

CITY OF GENEVA, HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

MEETING LOCATION & HPC INFORMATION

Location:

Geneva City Hall
Council Chambers
109 James Street
Geneva, IL 60134

Time:

7:00 p.m.

Commissioners:

Paul Zellmer, Chairman
Jewel Jensen
Lisa McManus
Kevin Phillips
Mike Riebe
George Salomon
Andrew Tobler

Staff Liaison:

Emily Stood
Preservation Planner
630.938.4541
preservation@geneva.il.us



TUESDAY, December 16, 2025 MEETING

Call to Order

1. **Roll Call**
2. **Approval of Minutes**
November 18, 2025
3. **Review of Building Permit Applications** (Certificate of Appropriateness)
 - A. **521 South Street** CASE 2025-115
Applicant: Jon Rae
Application for: New Window on Addition (Plan Amendment)
 4. **Public Hearing**
 - A. **4 E State Street** CASE 2025-114
Applicant: Dave Patzelt
Application for: Demolition of a Historic Landmark
 5. **Secretary's Report (Staff Updates)**
 6. **New Business**
 - A. From the Commission
 - B. From the Public (*When recognized by the Chair, proceed to the podium, state your name for the record, and provide your public comments. Please understand that this is your time to be heard and the public body's time to listen. No discussion or debate will follow.*)
7. **Adjournment**

Next HPC Meeting: January 20, 2026

The Geneva Historic Preservation Commission meeting is audio-recorded, and summary minutes are transcribed by a recording secretary.

ADA Compliance: Any individual with a disability requesting a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in a public meeting should contact Emily Stood, Preservation Planner, at least 48 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting. Emily Stood can be reached in person at 22 South First Street, Geneva; by telephone at (630) 938-4541-0871; or via email at estood@geneva.il.us. Every effort will be made to allow for meeting participation. Notice of this meeting was posted consistent with the requirements of 5 ILCS 120/1 et seq. (Open Meetings Act).

Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes

City of Geneva

109 James Street - City Council Chambers

November 18, 2025

Call to Order

Commissioner McManus called the meeting of the Geneva Historic Preservation Commission to order at 7:00 pm on Tuesday, November 18, 2025.

1. Roll Call

Present: Commissioners Tobler, Phillips, Jensen, McManus, Riebe

Absent: Chairman Zellmer, Commissioner Salomon

Staff Present: Preservation Planner Emily Stood

Others Present: None

2. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of October 21, 2025

Motion by Commissioner Phillips, seconded by Commissioner Jensen to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2025, meeting. Motion passed by roll call vote (5-0).

3. Five Minute Field Guide

Preservation Planner Emily Stood presented a Five Minute Field Guide on the topics of permeability and porosity in building materials. The presentation included a live demonstration using historic bricks from New Orleans (c. 1830) and a local brick (c. 1915) to test capillary action and water absorption. The discussion covered how these properties affect building materials like brick, wood, stone, mortar, and finishes, leading to issues such as efflorescence, spalling, and rot. The importance of using breathable, historically appropriate materials like lime mortar and lime wash over modern alternatives like latex paint was emphasized to ensure the longevity of historic structures.

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

4a. 312 S Fifth Street

CASE 2025-107

Applicant: Sean Gallagher

Application: Door Replacement

Preservation Planner Emily Stood presented the staff report, detailing the property's history dating back to 1905 and its recognition with a Geneva Preservation Award in 1990. The current six-panel metal insulated door was installed in 2020 due to rot and was identified as non-historic and out of character with the home's architectural style. The proposal involved replacing this door with a custom-made wood door, designed as a replica of a more ornate and historic interior door located within the home's foyer. The new door would feature beveled glass and be painted to match the existing trim; no changes to the door surround or trim were proposed.

The applicant, Architect Sean Gallagher, addressed the Commission. He stated he was representing the new homeowners, and confirmed the scope was solely to replace the door slab to enhance the home's historic character. Commissioner Phillips inquired if any window treatment, such as a shade or drapery, was planned for the adjacent powder room window to address privacy concerns with the new door's glass. In response, Mr. Gallagher clarified that while a future treatment like a Roman shade was a possibility, it was not part of the current

application. He stated the homeowners would evaluate the need after the door is installed and they experience the sightlines firsthand. Commissioners expressed strong support for the project, noting the existing door was inappropriate and the proposed replica was a significant improvement that was consistent with the home's historic fabric.

Moved by Commissioner Jensen, seconded by Commissioner Phillips, to approve the application for the door replacement at 312 S Fifth Street as presented.

Ayes: Tobler, Jensen, McManus, Phillips, Riebe

Nays: None

Motion Passed: 5-0

4b. **512 Fargo Boulevard**

CASE 2025-111

Applicant: Rob Daggett

Application: Door Replacement

Staff introduced the property, an individual landmark with a construction date between 1860 and 1872. The history included the property being moved from Western Avenue in 1942, which resulted in significant modifications, including the removal of a full-width front porch. The current front door is a salvaged unit that is not original to the home. Staff showed images demonstrating the door is warped, difficult to operate, and has significant gaps, leading to energy inefficiency.

The property owner, Rob Daggett, testified to the functional deficiencies of the door, noting it requires stuffing towels around it in winter and that the hardware is inoperable. He stated the door is "functionally obsolete" and expressed a desire to replace it with a more appropriate and weather-tight option. The proposal was to install a new four-light, true divided light wood door, a design staff indicated was similar to a door known to have existed on the property historically. Commissioner Phillips inquired if the old door could be salvaged for reuse elsewhere, to which Mr. Daggett responded that it was in such poor condition that it was not a viable candidate for salvage. The Commission found the proposal to be an excellent solution that would resolve functional issues while restoring a more appropriate historic appearance to the landmarked structure.

