

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2015
COUNCIL COMMITTEE ROOM**

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

Members Absent: Gibson, Withey

Also Present: Russell Colby, Planning Division Manager
Ellen Johnson, Planner
Chris Sanchez, Recording Secretary

1. Call to order

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

2. Roll call

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

3. Approval of the agenda

Ms. Malay added a general discussion regarding the Jones Law Office window workshop and door repair. Item was added under Additional Business (Item C).

4. Presentation of minutes of the July 1, 2015 meeting

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

PUBLIC HEARING

5. Eligibility of Property for Landmark Designation: 502 S. 4th Ave., Long House

Chairman Smunt opened the Public Hearing and asked if anyone had any comments or questions.

Joseph Stuart, the property owner, was present. He felt the home represents a significant piece of architecture and should receive landmark designation.

Chairman Smunt asked how the owner arrived at the date of the home. Mr. Stuart said he went to the Kane County Recorder of Deeds office, and discovered that Ira Minard sold the house to

Dennis Long in 1852 for \$450. The land was established in 1849. Mr. Pretz stated the house was most likely built between 1849 and 1852, and suggested the construction date be labeled “circa”. Chairman Smunt indicated this would be the closest they could get to establishing a date.

There were no other comments or questions.

A motion was made by Ms. Malay and seconded by Mr. Bobowiec with a unanimous voice vote to close the public hearing.

MEETING

6. Eligibility of Property for Landmark Designation: 502 S. 4th Ave., Long House
Joseph Stuart, homeowner and applicant, was present.

Chairman Smunt suggested the date of the home be represented as circa 1852.

A motion was made by Ms. Malay and seconded by Mr. Bobowiec with a unanimous voice vote to approve landmark designation for 502 S. 4th Avenue with a construction date of circa 1852.

7. COA: 305 W. Main St. (doors)

Oleg Shulzhenko, building owner, and David Reyes, tenant/restaurant owner, were present.

Mr. Colby displayed photos of the property.

Mr. Reyes said once the brick work began, they found they needed to make numerous repairs. He indicated the wood around the middle door was extremely rotted. He said the door had no moisture barrier which led to the rotted wood. He stated they replaced the glass blocks with no issues and decided it was best to continue with the brick into the door area. Mr. Reyes said the door had not been used in a long time, and since there were no immediate plans to use it, they went ahead and bricked it up. He stated they did not get approval for this work.

Mr. Shulzhenko said after seeing the condition of the door, he could not leave it as it was. Since he already had the contractors in place, he decided to have them work on the door area to give the front of the building a more balanced appearance. He said he checked with several door manufacturers, but they no longer make doors the same size as his.

Mr. Reyes mentioned the Fire Chief had stopped by and appreciated that they now had a panic bar.

Mr. Pretz stated he was not happy with them making changes without the Commission's approval. He felt it goes against their purpose of helping the applicant with the design to find a pleasing outcome. He said he went over to the property to see what had been done and asked three people with no knowledge of the previous door what they thought. They felt the workmanship and style were both good. Mr. Pretz felt it was a violation to not follow the proper approval procedure, and he was not pleased with how the owner handled this. However, he said the work was done well.

Mr. Shulzhenko questioned the Commission as to why they waited until the next meeting to discuss this situation. He asked why he wasn't contacted right away for their recommendation as to what to do. Chairman Smunt said the owner could have called the building inspector and explained he had a structural issue. He said they could have possibly had an onsite meeting.

Mr. Norris asked the owner how often he has been in front of the Commission, pointing out that it has been enough to know the procedures. He noted the panic bar could be seen in the old picture of the door. Mr. Norris said there were two violations to consider; one for 305 W. Main Street, and the other for 303 W. Main Street where the existing door was replaced.

Mr. Bobowiec stated he did not like the bricked over look and said the owner should have called them.

Ms. Malay felt the new look changed the architectural style of the building.

Chairman Smunt said he was concerned with future options if the current tenant moves out. He said if two businesses go into the current location, they now no longer have two doors. However, he felt it was reversible. He stated he would not have opposed what the owner did, but he did not approve of the way it was handled. Chairman Smunt outlined a picture with suggestions of what the owner could do to improve the appearance of the façade, including adding framing and a menu board to the newly bricked portion.

Mr. Shulzhenko said the project was not finished yet, and he was open to suggestions. He said the terra cotta on the bottom will be extended over the newly bricked portion. He showed pictures of the rotted door and said it was just done with plywood. He said the entire project, except the wall at the door opening was double bricked, so the brick in the door opening is easily reversible.

