

MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2015
COUNCIL COMMITTEE ROOM

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

Members Absent: Malay

Also Present: Russell Colby, Planning Division Manager
Ellen Johnson, Planner
Meagan Moreira, 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

No changes to the Agenda.

4. Presentation of minutes of the September 16, 2015 meeting.

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

MEETING

5. COA: 7 E. Main St. (sign)

Chairman Smunt said this is noncontributing lower store front façade with a contemporary sign and he thinks it fits well and he assumes that the way it's fastened would be determined by appropriate building codes; he has no concerns.

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

6. COA: 131 S. 1st St. (sign and awning)

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Mr. Colby said this is a recovering of an existing awning frame with fabric material and installation of a wall sign above the awning. Chairman Smunt said the Commission was supposed to receive some details and from the drawing the signs look to be in an appropriate location.

Mr. Pretz asked if the lighting is new. Mr. Colby confirmed. Mr. Pretz asked if the fixtures need to be complimentary to lighting on surrounding buildings. Chairman Smunt asked what type of lighting is currently in this location; he thinks the street lights are a warmer yellow color, so he feels they should stay away from a high Kelvin daylight white/blue light and they should stipulate staying in the 2700 – 3200 Kelvin lighting range to be consistent with the surrounding lighting. Mr. Norris said lighting in the surrounding area is either sodium which is a yellowish color or mercury vapor which is white and either way they need to match.

Mr. Norris asked what the sign would be made out of. Ms. Johnson said staff had no details.

Chairman Smunt said the applicant is expected to be here tonight and suggested tabling the item until they showed up.

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

Mr. Pretz suggested that even if the applicant didn't show up that Commission should bring it up and add conditions to the approval.

7. 307 W. Main St.

a. COA for Canopy/canopy sign

Mr. Pretz asked if this would replace the current sign. The applicant stated that it's an existing Citgo station with three Citgo logos. The new design of the canopy would be the white fascia with the yellow band and the red bar and 2 pectins which are halo lit and are not an obtrusive light. He said the red bar has an LED strip that washes up on the yellow which is just a halo light, low voltage LED, not neon. This would be on three sides of the canopy. The side facing the building is just yellow with a red decal.

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

b. Zoning Variation for freestanding sign

Mr. Colby said this is a zoning variance request for the setback of the proposed sign. The Commission should make a recommendation to the Zoning Board of Appeals regarding the impact of the requested setback on the Historic District. Mr. Norris said they will utilize the

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same concrete base with it being set back 3 ft. Right now there is digital square Citgo sign that's about 10 ft. off the ground.

The applicant said the sign will be to the new modern specifications for Shell stations. The applicant said the variance will be considered on Oct. 22. By modifying the existing sign, they are required to meet current sign regulations. They want to maintain the 3ft. setback instead of going to 10 ft. due to the location of the fueling station and the adjacent neighboring building, as the sign would be taken out of the line of site if they moved it back 10 ft. He said the left side of the sign would be 32" from the sidewalk.

Mr. Bobowiec asked if it would be a blind spot for cars. The applicant said it would be 10 ft. overall to the top of the sign. They first thought of just changing the cabinet of the sign but then they spoke with Bob Vann and he suggested taking this route because commuters would inch up towards the intersection since the surrounding buildings would make drivers pass the stop line regardless.

Chairman Smunt said the digital Citgo sign was approved a number of years ago by the Historic Commission and given the fact that all the historic buildings to the immediate east of the property have zero setback, and some building signs actually extend into the public right of way; he has no problem supporting the variance.

A motion was made by Mr. Bobowiec and seconded by Mr. Gibson with a unanimous voice vote to recommend approval of the variation to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

c. COA for freestanding sign

Mr. Smunt said he likes the lower sign versus the higher sign because it's less obtrusive and he thinks it works well.

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

Mr. Pretz asked if they were doing anything with the building itself. The applicant said the building will retain its original character and will be cleaned up with paint, installing a small "Food Mart" decal on the new yellow panel, removing light fixtures, paint all the EFIS area white, address the cupola on top to make it stronger and paint it and then place the image Shell has asked for on the building with the "Food Mart" sign, which is attached to the EFIS system already in place. This sign will have no lighting. He said there would be decals on the door, and they would also relocate the icebox from the front to the back of the building. He said it would be uniformed to Shell's image from the street sign to the building. It is an owner/operator store with Parent Petroleum as the supplier.

