

Rockford Historic Preservation Commission

March 10, 2004

6:00 PM

Rockford City Hall, Conference Room B

MEMBERS PRESENT: Val Olafson; Laura Bachelder; Jeanne Ludeke; Frank St. Angel; Ald. Jeff Holt

MEMBERS ABSENT: Vickie Krueger, Scott Sanders

STAFF: Ginny Gregory, Jackie Bernard

OTHERS: James and Linda McElhaney; Gary Carlson; Lew Crampton, Director of Burpee Museum of Natural History; Gary Anderson

COMMISSIONER TRAINING

Commissioner Training Session began at 6:00 PM with an IHPA video on residential architectural styles in Illinois being shown.

The regular Meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Val Olafson.

NEW BUSINESS

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A **MOTION** was made by Jeanne Ludeke to approve the minutes of February 11, 2004. The motion was seconded by Frank St. Angel and **CARRIED** by a vote of 5-0.

CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS

► 1010 North 2nd Street

Applicant Gary Carlson was present and explained his proposal to renew the July 2003 Certificate of Appropriateness which has expired, for a garage addition with the following change: Eliminate the pergola over the garage doors and rotate the terrace pergola 90° so it runs parallel to the house instead of perpendicular.

The original Certificate was as follows:

- Removal of the existing garage at the rear property line next to Madison Street. The garage will be disassembled and the brick used in the new garage.
- Removal of the existing driveway between the new garage and North 2nd Street.
- Construction of a new 2-car attached garage measuring 23' wide x 22' deep. It is to be attached at the basement level of the house with a wood (cypress) pergola on top of it. Doors are to be overhead doors designed to appear the same as the existing, barn-style doors. The garage is to be of cement block with a brick machine brick veneer finish. Design and location of all elements are to match the attached drawings.
- Removal of the existing driveway and construction of a new blacktop driveway going back to Madison Street with appropriate landscaping along the side.

A **MOTION** was made by Ald. Jeff Holt to **APPROVE** the addition to the garage to eliminate the pergola over the garage doors and rotate the terrace pergola 90° so it runs parallel to the house instead of perpendicular. The motion was seconded by Laura Bachelder and **CARRIED** by a vote of 5-0.

► **1622 Brownwood Drive**

Applicants James and Linda McElhaney were present and explained what they would like to do. They have an Australian Shepherd, which is a very active dog, and they want to give it the opportunity to run freely in the back yard. To do this, they want to complete the existing backyard fencing with a 5' high chain link fence and install chain link access gates on either side of the house. They commented on several homes in the neighborhood that have chain link fences. There would be two gates, with two sections of the chain link fence visible from the road.

Val said that she was aware of the other chain link fences on that street; however they were not visible from the public way. Linda McElhaney said that there were some chain link visible on "D" Street near Cospers Avenue.

Val said it would be preferable to continue the wood along the front so when the fence is joined to the house, it is a wood fence. This is mentioned in the guidelines and Laura Bachelder gave them a copy.

James McElhaney said he did not know they were under the jurisdiction of the Historic Preservation Commission, even though Linda was. She said that the house is not a historical house, but they just happen to be in that particular block which is. [The house was built about 1980.]

Val referred to page 11 in the Guidelines which reads: "acceptable materials for new fences are painted or stained wood, and cast or wrought iron." She said that if the Commission had approved chain link fencing before, but it has always been in the back yard and not visible from the road. She said that she had driven down Brownwood that day and the fences in that district are primarily wood or wrought iron, so the Commission is trying to maintain consistency with that. For the short sections between the fence and house, guidelines would be wood. There was some discussion on what part of the fence is visible from the road.

Linda said that the east side of the house is the only part that would be visible. The cost of fencing is \$1,700 for wood vs. \$900 for chain link, with the gates being the biggest expense.

Val suggested using both materials. In the back yard, chain link could be acceptable since it would not be visible, but the two short sections that would be visible should be wood. Mrs. McElhaney repeated that the expense of these short sections using wood is high since that is where the two gates would be.

Jeanne suggested the idea of looking into electric fencing for the visible area, therefore, eliminating the high cost of wood gates. They decided to look into that option.

A **MOTION** was made by Jeff Holt to **APPROVE** a fence at 1622 Brownwood Drive as follows:

- The sections visible from the public right-of-way on the front of Brownwood Street, 9 feet west of the home and 11 feet east would be wood or wrought iron.
- ◆ The 30 foot section in the rear yard may be chain link.

The motion was seconded by Frank St. Angel and **CARRIED** by a vote of 5-0.

Brief discussion followed on various other types of fencing materials that could be used. It was decided that if they chose not to go with electric fencing, they could come back to the Commission with a more specific style at that time.

PROPOSED ADDITION TO BURPEE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Lew Crampton explained that Ginny had invited him to attend a Commission meeting to present the Museum's expansion plans while they are still in the preliminary stage. He reiterated that the plan is only preliminary. He then said that part of the plan is to renovate the Barnes Mansion (813 North Main Street). If anyone has an interest in interior woodwork, he extended an invitation to stop by where the museum headquarters are located. They have taken all the museum panels off the interior walls and exposed some incredibly beautiful woodwork. They are going to try to make that area a showplace as it was in the 1890s. They have various articles about fabulous parties given by Fletcher Barnes in the mansion.

His main reason here tonight is to share information. The Museum Campus Project is just starting to kick-off. Although the Discovery Center and Burpee still have to work out a campaign agreement, he is pretty sure this will happen. They have hired a professional fundraiser, and they are in the quiet period now, which will last for about 10 months. During this time, they will line up large gifts, get a volunteer committee and erect foundation stones under the overall campaign. No campaign goal has been set as of yet. There is a possibility that the Art Museum may enter into this project also.

There are a couple of structures on Burpee property that may or may not be impacted by the construction project. There is a site plan and they would like to go over it with the Commission to learn about any concerns or considerations they may have. There is plenty of time, since the quiet period for the campaign will continue through December 2004. In all, it will be close to a 20-month campaign, so if they break ground on this project, it most likely won't be until late 2006 or early 2007. He introduced Gary Anderson as their lead architect for this project. Gary will be showing the site plan so the Commission will know where things are.

Lew explained that they are talking about a structure of about 20,000 sq. ft that would connect Burpee with the Discovery Center portion of Riverfront Museum Park at the place where the Discovery Center's outdoor science center, a wooden structure, sits in the back of the building. They are basically talking about a down grade, so it's not likely that the first floor (lower level) or even the second level would be visible from North Main Street. There is a berm between the Riverfront Museum Park and where Burpee sits. However, there would be a clear site line to this project from the river and from Whitman Street bridge coming across.

On the lower level, Burpee's current plans are to create classroom and laboratory space to house a relationship that they are building with Northern Illinois University and their graduate students and professors who work in anthropology, geology and education. They plan on building a lunchroom to service the approximate 40-45,000 students that visit the Discovery Center and the Art Museum over the course of a year.

On the level above that, which may or may not be visible from North Main Street, they would have two major halls, one an exhibit hall with the new home for Jane. Their current plans are to install the Jane Exhibit, for which they have already raised about \$1.2 million, in the current Paleo Hall, move the T-Rex to the airport, take the Columbia mammoth upstairs to the 3rd floor and relate it to their Native American Exhibit. Then, they plan to install Jane's mounted skeleton with other things.

That would be about almost half of that upper floor. The balance of that is the part that would connect with Riverfront Museum Park and would be a traveling exhibit hall. Their goal would be to have the Administration Hall and Exhibit Scheduling shared between Burpee and the Discovery Center. That way, they could pool their resources and bring in some of the best museum shows that are traveling around the country. Lew gave some examples. He added that this could be a benefit to the museum as well as the community.

These are the general uses planned for approximately 20,000 sq. ft. The Discovery Center plans to tear down the old Sears garage, called the Assembly Hall, and erect a 2-story structure. It would consist of storage space, exhibits, classrooms and a meeting space that would serve people from the Discovery Center as well as other tenants in the Riverfront Museum Park. The Museum Park property is owned by the Park District, but the Discovery Center owns the property where they hope to expand. However, they have stated publicly that they will submit their plans for approval to the Rockford Park District and proceed through the public process. Hopefully they can do that close to the same time the Discovery Center accepts bids.

Gary Anderson held up the site plan and explained the overall effect of what the proposed changes will be. It shows the existing Burpee and the original expansion as well as the new addition. In trying to make the link, he said the lowest level, which is currently the basement, would actually be able to step out on the grade. They plan to expose the side of the building with glass, pulling into the stonework on the existing building. They want to make the building look inviting from the Rock River and from the bridges since it will be very visible from those vantage points. He pointed out that they are looking at how spaces can be enlarged and made bigger for the traveling exhibit and the Jane Exhibit. The most important thing is the connection that they are making to the Riverfront Museum and at this point, it is going to be connected at the Discovery Center. Gary continued to go over the layout of the trees, shrubs, etc. They are very concerned about the site and the positioning with the river and the importance of the river to the development, of Rockford, and what it meant to the Native American culture. They also want to tie the whole campus together. Their ultimate goal is to put the front door on the riverfront for the whole Museum campus. There is a lot to take into consideration, whether IMAX comes in the future, public spaces, the potential for food service or a restaurant. This plan is the first phase of seeing the bigger picture evolving in the long run.

Lew said that this is a two-stage process: Stage one would be the Burpee and the Discovery Center moving forward to get the ball rolling and take care of some immediate needs. He mentioned that Sara Wolf [of Discovery Center] had exhibit material in the storage room that she could not get out on her floor. Now that they have settled the governance issue at Riverfront Museum Park, she is able to negotiate an agreement with the rest of her tenants to do this, and, at the same time, make some of this space available to the other tenants at Riverfront Museum Park.

Stage two of the process, speaking generally, would be the construction of some kind of "wow" venue. He gave examples, IMAX, digital, etc. They would also want to rehabilitate the Sears building to change the exterior so it looks like an attractive museum, not an old Sears store; and rework the lobby so that it efficiently handles visitors and shunts them off to gift shops or the Discovery Center, Art Museum, or the Dance Company.

Site designs are another matter. They are a museum in a park, not a museum in a parking lot. However, the parking spaces are much needed. The parking issue has to be answered down the road. There are currently not enough parking spaces in the lots to service the amount of visitors expected in the next 4-5 years. That is why they are working with the City and the Mayor's Task Force. They are also looking at circulation patterns, street patterns, etc.

The building has a roof and there is a lot of square footage there. Lew said he would like to create some passive solar arrays there and connect them to some kind of an exhibit framework to teach people about what solar energy is and how it is beneficial to the environment. They would also like to create a small space for receptions. Typically, in the spring and summer evenings, it is a very nice place to have wedding receptions and other special events, similar to a rooftop garden atmosphere.

The first addition would be about 40,000 sq. ft, about half the size of the one built a few years ago. The Discovery Center consists of approximately 28,000 sq. ft. and it has a lower level also, so there are actually 3 levels there. They plan to move the loading dock to the lowest level so they can use the space in the building better. Eventually, all of that will be underground for future additions.

At the Discovery Center, they will be taking out the fill so that the river will be visible from the parking lot. The plan is to return the land to its original contour.

Lew mentioned that he envisions an amphitheater and a foot bridge connecting it across to Madison Street. He sees it as a hot, mixed retail/commercial and housing with the Brewery and other spots.

Ginny Gregory questioned the Commission on how they felt about what the massing for these two additions as compared to the original.

Lew said that the Manny [737 North Main] would be most affected by this plan. He doesn't think it would impact very much, since the new addition won't be very visible from North Main Street, and the Manny's major outlook is toward North Main. Both Gary Anderson and Lew referred to the site plan and went over these points. Val questioned the courtyard area and Lew reassured that this area would not be used for garbage or dumpsters, but for a possible greenhouse with hopefully, a butterfly exhibit. Val said that it is important to continue to have the three sides visible, used and appreciated.

The new entrance has not yet been resolved, but parking being so critical, eventually even the Burpee's front door is going to be changed to the riverfront side. Lew referred to the site plan.

Gary Anderson said that the long term hope is that in creating a new entrance on the riverfront side, they would get a "wow" experience again in entering the museum. People should be very impressed that this is a destination that must be experienced. He is looking into underground parking, if possible. This will be an important tourist attraction for the community, as well as a quality of life issue attracting people to work here. It is their intention that this will be a boost to downtown Rockford.

Lew said they are not positioning this as an expansion of two museums, but as creation of a civic asset that fits the entire community, similar to the Coronado campaign.

Val commented on parking down by the boathouse. She would like to keep it as is, as a focal point, and creating more landscape to outdoor space around it, rather than just creating a parking lot. Lew agreed and said that he would like to do some native landscaping there as well.