Moved by Commissioner Tobler, seconded by Commissioner Jensen, to approve the application for the door replacement at 512 Fargo Boulevard as presented.

Ayes: Tobler, Jensen, McManus, Phillips, Riebe

Nays: None

Motion Passed: 5-0

5. Secretary's Report (*Staff Updates*)

Preservation Planner Emily Stood provided the following updates:

- **Permit Activity:** Construction permit activity leveled off to a normal volume after a particularly busy period the previous month.
- **Administrative Approvals:** Five permits were approved administratively for minor work that conforms to established guidelines. These included two sign permits, two walkway replacements, and one like-for-like roof replacement.

- **Ongoing Projects:** All other staff projects and initiatives are continuing to progress as scheduled.

6. New Business

6a. From the Commission

Commissioner Phillips inquired about the timeline for the East State Street application. Preservation Planner Stood confirmed that the process is on track and that a date for a combined public hearing and standard meeting would be announced soon, likely for the following month.

6b. From the Public

There were no comments from members of the public in attendance. Commissioners commented that a regular attendee, Al, was not present, and Staff noted he had kindly sent a prior email informing them of his absence.

7. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Phillips, seconded by Commissioner Jensen. Motion carried unanimously by verbal assent. Meeting adjourned at 7:31 PM.

CITY OF GENEVA, HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

December 16, 2025

HPC Case Number:
2025-115

Applicants / Owners

Jon Rae – Jon R
Construction Inc.

Request:

Change to existing permit
– new window on addition

Staff Liaison:

Emily Stood
Preservation Planner
(630)938.4541
preservation@geneva.il.us



AGENDA ITEM 3A

**521 W South St
New Window on Addition**



1999 – south side of home / South Street



2015 – west side of home

BACKGROUND

The 1999 Architectural Survey classified this property as Contributing in the local Geneva Historic District, and Contributing to the Central Geneva Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The 2016 National Park Service survey update confirmed this. Both the 1999 Architectural Survey and the 2016 update identify this residence as a Queen Anne style house built in 1885.

The Snyder family resided at the property beginning as early as 1899. Mr. and Mrs. Harry and Luella Snyder often hosted or nursed members of her family, the More family, at the house. The family was also known to keep chickens on the property, and had impressive tulips. Their daughter Mary Jeannette Snyder, who worked in private nursing, remained at the house until at least 1974. According to Geneva Republican real estate transfer records, she was added to the deed in 1944, and she and her parents remained at the home together. The Snyder family also included Ruth and Robert Snyder, who did not appear to remain in the home through their adulthood.

When the National Register District was established in 1979, Roy Harsch and Leslie Vieau were listed as property owners.

PERMIT HISTORY:

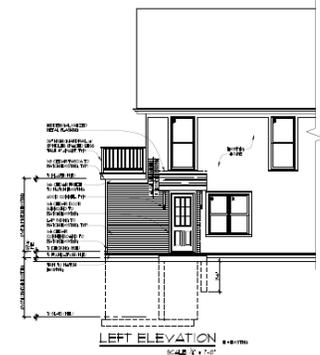
- 1999: Re-Roof
- 2000: New Deck
- 2003: 3 Car Detached Garage
- 2004: Convert Attached Garage to Living Space
- 2004: Brick Paver Walkway
- 2022: Re-Roof
- 2025: Re-roof

REQUEST 3A:

New Window on Addition

HPC Case #2025-115

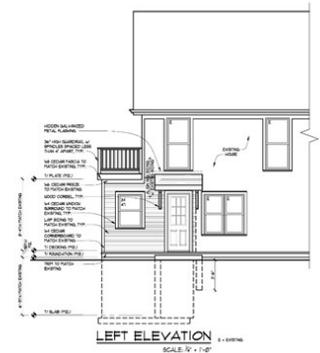
This Applicant is proposing a change to the existing permit, which appeared before the HPC in June of 2025 and again in October 2025. This change would be the addition of a window on the west elevation of the addition which has already been approved. Desire for the additional window was identified during the construction process of the rest of the addition, which is ongoing.



Current Permit Drawings

STAFF ANALYSIS

The window would be applied to the new addition, so it would not affect any historic material on the house. The proposed window mimics the character of existing windows and other windows on the same addition, with a 1"x4" cedar surround to match existing.

**Review for Conformity to SOI Standards**

Staff submits, for the Commission's review and discussion, the following analysis of the SOI Standards as applied to the proposed project:

New Proposal

1. **A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.**
No change in designated use is proposed.
2. **The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.**
No historic materials would be affected.
3. **Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.** *The proposed window mimics the existing windows as well as the windows on the addition which have already been approved. No additional decorative items would be included.*
4. **Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.** *The addition proposed to be affected has not been completed yet and so has not acquired historic significance.*

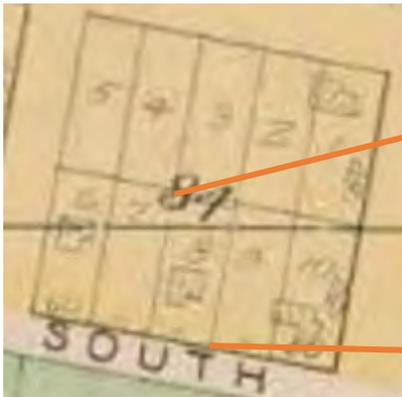
5. **Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.** *No historic materials would be affected by this change.*
6. **Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.** *No historic materials would be affected by this change.*
7. **Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.** *No chemical or physical treatments of existing materials, scheduled to remain, are proposed.*
8. **Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.** *No archeological resources are known to exist or are expected to be encountered in the proposed area of work.*
9. **New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.** *The body of the new addition has been approved as compatible and differentiable. This window would be compatible in material and type with existing windows, and would match the other windows on the addition.*
10. **New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.** *A new window on this addition would not change the effect of the overall addition on the essential form and integrity of the historic property.*

Design Guidelines for Historic Properties

Staff submits, for the Commission's review and discussion, the following analysis of the adopted *Design Guidelines for Historic Properties* as applied to the proposed project:

Allow Building Expansions that Maintain the Character of the Historic Building. *The Applicants' original proposal presented an addition that is sympathetic to the character of the building. The addition of the window would not detract from the character of the building as it would not affect historic materials and would be compatible with the existing windows.*

Historic Maps + Images



1892 Atlas



1999 Survey



2016 Survey



2016 Survey - Rear

Site



Approximate area of addition

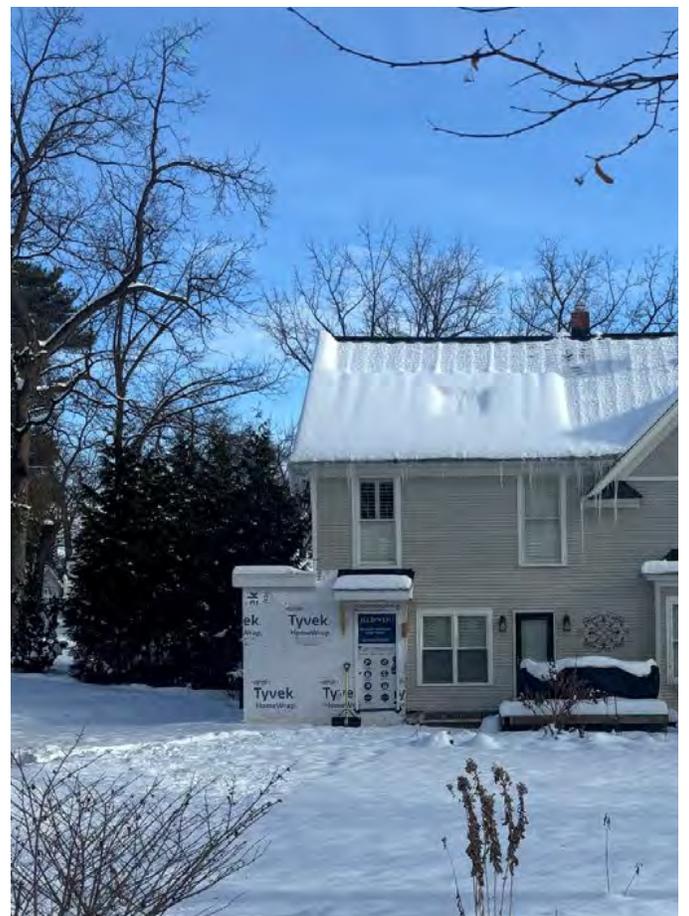
Existing Condition



Pre-Construction



September Progress



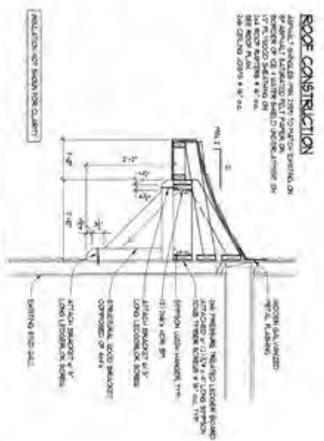
December Progress

Approved Proposal

BASEMENT DEMOLITION PLAN
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



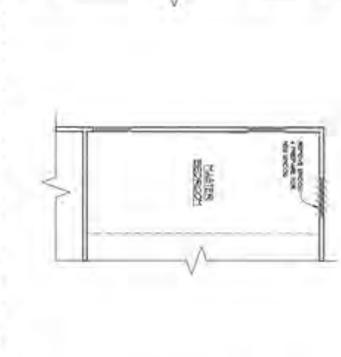
TYPICAL CORBEL DETAIL
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



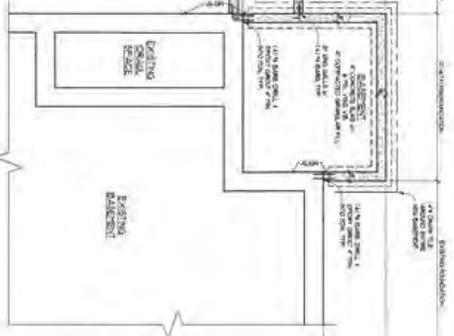
FIRST FLOOR DEMOLITION PLAN
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



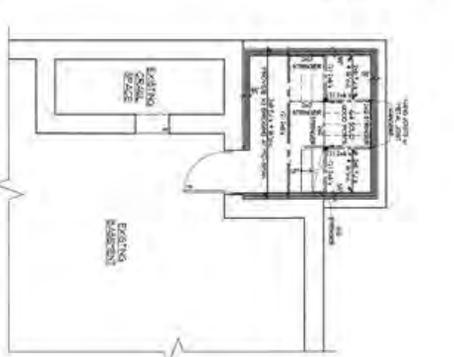
SECOND FLOOR DEMOLITION PLAN
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



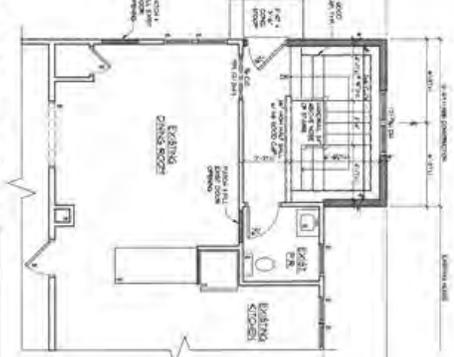
FOUNDATION PLAN
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



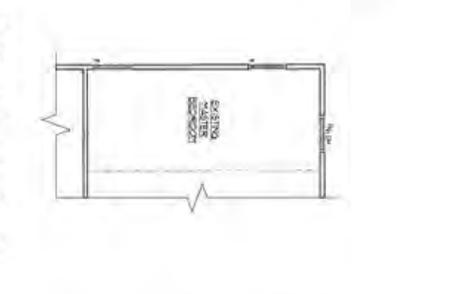
BASEMENT PLAN
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



