

Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes

City of Geneva
109 James Street - City Council Chambers
July 18, 2023

Call to Order

Chairman Zellmer called to order the July 18, 2023 Meeting of the Geneva Historic Preservation Commission at 7:00 pm.

1. Roll Call

Present: Chairman Zellmer and Commissioners Jensen, McManus, Phillips, Salomon, Stazin
Absent: Commissioner Hartman
Staff Present: Preservation Planner Michael Lambert
Others Present: City Attorney Ron Sandack, Court Reporter Theresa Vorkapic, Recording Secretary Anna Benson

2. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of June 20, 2023 - **Motion by Commissioner Salomon to approve the minutes. Second by Commissioner Jensen. A roll call vote followed and the motion passed 6-0.**

3. Continuation of Public Hearing (from January 18, 2023)

A. 4 East State Street CASE 2022-079 & 2022-080 Applicant: David A. Patzelt, Authorized Representative Shodeen Family Foundation. Application for: Demolition of a Historic Landmark and De-designation of the Property.

Chairman Zellmer stated the purpose of tonight's public hearing is to provide an opportunity for the public to provide additional testimony and for the applicant to provide a closing statement. He continued to state that if the commission chooses to close the public hearing tonight, deliberation on the matter will occur at the next regularly scheduled meeting which is August 15, 2023, due to the absence of a commissioner at tonight's meeting and in consideration of other business on tonight's agenda.

Motion by Commissioner Salomon to continue the public hearing. Second by Commissioner Jensen. A roll call vote followed and the motion passed 6-0.

Preservation Planner Michael Lambert stated he received one letter in regards to this case from Alan Leahigh dated June 17th, 2023 and distributed a copy to the commission.

Chairman Zellmer stated that members of the public would begin testimony and referenced the sign in sheet to allow speakers to begin in that order.

Resident Colin Cambell, 18 South 6th Street, presented a powerpoint presentation and advocated for the preservation of the site, emphasizing the potential for rehabilitation into a contemporary building.

Kendra Parzen, Advocacy Manager for Landmarks Illinois voiced her objection to the application. Ms. Parzen believes the City of Geneva made the correct decision in landmarking the site and she asked that they uphold it.

Al Watts, Community Engagement Director for Preservation Partners of the Fox Valley, read a letter that resident Karen Alexander, 133 S River Lane, asked him to read for her. She believes the city should save this piece of history. Mr. Watts continued by reading his statement that he prepared. He believes the site does not meet requirements for demolition outlined in the city's ordinance.

At this point Chairman Zellmer said that the applicant can begin their closing statement.

David Patzelt, representative for the applicant, the Shodeen Family Foundation, began by reviewing comments he had on the amended City of Geneva's consultant's report completed by Teska and Associates that was presented at the last Historic Preservation Commission meeting. Mr. Patzelt highlighted that Teska and Associates agreed public financial participation is needed for a ROI of 10%, which can be considered the threshold a developer would need to consider proceeding with a project. He continued by pointing out financial errors or issues he sees in the report that would determine how much public financial participation is needed. He pointed out a number of issues in the consultants' report that included the land appraisal number reported significantly wrong, the IRR calculated incorrectly, and debt service payments calculated incorrectly. Mr. Patzelt continued to state that the revised numerical tables provided by Teska lack supporting documentation or detail on how they arrived at the figures found in the tables.

Mr. Patzelt presented a timeline of his and the applicant's attempts to have conversations with city staff to discuss financial incentive availability to no avail. He stated that there have been repeated requests to discuss the possibility of financial assistance. The response he eventually received was that having an active demolition request and seeking a conversation about a financial partnership is incongruent.

Kate McCracken introduced herself as a representative for the applicant. Ms. McCracken stated there were things she needed to get into the record this evening. It should be noted that with all public hearings at the City of Geneva, the testimony provided throughout the public hearing is captured by a court reporter and an official word for word transcription is produced.

Ms. McCracken stated she would like to present some very specific facts for the record. The facts she presented for the record are that the property was purchased in 2013. Then, in 2016, the Historic Preservation ordinance as it relates to how landmarking status is established, was passed. Commissioner Zellmer raised a question, asking if there was a method to designate sites before then. Ms. McCracken stated that the ordinance that passed in 2016 established a method in which you could do it without the owner's consent, whereas previously you could not. This was confirmed by city staff. Ms. McCracken refuted the comments that the Shodeen Family Foundation knew what they were getting into by

purchasing the property in 2013. Ms. McCracken emphasized, while on record, that it is false that in 2013 the applicant knew what they were getting into.

Ms. McCracken distributed a copy of the city's ordinance section 10-6-6 which is titled Historic Landmark Designation and can be found on the city's website. Before reviewing the standards for demolition, she requested the commission to review the commission analysis portion of the Landmark Designation section. The ordinance states a staff analysis of the site is to be completed on behalf of the commission, however an analysis was never conducted by city staff. Ms. McCracken then reviewed section 10-6-10B of the ordinance in detail and how it relates to this case, which is the Demolition of Designated Properties section. She highlighted that point B1 could not have been met by the applicant, because a safety analysis was never conducted because the city declined to do so, reasoning that site was unoccupied.

A discussion regarding the potential for a private public financial partnership ensued. Ms. McCracken said as far as she knows for the past five years, there has not been and is no financial partnership on the table. Chairman Zellmer commented that the discussion surrounding a financial partnership should have occurred before a demolition request. Discussion regarding the charrette process between Ms. McCracken and Commission Phillips ensued. Ms. McCracken stated that the charrette process produced ideas of building proposals, but those building proposals were not the applicant's proposal or building ideas. At 8:00 pm Commissioner Stazin called a point of order, asking if the commission was at the point of debate and discussion. Chairman Zellmer said that asking the applicant direct questions is not a debate and asked all not to rehash the charrette process.

Ms. McCracken concluded by reiterating that the language of the city's ordinance has significance. She believes the demolition request meets one of the four criteria, 10-6-10-B3 as the Geneva expert consultant said without TIF funds the project is not feasible. Meeting that standard she believes the demolition request needs to be approved.

Commissioner Salomon suggested withdrawing the demolition request and working through the process of a public private financial partnership. If it does not work out, the applicant could re-apply for demolition of the site in one year.

Commissioner Jensen referenced an article from a local news platform, The Patch, from 2014 that reported that Shodeen is committed to preserving the historic building at the site and she asked what changed. Mr. Patzelt responded that they have studied the building and it's been brought to light the poor condition of the structure and what is/is not possible.

Chairman Zellmer confirmed with the applicant's representatives that they had concluded their closing statement at this time.

Motion by Commissioner Stazin to close the public hearing for the proposed demolition and designation of 4 East State Street, cases 2022-079 & 2022-080. Second by Commissioner Salomon. A roll call vote followed and the motion passed 6-0.

Chairman Zellmer stated that deliberation on this matter will occur at the next regularly scheduled meeting which is August 15, 2023.

Commissioner Stazin commented that it is odd the door was not centered in the building and it was confirmed that it has never been centered in its history.

Commissioner Stazin commented that he believes differential settlement is causing the deflection in the eastern lintel.

Chairman Zellmer stated that the commission believes the applicant is heading in the right direction in this proposal. This concluded the discussion on this property.

