

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
109 James Street
Geneva, Illinois, 60134

July 20, 2021

1. Call to Order

Chairman Zellmer called to order the July 20, 2021 meeting of the Geneva Historic Preservation Commission at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present HPC: Chairman Zellmer; Commissioners Hartman, McManus, Zinke

Absent: Commissioners Salomon and Stazin

Staff Present: Preservation Planner Michael Lambert, City Planner Chayton True

Others Present: Applicants Molly Harvey; Architect Mark VanKerkhoff
(*remote)

3. Approval of June 15, 2021 Minutes

Minutes of June 15, 2021 – **Motion by Commissioner Zinke to approve the minutes, as presented. Second by Commissioner Hartman. Roll call:**

Aye: Hartman, Zinke, Zellmer

Nay: None

Abstain: McManus

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 3-0-1

4. Field Minute Field Guide – Telling the Full Story

Preservation Planner Michael Lambert provided a summary regarding a campaign launched by the National Trust for Historic Preservation urging Americans to tell the full story about preservation, which includes not only architectural preservation but cultural geography. He explained that cultural geography is the practice of identifying those authentic places and materials that represent how communities were shaped by humans and the life experiences of one's predecessors. While preservationists may focus on architectural form or style, they must also consider the details of the building's cultural geography, i.e., who owned the building (or group of buildings), the artifacts of the people who lived there, the civic and business leaders who may have owned the building, thereby representing – collectively – and memorializing the individuals and events that shaped the community, or, creating a sense of place and time. Preservation, then, seeks to retain the physical remnants and extant places that represent the human interaction with the landscape. As a result, the historical background of a place (cultural geography) combined with retention of authentic places "tells the full story" through preservation.

5. Review of Building Permit Applications

A. 228 N. First Street (Case No. 2021-060). Applicant/Owner: Molly and Casey Harvey, Owners; Mark VanKerkhoff, Architect. Application for Construction of a Shed Roofed Dormer (visible on the Ford Street elevation) Contributing Property. Preservation Planner Lambert located the subject site on the overhead map, explaining the request is for the construction of a shed roofed dormer on a contributing property which dates somewhere between 1852 to 1854. The site originally included four lots at First and Ford Streets but was reduced over time to its current size.

Mr. Lambert understood the home was constructed by Eben Conant, an early settler/carpenter in Geneva, but Conant did not live in the residence. A historical background of Geneva's first three physicians followed; one of those was D. Wesley Humphrey who lived in the First Street home from *circa* 1855-1865. Various additions were added to the home during the 19th century by the next occupants, Dr. Humphrey's brother and sister-in-law, Edgar and Helen Humphrey, who lived in the house until their deaths. The property passed out of the Humphrey family in 1913 after nearly 60 years.

Per Mr. Lambert, the applicants would like to raise a portion of the roof to allow head room in an existing, second floor bathroom area since the home is a one and one-half story home. Elevations followed with Mr. Lambert explaining the addition was a minimal addition to the roof but was on a visible façade facing Ford Street. An issue he addressed in the staff analysis was the appropriateness of the windows. To date, all windows have been replaced and, now, are vinyl one-over-one, double-hung windows. The applicants are proposing to install a single-lite window in the dormer as opposed to a three-lite window, which would have been more typical for the historic period of the home. The dormer addition is proposed to have a cement fiber siding. No historic siding was exposed, and its condition was unknown at this time.

Ms. Molly Harvey, 228 N. First Street, explained that the bathroom ceiling is low for the second floor bathroom and it further lowers toward the outside (wall). There is no shower and she would like to add a full shower and then expand the bathroom a bit within the existing house.

Architect for the project, Mr. Mark VanKerkhoff, discussed his specialty in historical homes and shared his own personal landmarking story of the Daniel Lincoln homestead. He explained the approach to this proposal was a minimal expansion of the bathroom to create head room. The home's windows were not original. The home has existing aluminum siding on it, and he believed Hardie-board was an acceptable material for the second floor addition and would match what is currently there. Referring to the Secretary of Interior Standards, he stated the vinyl window was chosen because the standards allow some leeway for materials and window replacement on additions or replacement of non-historic features. Mr. VanKerkhoff also stated a broken vinyl window exists in the first floor bathroom, and the window is actually in the shower. The owners wanted to replace it in-kind. Lastly, Mr. VanKerkhoff believed this element, as well as the shed roof addition, were reversible.

Per commissioner questions, asphalt shingles would be used on the shed roof with ice and water shield material under the entire area of the dormer. Mr. VanKerkhoff believed the roof material would not be seen from street level. Commissioner comments supported of the proposal, noting it was a very fitting addition to the home and the addition would be very discreet but questioned the appropriateness of the proposed vinyl windows, based on the adopted Geneva Window Policy.

Per Commission discussion regarding the proposed dormer window, Mr. Lambert explained that typically for this time period the proposed window would have been a three-lite window, but the windows were replaced between 1993 and 1998. He did not want to suggest that the commission create a false sense of historicism and believed this matter (of installing vinyl windows at a street elevation because of constant contact with water in a shower as well as high humidity in a small bathroom) was a "gray area" within the window policy. The Geneva Window Policy specifically prohibits vinyl window replacements on a street elevation; however, no historic windows remain as a precedent and guide; the adopted *Design Guidelines for Historic Properties* allows for the use of contemporary materials at new additions; and no durable material alternative exists for a window wholly within a shower. As such, Mr. Lambert believed that the commissioners would need to discuss why they would deviate from the window policy if they chose to allow the vinyl windows

and state those reasons in their motion. Mr. Lambert also pointed out that the window manufacturers that he researched were not recommending a wood window in a wet environment, such as a bathroom. Commissioner McManus did not believe it was a good idea either to have a wood window in such an environment. She supported the divided lights, however. Commissioner Hartman supported the vinyl windows in the bathrooms, stating that the remaining windows that were installed in 1993 would eventually be replaced. Mr. Lambert read the City's window policy as it relates to windows when no historic window exists to assess.

Chairman Zellmer then questioned staff if the same window policy existed, could the next homeowner replace historic windows with vinyl windows or replacement windows at a historic facade, wherein Mr. Lambert indicated that his understanding of the Geneva Window Policy did not allow that option. Given the two scenarios – a window in the shower and a window on the building's wall, Commissioner Zinke believed it made sense to follow the adopted Window Policy for the second floor bathroom window that was not located in a shower. The chairman voiced concern about setting a precedent with allowing vinyl windows under any circumstance within a historic facade. Discussion followed on other bathroom/window scenarios.

Motion by Commissioner McManus to approve the proposal at 228 N. First Street, including the second floor shed addition with a new vinyl window (because no historic windows exist to match it and because the window is in a new addition). Additionally, the vinyl window replacement, in-kind but with tempered glass, in the first floor bathroom is also approved because it is located in a fully wet environment. Second by Commissioner Hartman. Roll call:

**Aye: Hartman, McManus, Zinke, Zellmer
Nay: None**

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 4-0

5. Secretary's Report

Staff Updates: - Mr. Lambert reported that, in the near future, commissioners will be reviewing a concept for the former Cetron property located at 7th and State Streets because a small portion of the northeast corner of the parcel is in the historic district. The concept review will take place at the July 22, 2021 Plan Commission meeting, 7:00 p.m. City Planner Chayton True explained that three concepts will be provided with two elevations. Details followed.

6. New Business

- A. From the Commission: None
- B. From the Public: None.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Historic Preservation Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m. on motion by Commissioner McManus, second by Commissioner Hartman. A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.