

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING**

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

**APPROVED**

**DATE:** April 2, 2003

**TIME:** 7:00 p.m.

**PLACE:** Council Chambers, 400 South Vine Street, Urbana, Illinois 61801

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Rich Cahill, Liz Cardman, Alice Novak, Bill Rose, Trent Shepard, Art Zangerl

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Sharon Irish

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**STAFF PRESENT:** Elizabeth Tyler, CD Director; Rob Kowalski, Planning Manager; Michaela Bell, Planner; Teri Andel, Secretary

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Dave and Doris Barr, G. D. and Lois Brighton, Russell Dankert, Karen Kummer, Steve Ross, Joan Zagorski

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**1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM**

Urbana Historic Preservation Commission Chair, Alice Novak, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared.

**2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

There were none.

**3. APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Mr. Cahill moved to approve the minutes as amended. Mr. Rose seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote as amended.

**4. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

There were none.

## 5. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Steve Ross, of 609 West Green Street, lives directly adjacent to the property at 611 West Green Street, which would be considered under New Business. He commented that he appreciated the good repair that Barr Real Estate had kept the property at 611 West Green Street for the past four years. However, the Mixed Office Residential (MOR) Zoning District imposes some high standards, and he felt that the proposed apartment complex would not meet those standards. There are three major reasons why the proposed apartment complex would not be an appropriate MOR use adjacent to the Ricker House and in the broader neighborhood, which are as follows: 1) its size, 2) its orientation and 3) its style.

First, the previous building was a single-family house with approximately four to five bedrooms that had been cut into apartments at some point, and another apartment had been added to bring the total to six apartments. The proposed complex would have sixteen bedrooms in it, which would more than double the previous occupancy for that lot. Mr. Ross added that the fact that the proposed building would run from the minimum setback on the east to the setback limit on the west shows that the building would be too big for the lot. There would be eight parking spaces planned for sixteen residents, and that was another indication that the number of residents would be too many.

Secondly, he talked about the orientation as opposed to the Ricker House across the street, as opposed to his house next door, as opposed to the demolished house that was on that lot, and as opposed to any number of houses along Green Street. The proposed complex would have its broad side to the street; whereas, the other houses are located with their long access perpendicular to the street. This orientation parallel to Green Street rather than perpendicular to it will give rise to a concrete canyon effect.

Lastly, the style of the proposed building would not fit into the neighborhood. An excellent example of an apartment building that fits into the neighborhood is located at 712 West Green Street. It appears to be a single-family house on the outside. Another good example is located at 709 West Main Street, because it is not obvious that it is not a house, and it blends in very well with the neighborhood.

In summary, Mr. Ross stated that given the large size of the proposed apartment building (which would be bulging at the limits on the east and west setbacks), its orientation parallel to the street (giving rise to a concrete canyon effect) and its style (which does not fit into the neighborhood), he believed that the proposed apartment complex would be an inappropriate addition as a neighbor to the Ricker House and to the neighborhood in general.

Mr. Shepard inquired if Mr. Ross's garage was along the east side of the proposed lot? Mr. Ross answered that there were bushes along the property line to screen them from the trashcans of the previous apartment building.

Ms. Cardman commented that the proposed plan includes a significant concrete lot in roughly a third of the backyard's square footage for the total lot size that was being planned for. She

wondered if Mr. Ross anticipated any drainage problems on his property. Mr. Ross commented that it would depend on how the drainage was graded.

Karen Kummer, Executive Director of the Preservation and Conservation Association (PACA) of Champaign County, noted that PACA owns easements on the Nathan Ricker House across the street from the proposed property, and they also own easements on the Brighton-Ross House next door to the proposed development. Therefore, PACA had vested economic interest directly affecting their property values with this development.

