

Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes

City of Geneva
109 James Street - City Council Chambers

August 15, 2023

Call to Order

Preservation Planner Michael Lambert called to order the August 15, 2023 Meeting of the Geneva Historic Preservation Commission at 7:00 pm.

1. Roll Call

Present: Chairperson pro tem McManus and Commissioners Hartman, Jensen, Phillips, Salomon, Stazin, Zellmer *

*remote

Absent: None

Staff Present: Preservation Planner Michael Lambert, Community Development Director David DeGroot

Others Present: City Attorney Ron Sandack, Recording Secretary Anna Benson

2. Appointment of Chairperson pro tem

Preservation Planner Michael Lambert stated Chairman Paul Zellmer is out of town on business, joining remotely, and sought a Chairperson pro tem.

Motion by Commissioner Salomon to select Commissioner McManus as Chairperson pro tem. Seconded by Commissioner Jensen. Motion passed by voice vote.

Chairperson pro tem McManus sought a motion to allow Commissioner Zellmer to join the meeting remotely.

Motion by Commissioner Jensen for Commissioner Zellmer to join remotely. Seconded by Commissioner Salomon. Motion passed by voice vote.

3. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of July 18, 2023 -

Motion by Commissioner Salomon to approve the minutes from July 18, 2023 as corrected. Seconded by Commissioner Jensen. A roll call vote followed and the motion passed 6-0. Commissioner Hartman abstained.

4. Commission Deliberation

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.

Chairperson pro tem McManus opened this agenda item for commission discussion.

Commissioner Stazin began by asking staff to explain what TIF district means, if this site is in one, and how one goes about obtaining money from a TIF district. Preservation Planner Michael Lambert read a statement from Economic Development Director Cathleen Tymoszenko. He read that TIF funds could be dedicated to the preservation of the structure for which use and in what amount had to be vetted and a recommendation brought forward to city council. Community Development Director David DeGroot confirmed the property is within TIF district no. 3 and that preservation of historical buildings is one of seven goals outlined for that district and would be considered a valid request for TIF funds.

Commissioner Stazin asked for clarification about the previous ordinance that existed prior to the current one adopted in 2016 as it pertains to historic landmark nominations. Mr. Lambert replied that the pre-2016 ordinance had a much broader scope which allowed anyone in the United States to nominate a property for historical landmark designation, and the current ordinance has narrowed that requirement that one must be a resident of Geneva. Mr. DeGroot added that prior to 2016 it was a simple majority vote to nominate a site without the owner's consent, and the current ordinance requires a two-thirds vote.

Commissioner Phillips sought clarification about the process for the applicant to apply for TIF funds if they had withdrawn their demolition application. Mr. Lambert read another statement from Economic Development Director Cathleen Tymoszenko that the application process for TIF funds is tailored on the specific project scope, and this applicant is familiar with the application process as they have entered successful public private partnerships in the past.

Commissioner Salomon asked a question about re-submitting a demolition application upon withdrawing it. Mr. DeGroot replied that there is no waiting period after they withdraw, if no action is taken, they can resubmit at any time. However, once a final determination is made, then no subsequent request can be made for the period of one year.

Commissioner Jensen noted she wants the commission to remember the "big picture" and the community's comments and experts' testimony given to the commission, of which the majority have advocated for the preservation of the building.

Commissioner Stazin stated, as an architect, he believes the condition of the structure is beyond restoration. He voiced his concerns about the appearance of the building as well as its use. He has not seen a good solution or viable compromise. Discussion ensued about how there was

no creativity shown in concepts presented throughout this process. Commissioner Salomon said that is because they have an application for demolition, not a proposal to develop the site.

The commissioners discussed how, based on the reports presented to the commission, restoration is only a viable possibility with TIF funds and TIF funding is an alternative that must be explored and it is an option that has not yet been exhausted.

Motion by Commissioner Jensen to deny the request for demolition and de-designation of the historic landmark located at 4 East State Street. Seconded by Zellmer. A roll call vote followed and the motion passed 7-0.

While making their vote, Commissioners stated explained how and why they reached their individual conclusions, which are summarized as follows:

Commissioner Hartman: The case has been a challenge from both sides. While Commissioner Hartman is not an architect, engineer, or designer, his father was in the land development and building business. Therefore, Commissioner Hartman understands the issues at hand.