A motion was made by Mr. Withey and seconded by Mr. Gibson with a unanimous voice vote to approve the "Food Mart" signage on the building per the submitted elevations, along with repair of the cupola.

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8. COA: 318 S. 5th St. (building addition)

Mr. Colby said the addition to the house was reviewed by the Commission a few years ago and there were comments in support, but there were some questions regarding material for the windows. He said the addition was not completed but the windows and siding were replaced a couple years after and now a completion of the addition and also a second floor rotunda that will attach to the garage are being proposed.

Greg Richard, Batir Architecture, said the homeowner is looking to have a bridge that connects the second floor to the second floor of the existing garage, which presents design challenges. The rotunda is a result of that.

Mr. Richard said the one-story rotunda was presented in 2009 and there were some reservations as to whether the windows should be clad or wood. In the subsequent meeting the replacement windows were approved and in the last month the client has come back to add a second story bridge. He said the base, handle rails, guard rails and columns will be a bit more refined than in the drawings and they would be removing the roof on the top of the gazebo to make it two stories and a walkway to get to the garage.

Mr. Colby noted that the COA was approved in 2009 for the windows, siding and the garage expansion for the second floor. Chairman Smunt said this building was cladded over aluminum prior to the Historic District being formed, and the owner came back to resurface it with hardy board and a wood window with aluminum cladding on the outside, which was an upgrade and, because you cannot tell from the street, it was approved. He said nothing was being preserved so the Commission was pretty liberal as far as interpretation but he thinks it turned out nice overall.

Chairman Smunt said his first impression is that the second floor gazebo overpowers the west façade. The surrounding neighborhood is made up of much more humble residential structures in size and scale and he thinks this is pushing it way beyond proportion relative to its neighborhood. He said it would look great if it were a first story Queen Anne bed and breakfast, but he doesn't see this as good residential architecture in context of the neighborhood; that's his personal opinion but it's also based upon Secretary of the Interior standards.

Mr. Pretz said in looking at the drawing, when he tries to force his eye to any other area they go back to the little man in the rotunda, which takes away from the entire right side of the building; it's almost like it's a rotunda and then the house were attached and it seems off as to giving any balance to allow him to appreciate the house. He said he does not see the additions being proposed as secondary elements to be more functional; but more as the primary elements of the house.

Chairman Smunt said there is a rule of splitting up a picture in thirds when looking at photography which is a very comfortable thing and works in any kind of image. In looking at this structure, it violates the rule of thirds. He said he almost feels like there should be a 6 story structure near to make this 1/3 blend in with the other 2/6 to 6/6 and it just doesn't match with the visualization. Mr. Pretz said the prior proposal looks appropriate.

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Mr. Gibson said seeing a north elevation would tell him how they would get into that rotunda from the second story and if that was more of a porch with a roof over it they could drag it out into the other space to make the proportions a bit better. He asked what the protection is for the people on the second floor of the rotunda. Mr. Richard said there is a single railing about 18" above the floor level and there is a horizontal bar with shorter balusters. The problem with these graphics is that they are so flat. His biggest question is the walkway, which is a requirement, but he finds the rotunda itself very pleasing and airy and the nice thing about additions to a vernacular Victorian is that they tell the story of the age of the building. Chairman Smunt said it's hard not to see it as flat and he asked if Mr. Richard could provide a three-dimensional perspective drawing of how it would look. Mr. Richard said they are very expensive but he could draw up something.

Mr. Richard said with the first porch that was proposed before he was with the firm, he finds there to be a scaling issue and a little too light on the left hand side so it's a balancing issue. In regards to the thirds, he has three elements there that kind of set up a rhythm. He asked that the Commission somehow think of this building as more transparent than what they are seeing on a flat sheet of paper. He said he did push things around quite a bit with a bigger gumdrop roof and a turret roof and this is the amalgamation. Chairman Smunt said the view of the structure would be obscured by all the trees that have been planted so it would not be seen from the street.