Ms. Kummer pointed out some of the administrative criteria that the Development Review Board would be required to consider when they look at the proposed development, specifically Criteria A, B and C, which are as follows:

- a) *Encourage compatible new construction or rehabilitation and alteration of existing structures.*
- b) *Encourage compatibility and minimize impacts between the proposed land use and the surrounding area.*
- c) *Encourage the maintenance, preservation, and enhancement of both individual structures and the neighborhood's visual and aesthetic character.*

She stated that in response to these three criteria, she echoed Mr. Ross's comments in that as the site was proposed to be developed, it did not feel like it was compatible with the neighborhood, the Green Street corridor, or the MOR Zoning District. Green Street is still very much residential in character and scale as size and proportion. Although there are one or two modern apartment buildings, the other apartment buildings that are located along Green Streets are historic and mimic the size and character of the surrounding neighborhood structures quite well. Most of the buildings in the neighborhood, particularly the Ricker House and the Brighton-Ross House, are very vertical in character rather than horizontal in orientation. Setbacks are also important along this street. Most of the properties particularly in the vicinity of the property in question have large front yards, which give a more residential character to the neighborhood. Those setbacks and large front yards are an important part of the visual character of the neighborhood, and one of the things that should be considered by the Development Review Board in the MOR Zoning District.

Ms. Kummer talked about the site plan, and commented that it was horizontal in character and the scale was much too large for the site and the neighborhood. From an economic standpoint, she felt that this development was trying to maximize the economic capacity of the lot above and beyond what is good for the neighborhood to the detriment of the neighboring properties. Thus, the property values will be severely impacted by the proposed development and potentially diminished.

Joan Zagorski, of 1605 South Race, commented that she was shocked and distressed to drive past Coler Avenue and Green Street and see a pile of rubble instead of a house. She did not understand why the house could not have been rehabilitated and restored just as the Nathan Ricker House had been. It seems to be a waste of resources to bull doze down a house. This was one more blow to our Urbana community.

Ms. Zagorski stated that brings us to another stage, that of whether to allow an eight-unit apartment building to be built on that lot with variances to the setbacks. What impact would the proposed apartment complex have on the values of the nearby houses?

She was surprised that the proposed building would not look as bad as she had expected; however, she did not feel that the setback variances should be allowed. They are really not needed. The most important thing to her was the design and building materials used in the construction of the proposed building. She noted that the proposed design appeared to have some elements of Georgian Architecture that echoes the Georgian design of many University of Illinois buildings. She suggested that the petitioner use brick on all four facades and use the same color of brick as used on the University of Illinois Georgian buildings.

Dave Barr, representative of the property management company, Barr Real Estate, and part of the team that had been working on the design of the building, spoke to the Historic Preservation Commission. He noted that Barr Real Estate did not only develop in the City of Urbana, the City of Champaign and the Village of Savoy, but throughout the State of Illinois and in the State of Indiana as well. He commented that this process was thoroughly intimidating as a developer. It felt like no matter what a developer tried to do, the developer was the bad guy from the very beginning. He noted that there was a quote in the News-Gazette by one of the commissioners that stated that they would vote against it. He questioned what kind of a close-minded environment was he dealing with.

Mr. Barr felt that people were being biased against him building a rental unit on the proposed lot. People who rent are no way inferior to people who do not rent. He felt like withdrawing his application. He was trying to work to produce a building that looks good. City Staff suggested the variance process to him, so that he could produce a front entrance on Green Street. It was deemed to be important. As far as the materials to be used to construct the proposed building, they have not been determined yet. There has been an incredible amount of negative energy being directed at the project. Instead of being negative, he preferred people to approach him with somewhat of an open-mind and make suggestions in a positive context.

Mr. Barr talked about the Green Street corridor in general. The City of Urbana has an automatic three-year theoretical inspection program for building codes. If an inspector would go through each existing apartment building along Green Street and examine for compliance to building codes, he would be interested to see what would happen to those structures. People always make the comment that houses can be remodeled, and the houses could be. However, Barr Real Estate is trying to build a new structure that would be appealing and would fit in with the neighborhood.

Ms. Novak clarified that after glancing at the article in the News-Gazette to which Mr. Barr referred that none of the commissioners had stated that they would not vote in favor of the proposed plan. Mr. Barr read the following from the referred article:

*“The President of the Preservation and Conservation Association, Rich Cahill, who lives a block away from the proposed apartments, says he will likely oppose the development and the Association will probably take a stand.”*

Ms. Novak explained that the Historic Preservation Commission had the predicament that one of the Commissioners was also President of PACA. She stated that Mr. Cahill would not be participating in the discussion on this topic, nor would he be voting on the topic as a member of the Historic Preservation Commission.

Mr. Barr questioned how Mr. Cahill could give his opinion on this topic when he had not yet seen the site plan. Mr. Cahill declined to comment on the matter.

Lois Brighton, of 501 Evergreen Court, mentioned that she had previously lived next door to the proposed property for many years. She noted that the number of parking spots does not match up to the number of what would likely be the number of residents in the proposed apartment complex. Parking in this neighborhood area could become a very serious matter. Her experience is that every student has a car and would need a place to park.

## **5. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS**

There were none.

## **6. OLD BUSINESS**

There was none.

## **7. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS**

There were none.

## **8. NEW BUSINESS**

### **Site Plan Review: 611 West Green Street: Review proposed affects to the Ricker House Landmark**

Mr. Cahill stated that he must abstain from all discussion and voting on this topic for three reasons, which are as follows: 1) he lives in the same block as this property, 2) as the President of PACA, he has a vested interest in both the Ricker House and the Brighton-Ross House and 3) he had agreed to an interview with the News-Gazette and had made a public comment that was printed in an article.

Michaela Bell, Planner, presented the staff report for this case. She reviewed the Historic Preservation Commission's duties according to Section XII-3, F.11 of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance, which generally states that one of the powers and duties of the Historic Preservation Commission is to review upon submitted applications for the MOR Provisions and zoning variances for properties contiguous to or separated by public right-of-way from designated landmarks. She explained the intention of the application that would be reviewed by the Development Review Board and the variance application that would be reviewed by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Ms. Bell talked about the history of the Ricker House, which is located at 612 West Green Street. She stated that the Historic Preservation Commission was being asked to comment on the general site plan and any affects it may have on the Ricker House. The Commission should also provide comments relating to the two variances requested for this development, and their possible affects on the Ricker House property, if they are granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals. After thorough review of the site plan and proposed variances at 611 West Green, if the Preservation Commission felt that there would be any detrimental affects to the local landmark, they should specify these findings. In this event, the Chair should testify on the behalf of the Historic Preservation Commission and convey those findings to the Development Review Board and the Urbana Zoning Board of Appeals.

Ms. Bell then gave the staff recommendation, which was as follows:

*In reviewing the criteria and findings that resulted in the designation of the Ricker House as a landmark, staff was of the opinion that the submitted site plan application at 611 West Green Street would not have a negative impact to the Ricker House Historic Landmark. Staff also believed that the two requested setback variances for the new construction, if granted, should not affect or pose detrimental impacts to the landmark because the two properties are located across the street from each other.*

Ms. Cardman inquired whether the Development Review Board would be an open-session? Mr. Kowalski responded that the Development Review Board meeting would be held as a public meeting with the same format as a hearing. The public would be invited to come and give comments. The meeting would be held on April 17, 2003 at 3:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers.

Ms. Cardman commented that according to the Assessor's office, there previously was a three to seven unit building and was rated for five apartments. The previous building had measured 2,700 square feet. According to the plan, an eight unit building was being proposed, which she believed made it go from being a medium-low density to the equivalent of a medium-high density. She questioned whether that was permissible in a MOR Zoning District? Mr. Kowalski replied that the Zoning Ordinance in any zoning district does not necessary regulate density in terms of the number of dwelling units per acre or how many units could be on a lot. If multi-family was allowed in a zoning district, then it is allowed; however, they would still have to meet all the other development standards for floor area ratio, setbacks, parking, etc. Those development regulations would usually dictate what size of building could be built on any given size lot. There are no requirements for how many units there could be or how dense it could be. He added that in general, the MOR Zoning District does permit multi-family developments, but any development in a MOR Zoning District has to be reviewed by the Development Review Board, not necessarily to determine whether the use is appropriate or not, but how it is designed and how it would be used on that lot.

Ms. Cardman asked for more clarification on the MOR Zoning District. According to the 1990 Downtown to Campus Plan, the City of Urbana was trying to provide an "incentive to retain the historic structures, rather than raze them and build large apartment buildings." She understood this to mean that the City was encouraging preservation of the historic character of the neighborhood.

The actual process seemed to be that a 100+-year-old Queen Anne House was razed and mature trees were cut down. Then, the plan was submitted. She asked if this was a legal sequence of events? Can they anticipate other plans would be submitted after historic properties are razed? Mr. Kowalski answered that the MOR Zoning District was setup to review both new projects and to review projects that may involve remodeling or reconverting an existing structure. The City of Urbana does not have any kind of regulations that prohibit a property owner from demolishing a structure. In this case, the demolition permit was requested and permitted before the application for the new development was submitted. The MOR Zoning District was setup to offer a mechanism for review in either case of whether it would be a readaptive use of an existing structure or a new development proposed.

Ms. Cardman asked for clarification on the legality or the logic in determining the setbacks. She stated that there seemed to be a loophole in some sense in the MOR Zoning District or a historic neighborhood. By figuring averages across a number of properties on this historic street, the buildings are setback significantly relative to the other contemporary neighborhoods. By allowing the proposed building to have a setback of 27' as opposed to the 40' setback of the previous building, the cumulative affect would result in eroding and decreasing the permissible setback. Mr. Kowalski responded that the average setback requirement was one that the City has for any zoning district. The City of Urbana recently made an amendment that would still figure the average setback calculation, but would cap it at 25'. The main reason was to allow the ability to build on some lots that would otherwise be difficult to build on if there was a 50' setback requirement.

Mr. Kowalski noted that this development does propose a 25' setback to the building. The petitioner was requesting a variance for the front door entrance area that would bring it down to 19'. Ms. Tyler added that averaging on setbacks was used in the residential zones and was capped at 25' in all zoning districts, except the R-1 Zoning District, which already has many setback requirements. She felt it was beneficial for the City to have an average in the residential areas rather than having a minimum, because it helps to minimize the impacts of new development, but also allows for averaging out rather than meeting the neighbor's or a minimum setback.

Mr. Zangerl agreed with Ms. Tyler. He noted that he was on the City Council when the average setback was adopted. The whole point of the average setback originally was to prevent the building of buildings that jotted out right to the minimum setback.

Mr. Zangerl inquired as to what happens when a developer asks for a demolition permit in the MOR Zoning District? Is there any discussion in terms of the demolishing permit application? Is there any review of what happens to any existing trees? Mr. Kowalski answered that there were no provisions for any kind of higher level of review for a demolition permit in the MOR or any other district. Mr. Zangerl commented that for all practical purposes, the provision for the MOR Zoning District is meaningless. Ms. Tyler noted that the only way to protect against demolition is by landmarking a property. She added that there currently was not a tree preservation ordinance.

Mr. Zangerl questioned if the setback of the building included the balconies? Mr. Kowalski replied that balconies are allowed to encroach into the setback by two feet, and the proposed balconies would.

Mr. Zangerl asked what kinds of terms and comments was the Historic Preservation Commission restricted to make? Were they restricted to the kind of issues that the Development Review Board would consider? Could they only talk about massing, scale, footprint, etc.? Mr. Kowalski believed that the true intent of the ordinance was for cases where a project was proposed immediately adjacent to a landmark; however, the ordinance does say “including lots that are separated by a public right-of-way.” The intent was that the discussion should be focused on how the project would affect the landmark. However, any comments on the development itself would not be inappropriate.

Mr. Zangerl questioned if the materials to be used in the façade and so forth were fixed by the process of the Development Review Board? Mr. Kowalski responded that the plans submitted by the petitioner to be reviewed by the Development Review Board, if approved, would be expected to be followed. The Development Review Board is not supposed to have suggestions and recommendations on the aesthetics and the type of materials, etc. Mr. Zangerl asked if the plan would include the footprint, number of floors, roofline, etc.? Mr. Kowalski stated that was correct. He noted that there were thirteen criteria that the Development Review Board uses. A couple of the criteria are general and determine how the project fits into the character of the neighborhood. Others are more specific about how access would be accommodated. Mr. Zangerl asked if in considering the impact of the variances if granted, the Development Review Board looked at the footprint, then would the petitioner be committed to that footprint? Mr. Kowalski replied yes. Ms. Tyler added that the Development Review Board could say that they wanted something else that would require review by the Zoning Board of Appeals, and then the petitioner would have to go back to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Mr. Zangerl questioned if the Zoning Board of Appeals approves the variance and the Development Review Board likes the twelve foot wide entry way, then the design of the entry way could not be altered? Ms. Tyler stated that the Development Review Board could not approve something that had any more of an encroachment, because that is the authority of the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Mr. Shepard inquired if the parking space requirement for this project was the same for all of Urbana or just for the MOR Zoning District? Mr. Kowalski replied that the parking space requirement for residential uses and multi-family uses was dictated by the size of the bedrooms. In addition, there is always a minimum of one parking space required per apartment. However, there is no parking space requirement for the B-4 Zoning District.

