

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

**September 21, 2021**

**1. Call to Order**

Chairman Zellmer called to order the September 21, 2021 meeting of the Geneva Historic Preservation Commission at 7:00 p.m. and read a prepared statement.

**2. Roll Call**

Present HPC: Chairman Zellmer, Commissioners Hartman, Jensen, McManus, Salomon, Stazin, Zinke

Staff Present: Preservation Planner Michael Lambert

Others Present: Applicants Mike McFarland and Cody Renkosik

**3. Approval of August 17, 2021 Minutes**

Minutes of August 17, 2021 – **Motion by Commissioner Salomon to approve the minutes, as presented. Second by Commissioner Hartman. Roll call:**

**Aye: Hartman, McManus, Salomon, Stazin, Jensen, Zinke**

**Nay: None**

**Abstain: Chair Zellmer**

**MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 6-0-1**

**3. Five Minute Field Guide – Minimal Traditional Houses**

Preservation Planner Michael Lambert provided a presentation on Minimal Traditional Homes. These homes came out of a necessity and of societal shifts in aesthetics during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century. During that time the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), created by Congress, assisted WWII veterans and families coming out of the Depression in obtaining home ownership in the 1940s and 1950s. Such homes could be constructed rapidly and guaranty that every soldier could purchase a home. The homes' exteriors were simplistic and minimal, yet constructed with the same materials as larger homes with less interior decorative details. By the 1950s, a prosperous working class wanted more space and so the minimal traditional home gave way to the new Ranch-style home.

Commissioner Stazin asked staff to research homes from 1950 to 1959. Mr. Lambert asked commissioners to email him with other research suggestions.

**4. Review of Building Permit Applications**

A. 124 W. State Street (Case No. 2021-082). Applicant/Owner: Michael McFarlane, McFarlane Enterprises, Inc.; Industry House, LLC / Cody Renkosik. Application for Exterior Modifications to a Mid-Century Modern Commercial Building. Preservation Planner Lambert located the site on the overhead map, which was located in the Central Geneva Historic District. The proposal is to renovate the commercial building for a restaurant. The building is part of a handful of Mid-Century Modern commercial buildings in Geneva. The building has gone through many transitions through the years. During 1953, the site comprised of two stores and a boarding house but in February 1953 the building caught fire, along with the bank next door, and it was

razed. The property was then rebuilt as a hardware store. It is estimated the property is about 70 years of age and the front and east elevations have been visible for almost 60 years. Historic photographs followed. Mr. Lambert also pointed out the Mid-Century Modern commercial buildings that sat directly across State Street along with other examples found around the historic district.

Mr. Lambert pointed out the five, basic facade components of the Mid-Century Modern (commercial) building: simple rectangular forms, floor to ceiling storefront glazing, clear anodized storefront framing, clear glazing, and the bulkhead usually being exposed concrete and scored to resemble limestone.

For reference purposes, a photo of the current BASH Restaurant in Ottawa, Illinois was referenced on the overhead. A floor plan was also placed on the overhead, along with the building's proposed elevation for State Street and for the east elevation. The storefront will be reconstructed in its existing configuration and the windows at the far end, two-story warehouse will be replaced with aluminum windows. The chimney will be removed. On the east façade the storefront will be preserved but an overhead garage will be inserted in place of the existing windows. New doors will be added – one in an existing opening and the other in a location where it will have to be reopened again. The windows will be replaced and a metal fire stairwell will be added from the second floor of the rear addition.

Again, Mr. Lambert explained the current storefront is antiquated with single pane glazing and the framing is separating and/or damaged. The east facade, which has been exposed for more than 50 years, will include the removal of the chimney down to the one-story portion of the building. The Chicago common brick on this facade will be painted. Some of the concrete foundation on this elevation has spalled, exposing the rebar. Other existing conditions on this façade were pointed out by Mr. Lambert. A slide was placed on the overhead explaining the masonry work to be done. Mr. Lambert reminded the commissioners that the Design Guidelines recommend to not paint existing unpainted masonry. A paint sample submitted by the applicant was available to view. Cut sheets for the overhead doors were placed on the overhead screen. Simple metal railings were being proposed for the east side of the building for emergency purposes as well as a patio protection fence.