5. Review of Building Permit Applications (Certificate of Appropriateness)

A. 424 South Street CASE 2023-059

Applicant: Tom Wetmore – Wetmore Construction, General Contractor
Sean Gallagher – Gallagher Associates, Architect

Owner: Karen Lando, Owner

Application for: Alterations of an Enclosed, Historic Front Porch at a Significant Property

Preservation Planner Michael Lambert introduced this project and stated the property is identified as a Significant property within the local historic district and as a Contributing property in the Central Geneva Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The residence is a small Bungalow style house built sometime between 1917-1930. The proposal is to alter the location of the entry door and porch, which would be moved from the east elevation to the west elevation and does not alter the facade of the house. The porch currently has three 3-over-1 windows on the west elevation. The proposal includes moving those historic windows from the west elevation to the east. The concrete stoop and door on the east would be removed. A repurposed window from the living room would be installed on the new west elevation next to a new full light entry door. The driveway is currently on the west side of the porch so the purpose of this request is to move the entry door to the side which contains the driveway. The front/street elevation is minimally changed in this proposal. Mr. Lambert noted that a substantial addition is being built on the rear of the home and is not subject to review by the Historical Preservation Commission.

Sean Gallagher, architect on the project, provided some background information on the owner, who has lived there less than a year. He repeated the scope of the project. He noted that any siding that needs to be replaced on the east and west sides will be wood siding to match existing siding.

Commissioner McManus asked if the current front door is historical, which it is not.

Patricia Cameron introduced herself as the neighbor immediately west of this property. She said she would like to hear how drainage issues have been addressed in the front of the house as she has concerns about the concrete surfaces and drainage that might affect her property which runs very closely to this property's driveway. Ms. Cameron stated the previous homeowners would dispose of snow from their driveway onto her property. She suggested the owners consider moving the driveway rather than the

entryway. She believes the proposed work of changing the front door to face her property on the west, and a new proposed deck in the back is intrusive and that her privacy is being violated.

Discussion ensued about where Ms. Cameron could bring this concern. Mr. Lambert stated her concerns are not under the purview of the Historic Preservation Commission and that the Building Department will be reviewing this project and a Storm Water application will be reviewed by Public Works. Mr. Lambert stated this proposal is not requesting any variances and is within building and zoning regulations.

Mr. Gallagher stated he was required to have engineering plans drawn as part of their application. The proposal is actually reducing the amount of impervious surface in the front of the property and the new porch will have wooden steps with gaps, which are pervious.

Ms. Cameron spoke again and reiterated her concerns about privacy. She asked if they did a drainage study on the front of the property. Chairman Zellmer said they did the whole lot, however, the Historic Preservation Commission is not involved in such issues like the impervious requirements. Commissioner Salomon added that her issues cannot be corrected at this forum. Chairman Zellmer said Ms. Cameron would need to talk to the Building Department about her concerns and Mr. Lambert agreed with that advice.

Motion by Commissioner Jensen to accept the building permit application for 424 South Street, Case # 2023-059, the way that it was presented. Second by Commissioner Salomon. A roll call vote followed and the motion passed 6-0.

5. Review of Building Permit Applications (Certificate of Appropriateness)

B. 15 South Sixth Street CASE 2023-062

Applicant: Jeff Rosier – G. Klemm Roofing, General Contractor
Mike Schmidt – Schmidt Exteriors, Window Replacement Contractor

Owner: Joyce Courtney – The HomeCourt Real Estate
Jenn Courtney – The HomeCourt Real Estate

Application for: Window Replacement at a Significant Property
Siding Replacement at a Significant Property

Preservation Planner Michael Lambert introduced the property at 15 South Sixth Street as a Significant property within the local historic district and as a Contributing property in the Central Geneva Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The historic Queen Ann cottage is currently the office of The HomeCourt Real Estate Co. Roughly 30 years ago aluminum siding was placed over the original siding. With recent storms, the siding is being considered to be replaced under an insurance claim. Parts of the aluminum siding have been removed so that city staff can examine the original siding, which is the typical process for these projects. The historic wood siding was found by staff to be in good condition. It also exposed a decorative herringbone pattern in the gable, and a light blue stained glass window. It exposed the condition of the water table drip cap, which was knocked off when the aluminum siding was installed and it appears to be the most significantly damaged area of the historic wood siding. The historic window trim has been preserved. Mr. Lambert said concern about lead

based paint had been raised but it has not been tested to his knowledge. The applicant is requesting a siding replacement with fiber cement siding that has an exposure of 4” while the historic siding is 3”.