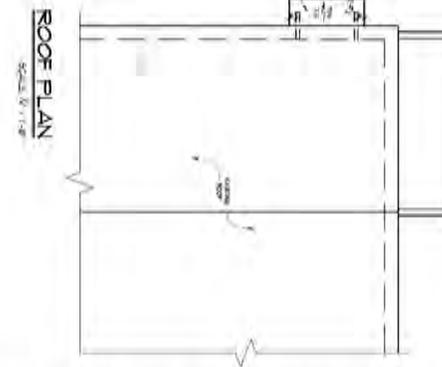
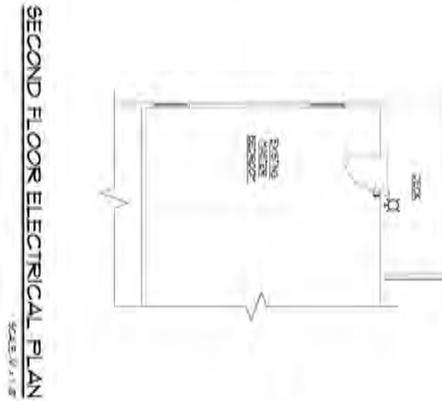
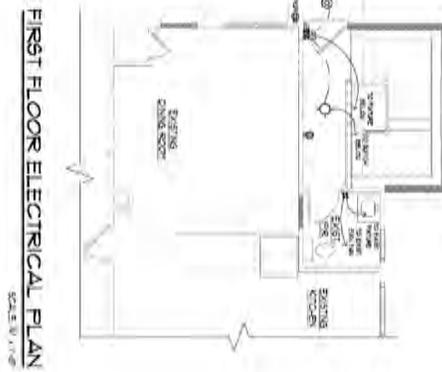
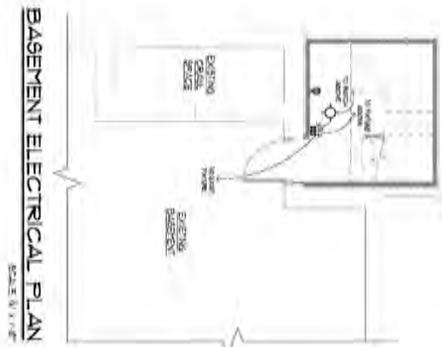
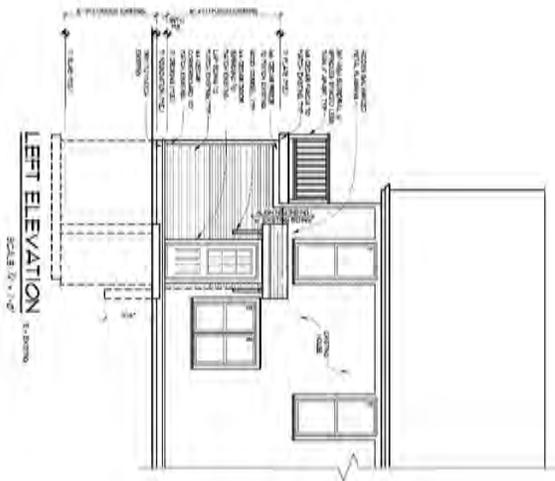
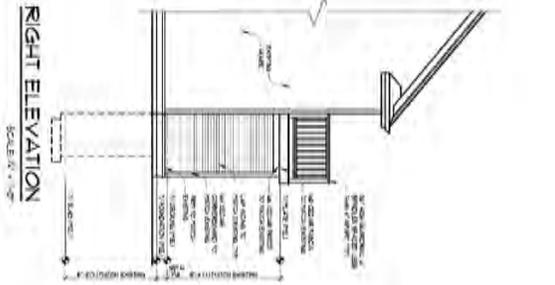
FIRST FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