Chairman Smunt asked the owner to provide a scaled elevation that includes details from tonight's discussion.

Ms. Malay felt the area filled in with brick now makes the building look like a diner from the 1950's versus the 1920's. Mr. Shulzhenko disagreed.

Mr. Norris asked for the Commission's guidelines as to how they should make decisions. He felt they should have also discussed 303 W. Main Street. He said the owner indicated the only issue with the door at 303 W. Main was that it had no panic hardware, but it could be seen in a picture taken before the current work was done.

Chairman Smunt said he saw the work that was done on the door and he was not horrified by it.

Mr. Pretz said they need to have two distinct discussions on both addresses instead of one represented as "the building". He said the work that was done looks worse in the picture. He felt it did not look that bad in person.

Chairman Smunt stated he would like to find historical pictures of the door at 303 W. Main Street to see if it was original to the building. He said the brick is the eyesore, not the changing of the door.

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

8. COA: 215 N. 3rd Ave. (stair/deck removal)

Mr. Pretz recused himself and represented the COA proposal as the property owner.

Mr. Pretz reviewed pictures of the property. He said he is converting the two-unit home back to a single family home. He said the porch area will be used to expand the kitchen. The door and stairs on the north elevation will be removed and windows will be added to the area where the door was.

The stairway and deck on the west elevation, which provides access to the second unit, will be removed. The door will be replaced with aluminum siding.

Chairman Smunt asked if Mr. Pretz will be keeping the lower porch located on the west side. His concern was with the style of the railing not matching the style of the home. Mr. Pretz said it was staying for now. He plans on replacing it at some point further down the road.

Chairman Smunt also asked about the plans for the windows on the north elevation. Mr. Pretz said there may be a structural issue preventing him from adding two windows. He needs to open the wall to see what the issue is before he can determine which window option will work best in that space.

A motion was made by Ms. Malay and seconded by Mr. Norris with a unanimous voice vote to approve a demolition permit to include the removal of the side porch, rear deck and door. Mr. Pretz abstained.

Mr. Colby asked if the motion included anything regarding the replacement windows.

An amended motion was made by Ms. Malay and seconded by Mr. Norris with a unanimous voice vote to allow the removal of the west stairway to the second floor and second floor door and replace with siding to match existing, and removal of the north door and stairs and replace with one or two windows to match the adjacent windows. Mr. Pretz abstained.

9. COA: 606 Cedar St. (shed & exterior alterations)

Tim Hancz, homeowner, was present.

Mr. Hancz reviewed the Plat of Survey he provided. He would like to install a 10 ft. x 16 ft. shed along the west side of the property. It will be wood sided. The shingles will match the house shingles. Mr. Hancz would also like to install a new fence around the perimeter of the house that goes along 6th Street and down around the property.

Mr. Norris clarified what the COA covers, as the owner referred to other improvements. Mr. Pretz noted the owner is seeking guidance on these other items and will be back for another COA for those at a later date.

Mr. Hancz continued describing the new fence and said he still needs to work on the details. Mr. Pretz felt the owner was going in the right direction with these plans.

Mr. Hancz said he would like to remove the two story deck on the back of the house. He feels it does not look right. Mr. Hancz also mentioned the rails are not up to code. He is planning on lowering the first floor to get better ceiling height inside the house. He is planning on installing temporary sliding doors after the deck is removed. His future plans are to build a one story addition in that area, and he will change the doors at that time. The addition will also include a walk-out basement in the area underneath it.

Mr. Bobowiec asked for clarification as to what type of material the sliding door will be made of. Mr. Hancz said he would like to use an Andersen wood slider. He said the outside consists of a sprayed, baked on paint. Chairman Smunt noted it is a factory finished wood window that can be stained. Mr. Hancz displayed a sample of the product he is hoping to use.

Mr. Hancz said he would like to replace the front door with a custom made mahogany door. Chairman Smunt asked if this new door would have a better “period appropriate” feel. Mr. Pretz questioned if this was the correct style door for this period. Chairman Smunt referred to the “American Field Guide” for further ideas on 1850’s designs. Commissioners expressed support for the door.

Chairman Smunt expressed concerns with the owner’s proposal to change the window dimensions on the original structure with a style of windows that is not even close to being of that period. Mr. Hancz said he would like to add cottage style windows with a high/low sash. He displayed a sample of the type of window he would like to use.

