

Rockford Historic Preservation Commission

April 14, 2004

6:00 PM

Rockford City Hall, Conference Room B

MEMBERS PRESENT: Val Olafson; Laura Bachelder; Jeanne Ludeke; Frank St. Angel; Vickie Krueger

MEMBERS ABSENT: Scott Sanders, Ald. Jeff Holt

STAFF: Ginny Gregory, Jackie Bernard

OTHERS: Fritz and Kelly Anderson (applicants); Mitchell Morey (applicant); Georgeann Dahm (9-1-1 Center); Jim Lev (Hagney Architects); Brian Bauer and Pam Hein (River District).

COMMISSIONER TRAINING

Commissioner Training Session began at 6:00 PM with an IHPA video on windows being shown.

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

NEW BUSINESS

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Frank wanted to change and clarify the wording of one sentence on page 7 from "Apparently, Catholic Churches do not have to meet ADA" to read "Apparently, all religious institutions do not have to meet ADA."

A **MOTION** was made by Frank St. Angel to approve the minutes of March 10, 2004 with the changes as noted. The motion was seconded by Laura Bachelder and **CARRIED** by a vote of 5-0.

CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS

► 1329 Cospers Avenue

Applicants Fritz and Kelly Anderson were present and explained their proposal:

1. Construct a small wooden deck at the rear of the property at ground level, avoiding trees, and obscured from public view by a fence. Approximate size of the deck: 14' x 10'; and
2. Erect a small wooden shed at the SE corner of the property. This would also be obscured from view by the fence. Roofing material will match the house. Approximate size of the shed: 6' x 6'.

Val asked if they had looked into the idea of a flagstone patio instead of a wooden deck. Mr. Anderson said that they have flagstone steps going up and using flagstone for the patio is possible, but the grade is steep. Also, they wanted a patio that was raised somewhat above ground level. It would only elevate a small amount, so there would be no need for additional retaining walls. He mentioned that the current retaining walls were built in the 1940s. He also pointed out that there are strong iron beams for erosion containment that he is unable to remove. They are approximately 12 feet in length. He feels the deck is the best solution. The center would be at ground level, and the back would be cut in a little and the

front up about two feet, but it would be completely invisible from the back. They will not be disturbing any of the trees in the back.

Val mentioned that the guidelines for decks refer to decks that are attached to the house, so if it's a freestanding entity, it would be a little different, but not a problem. Mr. Anderson said they would most likely have to move the garage if it had to be attached. He spoke to Harold in Zoning and was told that the parameters of the deck were all within the specs, and that there was no need for a permit for the shed due to the small size.

Val asked if Zoning required a railing on the deck. Mr. Anderson had not asked that question. Val said that a railing would be extremely visible. Mr. Anderson said the drawing shows a railing in the front, but it would still be below the sight line. It would be a minimal railing for security since the front slopes down so severely. Also, the deck will have a natural finish and would match the fence. The shed is not visible from the street, and it will be painted to match the trim of the house. The roofing will match the garage roof and the pitch is very close.

A **MOTION** was made by Jeanne Ludeke to **APPROVE** the Certificate as follows:

- Constructing a small wooden deck at the rear of the property, which will be at ground level, avoiding trees and obscured from public view by a fence. The deck will be of natural finish. Approximate size of the deck: 14' x 10'.
- Erecting a small wooden shed at the SE corner of the property, which would be obscured from view by the fence. The shed will be painted to match the trim on the house, and roofing material and pitch will match the garage roof. Approximate size of the shed: 6' x 6'.

The Motion was seconded by Laura Bachelder and **CARRIED** by a vote of 5-0.

► **1529 Oakes Avenue**

The applicant was not present, but had submitted a request that the Certificate of Appropriateness granted March 12, 2003 for a fence be renewed. The original Certificate allowed construction of a wood picket fence in the front and along part of the sides, and a brown or green chain link fence for the rest of the yard. The renewal request would be for fencing at the same location, but would allow a 6-foot wood privacy fence instead of the chain link. It is not visible from the street.

A **MOTION** was made by Vickie Krueger to **APPROVE** the renewal of the Certificate as originally written with the exception that a 6-foot wood privacy fence is to be installed in the back instead of the previously requested chain link. The motion was seconded by Frank St. Angel and **CARRIED** by a vote of 5-0.

► **411 Kent Street**

Laura Bachelder, representing Tinker Swiss Cottage Museum, explained her request to renew the Certificate of Appropriateness dated September 9, 2003 for the reconstruction of the outhouse, balcony and stairs attached to the barn.

Laura said that the outhouse was not completed last summer, so they would like to complete it this year. There are no guidelines for outhouses.

A **MOTION** was made by Frank St. Angel to **APPROVE** the renewal of the Certificate as originally granted on September 9, 2003. The Motion was seconded by Vickie Krueger and **CARRIED** by a vote of 4-0. (Laura Bachelder abstained from voting).

► **1643 Ethel Avenue**

Mitchell Morey, the applicant, was present to explain his proposed project. He would like to extend the existing garage 10 feet to the north (toward the rear of the property); replace existing garage doors with an overhead door; and reside the garage with 3-inch vinyl siding. Mr. Morey distributed various pictures that show the garage and entryway needing to be replaced. He mentioned that he is a contractor and cannot fit his pickup truck in the garage. He wants to trench in a new underground electric line from the house to the garage. One of the pictures shows the old style "tube and knob" aerial from the house to the garage, and he wants to remove that and go underground.

The concrete driveway in the front of the garage is cracked and needs replacement, as well as the entrance to the driveway. He plans to replace the existing 4" siding. The 3" vinyl siding is not an option for him at this time. The 4" car siding has tongue and groove, instead of the 3" lap siding. It will be a little different than what is on the house now. He would also like to replace the service door with a steel door.

Val said that she would like him to find garage overhead doors that look more similar to the current doors. Mr. Morey wants to remove the center pillars between the doors. Val said that he could find doors that look exactly like the current one. Even though it is one door, it would actually look like a traditional carriage door with two windows. Frank said that minor changes in the windows would be OK, but he should look into special ordering a door that is closer in look to the original door. He will check into this.

Mr. Morley said the pictures of the front concrete sidewalk represent a future project. The front sidewalk needs replacing but that will be done at a later date. Ginny mentioned that the Public Works Department has a 50/50 Program for this and said that he should contact them as soon as possible to get on their list, since they can only budget for so many each year. Val said the sidewalk doesn't have to come through HPC for approval.

Val has no problem with the extension, but the garage door needs to be closer in look to the current door. He said that it will take some time to get the doors, since they would be special order, but he wants to put the extension on and keep the old doors on until he gets the new ones.

Ginny mentioned that the Commission can approve the extension at this meeting, but he would have to come back for the door before installing.

A **MOTION** was made by Frank St. Angel to **APPROVE** the Certificate to extend the garage 10 feet to the north with a modification to the application of the vinyl siding to use wood siding to match the existing, and the roofing to match the existing roof.

The overhead door will not be approved at this time. The applicant should come back next month and show samples of doors that have the design of a carriage door.

The Motion was seconded by Laura Bachelder and **CARRIED** by a vote of 5-0.

REQUEST FOR ADVICE

Ginny said that she had received a phone call requesting advice. Ginny had informed them to attend this meeting, but no one was present. Ginny did not remember what the original question was, so this item will be tabled until next month.

PROPOSED ADDITION TO 9-1-1 CENTER

Jim Lev from Hagney Architects and Georgeann Dahm from the 9-1-1 Center attended. Jim explained that they are not in the design development stage yet nor are they ready for any type of approval. They just wanted to show the Commission what they have given to the ETSB Board. Val asked everyone if they knew where the 9-1-1 Center was located, and proceeded to show everyone since the building was visible from the window.

Jim said they have worked on the building previously, i.e., the radio tower and the canopy over the door on Walnut Street. He explained that the 9-1-1 Center is being upgraded and the operation renovated. They have to provide a primary site and also a 100% capability backup site which are remote from one another. When they began looking for sites, the easiest one was the backup site which is going on the River Bluff property on North Main Street. They looked downtown, but those sites all had big price tags on them. There is not a lot of property downtown that is on the market. They needed half a city block for this facility for the parking and the site. At River Bluff, there is a program for a full facility, about 16,000 square feet on two levels, including parking.

In the process of looking at options and checking on the current 9-1-1 building, he noted that Bradley and Bradley built it in 1926 and that it was originally designed to take on additional floors. It is a cast-in-place concrete frame. The concrete columns are 20 inches in diameter on 20 x 20 ft. bays. The soil takes almost 9,000 lbs. per square foot. It is very well designed and positioned to take a couple of more floors.

With all this in mind, they are proposing to add a 3rd floor to the current 9-1-1 Center across Walnut Street from City Hall. The floors in the building, as well as the roof, are 8" flat concrete slabs. There is granular sand or gravel type of pitching under the roof. When they stripped that off, they found the flat deck which would be perfect for a 3rd floor.

They intend to add a full 3rd floor, approximately, 12,000 square feet, as well as a penthouse of about 2500 sq. ft. for mechanical space. Jim laid out the original drawings and displayed them for the Commission to review.

Pointing out the differences in the drawings, Jim explained that the 9-1-1 Center was not built the way it was designed. The ground floor had fire equipment for the station, with the dormitory on the 2nd floor above the fire station (northwest corner). The southwest corner was designed as the Police garage. They were able to drive through from the alley to the back and come all the way through and drive out the front. They only had one door there. In the process of building this building, they built four garage doors across the front.

Jim said that with their budget, they are going to put the 3rd floor on top of these two stories. Their budget is covered to redo anything else on the building. The 9-1-1 Center is behind the two doors that are fixed with a concrete block wall behind them. The doors do not operate; they are just there for looks. They will probably stay the same. Ideally, they will include as an alternate in their bids a proposal to replace/rebuild the garage doors on the interior and replace the window system. The windows are 1960-1970s vintage aluminum, energy conserving windows that don't replicate what was originally there. They are

not really doing anything to those floors, even though there is minor remodeling on the 2nd floor. There is no need to alter the outside of the existing building, except the area he pointed out on the plan, where they are reusing the existing west door as the entrance to the building. They want to let light into the lobby space there.

Jim presented the preliminary drawing for the 3rd floor and explained their plan. He mentioned that the penthouse is really concealed by the faux roof put on around the structure. In order to make the building weatherproof, storm proof, bomb proof, and bullet proof as is required now, they are going to have a pre-cast concrete roof and bullet proof windows into the 9-1-1 Center. They have codes and regulations for Communication Centers that they have to follow. He mentioned that the Codes were fairly new and the existing 9-1-1 was not built to those standards. Both of the new facilities will be storm proof.

The 3rd floor addition is setback so as not to disturb the existing stone parapet on the building. That will be left intact, with an offset directly behind it. That way, they don't have new brick right next to old brick. The brick they will be using is a good match in texture and color but it won't be an exact match. It is important that they don't take the cap off and use new brick because it will stand out.

Ginny checked with the State Preservation Agency on the project and the man she spoke with said it actually should be setback. Val said that in theory, when you add on to a historic building, the addition should work with the historic building, but it should not try to pull people into believing it's a part of it. Therefore, it is either setback or slightly different material or something to indicate it is an addition but its working with a historic structure.

The roof is like a hipped roof and it does go all the way around. They are looking at metal, metal tile, or maybe a standing seam, but no decision has been made yet. It would not be shingled or wood frame. Ginny asked if there was any reason it could not be flat. Jim responded that it would be out of scale with the other two floors and it would look heavy.

Val confirmed with Jim that the central decorative elements will be setback as well. Jim also said that there will be a new elevator in the building, but it is being moved from the north side. This will no longer be a public entrance. The new public entrance will be on the west side and the elevator will be in the lobby. There will be two new stairs also.

There was concern that it looked a little prairie and a little classic revival. Jim thought it was consistent with what could have been built at that time. Val said that what might change it drastically is going with a red metal roof instead of a green one.

The penthouse will probably be masonry with some concrete and with masonry fill. The roof of the mechanical would all be precast. The lighting for the building has not yet been decided on, but it should remain consistent. One of the things they will do to protect the building will be to request that the alley east of the building be vacated. They would like to bury electrical through there so the power source to the building is not exposed at that point. The alley would only be closed back to the southeast corner of the building, at the east side entrance which goes down to the lower level, so that access to the building and the parking lot would be from the south, instead of coming into the alley from the north. That would all become green space.

Frank asked if there were any plans to change the garage doors. Jim said that Chief Robertson asked about trying to upgrade the doors, but they can only do that if the budget allows. If allowed, they will do the pair of them. A brief discussion followed. Frank will check to see if he can locate the original plans.

Jim said that nothing needs to be voted on at this point – that they are just keeping the Commission informed of the project and will continue to keep them updated as they proceed. They anticipate starting construction of the offsite structure at River Bluff in early summer 2004. The plan for the construction of the current 9-1-1 Center is expected to begin in late summer 2004. Jim concluded by saying that this is an aggressive program.

ILLINOIS STATEWIDE PRESERVATION CONFERENCE

Ginny distributed information to everyone and said that she will be attending the conference. She mentioned that if anyone else wishes to attend, they should make their reservation as soon as possible since there are not many hotel rooms available.

OLD BUSINESS

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE ORDINANCE

Ginny reported that no action was taken by City Council's Code and Regulation Committee. It was discussed two weeks ago at great length, but no decision was made. She said that it was supposed to come up again on April 13th, but she received a phone call informing her that it was being held out. She was unsure of the timeframe. She contacted her counterpart at the Chicago Landmarks Commission on Tuesday, and he said no one had filed suit as of yet in the St. Gelasius case. She spoke with Ald. Jeff Holt and he said that his feeling was that if they are waiting for someone to file suit, his recommendation to the Committee would be to table it and take no action. When a court case does resolve itself, then they can reenter it at that time.

Ginny also spoke of the information she handed out at the beginning of the meeting. She went through the files for the three churches that are in Haight Village because some were making the argument that we make life really difficult for them. In going through the files, she found that every single request was granted the first time it came up. There was a minor modification in one or two cases, but that was all. She will provide to the Committee on Monday, April 19th so that they have a chance to read it before they meet again.

As the Chairman, Val had previously sent a memo to the Committee, since she was not able to attend. The second time, she attended. She, Gary Carlson, and Gary Anderson all spoke. Two other people who were at the meeting also spoke. Overall, Val said that all of the people who publicly spoke at the meeting were against the change in the ordinance.

VIOLATION NOTICE: 311 GROVE STREET

Vickie said that Mr. Girgenti wants to get this property sold before anyone makes him do anything. Jeanne commented that he has a new back step arrangement that was put on after his meeting with us. At that particular meeting, he was instructed to replace the existing steps because of some rot. He has now built the steps out of treated lumber. Vickie said that she had informed him prior to purchasing the property that it was in a historic district. Jeanne said that he apparently knew it was in a historic district, but he was not aware that he had to get approval from the Commission before doing his projects.

Ginny said that Attorney Giliberti is working on the complaint, so he will be going to court. He is ready to file suit, but in the meantime, she will keep an eye on things.

Frank inquired about the house with the different colors and the temporary sign across from the YMCA. Ginny said that she had written him a letter as did Neighborhood Standards. He was issued a summons for Code Hearing, but did not show up for the hearing. The last time she checked, they had turned his fine over to a collection agency.

Frank also asked about the house across from Gary's house on North 2nd Street. They have put up a wrought iron fence and he was wondering if we approved this. A brief discussion followed. Frank said this fence is north of the stone wall. Ginny will check into this.

STAFF REPORT

- **1622 Brownwood Drive** Ginny wanted to give an update on the Certificate that was approved by the Commission last month for a fence on this property. Chain link was approved in the back. The way the Certificate was worded was that they *may* use chain link. However, when they came in for their permit, they decided they wanted a wood fence to match the gate, so Ginny said it was fine and signed off on the permit.
- **River District Workshop** Brian Bauer from River District informed everyone of a workshop they are sponsoring on May 1st from 9:00 to 11:30 at the Rockford Public Library in Classroom B. Gary Anderson, Ginny Gregory, and Val Olafson will be speaking. It is a "Research Your House Seminar." He said that Ginny showed him "Your House Has a History" which the Chicago Landmarks Commission put together. They are hoping to replicate that somewhat and do one for Rockford. After they get their first draft, the Commission is welcome to review and update as necessary.
- **City Website** Ginny commented that the City is changing its website and the Community Development Department's page looks really good. In addition to the agenda for each meeting, she is adding the minutes. She will have up to 6 months of minutes at a time. Gradually, we will be adding more information. Her goal is to put in the guidelines as well as other information, but that costs money. She mentioned that we now have three people in the department who are knowledgeable in doing web design and they are quite anxious to proceed.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Jackie Bernard
Intermediate Clerk