

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES
Geneva Fire Department – Lower Level Training Room
200 East Side Drive
Geneva, Illinois 60134

January 17, 2017, 7:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order

Chairman Roy called to order the January 17, 2017 meeting of the Geneva Historic Preservation Commission at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present HPC: Chairman Roy, Commissioners Hamilton, Hiller, Zellmer, Zinke

Absent: Commissioners Collins and Salomon

Staff Present: Historic Preservation Planner Michael Lambert

Others Present: Applicants Annette & Bob Forslund, 428 Ford St., Geneva; Mr. Sean Gallagher, Gallagher Associates, 427 Anderson Blvd., Geneva

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes – December 20, 2016

Motion by Commissioner Hiller, seconded by Commissioner Zellmer to approve the December 20, 2016 minutes. Motion carried by voice vote of 5-0.

4. Review of Proposed Development Concepts

A. 428 Ford Street (Case No. 2016-138). Applicant: Annette and Bob Forslund, Owners; Mark D. VanKerkhoff, Architect; Application for: Exterior Modifications including Porch Reconstruction and Addition. Historic Preservation Planner Michael Lambert reported the modifications for this home included restoration of two front porches and a new addition to the home. The western (upright) section of the home was constructed before 1856 (occupied by Jacob Bennett) and then by 1867 August Jennings added the one-story east wing (a worker's cottage) pushed up against the upright to make an Upright and Wing home. Viewing the western elevation, Mr. Lambert pointed out on the rear elevation there was a pitched roof that looked like an addition, but after viewing the framing, came to believe it may have been an early kitchen encapsulated into the home, possibly around 1900. In about 1902 the front porch was added on the upright; and around WWII the porches appeared to have been removed and the house was raised and set on a concrete foundation.

Pictures and elevations of what the owners were trying to achieve were viewed on the overhead. An existing floor plan was shown. Mr. Lambert stated there was a rear addition that appeared in 1890 but was heavily remodeled around the turn of the century, then remodeled again around 1920 with cobbled-together windows on the east side of the building. He also suggested to the commissioners that they may want to review the addition to see if there was any historical significance to it. Mr. Lambert stated the existing garage needed to be confirmed as historic. He felt it was constructed in the late 1960s but it needed to be confirmed.

The applicants' proposed addition was shown on the overhead with Mr. Lambert stating the applicants intend to remove the rear addition and to restore the two front porches. A roof plan was

also shown. He did note the owners were trying to incorporate green and sustainable architecture in their home and trying to designate an area on the building that would use a solar panel field. Lastly, Mr. Lambert reported that this project was being reviewed as part of the City's tax assessment freeze project. The Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA) had provided some comments but they were still reviewing the project.

Applicant, Mr. Bob Forslund, provided some personal background information to the commissioners and shared his and his wife's plans for the subject property, including the return of the porches to the home and keeping its integrity. After working with his architect, Mr. Forslund said that he and his wife agreed on the plan that was before the commission. His vision for the home was to tuck the home into the rear yet keep the historical upfront. He confirmed the project was under review by the State and he hoped to receive approval from this commission and then work with the State.

Comments from the commissioners included that it was beneficial to have the 1905 historical photograph of the home, seeing that it had not changed much over the years, and that pursuing the tax freeze was a plus. Isolating the old from the new was another plus. Commissioner Hiller believed the home had to be made livable, given the original home was small. Per his question about the upstairs area, Mr. Forslund described the second floor as having two rooms and the height of the second floor being very short. Dialog between Hiller and the applicants focused on the differentiation between the old and the new, the fact that landscaping would screen the new portion well, and that lot coverage was being met.

Commissioner Hiller drew attention to the window just to the right of the front door which he found interesting. Lambert agreed it was interesting but it appeared to be a double-hung and cobbled together. Ms. Forslund also explained her difficulty envisioning the home but said that if the kitchen had to be reduced in size, the home could be brought in a bit from the east side because she was not sure about the dimensions that were needed. Commissioner Zellmer agreed the roof was massive on the west side but it would not read as large because it was set back further. Other comments the owners shared was that the lot was very deep toward the east.

Mr. Lambert discussed that he spoke with the IHPA about what their expectations were with this home and a few other, similar historic homes. He was of the belief that the IHPA will want to push down the roof's ridge line. And, because the additions on these smaller homes were larger than the original homes, the IHPA would be encouraging them as contemporary interpretations of the historic homes. As a last comment he stated that the addition on the proposed home should not be forward of any of the original historic wall planes.