Commissioner Jensen: Based on the information presented and testimony provided, Commissioner Jensen is not convinced that preservation of the Historic Landmark has been proven to be an economic hardship for the Applicant. Commissioner Jensen further believes that Teska Associates and The Planera Group identified a path for financial feasibility. Additionally, Commissioner Jensen has not been convinced that the Applicant explored all other redevelopment options or investigated alternative funding sources.

Commissioner McManus: Based on all testimony, Commissioner McManus is not convinced that the Applicant explored all funding options for the rehabilitation of the Historic Landmark structure. If, and when, those options have been exhausted, the Applicant could make another request and the Commission could, then, reconsider the request.

Commissioner Phillips: Because the Historic Landmark structure is located within a TIF District, all development options possible site-wide have not been exhausted by the Applicant. Additionally, provisions for consideration of demolition identified in Ordinance 10-6-10 have not been met. The rehabilitation of the historic structure appears to be technically feasible; the building does not pose a safety threat to the general public because the site is fenced and windows are boarded; the Historic Landmark structure is not a deterrent to a major improvement project for which all required approvals have been secured, and demolition is not favored by the majority of the community, based on testimony provided.

Commissioner Salomon: The subject parcel is part of a great piece of property and Shodeen representatives stated, in 2014, that they would preserve the historic building. However, Commissioner Salomon expressed his belief that the Shodeen company hoped that “an Act of God” would destroy the historic structure. At this point in time, the Applicant has not brought forward any proposal to redevelop the site that would preserve the historic building. Furthermore, the Applicant did not

attempt to apply for TIF funding to demonstrate that they had tried to “do the right thing” to preserve the structure. Instead, the Applicant has been focused on tearing down the building and has been disingenuous in their efforts to preserve the structure.

Commissioner Stazin: In his vote to deny, Commissioner Stazin identified different reasons, noting that image and character are notable elements of the Historic District. Financing be damned, Commissioner Stazin was anticipating creative solutions that may include integration of some components into a different structure or preservation of a landmark monument of some nature incorporating all or part of the landmark structure. Commissioner Stazin has not heard that the Applicant has exhausted all of the talent and creativity that is available to make a win-win for everyone.

Commissioner Zellmer: Agreeing with previous observations and statements by other Commission members, Commissioner Zellmer added that—based on testimony—the public is in favor of saving the Historic Landmark building. Furthermore, because the designated parcel is in a TIF district and part of a larger property, he believes that the Applicant has not explored all available development options for the property and the historic structure.

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

A. 15 South Sixth Street

CASE 2023-062

Applicant: 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

Mr. Lambert introduced the property and its location which is the northwest corner of the Central Geneva Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and on the far western edge in the local historic district and provided a quick background on the building. This project was introduced to the commission at the previous month’s meeting, as a request for siding and window replacement. Siding replacement is no longer something the applicant is pursuing, as such the application has been reduced to window replacement. Mr. Lambert presented a bird’s eye rendering of the structure, with the window locations labeled with numbers. He explained to the commission that the applicant is not replacing or repairing any windows on the front elevation of the house, but the applicant would like to replace all other windows. The windows on the north and south elevation are seen from the public way and therefore are presented before the commission for review. The applicant is replacing the rear elevation windows as well but these are not subject to review by the Historic Preservation Commission. Mr. Lambert distributed a packet of photos that depict the condition of all the windows. He explained that the degree of deterioration varies window to window, from minor to very severe.

Joyce Courtney introduced herself as the property owner. She stated that after reviewing everything after the last meeting, she decided it was out of budget to replace or restore siding and so that has been withdrawn from the application, however she stated she would like to put the aluminum siding that was removed back on the building. As part of a siding replacement proposal on a historic property, staff requests that a small 3 foot portion of siding, which is aluminum on this house, be removed in order to view the condition of the historic siding that lays underneath. On this property, larger portions of siding were removed and it is against the adopted Geneva Historic Preservation Commission siding policy to re-apply this aluminum siding to the historic siding. The commission revisits this topic later on.

Discussion ensued about the type of windows currently on the house, and what type the applicant proposes to install. Presently, the window sashes are made of wood and the frame is aluminum. The applicant would like to replace the side and rear windows in all aluminum windows, sash and frame. To keep costs down, the applicant does not wish to repair or replace any of the front facing windows. In regards to storm windows, the applicant stated that the three front windows that currently have storm windows will remain, all other storm windows will be removed.

