

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

**August 17, 2021**

**1. Call to Order**

Chairman *pro tem* Stazin called to order the August 17, 2021 meeting of the Geneva Historic Preservation Commission at 7:00 p.m. and read a prepared statement.

**2. Roll Call**

Present HPC: Chairman *pro tem* Stazin, Commissioners Hartman, Jensen, McManus, Salomon, Zinke

Absent: Chairman Zellmer

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

Others Present: Applicant/Owner Andrea Redman for Niche Restaurant; Carl Groesbeck with Cogent Management Group; Rolf Anderson with Karis Capital and Jace Murray with Murray Commercial; Resident Jamie Dwyer, 128 N. Sixth Street

(\*remote)

**3. Approval of July 20, 2021 Minutes**

Minutes of July 20, 2021 – **Motion by Commissioner McManus to approve the minutes, as presented. Second by Commissioner Hartman. Roll call:**

**Aye: Hartman, McManus, Zinke**

**Nay: None**

**Abstain: Salomon, Stazin, Jensen**

**MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 3-0**

**4. Introduction of Newly-Appointed Commissioner**

New Commissioner Jewel Jensen was welcomed by the Commission. Commissioner Jensen shared some of her personal and professional background in historic preservation. She summarized her involvement in preservation while living in Sanibel Island and Captiva, Florida.

**5. Five Minute Field Guide – Free Classic Residences**

Preservation Planner Michael Lambert provided a presentation on the Queen Anne sub-style called the “Free Classic” Queen Anne Sub-type. The style represents about 35% of the Queen Homes constructed in the United States but are sometimes misidentified due to their subtle details. The Free Classic design appeared around 1890 and is considered by some as more visually conservative examples of the Queen Anne style. Identifying features of the Free Classic design include: the use of paired classical columns rather than turned-porch posts, Palladian windows, and asymmetrical facades. The style is sometimes confused with the Colonial Revival style which ran concurrently with the Free Classic style. Examples of the Free Class Queen Anne styles located in Geneva were noted on the overhead: 114 Ford Street, 211 Second Street, 327 N. Fourth Street, 317 Fourth Street, 321 N. Sixth Street.

## 6. Review of Conceptual Development Projects

A. 14 S. Third Street (Case No. 2021-074). Applicant/Owner: Carl Groesbeck with Cogent Management Group – Representative for Third Street Holdings, LLC (Niche Restaurant); Urbanlab.HCD, Architect. Application for Construction of a Rooftop Deck and Party Wall Treatment. Preservation Planner Lambert located the subject site on the overhead map. The site is located in the Central Geneva Historic District which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Currently, the 1927 building, which used to house a former post office, now houses the Niche Restaurant. Proposed is the construction of a roof top terrace to enhance social and entertainment opportunities for local residents and visitors.

Representing the applicant, Mr. Groesbeck, with Cogent Management Group, pointed out the Federal-style characteristics of the limestone/masonry building and explained that the south wall was a party wall (with the prior school) and 4 inches of the property sat on the new post office's property. Tonight's proposal included a proposed roof top terrace to be set back from the street and not be visible, yet provide a social and entertainment venue. It will create a viability for the restaurant and the downtown district. A steel exo-structure will stabilize the south wall yet enhance the architecture with greenery. An interior and a wider exterior set of stairs are being proposed, along with a deck, which will be set back on all sides.

Mr. Groesbeck explained he is working with the Chamber of Commerce building to address the exterior stairway in order to provide better access for both buildings. Approximately 60 to 80 people will be the maximum allowed on the roof deck. Due to the structural impracticability, a lift will not be required but a wider stairway will be provided for emergency purposes. As he understands, a "cold" menu will be provided to patrons.

Ms. Andrea Redman, owner of Niche and the building came forward and confirmed that a menu of cold items and cocktails would be offered for rooftop patrons. Mr. Groesbeck envisioned there would not be umbrellas on the roof; however, a tent structure would be located over the bar. He stated the original facade of the building would remain untouched except for the lighting. Ivy plants will be used for the greenery and condensation water from the air conditioning unit will be used to water the plantings. Commissioner Salomon supported the proposal.