SECOND FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

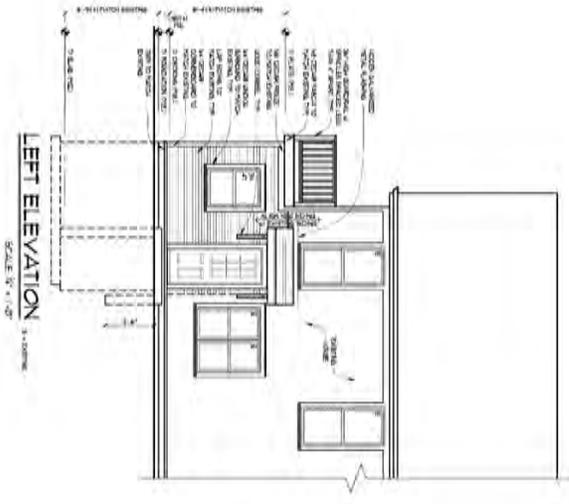
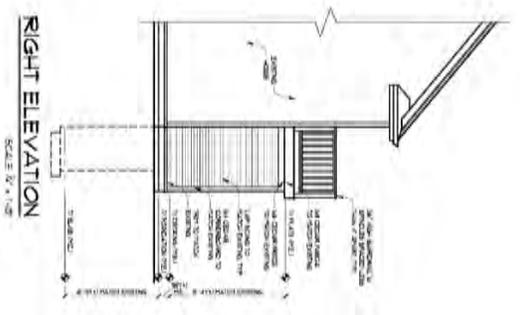
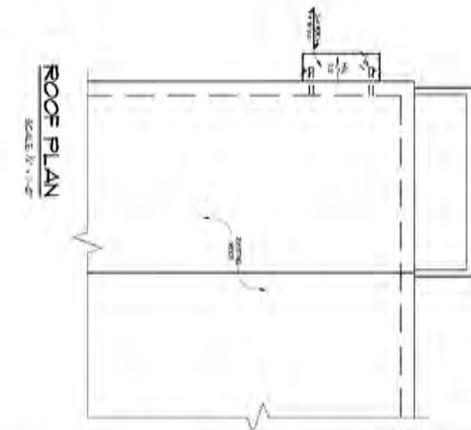
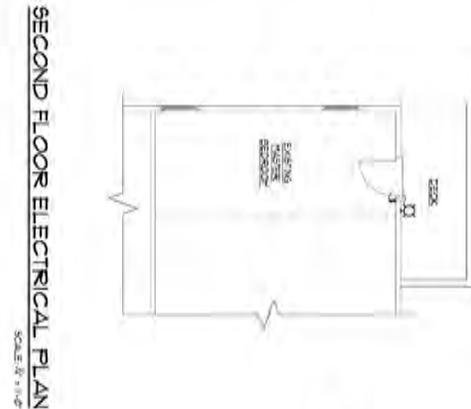
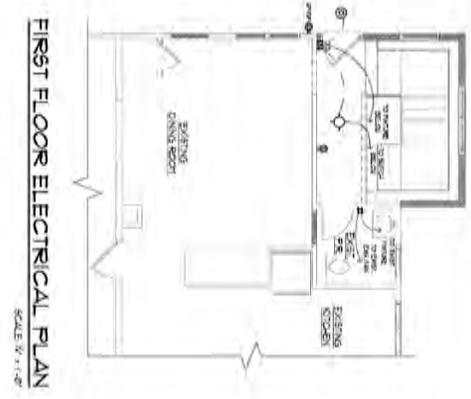
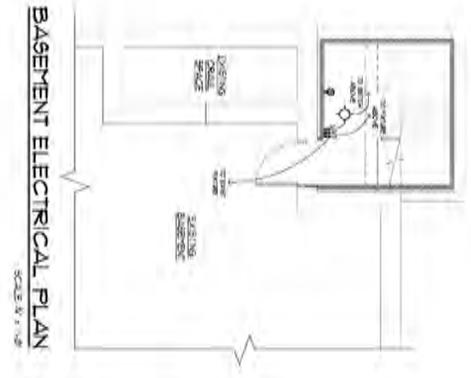


<p>2</p>		<p>3</p>		<p>ADDITION & REMODELING FOR: RICH & JULIE KRIEGER 521 SOUTH STREET GENEVA, ILLINOIS 60134</p>	<p>TIM NELSON ARCHITECT, LTD. Custom Homes • Additions • Remodeling</p> <p>121 North Country Lane P.O. Box 100000 Chicago, IL 60610 Tel: 773.334.1100 Fax: 773.334.1101 tim@timnelson.com</p>	<p>Project No. 100000 Date: 10/10/10 Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"</p>
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<p>NO. 3</p>		<p>NO. 3</p>		<p>ADDITION & REMODELING FOR RICH & JULIE KRIEGER 521 SOUTH STREET GENEVA, ILLINOIS 60134</p>	<p>TIM NELSON ARCHITECT, LTD. Custom Homes • Additions • Remodeling 1111 Lakeside Drive • Geneva, IL 60134 Tel: 630-208-0100 • Fax: 630-208-0101 tim@timnelsonarchitect.com</p>	<p>DATE: 11/11/14 DRAWN BY: JN CHECKED BY: JN PROJECT NO: 14-001</p>
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New Proposal



<p>3</p>		<p>3</p>		<p>ADDITION & REMODELING FOR: RICH & JULIE KRIEGER 521 SOUTH STREET GENEVA, ILLINOIS 60134</p>	<p>TIM NELSON ARCHITECT, LTD. Custom Homes • Additions • Remodeling</p> <p>411 Lakeside Center Dr. #200 Schaumburg, IL 60196 Tel: 630-206-1100 Fax: 630-206-1101 www.timnelsonarchitect.com</p>	<p>DATE: 10/20/14 DRAWN BY: JLN CHECKED BY: JLN PROJECT NO: 14-001</p>
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CITY OF GENEVA, HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

December 16, 2025

AGENDA ITEM 4A

4 East State Street
Permit Review

Applicant:

David Patzelt

Request:

Demolition of historic structure.

HPC Case Number:

2025-114

Staff Liaison:

Emily Stood
Preservation Planner
(630)938-4541
estood@geneva.il.us

BACKGROUND AND NOTIFICATION

The applicant has requested demolition of the designated Historic Landmark property at 4 East State Street. The site is generally known as the “Mill Race Inn” property, but the property—also—is identified by a number of significant occupants of the structure over time:

- The Alexander Brothers’ Blacksmith Shop (c. 1844 – 1853)
- The Rystrom Carriage Shop (1854 – c. 1878)
- C. E. Mann Wagon Manufacturing & Blacksmithing (c. 1882 – c. 1884)
- The C. E. Mann Cooperage (c. 1882 – c. 1891)
- Excelsior / Carlson Laundry (1892 – 1897)
- The Kirk Building (c. 1902 – c. 1922)
- John Updike Carriage Painting Shop (1904 – 1906)
- Anderson & Culberg Blacksmith and Wagon Shop (1906 - c. 1912)
- Mill Race Inn Restaurant (1933 - 2011)



2017-2018 Demolition Request & Landmark Nomination

In December 2017, David A. Patzelt, representative for the Shodeen Family Foundation, applied for a demolition permit of the limestone structure that had been erected as the Alexander Brothers' Blacksmith Shop between 1840 and 1847.

On December 27, 2017 and in response to the filed demolition permit request, Geneva resident Fred H. Zinke submitted a nomination for Historic Landmark designation of 4 East State Street, Geneva, Illinois. The request for Historic Landmark determination was considered based on historic significance separate and apart from condition assessment, economic feasibility, and/or future uses. Following a public hearing and a recommendation by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) on March 20, 2018, the City Council designated the 4 East State Street property as a Historic Landmark on May 7, 2018 per Ordinance 2018-09.

Within the identified Period of Significance (circa 1846 – 1945), the Historic Landmark designation of 4 East State Street recognized the property for many important attributes and criteria including its:

- integrity of design, materials, workmanship, setting, location, feeling and association;
- connection with early, water-powered industry along the Fox River;
- broad cultural and economic association with the development of the Geneva community;
- association with significant individuals and events in Geneva's development; and
- distinguishing characteristic of an architectural type inherently valuable for the study of a period, style, method of construction or use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship.

2019 - 2020 Charrette Process and Development Parameters

On April 15, 2019 the City Council passed Resolution 2019-40 approving a tax increment financing agreement between the City of Geneva and the Shodeen Family Foundation for a planning charrette and entitlement project related to the redevelopment of former Mill Race Inn property. The Resolution also authorized the City Administrator to execute a contract with Hitchcock Design Group to facilitate the planning charrette and manage the entitlement process.

The planning charrette was intended to create community consensus on an acceptable course of action to design for the future retail, lodging, residential, and/or mixed-use redevelopment of the property. The charrette was held between June 24, 2019 and June 27, 2019 and at the conclusion of the charrette the local charrette team recommended a redevelopment strategy that included 116 rental apartments, 8 townhomes, 2,000 square feet of ground floor commercial space, 155 covered parking spaces, public riverfront improvements including seasonal commercial space, and deconstruction and reinterpretation of the historic landmark structure.

There were concerns raised regarding the recommended redevelopment strategy by members of the public as well as members of the City Council and it was not clear that consensus has been reached. Therefore, a Resolution was advanced in the hopes of establishing basic development parameters that would allow the project to advance to the entitlement phase to work through the concerns that have been raised. The entitlement phase would allow for further detailed review by the Historic Preservation Commission, Planning & Commission, and City Council. On July 15, 2019, the City Council passed Resolution 2019-73 (attached) establishing basic development parameters to be used in preparing a redevelopment plan for the Mill Race site. The parameters addressed permitted uses, parking, bulk regulations, public riverfront access from private property, and the historic landmark on the site - specifically that the historic landmark may be deconstructed and reinterpreted in a nearby location that fits with the land use plan. However, as stated in Section 3 of the

Resolution, the development parameters were not to be construed as an approval of a demolition permit for historic landmark. All required plans and supporting data required for demolition of the historic landmark as set forth in the City Code were still to be required and reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission.

On November 30, 2020 the City Council considered a redevelopment plan that included 120 apartments, 7 townhomes, 1,720 square feet of commercial space, and reusing the stone from the historic structure to veneer masonry columns framing pedestrian access to the riverfront. The Resolution to authorize the consultant to proceed with the entitlement process for the proposed redevelopment plan failed by a unanimous vote.

2022 Landmark Boundary Amendment

On January 14, 2022, David A. Patzelt, representative for the Shodeen Family Foundation met with City staff at a Pre-Application Meeting in preparation for the submittal of an application requesting to rescind Historic Landmark designation for 4 East State Street. Following that meeting, City staff provided to Mr. Patzelt a copy of the most recent research about the historical development of the designated property.

On March 17, 2022, Mr. Patzelt submitted an application to consider the Rescinding of Historic Landmark Designation for the property located at 4 East State Street, Geneva. The submitted application—requesting a boundary amendment, in essence—was reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission on April 19, 2022. After deliberation, a motion was made and seconded to “*recommend (to the Geneva City Council) the rescinding of designation for a portion of the subject property per the applicant’s request, subject to staff’s recommendation*” that included a larger parcel surrounding the historic limestone blacksmith shop than had been requested by the Applicant. The motion passed unanimously, 7:0. The HPC recommendation was brought before the Geneva City Council on May 2, 2022. With the adoption of Ordinance 2022-23, the Council supported the Commission’s recommendation unanimously, 10:0.

2022-2023 Demolition Request

On October 11, 2022, Mr. Patzelt submitted applications to demolish the historic stone structure and de-designate the property. The demolition request included only the historic stone structure and did not include the remnant concrete foundations of later additions that were not removed from the site in 2016. Pursuant to staff review, modified applications were submitted on November 22, 2022 and on December 8, 2022. A public hearing was held on January 18, 2023, and continued to the following dates: March 14, 2023; April 18, 2023; May 2, 2023; June 20, 2023; and July 18, 2023. On August 15, 2023 the Historic Preservation Commission denied the applications for demolition and de-designation by a unanimous vote of 7-0. On September 7, 2023 the applicant requested the City Council consider an appeal of the determination. On September 26, 2023 the City Council unanimously upheld the Historic Preservation Commission’s determination by a vote of 9-0. On October 27, 2023 the applicant filed suit seeking judicial review and reversal of the denial. On June 10, 2024, Judge Kevin Busch affirmed the City’s decision to deny the petition was legal.

2023-2024 Code Enforcement

On November 15, 2023 the City issued a notice to the property owner citing violations of the adopted International Property Maintenance Code, specifically Sections 304.2, 304.6, and 304.7 regarding protective treatment, exterior walls, and roofs and drainage. On March 12, 2024, without any work being completed to bring the property into compliance, Mr. Patzelt submitted an application proposing to remove the existing wood roof structure, remove the temporary wood framed walls, and cover the top of the remaining stone walls with a tarp that would be secure with a 2x4 fastened to the stone walls. On March 14, 2024 the City issued a second notice informing Mr. Patzelt the proposed work would not correct the cited violations and that the proposed work qualifies as a demolition under Section 10-6-10(2) of the City Code, requiring review and

approval by the Historic Preservation Commission. A summons to appear before the Hearing Officer regarding the cited violations was issued on May 6, 2024.

