

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
109 James Street
Geneva, Illinois, 60134

June 21, 2022

1. Call to Order

Preservation Planner called to order the June 21, 2022 meeting of the Geneva Historic Preservation Commission at 7:01 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present HPC: Commissioners Hartman, Jensen, McManus, Salomon, Stazin, and Zinke

Absent: Chairman Zellmer,

Staff Present: Preservation Planner Michael Lambert, City Planner Chayton True

Others Present: Applicant Ryan VanOsdol; Architect Justin Rios; Applicant Blake Croson; Architect Sean Gallagher; Applicant Michael Simon; Al Watts, Community Engagement Director for Preservation Partners of the Fox Valley

3. Election of Chairman *pro tem*

Motion by Commissioner Zinke to elect Commissioner Salomon as Chairman *pro tem* for the evening's proceedings. Second by Commissioner Stazin. Motion passed by a unanimous voice vote of 6-0.

4. Approval of May 17, 2022 Minutes

Minutes of May 17, 2022 – Motion by Commissioner Stazin to approve the minutes as presented. Second by Commissioner Jensen. Motion passed by a unanimous voice vote of 6-0.

3. Five Minute Field Guide

Due to technical difficulties, the Five Minute Field Guide was not presented and will be presented at the July 19, 2022 HPC meeting.

4. Review of Conceptual Development Plans

A. 225-227 West State Street (Case No. 2022-042). Applicant/Prospective Purchaser: Ryan Van Osdol with Business Law Group, LLC and Architect Justin Rios with Metaverse Design + Studio. Application for Storefront Alterations at a Contributing Property. Preservation Planner Lambert presented a brief overview of the request that includes modifications of the existing, previously-altered storefront to accommodate interior modifications of an existing stairway. Mr. VanOsdol made a brief introduction, followed by Mr. Rios, who described the design process to-date that has included revisions to their original storefront proposal to more closely align with the historic preservation design standards and guidelines. Commissioner Stazin initiated discussion regarding the interior stair modifications and required direct egress. Mr. Rios responded that the proposed design meets code for egress per meetings with the Geneva Fire Marshal. Preservation Planner confirmed that the Applicants have met with Geneva staff members including the Fire

Marshal, Building Commissioner, and himself. Commissioner Jensen sought clarification of what was proposed to be removed; Mr. Rios clarified that the existing plywood would be retained if found to be in good condition and, then, painted. Commissioner Zinke sought further clarification that the historic features of the storefront would remain covered with wood; Mr. Rios confirmed that is the intent of the proposal and the removal of existing wood is proposed only if the material is found to be in poor condition. Because the closing of the sale for the property is not finalized, investigative work to determine existing details behind the existing plywood has not been possible. However, Mr. Rios stated that if historic features, such as prismatic glass transoms, remain and could be exposed, cost-effectively, then they would be willing to explore that option. Commissioner Jensen raised concerns about the removal of the west entry door (to the stairwell), which she identified as an original door and questioned its potential for re-use. Mr. Rios offered the door to other architects if it cannot be incorporated into the project. Commissioner Zinke questioned why the door could not remain; Mr. Rios explained the re-construction of the stairway that would render the door inoperable. The plan is to replace only the door itself with glass installed within the existing jamb and frame. Commissioner Zinke found the removal of the door to be unfortunate because the west entry vestibule dates to the original construction of the building (1908). Commissioner Zinke then asked Preservation Planner Lambert the date of the beadboard bulkhead. Mr. Lambert stated that it was not the original bulkhead but dated, likely, to the 1940s. Commissioner Hartman sought additional details about the west entry door, the direction of its swing (now outswinging), and the depth of the existing, interior landing (approximately 2'-0" or less). Mr. Rios offered the possibility of utilizing the west door at the east entry point. Mr. Rios discussed the challenges to relocation and re-use, including hardware modifications. Commissioner Hartman then questioned Preservation Planner Lambert whether any other storefronts had requested the removal of a historic, street door at a primary facade. Mr. Lambert could not recall an example at Geneva. Commissioner Hartman asked if the door was original to the property. Preservation Planner Lambert noted that the door is early (likely 1940s) but is probably not "original" (dating to 1908). Mr. Lambert noted that a difference exists between "original" and "authentic" or "significant." Commissioner Hartman concurred that, based on his observations, the door does not appear to date to 1908. Commissioner Stazin questioned what exists or existed between the remaining, historic, cast iron columns. After some brief speculation, Mr. Lambert interjected that it is difficult to know the details of what exists or what remains of the historic storefront because the Applicant has not yet completed the purchase of the property and, consequently, no invasive investigations of the storefront have been initiated. Commissioner Stazin sought clarification that the second floor windows were not proposed to be altered; Mr. Rios confirmed that was correct. Commissioner Stazin questioned whether the second floor fenestration patterns could be better integrated into the window divisions and details of the storefront. Mr. Lambert noted that, historically, no architectural connection existed between the storefront and second floor. Since elements are being modified, potentially, Commissioner Stazin favored a simplification of the storefront that may result in a more cohesive facade overall. Commissioner Hartman asked if the existing plywood sign panel was found to be in poor shape and had to be removed, if the Applicants would come back with a different alternative to the transom area. Mr. Rios believed that, in that scenario, the installation of beadboard at the transom area may be requested to allow for the placement of signage. Commissioner Hartman asked whether an awning had existed; Mr. Lambert confirmed that a retracted awning is shown in the historic image. Commissioner Zinke laid out a timeline for purchase, investigation, potential re-design, and HPC review. Preservation Planner Lambert summarized the Applicants' conceptual request, based on the information that is confirmed presently. Mr. Lambert asked whether the proposal, as presented and with considerations of the re-use of the west door, is generally acceptable to the Commission. Commissioner Jensen asked the Commission whether the west door—if not "original"—should be preserved? Mr. Lambert explained that some doors cannot be reversed at another location because of the veneer materials used at the interior side of the door. Mr. VanOsdol said if the door cannot be re-used, he would store it on-site. In response to questions about the existing stair, Mr.