Mr. Zangerl questioned what the maximum occupancy would be for one of the proposed apartments? Mr. Kowalski answered by saying that the Zoning Ordinance allows four unrelated adults per dwelling unit.

Mr. Kowalski mentioned that Mr. Barr did not originally plan to request for any variances on the design that he had. The original design was designed much differently in that there was not a main entrance to the building on the front along Green Street. There was front patio door type of entrances on each side of the building along Green Street with wood fences shielding those. The sides of the building did not have the bay-type articulations as seen in the current plan. Staff encouraged Mr. Barr to take a look at some alternative designs that might have a main entrance from Green Street. In order to have a main entrance along Green Street, the petitioner needed to



have the kind of front entry that would project into the front yard setback by a little over six feet. Likewise, the bay type articulations on the sides of the building could not be considered technically as bay windows, which would be allowed to encroach into the setback. Therefore, the bay type articulations had to be considered as part of the structure. Mr. Barr moved the building as far west as possible, so there would still be the minimum required setback from his building to Mr. Ross's property on the east, which is seven feet. The side-yard setback requirement for the MOR Zoning District is a minimum of seven feet. Along Coler Avenue, there is a minimum setback of fifteen feet, and the petitioner needs a thirteen-foot setback. Therefore, he requested a variance.

Russ Dankert, of HDC Engineering, stated that he was the architect for the proposed development. He reaffirmed Mr. Kowalski's comments about the original design. He noted that the number of apartments had not changed since the beginning. The MOR criteria are very restrictive with a very low floor area ratio, which causes a limited amount of building that could be built on the lot.

Mr. Dankert pointed out an error in the application, which was regarding the six foot three inch incursion into fifteen feet. It was actually twenty-five feet, which is the minimum. He noted that they have set the building two feet further south to the main body of the building so that they are not as punitive as they appear. The east to west was correct as Mr. Kowalski had described it. They wanted to maintain the side yard to the Ross residence, which was 25' from their west property line. Between the two buildings there will be 32'.

Mr. Dankert presented a pictorial view of the proposed development. He felt that the proposed building would fit into the character of the entire block. There will be brick on the front all the way across. He added that the proposed apartment complex would be shorter in height than the Ross's house.

He mentioned that the residents for this project would be targeted as married graduate students. The apartments would be small and would not likely to have four people living in them. They will have at the most two people in each. He did not believe that there would be two cars per apartment. By keeping the bedrooms small, it keeps people from over-occupying apartments.

Mr. Dankert commented that since the original drawing was made, there have been many changes. Many features have been added, the colors of the building would be classic in nature, and there would be a fair amount of landscaping. There was a stained glass window that was taken out of the previous building and would be put in the proposed building as a memorial. He asked the Commission to ignore the vinyl siding on the site plan, because they were planning to use wood siding on the sides and back of the building. Barr Real Estate plans to maintain all the trees that exist around the perimeter of the property.

Mr. Shepard questioned how far the parking lot would be from the property line? Mr. Dankert answered that it would be about a foot away from the property line. Technically, a developer cannot build on the property line. He added that the trash bin would be enclosed.

Mr. Shepard asked if there was power line along Coler Street parkway next to this property? Mr. Dankert replied that was correct. Mr. Shepard mentioned that the proposed plans show large trees

being planted in that parkway that would not fit there in reality. Mr. Dankert commented that a careful selection of material would be good on that side.

Mr. Zangerl was curious if Mr. Barr had any restrictions in his leases regarding what could go on the balconies. Mr. Barr replied yes. They do not allow barbeque grills on the balconies due to being a safety concern. In regards to other items being restricted, he never really thought about it. He noted some of the things that might be stored on the balcony decks, such as bicycles, lawn chairs, etc. The railing should screen most of the things from view. Mr. Zangerl questioned if the tenants would be allowed to have satellite dishes on the balconies? Mr. Barr answered that the tenants would not be allowed to attach anything to the building. The apartments would be wired for cable and would not need a satellite dish. Mr. Zangerl suggested that Mr. Barr does not use an open rail.