Mr. Pretz clarified if the request is to make the windows longer, along with changing them from four pane windows to ones with a smaller top and longer bottom. The owner confirmed this is correct. Mr. Pretz indicated he would be uncomfortable with cutting into the front of the building to make the windows longer. He was concerned with how it would look from the street.

Chairman Smunt provided historical information on window styles and said the use of different size sashes was not supported by any historical records. He said he was not opposed to adding a window, but he would like to stay true to the period by keeping the windows the size as they are. He mentioned they do not want to alter historic original materials, and by cutting bigger openings, it would be modifying the historical style. Chairman Smunt said they could be more flexible with changes to the addition.

Mr. Norris indicated the material suggested for use on the windows was not appropriate for that style house.

The owner said he was fine with not lowering the windows.

Chairman Smunt asked why the wood window/door trim needs to be removed. He was concerned with possible structural damage to the walls. He said if it is not rotted, then there would be no reason to replace it. However, if it is, then the owner should replace it with oak, not cedar. Mr. Hancz said he would like a modern insulation system.

Commissioner's discussed staying as true to the original house as possible. They mentioned the home may be the oldest home in town. Chairman Smunt said it is worthy to take extra care to preserve it. He indicated the home has landmark status because they wanted to ensure it was not altered. Ms. Malay said the builder of the house platted the west side of town so he has a great deal of significance to the town.

Mr. Bobowiec asked if any of the windows in the addition were close enough in size so that they could be moved to the front of the house. Mr. Hancz said he wanted to keep moving along with his project so he is open to keeping the original three windows on the first floor. He would try to match the two upper windows as close as possible using an Andersen product. The Commissioners suggested alternate ways to use some of the existing windows in other areas of the building.

Mr. Hancz asked if the trim around the windows needed to be oak. Chairman Smunt said if the trim is rotted beyond salvation, it should be replaced with like-in-kind material.

Mr. Hancz asked for guidance on windows for the back of the house. Chairman Smunt indicated it is fine if the front and addition window dimensions do not match, but style-wise they should be the same. He said the windows should be kept tall and narrow, rather than wide.

Ms. Malay mentioned a small section of the basement may have been part of the Underground Railroad. Chairman Smunt asked the applicant to let them know if he finds any artifacts dated from the 1850's so they can be documented.

A motion was made by Ms. Malay and seconded by Mr. Bobowiec with a unanimous voice vote to approve construction of a shed, demolition of the deck, and replacement of the front door with a mahogany door and matching jambs.

10. Additional Business

a. Mobile Tour App Project

No updates.

b. Landmarks Research

No updates.

c. Jones Law Office Window Workshop & Door Repair

Ms. Malay stated the City is entering into an agreement with the Camp Kane Heritage Foundation. They are forming a Jones Law Office "support group" which also includes Preservation Partners and the DAR. They are putting together a work plan for the Jones Law

Office. The work will include refinishing the door. Dan Otto is proposing the work. It will include sanding, color matching, and applying two coats of outdoor oil finish. Mr. Pretz asked if there was damage to the door. Ms. Malay said it is more worn than damaged.

Ms. Malay noted there will be some floor repair work done in the interior of the office. The old flooring will be replaced and stained. They will also be putting in a non-operational stove.

Ms. Malay said she is looking for approval on the door. She stated the Commission will be kept up-to-date on all projects pertaining to the Jones Law Office, and will be granting approval on those projects even if they do not require a COA.

Ms. Malay referred back to a previous discussion regarding the Commission holding a window workshop to repair the three windows on the structure. She asked if the Commission was still willing to take on this work, and if so, when they might be able to do it. She said the windows are in need of repair and will weather over the winter, so the sooner the work can be done, the better.

Chairman Smunt asked about the condition of the windows. Ms. Malay said they are all in fairly bad shape. She said they need sash repairs.

Mr. Pretz advised the group that due to other commitments, he would not be able to assist with the workshop. The Commission discussed options for the workshop and whether it would be feasible. Ms. Malay stated Dan Otto placed a bid for the work, but they currently do not have the funds to support that bid. Chairman Smunt said he would need to see the windows before making a commitment. He will provide an update at the next meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Norris and seconded by Mr. Bobowiec with a unanimous voice vote for advisory approval of the door repair and rehabilitation as described. Ms. Malay abstained.

11. Announcements: Historic Preservation Commission meeting Wednesday, August 5, 2015 at 7:00 pm in the Council Committee Room.

12. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm.