

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES
109 James Street
Geneva, Illinois, 60134**

February 19, 2020

1. Call to Order

Chairman Zellmer called to order the February 19, 2020 meeting of the Geneva Historic Preservation Commission at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present HPC: Chairman Zellmer; Commissioners Hamilton, Hiller, Salomon, Stazin, Warner

Absent: Commissioner Zinke

Staff Present: Preservation Planner Michael Lambert; Community Development Dir. David DeGroot

Others Present: Applicant Robert Akers and Joe Stanton for 101 Hamilton Street; Mr. Alex Teipel with Architectural Resources; Mr. Dennis Kintop contractor

3. Approval of January 21, 2020 Minutes

Minutes of January 21, 2020 – Motion by Commissioner Hamilton, second by Commissioner Salomon to approve the minutes as presented. Motion passed by voice vote of 4-0. (Zellmer and Stazin abstain.)

4. Five Minute Field Guide – Certified Local Governments (CLG) and the SOI Standards

Planner Lambert discussed the establishment of the Certified Local Government program in 1980 as an expansion of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (the “Act”) which allowed local governments the opportunity to participate in national preservation activities, as defined in the 1966 Act. The program is a partnership between local, state and federal governments to preserve the historical character of distinguishable places in America. A review of the program’s requirements, resources and benefits to the community followed, as did an explanation of the responsibilities of being a CLG community, one of which is to protect local historic resources and promote appropriate preservation through the application of the Secretary of Interior Standards for rehabilitation.

5. Review of Building Permit Applications

A. 101 Hamilton Street (Case #2020-002) – Robert Akers/Robert M. Akers Architecture, Architect; Joe Stanton/Hamilton Homes, LLC, Representative; Application for Construction of In-fill Townhomes at a Significant Property. Preservation Planner Michael Lambert recalled this project was a concept review last month. He proceeded to recollect the discussion for the commissioners which included the site’s location (Hamilton and First Streets), the concept site plan that was presented prior, current and historic photographs, proposed floor plans and proposed building elevations. Per Mr. Lambert, the applicant did meet with the City’s development team due to a prior circulation concern but it was addressed. There is an 8-foot elevation drop on the site.

Mr. Lambert recalled at the last meeting the commissioners had asked for context drawings of the neighborhood compared to the historic home. He referenced those drawings, explaining that they related to the floor heights and building elements of adjacent buildings, as recommended by the City's newly adopted design guidelines. Floor to floor height for the first floor was 10' feet 1" inch, second floor was 9' feet 1" inch and roof pitch was 10:12 which was similar to roof pitches in the neighborhood. The floor heights were somewhat taller.

Colored renderings of the various materials followed: cultured stone (grayish), lap siding and shingles. Per Lambert, the commissioners could discuss semi-permanent and permanent colors. Since textured siding was not allowed, smooth siding and trim would be requested. The entry door would be a wood-grain embossed panel steel door; proposed windows to be vinyl cladding – typically not approved by the historic district, but the Crestline 500 meets the minimum requirements of the City's window policy. The windows do have an option available for an applied vinyl wooden muntin on the exterior and an applied wooden muntin on the interior with a glass spacer bar. The garage door will be a 20-panel embossed steel door with glass lights. The roof will be asphalt shingle with accent standing seam metal roof (narrow batton).

Architect for the project, Mr. Robert Akers, introduced the applicant, Mr. Joe Stanton.

Mr. Joseph Stanton for Hamilton Homes, LLC, described how he considered raising the historic house and possibly dropping the elevation on the west side of the property. However, both options could not be done and he explained the challenges of why. The existing grade would remain and so would the existing channeling system. Retaining walls along First Street and Hamilton Street would be constructed to hold the slope in place.

Mr. Akers explained tonight's presentation was to consider the new three townhomes with the historic home to be discussed at the next meeting. He invited commissioners to walk through the historic home and, again, reiterated the challenges of raising the historic home. Turning to the overhead, Mr. Akers reminded the commissioners they wanted to see drawings of the historic home in context with the proposed townhomes as well as neighboring homes. He reminded the commissioners that the project was meeting the City's new zoning requirements and was not exceeding height requirements. It was, however, exceeding the height of the historic home, yet fitting well within the surrounding area. Mr. Stanton explained that the historic home would complement the new townhomes and not mimic the look of the new townhomes.

Commissioner Hamilton referenced SOI Standard No. 9 and believed the architectural compatibility between the historic home and townhomes was disconnected – pointing out much detail existed on the proposed townhomes while the historic home was a very simple style. Mr. Stanton agreed that historic homes were generally simpler but at the same time he wanted to construct something that met today's buyer, be a viable project, and reflect what was going on in the area. (Mr. Lambert discusses Robert Long's work in the historic home and that commissioners may find, after the applicant's investigation, that the historic home is not that simple of a house as it appears currently.)

Commissioner Salomon questioned if the applicant considered the comments in the staff analysis, the design guidelines as it related to massing and the porches, noting the townhomes were significantly larger than the historic home. Mr. Akers and Mr. Stanton elaborated on the discussion they had with staff and indicated some of the comments were anecdotal discussions – flow of water, grade of property, etc. Asked more directly if the massing, height and porch scale, etc. for the townhomes -- as read from the staff report by Commissioner Salomon -- were considered by the applicant and discussed, Mr. Akers explained he did but was pleased with the

design, stating it fit into the scale of the neighborhood. He agreed the townhomes were taller than the historic home, but not taller than the rest of the neighborhood. Mr. Stanton pointed out his project was under the height requirements and under lot coverage.

Commissioner Hiller liked the project overall but questioned where the grade was measured for the height of the building on such a steep slope. Discussion followed. Mr. Akers proceeded to review Sheet A6.0 in more detail to make his point (SW corner of the property). Asked what the purpose was for the pergola connection between the historic building and Unit #3, Mr. Stanton explained it was required in order to meet code. As Mr. Lambert explained, two principal structures could not be on the same zoning lot and therefore the pergola was attached. Commissioner Stazin explained that while it could imply a connection between the two structures, it could also be argued that there should be more similarity since it was a connected structure. Per Mr. Akers, the pergola would be tied together with materials and it would be depicted with the historic home drawings.

With regard to the new townhomes, Mr. Stanton explained he was open to a change in materials, such as the limestone look, if necessary. Commissioner Warner expressed his concern about the historic home being dwarfed by the larger townhomes and inquired if all of the townhomes had the same floor to ceiling height (Mr. Akers affirms). Asked if one of the three townhomes could be more respectful to the historic home, Mr. Akers explained he understood the concerns, commenting that the intention was to raise the historic home five feet. However, he took comments from staff on how to proceed and summarized that there would be some tie-ins. Mr. Stanton explained the financial reasons behind selling the townhomes, as proposed, in order to attract buyers.

Chairman Zellmer proceeded to explain how he brought down a building's scale in his own architectural drawings. He agreed the townhomes were larger and the historic home appeared to be swallowed up by the rest of the development. He believed the project did not follow the neighborhood in scale. Mr. Stanton believed the same issues being raised were the same issues he and his architect addressed.

Commissioners voiced their concerns about massing and recalled that other applicants were asked to provide other options, make a compromise, and believed more could be done with the project. Mr. Akers believed they compromised by preserving the historic home, meeting code requirements, and this was the first project under the City's new Downtown Zoning District.

Mr. Stanton indicated the issue was more with the site versus height. Commissioner Salomon pointed out the differences of height between the townhomes and the historic home in more detail, i.e., 40 feet from ground level as compared to 24 feet (historic home). Even if the historic building was raised one foot it would be dwarfed by 15 feet. Commissioner Warner pointed out that if the home to the right were placed at grade it would be more respectful to the historic home. Mr. Stanton argued that there were a variety of homes in the area and believed there would be no discussion on this matter if the lot was flat.

Asked if the three townhomes had to have the same look, Mr. Stanton explained that designing them individually created more costs and he was trying to keep costs down to make them more affordable. Conversation followed on the roof pitch of the existing adjacent homes and the new townhomes and the fact that Mr. Stanton did not want to mimic the roof pitch of the historic home. Mr. Ackers also pointed out the fact that the perspective of the townhomes behind the historic home changed as one walked down the street. Commissioner Stazin reminded Mr. Akers that he preferred to review streetscape perspective drawings.

Commissioner Hamilton stated the concern was that the new townhomes were not respectful of the historic home and he preferred to see the two separate plans come together. However, Mr. Stanton defended the work completed to date, the requirements being met, and asked the commissioners to consider the limitations and concessions already being made.

Dialog was raised about the details of the pergola which Mr. Stanton believed would be better discussed when presented with the historic home. Commissioner Warner was agreeable to the project, subject to review by staff. Asked about the details of the stone, the commissioners preferred stacked limestone (Batavia) and asked to see samples at the next meeting.

Chairman Zellmer opened the meeting to public comment. No comments received.

Motion by Salomon to approve the request for 101 Hamilton Street, subject to: 1) the modifications of the site design as noted by the City's engineering department, 2) review of the pergola plans, and 3) the applicant bringing sample materials for the vinyl windows, exterior materials, metal roofing color, and stone materials and color at the next meeting. Second by Commissioner Hiller. Roll call:

Aye: Hamilton, Hiller, Salomon, Stazin, Warner, Zellmer

Nay: None

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 6-0

As an aside, Mr. Stanton stated that Hoffman Lumber located in Sycamore has wood from the former Mill Race Inn.

6. Secretary's Report

Mr. Lambert recalled for commissioners that the 307-309 W. State Street bulkhead proposal was to return to the commission regarding fire department connection. He recalled the details of what the commission had asked for which was not what was approved. Tonight, the commission was being asked to approve the boxed out connection, as installed. Staff did not feel comfortable approving the request without returning it to the commission.

Mr. Kintop, contractor for the project, indicated he was at fault. Commissioner Stazin asked if a full elevation existed, wherein Mr. Lambert stated in the negative. Asked what it would cost to correct the issue as approved, Mr. Kintop estimated about \$8,000 for the entire wood trim.

Mr. Alex Teipel, the architect for the project, stated the bulkhead, as cut out, was in keeping with the spirit of the original building; it was not a restoration. Chairman Zellmer reminded him it was not what was approved by the commission.

Further discussion followed regarding the wood trim panels, what the fire department was willing to allow for the bulkhead height, and commissioners trying to agree on the look of the panels. Commissioners, except for Mr. Stazin, appeared to be fine with the bulkhead height and asked Mr. Kintop to make the two cut-outs as two square panels where the fire connection was located.

Lastly, commissioners were invited to a Landmarks Illinois meeting on March 21, 2020 located in Naperville. Mr. Lambert would forward details to the commissioners.

7. New Business

A. From the Commission: None.

B. From the Public: None.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Historic Preservation Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:54 p.m. on motion by Commissioner Salomon, second by Commissioner Hamilton. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote of 6-0.