Mr. Shepard inquired about how deep the balconies would be? Mr. Dankert replied that the balconies would be six feet deep. Balconies are amenities that people like and also adds visual dimension to the building.

Mr. Rose inquired if HDC Engineering had anticipated trying to provide a site plan that might have included the footprints of the proposed building with the neighboring building on Green Street and the Ricker House across the road? This would allow the Commission to better view the alignments of the massing elements. Mr. Dankert replied that his office did not. He did measure all of the setbacks up and down the street, which was also required; however, he did not draw a site plan deliberately for that. He commented that he has a lot of trouble with the MOR Zoning District, because it is not doing what was expected.

Ms. Novak inquired about the type of windows to be used. Mr. Dankert replied that was something that had not been discussed. The changes have made this project very marginal financially. Decisions about windows might be made to use the cheaper kind. Ms. Novak asked about the roof material? Mr. Dankert stated that the roof material would be a Shake-style asphalt shingle and would be medium gray like slate gray. Ms. Novak questioned what type of shutters would be used? Mr. Dankert replied that they would probably use vinyl shutters for maintenance purposes. Ms. Novak asked if they would be appropriate scaled for the windows? Mr. Dankert responded that they could work.

Mr. Barr expressed appreciation for the Historic Preservation Commission volunteering their time.

Ms. Novak was curious whether this was the first time he had submitted an application for this property? Mr. Barr replied that was correct, and it was his first time he had ever worked in a MOR Zoning District. He suggested that the City of Urbana be as critical as they want, but make the process a little more positive and a little less intimidating to the developer. If the City would make the process more encouraging, then it might encourage property owners in the MOR Zoning Districts to do a little more. Ms. Tyler commented that there have been efforts in the past to revise the MOR Zoning District to learn from what has worked and what has not worked. The recommendations were never adopted, because they were put on a long list of staff review items for the Zoning Ordinance.

Ms. Cardman brought forth some data as a result of Mr. Rose asking about setbacks of adjoining properties. The proposed property has a 27' front yard setback. The adjoining property at 609 West Green Street has a 47' front yard setback. The Ricker House roughly has a 38' front yard setback from the sidewalk. The Queen Anne at 702 West Green Street has a 35' front yard setback. 701 West Green, which was the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Construction, has a 37' front yard setback.

Mr. Rose stated that he recently attended a federal government panel in Washington, D.C. One of the panelists was the head curator at the Walker Art Gallery in Baltimore. When he heard that Mr. Rose was from Urbana, the panelist mentioned that he had previously come to the City of Urbana and had commented on the number of big, old houses we have. It bred in Mr. Rose a rededication to the efforts of stopping the demolishing of these houses. He believed that we could all share in the desire to put together a community that involves both old and new properties, where new construction is compatible with old properties.

Mr. Rose noted that there was not any wording in the regulations for the Development Review Board that would require an architect who is planning a project to include both the site plan and a site section with elevations. He found it difficult to make the best decision in the absence of that information. He suggested that staff encourage future contributions to provide that information to be of help to any Commissions who review the project. He believed that the development of a project, where compatibility with neighbors is at the core of the project, can and should be done on a site plan that includes footprints and elevations of the existing buildings to the benefit of the building itself. On the south elevation of the Ricker House, there is an element of about the same size and proportion; however, he was unable to tell if they were aligned.

Mr. Shepard commented that when looking at the drawings of the building and trying to imagine himself sitting on the front porch of the Ricker House, the proposed apartment building would seem big and would make the Ricker House feel different due to its size. Therefore, he had a mental objection to the bulk of the project. At the same time, he wished that 90% of the apartment buildings being built in the campus area would look that good. Overall, he believed it would make the Ricker House feel a little lost and more out of place and felt that the proposed apartment complex would have a negative effect on the Ricker House.