Mr. Norris asked why he chose the bell type roof versus keeping it what it was. Mr. Richard said historic precedent. Mr. Norris said it's not really reflective anywhere else so now there is the competition and it's disturbing because it looks so big and heavy; he said taking off the shingle would have made a difference but now all he sees is this big element hanging above on these delicate twigs below. He said the other element works a bit better and he gets the 2 story coming off the house and it could be kind of fun but it's just not flowing to cap the end of the structure very nicely; he said it feel like apples and oranges. He said the railing coming across is also creating an element which is airy but there's still that huge roof with the round elements that do not match the rest of the structure. Mr. Richard said the hexagon shape is a direct result of the geometry needed to get to the center of the peak of the garage. Mr. Norris said the math is working out and he doesn't think anyone has a problem with the 1 story shape; it's the heavy top and with all the other pediments that doesn't reflect nicely.

Mr. Gibson asked if this is what the owner wants or is this just what Mr. Richard's suggestion is. Mr. Richard said his client came to the firm and said he wanted a bridge and this design seemed like the best solution; the owner is happy with the design.

Mr. Bobowiec agreed that the roof is very overpowering.

Mr. Norris suggested that since the one handrail is floating off to one side to have the handrail float to the other side to help tie it together. Mr. Richard said like a gallery railing. Chairman Smunt said he thinks a 3 dimensional would help a lot to get the feel.

Mr. Gibson suggested getting rid of the shingles in the middle to have more of an open feeling. Mr. Richard said the posts need to have support going side to side so there is structure in that middle section. Chairman Smunt said by doing that lower roof it does tie it in with the lower roofline very well and he doesn't think the shingles are what will be noticed; it's not going to

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jump out. Mr. Richard said he is not sure the roof would end up being shingles but he did talk to the owner about doing a sheet metal roof. He is not wild about brand new copper but if they did, it would be patinated or led colored. Chairman Smunt suggested a carriage house shingle. Mr. Richard said that would work on the concave section back there but the convex section at the top would be a challenge. Mr. Smunt said there is possibly some need for a change in the upper roof. Mr. Richard suggested a low pitch roof rather than the bell shape. Mr. Norris said that would help him out.

Mr. Pretz said he cannot visualize enough and he needs to see a graphic. Mr. Gibson would like to see a north elevation to see how it the element fits in. Mr. Smunt suggested a west elevation as well as a 3 dimensional and also information regarding what would be done with the roof tiling because it could affect the design of the roof. Mr. Bobowiec suggested adding lightning rods to the 2 gables to tie it in to make it all look more scaled. Mr. Smunt said it's structurally overpowering and maybe something could be done to tweak the shape or height to make it less dominating to the rest of the structure.

Mr. Richard said he would do some studies with a change in the roof shape and then lower it a bit and then revisit this on October 21.

Mr. Norris said he would also like to see a southwest elevation.

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

9. COA: 304 State Ave. (exterior renovations)

Malcolm Kanute, applicant, said computer generated elevations do not do justice as to what they are trying to do. He brought some supplemental pictures and what they want to do is take the original red brick portion and restore it to what it once was. Starting with the main part on the southwest corner of the house, they are proposing to:

- Replace the windows with Eagle windows manufactured by Anderson, which will be aluminum clad wood windows, white on the outside with white brick molding all the way around the house with simulated divided light, either a 1 1/8" or 1 ½" grill.
- Replace the front door and add a portico structure.
- Add black shutters.
- Replace doors on the first floor, two in front and three on the west elevation, with double hung windows that will go all the way down to the floor with tempered glass on the lower sash.
- Replace all the soffit and fascia with all the same details in the gables.

Mr. Kanute said on the north end they are proposing to:

- Replace the double hung window by splitting it to 2 windows to mimic the downstairs on the southern end of the house.
- Take the hip roof off to make it flat.

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- Leave the wall in relationship to the original house which actually sets back from the far western elevation; there will not be a functioning balcony there.
- The first floor to the soffit would be resided with white siding on the western elevation.
- Trim detail on the side porch would all be redone.
- Redo side porch.

Chairman Smunt said in regard to the roof that it is okay to distinguish the new addition. It has a good size and scale right now, and ornamentation does not need to be added just because it was used on the original structure.

Mr. Norris said they did bring in some detail off the back side but he is not as concerned about what we don't see from the street.

Mr. Kanute said the north elevation is all brick and they are planning to add a red brick chimney chase on the north elevation.

Mr. Norris said there is a new element of a railing that is 18" and although he knows it's not functional, it was not on there before. Chairman Smunt said it's a flatter roof. Mr. Norris said there will still be a pitch because when it's sloped to the back you have to give back the 5 ft. so it will keep the pitch. Mr. Kanute said it will have a pitch with some ice and water shield.

Mr. Kanute noted that the drawing was wrong and the second floor is brick on the north elevation and that the main ridge would be raised up to just below the main ridge of the original house. He said on the north elevation they would like to bump out the second floor to be able to get in two bedrooms and a bathroom, and to also get a covered area with a set of French doors off the family room below. He asked the Commission what to do on the north elevation on the second floor; should he tie that in with white siding to butt up to the existing brick? Chairman Smunt said there are two different types of siding and that matching the siding would work; it's a modern component that is not on the street side; no one will even know it's there. Mr. Norris suggested that if its flush they could probably pick it up but otherwise just set it back a little bit.

Mr. Kanute said that on the east elevation on the first floor there would be a set of swinging French doors with a stationary light on either side to allow light into the family room. He said the second floor windows are not right in the drawing; there's another bedroom there and the bathroom.

Mr. Norris said the stone on the garage should wrap around the side so it does not look like so much like a veneer. Mr. Pretz asked if it would be a burden to rap the brick around just the garage portion. Mr. Norris said that's a lot and suggested just taking half of the stone that was going to be on the upper portion of the garage and forming a belt around the garage.

Mr. Kanute said the new garage new will be 6 to 8 ft. smaller than what exists there right now. The Commission agreed that the volume was okay for the new garage. Mr. Kanute said the reason they are putting the gable the garage is to try and get a room above the garage because there is not a usable basement.

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Mr. Kanute said he was looking for suggestions to bring the volume down to get the eave line lower by the windows on the connecting structure. Mr. Pretz said the windows don't flow with everything else on the house because these are laying sideways. Mr. Norris said that needs to be resolved. Mr. Norris suggested making a knee wall around to the east elevation of the garage so the new wall is only maybe 3 ft. and framing on top of post and beam which is what they would have had back then. Chairman Smunt said the connection addition is more modern so it doesn't really need a knee wall. Mr. Norris said the stone is part of the program. Mr. Knute said they were thinking stone because there is already about three different types of red brick. They are going to acid wash the whole outside to get some conformity, but he doesn't think they'd ever be able to match it. Chairman Smunt said he is not suggesting brick; he suggests making a lower knee wall and have it below the sills of the windows, and then have a wide band on top of the connecting structure with two smaller windows punched in right above the main windows.

Chairman Smunt said before the Commission approves this they would need to see some altered drawings reflecting what was discussed. Mr. Kanute said he would like to get started on the windows and doors. Chairman Smunt said he wants to allow him to get going but maybe he could just redraw what was discussed to see if it will look right. Mr. Kanute showed the Commission the specs for the windows he would be installing. The Commission agreed they were okay with the window change because they will be a vast improvement and the current windows are not original; they were changed out without the Commission's approval.

Mr. Withey excused himself at 8:40PM.

Mr. Kanute said the front door would have sidelights if they can fit because they cannot alter the opening since the walls are 12" thick. Chairman Smunt said he thinks either way works but when voting for approval, the Commission would like to know exactly what will be there. Mr. Kanute noted that the garage door would be different as well, they will be true carriage wood made out of some sort of cedar.

Chairman Smunt said that since there is evidence that shutters existed previously, it would be cool to get replacement hardware and mount the shutters correctly, so that if they were closed they would actually cover the whole window. Mr. Norris noted that in Mr. Kanute's drawing the shutter dimensions are wrong. Mr. Gibson asked what they would do for a shutter on the west elevation adjacent to the chimney chase. Chairman Smunt said they would have just rested the shutters against the chimney. He suggested just doing shutters on the front elevation on the original house.

The Commission agreed that they were okay with the new element over the front entry.

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

10. Additional Business

a. Camp Kane Concept Site Plan

Dan Raz, Camp Kane Foundation, was present.

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Mr. Bobowiec noted that option #3 in the packet regarding the parking is incorrect. Kim Malay and David Richards met with staff last week and suggested an alternative of a turnaround and they expanded the parking because once the education center is there the original option was not enough parking.

Mr. Colby said the option showing parking on the street would be easier in the interim because they would be working with the existing street and there wouldn't need to be much stormsewer infrastructure put in; like you would for a parking lot. Mr. Bobowiec said down the road if the mansion gets built there would hopefully be a pull-off for buses to drop off, but since the education center will probably be the next phase of this they are trying to figure a way for busses to drop off kids safely since Deveraux Way does have quite a bit of traffic from the city coming in and out. He said his suggestion is to start with the option with the turnaround for now and after it's completed and the city agrees they can then do a parking lot expansion into the woods. If all of this is built and it's inconvenient to get to, it won't get used.

Mr. Bobowiec said the memorial monument is going to be moved a bit. The bike connection up to Langum Park and a path through the woods would be the first real connection to get people safely from the east side of 7th Ave. to the bike path.

Mr. Bobowiec said they are applying for a grant November 1st for the education center so it could possibly start being built this winter or next spring, if they get the money.

Mr. Bobowiec mentioned some limestone type bleachers to have seating for about 50-60 people with a flat stage to have bands or dances and there are some water features and statues around the property.

Mr. Colby said this is going to be reviewed by the Planning & Development Committee on Monday, October 12 and asked if the Commission had any comments. Mr. Pretz said the turnaround should be added.

Mr. Bobowiec said his thought would be to send the busses up to park at Langum while they wait for the kids. Mr. Norris said that would probably not be the most standard way of doing it and maybe they could broach some parallel parking for the busses so the kids don't have to cross the street. Mr. Bobowiec said he hopes the city will do that but they didn't want to push too much with the house being right there.

Mr. Bobowiec said there would initially be port-o-potties but they would be asking for bathrooms at some point. Mr. Norris said if the education is going to be inside the museum, one thought would be to get it closer to the parking lot, since there is no way to get from here to there if someone is in a wheelchair.

Mr. Norris suggested that the paths in the woods should meander more. Mr. Bobowiec said they are dealing with a lot of people who don't want them in the woods at all. Chairman Smunt said being a bike rider you do not want a sharp 90 degrees for bike riding, you want a nice flow and a

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dominant bike route to connect and suggested signage to state “to 7th Ave.” to the right and “downtown St. Charles” to the left. Mr. Norris asked if that bike path could also connect behind the ballpark. Mr. Bobowiec said they are trying to connect it to the parking lot near the playground on the far north side because there is really no direct access, but they cannot encroach on the sledding hill.

Mr. Bobowiec said it would be nice to have the woods finally get used. Chairman Smunt said there is no reason that species of trees couldn’t be identified throughout, like Delnor Woods. He said just getting the walkway, the monuments, and the bike connection done would be an enhancement for the city would still honor Camp Kane, the Jones Law Office, the 8th Illinois and the underground railroad history.

b. Jones Law Office – Interior Painting

Pat Pretz said the interior would be painted mindfully gray and the walls would be painted around the graffiti. The ceiling does not need to be painted, just cleaned and dusted. The casings, chair rail, floor trim and around the windows are walnut and will be unpainted. She said the door was completed and hung today; it’s pine with walnut panels and is good looking. She said there are two holes in the front door so there is no choice but to put a door knocker back on it. She passed around a cast iron knocker from the period for the Commission’s opinion. She said the door doesn’t need to be stained or sealed but maybe in 2 or 3 years penetrated oil would be put on it.

Mr. Bobowiec said the door knocker would need a strip plate on the lower hole because people would slam it. Ms. Pretz said that would be included. Chairman Smunt said the knocker is really heavy but it should be left just as is so it looks like it was always there. Mr. Norris said it’s beautiful but is overpowering on a 10 x 10 ft. building. Ms. Pretz said it looked good on the door and wasn’t very obvious. She said the floor boards are done. She said they have the furniture in storage; it’s everything that was in the original law office in 1988 except for the cast iron stove.

c. Discussion Regarding COA process- No updates.

d. Landmarks research- No updates.

5. A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved by voice vote to un-table #5 COA: 7 E. Main St. (sign)

A motion was made by Mr. Bobowiec, seconded by Mr. Pretz, and unanimously passed by voice vote to approve the COA, with the condition that the sign is made of a synthetic, rot-resistant material, and that the Kelvin rating of the lighting is similar to what is on Frist St.

11. Announcements: Historic Preservation Commission meeting Wednesday, October 21, 2015 at 7:00 P.M. in the Committee Room.

12. Adjournment at 9:20 p.m.