The hearing was initially scheduled for June 20, 2024 but was continued in order to allow for the application to remove the wood roof and temporary wood frame walls and cover the stone walls with a tarp to undergo review. That demolition application was then withdrawn on July 16, 2024, so the hearing process was continued, with the understanding that a redevelopment plan would be submitted within 60 days. At that point, the City was informed a redevelopment plan would not be submitted without the issuance of a demolition permit for the landmark. On September 19, 2024, the hearing officer ordered that the building be made weather tight by October 17, 2024. In response, Shodeen filed for judicial review of the determination.

A ruling on the case was issued on September 30, 2025 in the City's favor and affirming the determination of the hearing officer that the building would be required to be made weather tight.

Current Demolition Request

On September 24, 2025, David A. Patzelt, representative for the Shodeen Family Foundation, met with City staff at a Pre-Application Meeting in preparation for the submittal of an application requesting to demolish the Historic Landmark located at 4 E State Street.

On October 20, 2025, David A. Patzelt, representative for the Mill Race Land Company, L.L.C., submitted an application to consider the Demolition of the property located at 4 East State Street, Geneva. The submitted application was reviewed for completeness and accuracy by City staff, who provided written review comments and requests for clarifications and documentation to the Applicant on October 28, 2025. The Applicant submitted a revised nomination on October 31, 2025.

On October 28, 2025, a Notice of Filing of the request for Demolition of 4 East State Street was mailed to the Owners of Record for all adjoining properties within 500 feet of the designated property.

On October 29, 2025, signs advertising the public hearing were posted at the designated property along State Street.

On December 1, 2025, [a webpage dedicated to the potential 4 E State St demolition](#) was created and a notice of a public hearing to consider the request for Demolition of 4 East State Street, Geneva was duly published in the *Daily Herald* newspaper. Additionally, a second notice was sent by certified mail to the Owners of Record for all adjoining properties within 500 feet of the designated property, including information on the date and time of the public hearing. The public hearing was scheduled to be heard before the Geneva Historic Preservation Commission on December 16, 2025.

On December 5, an updated applicant letter was submitted, with no changes to the remaining application materials.

PERMIT REQUEST

The Applicant is requesting a demolition of the Historic Landmark located at 4 E State street with an application focus on Standard Four of the Standards for Demolition Review, described in City Code, Section 10-6-10.B. Standard Four argues that, "The retention of a building, structure, object, improvement, or site is not in the best interest of the majority of the community." [The application is available to view on the City of Geneva Development Projects website.](#)

STAFF REVIEW OF THE SUBMITTED APPLICATION

This demolition would signify the loss of the vernacular structure at 4 E State Street which is one of few physical remainders of the early development in the area. No development has occurred in the area, and without demolition or removal of the landmark structure, no development is likely to occur.

The HPC is *not* being asked to re-examine the significance of the designated property—which includes the *circa* 1846, limestone blacksmith shop; significance was determined by HPC and City Council action in 2018. The HPC is *not* being asked to re-examine the appropriateness of the boundaries of the Historic Landmark that were modified by HPC and City Council action in 2022. The application under review is solely for demolition of the historic structure; there is no additional development proposed in this application. As such, the HPC is *not* being asked to examine any work at the site beyond the demolition described in this application.

The submitted application includes many of the same documents which were submitted in the 2023 demolition request. This demolition request has shifted focus to Standard Four of Section 10-6-10.B of the City Code, which says, “The retention of a building, structure, object, improvement, or site is not in the best interest of the majority of the community.” Much of the Applicant’s new data on this specific condition is described in the Response of Item B of their application.

The site has been identified as Opportunity Site 6 in the Downtown Station-Area Master Plan. The Mill Race Inn, located at 4 E State Street, was identified in that report as an included item on the City’s Historic Resources List, which is appended to the 2008 City of Geneva Historic Preservation Plan. This Master Plan was adopted in November of 2012, before the demolition of the portion of the Mill Race Inn which revealed the existing structure. Opportunity sites identify areas that have a high likelihood or potential for development. They are not an attempt to predict what properties will develop or in what manner.

TIF No 3 was established in 2016, in keeping with the Strategic Plan Vision 2, which aims to, “Maintain, sustain, and enhance the character, vibrancy, uniqueness, and desirability of our various business districts and corridors.” The Redevelopment Plan and Project related to the TIF shall be completed, and all obligations issued to finance redevelopment costs shall be retired, no later than December 31, 2039.



Updated Images from Application

STANDARDS FOR DEMOLITION REVIEW

Per Geneva City Code, Section 10-6-10.B, the request shall be evaluated based on the evidence presented, provided that the demolition improves or corrects one (1) or more of the following conditions:

- 1. A building, structure, object, improvement, or site that constitutes a hazard to the safety and welfare of the general public or occupants of the improvement, property, or site as determined, in consultation with the preservation planner, by the City of Geneva Building Official, Code Enforcement Officer, Chief of Police, and Fire Chief;*
- 2. A building, structure, object, improvement, or site that is a deterrent to a major improvement program that will be of substantial benefit to the community for which the applicant has secured all necessary and required planning and zoning approvals, environmental clearances, and project financing;*
- 3. The retention of a building, structure, object, improvement, or site that will cause undue economic hardship to the owner of record when a governmental action, an act of God, or other events beyond the control of the applicant created the hardship and all feasible alternatives to eliminate the financial hardship (which may include sale of the property at fair market value or relocation of the improvement to another site) have been attempted and exhausted by the applicant; or*
- 4. The retention of a building, structure, object, improvement, or site is not in the best interest of the majority of the community.*

COMMISSION REVIEW

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) shall consider the application and testimony from the Petitioner in combination with testimony from interested parties in regard to the proposed demolition of the property addressed as 4 East State Street, Geneva.