Lew and Gary will continue to keep everyone informed of their plan and the progress.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE ORDINANCE

Ginny Gregory explained Ald. Doug Mark's proposal to amend Rockford's preservation ordinance to match Chicago's in requiring owner consent for the designation of religious properties that are used primarily for religious purposes. She reported that she and Attorney Elliott from the City Legal

Department are working together to provide information to the Code and Regulation Committee of City Council. She checked websites for other certified local governments in Illinois to find their ordinances and their list of landmarks. Ginny distributed copies of this information to all members for their review. None of the ordinances she checked have a similar exemption. There are one or two that require owner consent, but it is a blanket owner consent, not specifically for religious properties. She pointed out that on top of the handout, there is a list of religious properties that have been designated, including several in Chicago. Presumably they were all done before they changed their ordinance. She spoke to someone at Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois in Chicago and she found out that Chicago did designate St. Gelasius recently. In this case, the church was vacant at the time someone filed an application for landmark designation. After the application was filed, the Archdiocese brought in the Institute of Christ the King. Now they are saying that it is a church that is in use and therefore exempt. Chicago City Council went ahead and landmarked it anyway, and she expects it to go to court.

Ginny called a head staff person in Chicago and they were out of the office. Val said that she spoke to a Preservation Consultant in Chicago and she was informed that it would definitely be going to court, and that they are going to fight it. She said the Commission doesn't plan to back down since they are not very happy with the ordinance.

Ginny said that this item will be on the agenda at Codes and Regulations Committee next week, so she suggested someone attend to voice their opinion. She said that if no one is able to attend, maybe the Commission could put something in writing and Ginny can present it to them prior to the meeting.

Ginny suggested that if some of the aldermen really want to do this, the Commission recommend that they wait until a decision in Chicago is made. It is always a possibility that the Court in Chicago will invalidate the ordinance, therefore, waiting could save us from going to court as well.

Gary Carlson mentioned that his concern is when you start to provide exceptions to the ordinance, there is always a fear of the possibility that we can be decertified. What are the ramifications of doing something like that, and what happens the next time a fraternal organization says that they also want an exception?

Ald. Jeff Holt questioned how it affects the church if it's in a historic district, whether or not it is exempt if in a district. Ginny will check on that. Jeff said that he thought it would be helpful for individuals that are concerned about this proposed change to come and voice their concern. If no one shows up at the meeting, it will probably go through without much resistance.

Gary Carlson commented that when dealing with churches, you deal with democratic process. The congregation can vote or not vote it in. In the Catholic Church, the Bishop is it. He can make decisions on his own, no matter what the parish or congregation says. That should be a big concern, since there is no way to stop that from happening. He referred to an email he received from Mike Molander, a Haight Village resident. He described churches and what they mean to our communities. He pointed out how Europe treats churches. The people protect the churches in Europe, and in the U.S., we have to have laws to protect them. We don't realize how much churches really mean to us, until they are gone. Gary said that he would like to submit this email he received to City Council because it briefly sums it all up, of how much these structures mean to our community, to our neighborhoods and we definitely take them for granted. It makes no difference what denomination.

Ald. Holt said that this community has a lot of significant historical structures that are churches. Examples are Emmanuel Lutheran on 6th Street, Salem Lutheran, various Catholic churches, the Methodist Church downtown, etc. Now you see the newer churches going into to places like Michael's Restaurant on Perryville or a storefront on State Street. His concern is what happen if, 100 years from now, all of these

structures are gone and the only churches left are in strip malls? What significance does this have to a neighborhood or a community? He drives by Salem Lutheran Church everyday and thinks that it really makes an impact on the neighborhood.

Gary Carlson said that the Catholic Church, in particular, has the most historic structures in the world. Prior to multi-story buildings, what really identified one city from the next would be the churches. He spoke to Mike Jackson in Springfield and informed him of what was going on. Gary feels that the separation of church and state issue is taken by the Bishop, since now they are trying to choose which of our ordinances and codes they want to operate under. We don't want to operate under that anymore. How the separation of church and state works is, our government says we won't pass any laws that restrict your expression of religion and in exchange for that, the churches have to follow by our codes and ordinances, but they don't have to pay any property taxes. Mike Jackson said that the first code that they opted out of was ADA. Apparently, Catholic Churches do not have to meet ADA. And this is another code that they don't want to operate under. Discussion continued regarding tax credits.

[Correction to the above paragraph submitted by Frank St. Angel at the April 14, 2004 meeting: All religious institutions are exempt from ADA rules, not just properties of the Roman Catholic Church.]

Ginny reminded everyone that the Codes and Regulations Meeting is Tuesday, March 16 at 5:15 on the second floor of City Hall.

VIOLATION NOTICE: 311 GROVE STREET

Ginny said that she had driven by the house a couple of weeks ago and noted that Mr. Girgenti has put up the cedar shake siding and the shutters are still there. The letter she had sent him explaining the Commission's denial for a Certificate of Appropriateness was returned with "refused" on it. It was a few days later that she drove by and saw the house, so that is when she took the pictures and gave them to Atty. John Giliberti for him to write Mr. Girgenti another letter. He did and gave him until the 21st to comply. If he doesn't comply, we will see him in court. Attorney Giliberti sent two copies of the letter, one regular mail and one certified mail.

OLD BUSINESS

307 WALNUT STREET

When the fence was put in it was wrought iron fence along the side (Ginny showed a picture). Ginny checked the Certificate they got when they tore down the Boy's Club, and there were some changes along that particular side, but the only reference to this fence was that they were moving it. The Commission instructed her to send a letter sent to the Salvation Army to ask what happened to their fence.

PUBLIC MEETING ON POSSIBLE 7th STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

Ald. Jeff Holt reported that he will be holding a public meeting at 5:30 PM on March 31st at Patriot's Gateway Center to discuss possible formation of a Historic District for the 7th Street area. Val Olafson and Zion Development are the ones that approached him on this. The first step he wants to take in the process is to have an open dialogue with property owners in that area to talk about what it means, what the benefits are, what the requirements would be, so everyone will understand what it means for them. Val said that the area covered would be from Commercial Mortgage on Charles Street/7th Street, all the way to Keith Creek.

Ginny said she mentioned this meeting to Jim Caruso and she will be at this meeting. She felt that one of the first things to get across was the difference between a local district and a National Register district. She wants to be sure that all of the property owners understand the difference between the two.

Val said she will be doing the agenda, and she and Jeff will be running the meeting. Gary Anderson will probably talk as well. Gary has been talking to Val about this project for sometime, and Zion is looking for tax credits to make a couple of their projects financially doable. Val said they are looking at more of a redevelopment for the whole district. She will also explain at the meeting how the tax credits work and who is eligible for them. She met with the Planning Committee for Mid Town District and next week she will present information to the Mid Town Board. There are a lot of people on that committee that are very eager about this project, so they will be attending this meeting also.

Ginny spoke with Gary Anderson and he asked if the City could provide assistance if Mid Town District puts in money to pay for a consultant to do the National Register nomination. She also spoke to her equivalent in Elgin and they have done it with consultants and they pay about \$50 per property. Ginny feels that our cost would be higher since we do not have an up-to-date survey of the area. She came up with a figure of about \$10,000. Gary Anderson will check with a couple of consultants to get a real figure that we can work with, and also find out how much Mid Town is putting in.

Jeff Holt said Mid Town doesn't have any money, but they will most likely come up with money somehow. He said that some neighbors in that area that were given some money from the Rockford Community Foundation, but he thinks it was only a couple thousand dollars.

Val said they had talked about a grant from the Community Foundation and also from AMCORE Foundation. It makes perfect sense, since it is their neighborhood.

STAFF REPORT

Ginny said that there is a new Planner in the Community Development Department and she loves to do websites. She has revamped the Planning Division's part of the City's site and will be working on the HPC area also. Ginny wants to know if anyone has any objection to listing all of the Commission members on the website with pictures. It was agreed that the names would be ok, but not pictures.

Ginny reported that the State Conference is June 17 through June 19 at Pere Marquette Lodge. If anyone want to go and stay at the Lodge, make your reservations now.

There is a National Conference on Tax Incentives for Developing Historic Properties in Boston sometime this fall. This year's Restoration and Renovation Exhibition and Conference will be in Boston in April. She has information of all of these conferences if anyone is interested.

Val read an article about Jim Ryan [of Public Works]. She wanted to know if it is possible to have Public Works come before the Commission when road redevelopment and changes in roads go through historic districts. Ginny said that they will and she has been in contact with Jim Ryan and Steve Ernst mentioned in the article. Ginny felt the main concern was to find out how they plan on closing off 3rd Street at Walnut Street. There is railroad property to consider. Discussion followed.

Gary Carlson said that he has a key for 1010 North 2nd Street if anyone has the time after the meeting, he would be happy to show it to them. He said the plaster is done and primed, the downstairs is going back

up, since it had to be removed when taking out the plaster. He said they are about 2/3 done. The kitchen and bathrooms are not in yet, but they are progressing.

With no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jackie Bernard
Intermediate Clerk