Commissioner Zellmer discussed a stairway that flowed into the basement behind the fireplace which the owners stated they struggled with its location. Regarding the second story, Mr. Forslund shared that he and his wife were considering opening it up to see the second floor (like an interior veranda) but keep the original interior's integrity. Per Hiller's question about compliance of the steep steps of the staircase, Mr. Lambert explained that as long as they were not altered in any way, they remained. He reiterated to the commissioners that the issue the IHPA would be looking at is what were the critical features.

Commissioner Zinke appreciate the owners purchasing one of the city's pre-Civil War "gems" and keeping and using the home. However, she felt that the addition might overwhelm the original house, wherein Ms. Forslund explained that her goal was to have four seasons of landscaping to keep the newest part of the home secluded and private. Commissioner Zinke then encouraged the owners to keep the outside decorations simple and possibly consider using more glass in the north elevation. She recommended that the connection to the new addition have as

much glass as possible to differentiate where the addition starts as well as in the location where it "juts in". She cited a small Federal-style home she has seen in Buford, South Carolina which connects a new addition with the historical home using a wall of glass. Zinke said she would take a photo of the glass wall and email it to Mr. Lambert to forward to Ms. Forslund. Because Ms. Forslund discussed her dislike for two windows located on the north elevation she was open to Zinke's suggestion. However, Mr. Lambert pointed out that one of the reasons the courtyard discussion was being discussed was that the two oldest and narrow windows were on the elevation and could be seen clearly from Ford Street. He said he had asked the Forslunds to consider the two windows in their design.

Continuing, Commissioner Zinke also recommended that if the all glass idea became impractical she suggested the owners ask their architect to come up with another alternative to differentiate the addition. Ms. Forslund offered the idea of possibly pushing the bedroom back further. Commissioner Zellmer recommended the bedroom be pulled as far back possible to get it behind the plane. Referring to the Ford Street elevation he also suggested that the proportions of the bedroom on the north elevation, because they were so close to the existing house that it be refined somewhat. Ms. Forslund was, again, open to that idea because she did not particular like it either. Lastly, reviewing the floor plan, Zellmer discussed the interior and suggested pulling in an area just a bit so a corner could then be exposed.

Asked for his input on this matter, Mr. Lambert stated that in dealing with the tax assessment freeze, the primary spaces needed to be preserved, noting that in speaking with the owners he had discussed with them that the three original spaces that made up the cottage were the primary spaces of a workman's cottage. He has discussed the connection to the corner with the owners on several occasions, but the room under discussion did not have much integrity and so the challenge was how to make the connection through the worker's cottage into the addition and it appeared the applicants were still trying to work through that issue.

Commissioner Zinke questioned the owners about the location of the proposed stairway and whether it had to be placed where it was proposed, wherein Mr. Forslund stated they struggled with its location but said the goal was to make it larger and inviting because they intended to finish the basement. Also, Ms. Forslund said the fireplace was in its location in order to see it across the entire house.

Going back to the glass wall and discussing what else could be done to differentiate the old from the new, Commissioner Zellmer stated that different siding could be used, board and batten, or something that was fitting with the style but not replicating it. Zinke said brick/masonry could be used, Mr. Lambert interjected that IHPA would likely not support an introduction of a masonry material on a wood-framed structure.

Returning to the main point of the discussion, Mr. Lambert asked the commissioners whether the scale of the addition was broken down satisfactorily or was there anything in the concept that was concerning in regard to the standards set forth in Geneva's *Design Guidelines for Historic Properties*. Hiller inquired about the floor area ratio (FAR) figures, mentioning there was a bonus if a detached garage was incorporated into the plans. Mr. Forslund confirmed they were well within the FAR numbers. Commissioner Hamilton stated that his initial concern was the very large addition, but after hearing about the landscaping screening and such, he was fine with it. He did question when the rear sunroom was constructed, wherein Mr. Lambert recalled that it first showed up on the 1891 Sanborn Map and that it was not a porch. It had gone through a number of renovations. Hamilton expressed concern about demolishing the utilitarian part of the home. Mr. Lambert explained that while this part of the home was visible from the corner, he was unable

to determine what the function of the space was, pointing out that the floor and space had gone through many renovations over time. He questioned whether it had any integrity.

The commissioners then moved to discuss the addition's ridge lines with Zinke mentioning she read somewhere that the state was insisting that the addition's ridge lines of the roof not be any taller than the ridge line of the original house. Mr. Lambert explained that this was a comment that was consistently coming up with all of the four small homes within the Geneva Historic District and that are under consideration for modifications. It was a general guideline that IHPA was seeking. Zinke pointed out that the project clearly had higher ridge lines than the original home. Mr. Lambert stated he did discuss this issue with the owners.