Chairman *pro tem* Stazin, in reviewing the classical elements of the building and the rendering, did not see how the proposed elements blended in with the classic style of the elevation, nor did he ever recall seeing iron used on "Roman" structures. He asked for more specifics on how the structure would attach to the south wall or was there a separation. Wherein, Mr. Groesbeck explained that COR-TEN steel channels would be attached to the masonry along the base. The structure would be a reflection of being constructed in its own time with the idea the element would enhance the visual impact of the façade on Third Street while calming down the sight of the south wall.

Reviewing the east elevation, Chairman *pro tem* Stazin struggled with the utilitarian character of exposed channels being proposed, which he believed did not enhance the character of the existing elevation with the shape of the elements. Mr. Groesbeck explained the idea behind the exo-skeleton structure was to pick up the same rhythm of the columns, representing the time period that the building was constructed. Stazin also expressed his concern about the triangular pediment not being able to hide the rooftop deck from the southeast.

Historic Preservation Planner Lambert recommended that additional examples of roof top terraces be provided to the commissioners, noting some good examples existed in Chicago. Commissioner McManus said she struggled with the green wall competing too much of the rhythm

of the façade and suggested stepping the sidewall treatment back a bit from the historic east facade. Mr. Groesbeck explained that stabilizing the wall was a structural necessity but Chairman *pro tem* Stazin believed that steel was not the only design option for the south wall. Commissioner McManus recommended seeing some elevations of the exterior wall with the exo-skeleton.

Preservation Planner Lambert shared with the commissioners that originally the owner was looking at the wall as an enhancement (public art) to Third Street and not as a roof top terrace. Commissioner Salomon, after finding out the true limits of the property line and where the exo-skeleton structure would start (on the Post Office's property), understood why a steel skeleton was being used.

Chairman *pro tem* Stazin invited public comment. None received in-person or virtually.

Commissioner Jensen inquired if rooftop examples existed in the historic district of Geneva that the applicant could consider, wherein Mr. Groesbeck listed off some nearby examples but indicated many more examples existed in downtown Chicago and it appeared to be a popular trend. Commissioners Zinke and Stazin voiced concern about growing ivy and its detrimental effect on brick walls, wherein the applicant said he would get the plant information for the commissioners.

Chairman *pro tem* Stazin asked Preservation Planner Lambert to summarize the discussion for the record. Mr. Lambert identified the following review comments and concerns:

1. Overall, the roof terrace concept was not objectionable but dependent on details;
2. Commissioners would like to know what other options exist for the exo-skeleton;
3. Commissioners would like additional information on the "live wall" plant materials and brick wall protection;
4. Concern was raised over the contemporary nature of the south wall versus the historic façade and whether some separation between the two treatments would be beneficial;
5. Concern regarding sightlines from Third Street if parapet wall or only triangular pediment would block views of permanent roof structures;
6. Some concern raised over visibility of furniture, particularly umbrellas;
7. Applicant verified that only proposed changes to the historic façade may be some lighting improvements;
8. Concerns were raised about emergency egress from and accessibility to roof terrace (code issues); and
9. Commissioners would like to see south elevation drawing as well as development/refinement of the project details.

B. State and Seventh Streets (Case No. 2021-075). Applicant/Owner: Jake Finley and Rolf Anderson with Karis Capital; Jace Murray with Murray Commercial; and Scott Shelton with Ryan Homes. Application for Construction of New Townhomes at Peyton Street within the locally-designated Geneva Historic District. For this parcel, Chairman *pro tem* Stazin reminded the commissioners to focus on the historic portion of the parcel located at the northeast corner of the project site. Preservation Planner Lambert located the subject site on the overhead map and summarized its background of ownership, pointing out that portion of the subject site (unimproved, surface parking lot) located in the historic district that is under consideration. Properties identified as Contributing and Significant about the subject property with the majority of the properties being Contributing. Mr. Lambert referenced the development objectives identified in the City's Downtown Station Area Master Plan that pertain to historic preservation review for infill properties as well as the guidelines for in-fill properties as described in the City's adopted *Design Guidelines for Historic Properties*. A rendering of the townhome project followed.