Mr. Lambert reminded the commissioners that the 1999 Survey did not identify Mid-Century Modern buildings constructed after 1945, while the 2016 Survey, completed by the National Park Service and the State of Illinois, did identify them as contributing if they were constructed before 1966, so a "gray" area exists between the available survey data available to the Commission. In summary, he reminded the commissioners that they would have to make a determination as to the significance of the Mid-Century Modern building either individually or collectively with other Mid-Century Modern commercial buildings and also to identify what the commission feels are the character-defining features of the building in order to protect them. Lastly, he said the commissioners would need to identify the SOI Standards for the project's individual facades.

Applicant, Mr. Mike McFarland, and general contractor for the project, summarized the poor condition of the existing front glass as compared to the new glass system. The screws were rusted, the glass was single-pane, and no insulation existed. A description of the new insulated glass system followed. The frame was about a ¼ inch wider on the up-rights. The applicant preferred to use a black window frame due to the theme of his other restaurants. The sliding door would remain. The existing single-pane windows would be replaced with stronger frames and insulated glass. At the east elevation, the existing air conditioning unit would be removed and the brick, chimney chase would be removed as well. Mr. McFarlane was open to removing the chimney and leaving some of it in place, however. The proposed garage door on the east elevation could only be located towards the front of the building because of existing structural

columns that support the roof; an existing basement staircase; and the goal of connecting the sushi patio and the outdoor dining patio.

Per Commissioner Zinke's question, the open garage door would roll up to provide natural air for patrons of the restaurant and provide a connection between the dining room and the outdoor patio. The garage door would also be located where the existing air conditioner system and windows are presently located. The outdoor stairs were a necessity for emergency egress from the second floor, and the applicants were trying to keep the same theme from their other buildings.

Concern was raised by the commissioners as to the applicant painting all of the brick, including the Roman brick. Commissioners Zinke and McManus supported keeping the front façade Roman Brick unpainted but McManus said painting the concrete block and the Chicago common brick on the east façade was acceptable in her estimation.

Applicant, Mr. McFarlane explained the Roman brick continued around to the east façade and that he was basically updating the building to make it look uniform. He proceeded to remind the commissioners of the other work he was doing to make the building look like one building.

Commissioner Stazin shared his comments, pointing out that while the east elevation appeared to be the major focus, it was—in fact—a part of the Mid-Century Modern storefront and the components that comprised the design that typified the building's design; not just a few of the components. He believed the commission had to stay true to the many components and wanted more of that character preserved. As for the east elevation, he stated the windows had some symmetry and having a slide up garage door would not be found as part of the elements. Mr. McFarlane explained that the metal fence on the east façade would take on a "grid" like look similar to the windows and garage door, to remain uniform.

Commissioner Stazin inquired as to why there appeared to be conflicting window fenestration on the east elevation near the southern end of the building wherein Mr. McFarlane indicated it was actually a portable air conditioner. Stazin believed conflicting themes existed here: 1) the applicant's imagery for his restaurant, and 2) the preservation of the Mid-Century Modern structure in the Historic District. He suggested more harmony between the two themes. After confirming that the applicant wanted to paint the entire east façade in one uniform color, Commissioner Salomon was fine with painting the Chicago brick and concrete bulkhead along State Street because it "needed help" and the mortar did not match. However, he believed the fascia brick (Roman brick) should be left alone because it was the true look of the modern appearance of the building and it would only wrap around about 8 feet to the east façade. The painted common brick would then tie the two facades and link them together well.