Chairman Roy also voiced concern about the tall height of the ridge lines and asked to have them lowered. The other issue he had was the translation from the outside to the plane noting that if there could be a line of windows where the stairwell existed it would differentiate between the old and the new, as would the area where the little nook existed on the west side. He said it could have a full length window inserted there. Otherwise, he questioned what was really being seen. As for the large bedroom jutting out, he questioned why it was not fully taken out versus creating a notch. He believed it complicated the roof line and took away from the original house. He also believed the master bedroom and walk-in closet could be simplified for better flow. Other comments from the chairman followed regarding two historic windows at the east side of the home, making the dining room larger, and relocating the closet next to the bathroom on the opposite side. Mr. Lambert believed the owners needed to speak to IHPA and find out what exactly were the significant features of the workers' cottage. Ms. Forslund also pointed out that the wall they were discussing was a "moving target" for now.

Mr. Forslund indicated that the key points he was taking away from this discussion included the differentiation from the old and the new, lower the roof line, and address the extension of the front bedroom.

Mr. Lambert reminded the commissioners that the owners still had to speak to the IHPA regarding their input, if the goal was to comply with the standards for a Tax Assessment Freeze project. He said he would summarize and forward tonight's comments to the Forslunds.

B. 15 S. River Lane (Case No. 2017-001); Applicant: Shodeen Group, Owner; W. Alex Teipel, Architectural Resources; Application for: Exterior Addition. Mr. Lambert stated the applicant was not present but because the proposal was a reasonably straight-forward request, he was willing to present the proposal. Proposed is an addition to the 4th level of the Herrington Inn, which staff explained was a non-contributing building in the historic district. (According to the permit matrix, additions to non-contributing buildings and visible from the public right-of-way are to be reviewed by the HPC.) While the proposal was submitted as a permit review, Mr. Lambert said there were no specifications and no information about the addition except for what was in front of the commission (*i.e.*, a proposal for a small cantilevered breakfast room). He said the plans were presented to the Geneva Building Official initially, due to the fact that the details of the structural cantilever and bracket system would look like once detailed. Therefore, this proposal was considered a concept for the support system. Mr. Lambert asked if the concept was acceptable to the commission or if there were concerns.

Per Commissioner Zellmer's questions, Mr. Lambert explained the difference between a concept review versus a final review process; he further explained that the HPC has binding authority on permit reviews – meaning once a project is accepted by the building department it comes to the HPC. Regarding the Campbell Row townhomes, Mr. Lambert explained there was a

miscommunication and what he thought was going to come before the commission as a typical concept review and a permit review was actually a planned unit development (PUD) coming forward. Per the Historic Preservation ordinance's language, a PUD does not return to the HPC for a final permit review. As a result, Mr. Lambert said when future PUDs come forward at HPC, he will seek more details from the commission upon concept review.

Commissioners supported the proposed concept but the chairman and some other commissioners wanted to see the details. Zinke, reviewing the west elevation, thought the cantilever would look more attractive if it was more window-like, similar to the dormer to the left, just on the one side facing down the street. She suggested inserting a small window with more siding as opposed to all glass at the west elevation.

5. Secretary's Report (staff updates)

Mr. Lambert provided an update on the city's survey forms. His goal is to complete the surveys by next year with a GIS feature to pinpoint a property and pull up the form. Details followed.

The National Park Service sent back the historic district update but Mr. Lambert stated he did not know why the update was not approved. Other updates included that that the commission closed out the 2016 year with 152 cases. As an FYI, the tax assessment freeze on properties are keeping him busy. Zinke inquired how the tax freeze would apply to the first application. Details followed by Lambert. Hiller asked about a concept review for 316 S. Sixth Street wherein Lambert said there was a last minute decision to not come before the commission tonight but to hold off until next month. Details followed.

6. Announcements

A. From the Commission – None

B. From the Public – Ms. Margaret Egan, Asst. Director for Preservation Partners, 402 Campbell Street, Geneva referenced the post cards she sent to the commissioners, announcing a panel discussion to be held on Saturday, February 25, 2017 (9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., \$10 per person), at the Batavia City Council Chambers. Ms. Egan discussed that due to recent commercial and residential projects being proposed in the Tri-Cities area, Preservation Partners has invited Mr. Ben Willis, an architect from Rhode Island, who discusses how commercial (and residential) communities start to look like every other community, as well as the need for design. Ms. Egan explained that the goal of the seminar will be to explore the issues confronting the Tri-City area as it relates to the intersecting of development and preservation. Ms. Egan encouraged commissioners to visit the Union Studio Architects website: www.unionstudioarch.com for more information. Lastly, she referenced a book entitled "The Past and Future City -- How Historic Preservation is Reviving Cities," as authorized by Stephanie Meeks.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m. on motion by Hiller, seconded by Chairman Roy. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote of 6-0.