Mr. Lambert stated the historic windows are in various states of disrepair and most are painted shut. They are simple 1 over 1 windows with replacement hardware and most do not operate. 90 photos were submitted by the applicant showing the deterioration consistent across all the windows, with rotted jambs, fascia, and sashes. Mr. Lambert stated that in the past, the commission has approved full jamb to jamb window replacement and insert window replacements.

Mr. Lambert stated these projects are part of a comprehensive building renovation and that a roof replacement is being requested and processed through administrative review. He noted the porch details would remain.

Applicant and owner Joyce Courtney introduced herself. She bought the home 14 years ago in 2009. The home was in disrepair when she purchased it and she has improved it over the years and is supportive of historic preservation. She clarified that the insurance claim will cover roof replacement, removal of the aluminum siding and installation of fiber cement boards, but according to the agent she spoke with today, insurance will not cover remediation of the lead based paint or restoration of the historic wood siding. Ms. Courtney stated she found out today that the paint on the house does indeed contain lead. She received a quote for lead paint remediation and it was over \$35,000 which she said is very concerning to her as a small business owner. The commission stated they would like to see the lead based paint report and consider that in its decision making process. Chairman Zellmer and Mr. Lambert stated their charge is to preserve authentic materials, especially if it's in good shape. Mr Lambert said in the past, insurance has paid for restored historic siding projects. He asked the applicant to obtain in writing the denial of restoration of historic siding from the applicant's insurance company.

Mike Schmidt, Schmidt exteriors, introduced himself as a Pella certified contractor. He presented a sample window that was designed to satisfy historic home preservation. He explained the pros and cons to the insert replacement method. The pro being it is less disruptive to the historic trim and the con is you lose about half an inch of glass in the windows. The siding project plays a factor into the applicant's decision on which type of window replacement to do. Commissioner McManus stated that the windows clearly need to get replaced and Chairman Zellmer agreed window replacement seems warranted and would like to see a cost for each proposal, although he believes the insert style replacement would be best to preserve the historic wood as best as possible.

Commissioner Phillips asked if insurance would pay for disposal of the lead based painted siding and the applicant stated she would have to find out.

Chairman Zellmer stated he feels like the commission needs more information such as the report of the lead based paint, window replacement options, costs for siding removal, cedar siding replacement, fiber cement siding, etc. He reiterated that their first mandate is to preserve the original material, then the next best option would be to replace with in kind materials, and if it can't be replaced in kind, then perhaps another type of siding could be an option. Commissioner Phillips asked if it would be acceptable for the applicant to do wood on the front and fiber cement on the sides. Mr. Lambert stated the commission has approved one project like that in the past and it is an alternative that could be considered. Chairman Zellmer stated he would like to discuss at the next meeting the scenarios of salvaging the historic wood, replacing just the facade of the home in the salvage wood, full replacement and costs for all.

Commissioner Stazin asked about the condition of the soffit and fascia. Mr. Rosier said they are all aluminum and he won't be replacing that unless something is discovered during the re-roofing process.

Glorianne Campbell, 18 South Sixth Street, introduced herself as a resident that has lived across the street since 1946. She stated that the current property owner has taken such good care of the building and enhanced it. She appreciates that as it was not well kept in previous years.

6. Secretary's Report (Staff Updates)

Preservation Planner Michael Lambert stated at each meeting moving forward he is going to start updating the commission on the administrative reviews he conducts on the commission's behalf.

7. New Business

A. From the Commission: None

B. From the Public: None

8. Adjournment

At 9:53 pm Commissioner Stazin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Salomon. Motion passed by voice vote 6-0.