

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

**March 15, 2022**

**1. Call to Order**

Chairman Zellmer called to order the March 15, 2022 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 Jensen, McManus, Salomon  
Absent: Commissioners Hartman, Stazin and Zinke

Staff Present: Preservation Planner Michael Lambert

Others Present: Applicant Recording Secretary Celeste Weilandt

**3. Approval of November 16, 2021 Minutes**

Minutes of November 16, 2021 – **Motion by Commissioner Jensen to approve the minutes as presented. Second by Commissioner Salomon. A voice vote followed and motion passed. Vote:**

**3. Five Minute Field Guide – Shake or Shingle**

Preservation Planner Michael Lambert provided a short presentation on shake shingle vs. sawn shingle, reviewing the differences between the two shingle types.

**4. Review of Conceptual Development Plans**

A. 136 S. Fifth Street (Case No. 2022-004). Applicant/Owner: Mike and Liz Henderson, Owners, along with David Bus and Geralyn Toth with ACBI Architects and Architect Tom Wetmore with Wetmore Construction, Contractor. Application for Exterior Rehabilitation of a Significant Property. Preservation Planner Lambert noted that this case was withdrawn by the petitioner.

B. 427 Fulton Street (Case No. 2022-005). Applicant/Owner Joe McMahon. Application for Demolition of an Existing Garage and Construction of a New Garage. Preservation Planner Lambert discussed the petition was a demolition of a garage and a concept review. The reason for this case coming before the Historic Preservation Commission was to provide input to the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) discussion regarding the PZC recommendations to be made to the City Council. The location of the property was depicted on the overhead, and a brief history of the bungalow structure followed. The owner would like to demolish the existing (one-car) garage and replace it with a slightly larger (two vehicle) garage on the same site (northeast corner of property). Deterioration of the structure was pointed out. Two zoning variation requests are being sought: a variation to reduce the required rear and side-yard setback for a detached accessory structure from the required 5 feet to a minimum 1.5 feet as well as a variation for lot and area requirements to increase the allowable lot coverage from 45% to 49%. Photos of the existing garage's exterior and interior followed.

Mr. Lambert identified three questions to be considered by the commissioners in regard to historic significance and demolition: 1) is the existing garage a good example of an early 20th century, detached, residential automobile garage in Geneva?; 2) does the existing garage retain sufficient architectural and/or structural integrity?; and 3) does the loss of the existing garage significantly alter the historic character of the property and/or the neighborhood?

Mr. Lambert identified three additional questions to be considered by the commissioners in regard to historic significance and proposed new construction: 1) is the proposed garage subordinate and complementary to the historic architectural character of the property?; 2) at a conceptual level, does the proposed garage complement the historic mass, scale, height and materials of the existing property?; and 3) does the proposed garage significantly depart from the historic character of the property and/or the neighborhood?

Additional considerations also followed but Lambert reminded the commissions that the applicant would have to return to the HPC for approval of final construction drawings with sample materials.

Owner/Applicant, Mr. Joe McMahon, came forward and explained the new garage door will be 8 feet in height and a couple of feet wider to accommodate vehicles. The western “bump-out” will be a small workshop. He envisions he will install windows in the top panel of the garage to provide light, a hipped asphalt roof to match the house, windows on the west elevation, and a west entry door. The roof pitch is estimated to be 4:12 or 5:12 roof pitch to match the existing residence with asphalt shingles. He is leaning toward the garage siding being Dutch lap siding, probably wood.

Mr. McMahon recalled from a previous Planning & Zoning Commission (PZC) meeting that his neighbor to the north did not want vehicular entry to a new garage from Fifth Street. The neighbor to the east has a two-story garage (pictured in the staff report provided). He intended his garage to blend in to the property and not overshadow his neighbors’ garages. Mr. McMahon explained the that the garage had some deterioration issues. As for when the garage was constructed, Mr. McMahon did not know that information but surmised it was built when one-car garages were the norm. (Mr. Lambert noted the garage was constructed about 1930 (or later) but substantial alternations took place thereafter.)

Per Mr. Lambert’s question, Mr. McMahon explained the existing garage was about one and one-half feet off the east property line. The current rear (north) setback line was about 3 feet. The new, two vehicle garage would have an approximate 1-foot roof overhang to avoid encroaching on the neighbors’ property.

Chairman Zellmer asked the commissioners if the existing garage was a good example of an early 20th century garage wherein commissioners voiced they did not feel it was and it was more like a utilitarian structure constructed with little intent except to keep a vehicle out of inclement weather. Commissioners also felt that neither the loss of the existing garage or the construction of the proposed garage would alter the character of the property or neighborhood because the proposed garage is to be located in the far rear of the home and was well hidden. Chairman Zellmer—noting that the existing residence was raised a substantial distance above grade—emphasized to the applicant that the new garage roof should not overpower the existing house structure, and that it be subordinate to the main home. Mr. McMahon concurred with that comment.

**Motion by Commissioner Salomon to approve the concept for the demolition of the existing garage and construction of a new garage as long as the new garage is subordinate**

**to the existing home and approval by the HPC of design and finishing elements prior to construction. Second by Commissioner McManus. Roll call:**

**Aye: McManus, Jensen, Salomon, Zellmer**

**Nay: None**

**MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 4-0**

Mr. Lambert informed Mr. McMahon the he would forward the HPC determination to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

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

Historic Preservation Planner Lambert announced that 521 Hamilton Street has qualified for a Property Tax Assessment Freeze for the Mid-Century Modern house. This was good news because few Mid-Century Modern buildings exist in the designated Geneva Historic District and none outside of the Historic District are individually designated as Historic Landmarks. On another topic, Mr. Lambert explained many projects have not been coming forth due to supply chain delays, labor shortages, and rising construction costs. In the meantime, he continues to work on the survey. Updates followed as to previous projects that have been approved or that have come through the HPC. In response to a Commissioner inquiry, Mr. Lambert noted that he had met with property representatives regarding the modification of the Historic Landmark designation for the former Mill Race Inn property.

**6. New Business**

A. From the Commission: None

B. From the Public: None

**8. Adjournment**

**There being no further business to come before the Historic Preservation Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m. on motion by Commissioner Salomon, second by Commissioner Jensen. A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously by voice vote of 4-0.**