Mike Schmidt of Schmidt Exteriors spoke in depth about the windows he would install. He stated it is significantly more expensive to repair the historic windows than to replace. Mr. Schmidt and the applicant would prefer aluminum clad replacement windows on the sides and the rear. If that is not approved, Mr. Schmidt and the applicant would replace the side windows with painted wood sash and aluminum frame windows on the sides, while installing new aluminum clad windows in the rear. However, the applicant expressed her concerns about having three different types of windows throughout the house if that is the case.

Commissioner Hartman stated he has been told that a single-pane window with a storm window has the same efficiency as a new double-pane window. Mr. Lambert stated that yes, studies have demonstrated that they can make a single-pane window with a storm panel as efficient as a modern window, but there are many factors that go into that, such as weather striping, caulking, and the entire assembly is sealed properly, which is laborious. Mr. Lambert stated it is acceptable to preserve authentic materials by restoring them and then adding a modern addition such as a new storm panel as it can be removed in the future and protects the original material. No permit is required for storm windows to be installed or removed.

After much discussion the commission decided all aluminum clad windows would be acceptable. They are only being put on the sides and rear of the home, and one would not notice much of a difference of material from the street. In addition, the primary, front historic windows are being maintained and are not considered for replacement. The commission agreed with the applicant that having three different types of window on a house would not be desirable. Commissioner Stazin noted on this house, the image of the windows has been of storm windows, not the historic wood windows, which makes him more open to the aluminum replacement for the sides. In addition, Mr. Lambert stated in the past, the Historic Preservation Commission has allowed a historic wood window that is determined beyond salvage to be replaced with an aluminum clad window.

Motion by Commissioner Stazin to approve replacement with aluminum clad windows on the north and south elevations on 15 South Sixth Street. Seconded by Salomon. A roll call vote followed and the motion passed 7-0.

Discussion transitioned back to the siding on this house. Portions of aluminum siding were removed in larger amounts than instructed. Two of the three panels that make the bay window area on the front of the house had 4” exposure aluminum siding removed, exposing the original 3.5” historic siding. Mr. Lambert stated when he spoke to the siding contractor, he made clear that if it comes off it cannot be put back on to the historic siding. Ms. Courtney replied that she did not hear that and she would have told him not to remove it. Commissioner Stazin stated he would like to see the exposed historic siding repaired. Commissioner Salomon agreed with Commissioner Stazin and stated in the past they have been very firm with siding projects. Commissioner Phillips added that he would like the aluminum that remains on the south elevation of the bay window area to be removed so there is some consistency in the front elevation. Ms. Courtney stated again she was not told about removing the siding that it could not be put back on. Commissioner Stazin stated that restoration of the exposed wood siding would not be unreasonable, especially because it is in good condition.

Motion by Commissioner Stazin to require that the owner/applicant refinish the existing wood siding in lieu of re-installing aluminum siding (which does not conform to the guidelines) and recommends the removal of additional aluminum siding (at south face of bay window and at the entry wall of porch) for aesthetic reasons and refinish/re-paint the original siding, at 15 South Sixth Street. Seconded by Commissioner Hartman. A roll call vote followed and the motion passed 7-0.

Mr. Lambert clarified in regards to restoring the historic siding; if less than 10% material replacement is required, no permit is required. If 10% to 25% replacement required, then only administrative/staff review is required. If more than 25% replacement required, then the request would come before the Historic Preservation Commission.

B. 302 South Third Street

CASE 2023-076

Applicant: Jayni Wunderlich / Graham’s Chocolate, Owner NextWave
Construction, Contractor

Application for: Replacement of a Non-historic Front Door at an Enclosed Porch at a
Contributing Property

Mr. Lambert introduced the property and stated about a year ago the porch was replaced. This proposal is to replace the entryway, wood door on the porch with a steel door in the same style; full length clear glass panel. The entryway is a non-historic entryway on a non-historic

front porch. The reason it is coming to the commission is simply because it is a front door, on a contributing property.

The applicant came forward and introduced himself as Dave Gurtler, owner of Next Wave Construction. The proposed new door is 20 gauge steel with a security plate built in. The frame and all components of the door will be replaced and the transom and door are one unit.

Motion by Commissioner Stazin to approve the exterior door as submitted for 302 South Third Street. Seconded by Commissioner Jensen. A roll call vote followed and the motion passed 7-0.

6. Secretary's Report (Staff Updates)

Mr. Lambert stated he approved 10 permits for minor work in the historic district on the commission's behalf.

7. New Business

A. From the Commission: None

B. From the Public: None

8. Adjournment

At 8:59 pm Commissioner Stazin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Salomon. Motion passed by voice vote 7-0.