would be a good option in this situation. He said unless there is a structural issue, he would not support demolition. Ms. Malay agreed.

Mr. Shulzhenko asked which parts of the structure are significant. Ms. Malay said the whole exterior. Mr. Shulzhenko said another option is to retain and repurpose parts of the house as a façade in the new building addition. Chairman Smunt said there are other examples of this type of project that did not turn out well.

Mr. Gibson said the City has only a defined stock of this style house from this era, which is why the Commission is unlikely to allow demolition.

Historic Preservation Commission

Minutes – February 4, 2015

Page 6

Chairman Smunt said the Commission would support finding a location to move the house. Mr. Shulzhenko asked if there is a known location where the house can be placed. Mr. Bobowiec named some potential locations, including a vacant lot on S. 3rd St.

The Commission discussed possible vacant lots around downtown that could be locations for the house. The Commission also discussed ways to promote the availability of the house.

8. Additional Business

a. Mobile Tour App Project

No updates.

b. Landmarks Research

No updates.

9. Announcements: Historic Preservation Commission meeting Wednesday, February 18, 2015 at 7:00 pm in the Committee Room.

10. Adjournment

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