The HPC is granted the responsibility to evaluate the request for demolition in accordance with Geneva City Code, Section 10-6-10.A9:

Commission Action. The commission shall consider only the property, building, structure, feature, or object proposed for demolition; the merit of any proposed replacement construction or improvement shall not be a standard of review for a demolition request.

The commission may solicit expert testimony to evaluate information provided either as part of demolition application or at the public hearing.

The HPC is authorized to solicit expert opinion; however, the ordinance does not provide a clear process for the authorization of soliciting expert testimony or the identification of minimum qualifications for expert testimony when so requested by the Commission.

The responsibility to evaluate the request for demolition in accordance with Geneva City Code, Section 10-6-10.A9 continues:

A public hearing may be continued to a date certain in the event that the commission determines that additional information, unavailable at the public hearing, is warranted and necessary for the purpose of making a finding of fact.

Additionally, the commission may continue a public hearing to the next regularly-scheduled meeting of the commission to provide time to fully evaluate new evidence presented at the public hearing.

Furthermore, the commission may continue a public hearing regarding a request for demolition for a specified period of time, not-to-exceed one hundred twenty (120) calendar days, for the sole purpose of allowing the applicant and the commission to seek alternatives to demolition when the commission determines that all of the following conditions exist:

- a. The property itself, or in relation to its environs, has significant historical, architectural, aesthetic or cultural value in its present condition;*
- b. Realistic alternatives for preservation for the property-including adaptive uses-are believed to be neither cost prohibitive nor beyond the limits of local market value; and*
- c. The property, in its existing condition, does not present a public health or safety hazard to individuals, neighboring properties or the greater community.*

Furthermore, the HPC—based on the probable time required to hear all cases scheduled for the Commission meeting at which the public hearing is scheduled—may limit the time for hearing testimony concerning the request and continue the public hearing to the next regularly-scheduled meeting of the Commission.

The responsibility to evaluate the request for demolition in accordance with Geneva City Code, Section 10-6-10.A9 continues:

When the commission postpones a recommendation regarding a demolition request (for a specified period of time, not-to-exceed one hundred twenty (120) calendar days, for the sole purpose of allowing the applicant and the commission to seek alternatives to demolition), the commission shall retract said postponement when the commission determines that an applicant has:

- a. Made a bona fide and reasonable, but unsuccessful, effort to locate a purchaser for the property who is willing to preserve, rehabilitate, or restore the improvement, property, or site;*
- b. Made a bona fide and reasonable, but unsuccessful, effort to locate a purchaser for the improvement who is willing and able to relocate the improvement to another property or site;*
- c. Made a bona fide and reasonable, but unsuccessful, effort to develop a cost-effective program for the preservation of the improvement; and*
- d. Agreed to accept a demolition permit on specified conditions of the commission.*

When a Historic Landmark is lost due to demolition, the HPC may request documentation of the property prior to demolition so that the architectural and historic character of the property is recorded, in perpetuity, for future study and awareness as provided in the Geneva City Code, Section 10-6-10.A9:

When the commission considers a request for demolition, an applicant may be required, as a condition of demolition approval, to prepare and submit, prior to the commencement of demolition work, the following documentation of a building, structure, object, improvement, or site that is designated as a historic landmark or identified as a contributing or significant property within a designated historic district:

- a. Site plan (scale not less than one (1) inch equals 20'-0");*
- b. Floor plans of each level (scale not less than 1/8" equals 1'-0");*
- c. Elevations of each side of the property improvement (scale not less than 1/8" equals 1'-0");*
and

d. Photographs of each elevation and significant, interior or exterior architectural feature as determined by the commission (clear, black and white images).

In any case, the Geneva City Code, Section 10-6-10.A9 requires a determination within a specific period:

The commission shall make written findings of fact within forty-five (45) calendar days following the close of the public hearing.

The commission may grant a demolition request for a historic landmark or a property within a historic district if, upon review of all testimony, the maintenance, use, and/or alteration of the property would cause immediate and substantial hardship for the owners of record because rehabilitation in a manner which preserves the architectural, historic, or structural integrity of the property either:

a. Is infeasible from a technical, mechanical, or structural perspective; or

b. Would leave the property with no reasonable economic value because it would require an unreasonable expenditure when accounting for such factors as current market value, permitted uses of the property, and/or the cost of compliance with local, state, and federal codes applicable to the property.

The commission, by a simple majority vote, shall grant or deny the application for demolition.

NEXT STEPS FOLLOWING COMMISSION REVIEW OF THE REQUESTS

If the request to demolish and remove historic building materials to the *circa* 1846 Alexander Brothers' Blacksmith Shop, a limestone structure designated as a local Historic Landmark, is denied by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), the Geneva City Code, Section 10-6-10A.10 states:

Appeal of a Demolition Denial to City Council. If an application for any demolition work is not approved by the historic preservation commission, then the applicant may request, in writing, to the director of community development that an appeal of the commission's decision be made to the city council.

Both the applicant and the commission have the right to be heard at the appeal proceedings.

Upon consideration of the written record of the commission's decision and the applicant's appeal, the city council shall grant or deny the application for proposed demolition work.

Within thirty (30) calendar days after such an appeal is made, the city council shall, by resolution, affirm, or reverse the commission's determination according to the applicable standards set forth in this chapter. In accordance with said standards, the city council may also modify the commission's determination. A reversal or modification of the commission's determination shall be approved by a vote of not less than two-thirds (2/3) of the aldermen then holding office.

From the date of filing until a final determination is made by either the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) or City Council, "no alteration, construction, demolition or removal" is allowed except ordinary repair and maintenance.

If demolition is approved, the site must be restored and maintained per City Code until such time that development of the property occurs. However, any authorization for demolition is only valid for twelve (12) months from the date of approval.