Messrs. Rolf Andersen and Jace Murray reminded the commissioners they were before the commission three years ago with a concept plan. Mr. Andersen also shared some of the previous concept plans that went before the City for consideration. Again, he was before the commission tonight to receive input. Mr. Murray also confirmed that the proposal was before the Planning and Zoning Commission a few weeks ago to receive their input.

Commissioner questions/concerns pertained, primarily, to the height of the buildings. Mr. Andersen indicated conceptually, that the building height would be in the “low 30s” as part of the feedback he received from the Planning and Zoning Commission. Chairman *pro tem* Stazin queried the applicants on how the project met the City’s planning goals for the property, especially as it relates to the character of the area, massing, form, and architectural style. Chairman *pro tem* Stazin noted that, as a Commissioner, that overall context is one of his major tasks and requested that the applicant identify how the identified goals on pages 6 and 7 of the staff report were met by the architecture of the proposed development. The applicant stated that “checking as many boxes” along the way is their goal and identified that “diversity in architecture” is one of the key elements of the downtown area. The applicant’s intent is to meet Geneva’s design goals within a townhome project, which they believe is the best product for the parcel. Mr. Andersen appreciated the comments and agreed that encouraging diversity of residential development was a positive. Given the site challenges, he believed the townhome product as proposed worked best conceptually.

Chairman *pro tem* Stazin wondered if the housing type at the Historic District parcel had to match the rest of the development or could be some other housing product. Asked if the three parcels had to replicate the rest of the development, Mr. Andersen indicated he would have to discuss that point with the architect/builder.

Commissioner Salomon, in reviewing the site from the overhead, suggested differentiating the three buildings on the site with different facades or material styles since the three buildings were the only ones backing up to existing historic homes. Commissioner Salomon also questioned the seemingly random placement of the buildings on the historic district parcel and suggested a more orderly placement of buildings on the historic district parcel. Commissioner McManus concurred but also acknowledged that the existing tree line along Peyton Street may block the new houses from the Historic District. Commissioner McManus did not want to contradict previous direction given by the HPC or others.

Chairman *pro tem* Stazin suggested that a plan view may not be as helpful as rendering views that show the housing stock as it would be perceived walking down the street from the Historic District.

Further questions followed regarding parking (underneath buildings), street parking, and assigned parking. Mr. Anderson, recalling prior feedback, said there was a previous mention for adding more green space to the site which the applicants have attempted to provide.

Chairman *pro tem* Stazin invited the public to comment.

Mr. Jamie Dwyer, 128 N. Sixth Street, relayed that he has seen the numerous plans prior and he believed that he spoke for the neighbors who—like himself—would welcome some development of the property west of their homes. His concern, along with many other residents, was the three-story building height that would block natural sunlight from their properties. Density was a concern. He asked if the developer could transition the three buildings from 2 story buildings on Peyton Street to three-story buildings for the larger parcel; whether the existing overhead electrical would be buried (or if just eliminated from the artist’s renderings); and believed

the Peyton Street setback appeared “tight” (not deep enough). Mr. Dwyer also voiced concern about the semi-trucks backing in/out of Burgess Norton in the morning, in close proximity to the homes and noted that trucks accessing Burgess-Norton utilize the Peyton Street property to maneuver their trucks. Lastly, Mr. Dwyer supported the direction the proposal was moving but asked that building elevations with greater detail that respected nearby, historic homes and parking details be provided in the future.

No further public comments were received.

Commissioner Zinke recommended the applicants review Page 6 the HPC’s agenda packet, specifically paying attention to the first six items under the “Summary HPC Comments regarding Previous Development Proposals” in order to secure HPC approval.

**7. Secretary’s Report**

Staff Updates: Mr. Lambert had no report.

**8. New Business**

A. From the Commission: None.

B. From the Public: None.

**9. Adjournment**

**There being no further business to come before the Historic Preservation Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:28 p.m. on motion by Commissioner Salomon, second by Commissioner Zinke. A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.**