Rios explained that the stairs are not being re-constructed. Commissioner Zinke asked why the existing stair could not be retained and build the landing and access into the first floor further up on the existing staircase. Commissioner Zinke expressed difficulty in accepting the proposal because the west entry alcove is the only part of the existing façade that “feels” original; she could not accept the alteration of the west alcove during a permit review. Chairman *pro tem* Salomon asked whether or not the existing door could be retained in place and sealing the entrance off with the glass being replaced with a dark –tinted glass. Commissioner Zinke objected to the dark glass but could accept a back-painted or dark film option that could be easily removed. Mr. Rios said the glass could be frosted or an opaque/translucent film could be added to obscure view into the stairwell. Mr. Rios acknowledged that modifications would be made to the door to secure it. In general, the Commissioners favored the retention of the door. Mr. Rios would need to verify that the Fire Marshal would accept this option, and Mr. Lambert noted that a sign may be required identifying that the door is not a functional door. Commissioner Hartman stated that the submitted proposal was acceptable, but he would approve any of the other modifications that were discussed by the Commission. Commissioner McManus stated that if the west entry door was installed during the Period of Significance for the Historic District, then the Commission had an obligation to preserve historic elements in some manner. Commissioner McManus noted that it was her belief that the Commission could not require restoration of missing elements that are not affected by the proposed project. Commissioner Stazin would support the retention of the west door if some documentation is discovered or provable. Commissioner Stazin noted that the historic, cast iron columns are more character-defining of the storefront than the west door. Commissioner Jensen prefers the use of the door at the east entry rather than being blocked off at the west alcove; but she can support either option. Commissioner McManus concurred with Commissioner Jensen. Chairman *pro tem* Salomon encouraged the Applicants to investigate the west door and provide options for review; however, “one way or another, that (west) door is going to have to have a home” in the completed project.

5. Review of Building Permit Applications (Certificates of Appropriateness)

A. 516 Franklin Street (Case No. 2022-025). Applicant/Owner Blake Croson with Architect Sean Gallagher. Application for the Construction of a Second Floor Addition at a Contributing Property. Preservation Planner Lambert provided a brief introduction and noted that the Commission had previously supported the conceptual project presented at the May 17, 2022 meeting of the HPC. Mr. Gallagher reviewed the details of the design and described the project, which included a new Master Bedroom suite over the existing garage addition. Mr. Gallagher stated that the ridge of the new addition is approximately 2 feet higher than the ridge of the original house. However, based on the sightlines from the street, the difference in ridge heights is almost imperceptible. Commissioner Zinke asked if any changes have been made since the review during the previous month’s meeting. The applicant replied no and elaborated that the submittal simply included additional construction details and related information.

Motion by Commissioner Jensen to approve the plans for 516 Franklin Street as presented. Second by Commissioner Zinke. Roll call:

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

Nay: None

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 6-0

B. 404 South Third Street (Case No. 2022-043). Applicant/Owner Michael Simon. Application for the Reconstruction of Roof Balustrades at a Significant Property. Preservation Planner Lambert provided a brief introduction regarding the historical development of the property from its residential beginnings to its transformation into an iconic retail destination, established by

Kate Raftery a century ago. Mr. Lambert noted that the property was a Significant property but more for its commercial history than architecture because the building has been both organic and evolutionary in response to the expanding commercial uses. Preservation Planner Lambert described the resultant architecture as “whimsical” compared to “period correct.” The proposed areas of balustrade reconstruction are at 4 locations: 1 at the original residence; 2 at the 1946-1947 east (Third Street) additions; and 1 at the 1977-1979 north addition along Fulton Street. Mr. Lambert noted that the existing balustrades are not the original architectural elements. In fact, 3 of 4 balustrades (the east-facing balustrades) date to the mid-20th century but with modifications over time, particularly replacement of corner finials. The north addition balustrade is not based on historic documentation but was a fabrication, dating to the time of construction (which is after the Period of Significance: 1835-1966). Mr. Lambert noted, also, that the intent—at the Third Street locations—was to retain the historic corner plinths/piers and their replacement urn finials but replace the spandrel railing in between. Additionally, the new balustrades would be mechanically-attached to the roof structure (rather than rely on gravity as the current balustrades do). Mr. Michael Simon began to describe the property and the planned, balustrade replacement project, including an overview of sample mock-ups that Mr. Simon brought to the meeting. Commissioner Zinke asked if the same design was considered for all three improvement areas; Mr. Simon stated the balance would not be appropriate given the different ages and designs of the various parts of the complex. Commissioner Zinke asked if an alternative design could be considered for the north balustrade; Mr. Simon explained that he favored the proposed design. Preservation Planner Lambert explained that there is no uniformity to the building complex and, consequently, uniformity does not support the “whimsical” look of the property. Commissioner McManus stated the taller of the two designs (for the east balustrades) is a nice interpretation of what exists currently and does not have issues with differing designs for different parts of the property. Commissioner McManus preferred the differentiated designs. Commissioner Stazin expressed agreement with Commissioner McManus, but felt that the details seem to be a little heavy in appearance. Seeking clarification, Preservation Planner Lambert asked if it was the bottom rail that seemed “heavy” and—perhaps—should be reduced to approximately half of its height. Commissioner Stazin believed that would satisfy his concerns. However, Mr. Simon pointed out that the heavy bottom rail was designed to mask some of the rooftop HVAC equipment on the north roof. With no other commissioner comments, Chairman *pro tem* Salomon stated his support for the balustrades as presented, including the heavier bottom rail to mask rooftop HVAC equipment.

Motion by Commissioner Hartman to approve the roof balustrade designs for 404 South Third Street as presented. Second by Commissioner Jensen. Roll call:

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

Nay: None

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 6-0

6. Secretary’s Report (Staff Updates)

None.

7. New Business

A. From the Commission: None.

B. From the Public: Al Watts, Community Engagement Director with Preservation Partners of the Fox Valley invited the Commission to an open house event for the Viking Ship between 5pm and 7pm on Thursday, July 7th. Watts elaborated on the details and purpose of the event. Zinke questioned whether the ship had crossed the Atlantic Ocean to which Mr. Watts

affirmed, stating that the replica had been built in Scandinavia and crossed the Atlantic Ocean for display at the 1893 Columbian Exposition (World's Fair) held in Chicago. Stazin asked how the ship ended up at Geneva, and Mr. Watts gave a brief history of its transfer to the Field Museum (Chicago), the Lincoln Park Zoo (Chicago), and, finally, to Good Templar Park (Geneva).

8. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Historic Preservation Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m. on motion by Commissioner Stazin. Second by Commissioner McManus. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote of 6-0.