Mr. McFarlane discussed that he and his client entertained the idea of removing the front awning and exposing the brick but there was concern about the condition of the brick/mortar underneath that awning. However, staff mentioned the mortar of an 1854 building was just matched so it could be matched on this building. Staff's understanding was that the commissioners' preference was to save the face brick. Regarding the storefront framing, Chairman Zellmer also preferred the applicant use the clear anodized aluminum because it was in keeping with the character of the storefront and building. However, Mr. McFarlane voiced that his client was spending \$150,000 for the storefront and they wanted the color they submitted.

Chairman Zellmer reminded them that the commission was looking at the long-term character of the building and it was trying to keep that same character. Its character would change if the dark bronze color was used. Commissioner Hartman concurred and did like the applicant's other stores but explained that a nice compromise would be to keep the clear anodized aluminum.

In reviewing the floor plan, Mr. Lambert pointed out that the patio was ending at about the transition between the two different bricks being discussed and it appeared to be a natural break where the patio was beginning. It appeared it was already respecting the front facade.

Significant conversation was raised regarding the color of the aluminum storefront and why the applicant wanted the dark color. It was also pointed out by Commissioner Salomon that while he understood the theme for the building, sometimes compromises had to be reached based on local requirements or community guidelines. With the suggestions being made he envisioned the applicant's building would be about 90% of the clean look the applicant was trying to reach. Commissioner McManus offered some ideas but after reading the Secretary of Interior Standard on replacing versus repairing, she read "the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture and other visual qualities." Therefore, if the existing was a silver finish, the new finish should be the same. McManus stated her goal was to not establish a precedent of going against the standards the commission represented.

Staff also assured the applicant that the commission dealt with similar issues on both commercial and residential projects. Commissioners voiced their support for the painting of brick on the east façade but to not paint the Roman brick that wraps around. Commissioner Stazin also added that the return on the fence area for the (black) fence could further define the new from the historic street presence. Commissioner Jensen read SOI Standard No. 6 and inquired about the storefront finishes across the street, wherein commissioners indicated they were silver. Regarding the parapet and hiding the mechanicals, there were no issues voiced because the applicant explained that the roof surface was below the top of the parapet wall which was estimated at 18-24" tall.

Given that the commissioners preferred the silver storefront system, Mr. McFarlane asked if the commissioners would be open to silver window frames and the silver garage door on the rest of the building, wherein commissioners were fine with the suggestion. The applicant appeared to be fine with using silver to be consistent. Commissioner Salomon understood the applicant was going for the industrial look and said whether the east windows and doors were black or silver, it would not make a difference to him.

**Motion by Commissioner McManus to approve the exterior modification to a Mid-Century Modern commercial building at 124 W. State Street, with the understanding that the façade Roman brick will remain in its current finish. The front facade glass to be replaced but maintaining the clear anodized finish. The Chicago common brick and concrete block to be painted. The window framing at the common brick and concrete block walls can be a color determined by the applicant. Second by Commissioner Zinke. Roll call:**

**Aye: Hartman, McManus, Salomon, Stazin, Jensen, Zinke, Zellmer**  
**Nay: None** **MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 7-0**

Commissioners were in agreement for staff to work with the applicant to approve the final storefront finishes.

Mr. Lambert relayed there was no public to be recognized.

## **5. Secretary's Report**

Staff Updates: Mr. Lambert relayed that October's agenda will be full.

**6. New Business**

A. From the Commission: Chairman Zellmer asked staff about the status of the Little Owl project, wherein Commissioner Stazin relayed that his understanding was that the developer/owner was looking to lease or otherwise dispose of the property. As for the status of the building next to the Nobel House, Mr. Lambert stated that no plans for exterior work have been submitted, but he understood the exterior will be painted. Mr. Lambert was unaware of any details of the interior remodeling.

B. From the Public: None.

**7. Adjournment**

**There being no further business to come before the Historic Preservation Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m. on motion by Commissioner Stazin, second by Commissioner Salomon A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously by voice vote of 7-0.**