Ms. Cardman mentioned that she was in southern Louisiana and saw buildings that were 150 to 170 years old, which were in excellent shape. She talked about the standpoint of the Ricker House and how it had been surrounded by the Queen Anne Houses on the northwest corner and at 609 West Green Street, as well as the Queen Anne House that was at 611 West Green Street. The Ricker House was harmonious with the buildings that were immediately surrounding it with the asymmetry of the buildings, irregular rooflines, and projecting gables, as well as the architectural detailing. She noted that she was grateful to see the architectural details on the plan of the proposed building. Regardless, the proposed building would be situated such that it would completely change the view from the Ricker House. The Ricker House would oversee a property that would more than double the square footage of what had been there. The Ricker House had overseen a property that obviously had the feel of a single-family home, although it was a five-unit apartment building. It was proposed to become an eight-unit apartment complex, which would be more than a 50% increase in terms of the number of units in the building. There would be an increased amount of traffic of cars going from a five-unit apartment complex to an eight-unit apartment complex.

Clearly the setbacks would be a significant change over what the Ricker House and other surrounding properties have. She felt the proposed setback would not be harmonizing with what the Ricker House has had its view in the intersection on Coler Avenue and Green Street.

Mr. Zangerl stated that the biggest interest that the Historic Preservation Commission could have in this at this point would be to address the aesthetic quality of what Mr. Barr was proposing to do. It could be much worse than what is being proposed. In looking at the scale, setbacks, and so forth, the bigger potential impact on the Ricker House would be how the tenants of the proposed property act as neighbors in this neighborhood. He firmly believed that would depend on how the landlord treats the property and what the landlord expects from the tenants. Ideally, a single-family use on the proposed property would be best. However, of the many possible designs with permitted use there, this design is not terrible by any means. Therefore, he encouraged Mr. Barr to expect of his tenants the kind of treatment of his building and the neighborhood that is deserved.

Mr. Rose noted that architects always make decisions in sequence; otherwise buildings would never get built. Clearly, one of the drivers would be how many units are possible and how to maximize the return. That dictates a certain mass. This would be a handsome building in many regards. It may reduce the profits. He would take the massing of the building (the size of the building and the square footage) to be an early decision with which the later development then has to work. In looking up and down the street, while there are symmetrical buildings, asymmetry of buildings seemed to be the rule. There are slight asymmetries in the symmetric front façade of the Ricker House, which are notable ones that strongly indicate one side is the street and one side is the garage.

He stated that the symmetry and asymmetry question also applies to issues of massing. The massing on the street has blocks that are in and out both high and low. There are a lot of shadow makers.

He referred to a comment he made earlier about if compatibility with neighbors would be insisted upon by the City of Urbana as being part of the design process, then the site plan that works off of those could influence this. He felt left with an understanding and recognition of some of the drivers, but disappointment in that he believed that the adjacent properties and the overall impact might have been able to influence the overall massing of the proposed building. There was still a boxiness about the building that says the petitioner was maximizing the mass of the building for a return on the investment. Therefore, there were elements of the building for which he complimented the architect, and there were elements in the neighborhood that he missed seeing in the proposal.

Ms. Novak was disappointed that the Queen Anne house was torn down. Although it was too late, she noted that all buildings require maintenance.

Nevertheless, the Historic Preservation Commission was dealing with the lot and the proposed development. She felt that the Commission not making constructive criticism would be counter-productive. Therefore, her personal suggestions would be the following: 1) increase the pitch of the roof and add verticality to the building, 2) orientation of the building still looks like an apartment building, bump up the pitch of the gable entrance pavilion if not the entire roof system, 3) balconies are a problem – although she understands that they are an amenity and a necessary component, 4)

increase the pitch on the bays on the Coler Avenue side, 5) use medium gray shade Shake-type shingles and 6) use True Divided Light windows.

Mr. Dankert commented that they were not insensitive to the Ricker House. In fact, they turned the driveway away from Green Street to be in the back, and all of the parking would be in the back. This was not true with the original house. Now, there would be a front yard facing the Ricker House.

Mr. Zangerl asked if the Historic Preservation Commission's comments would be heard by the Development Review Board or the Zoning Board of Appeals? Mr. Kowalski replied that both bodies would receive the minutes from this meeting. Ms. Cardman questioned if Ms. Novak would speak before the two Boards? Ms. Novak answered that she was unable to so she would ask Mr. Zangerl to speak at both meetings. Mr. Kowalski commented that the minutes are usually pretty detailed and would be given to each Board. Staff could also attempt to summarize the comments from this Commission in their staff reports for each Board.

Mr. Rose hoped that the Historic Preservation Commission's interest in preservation could be entirely consistent with good development in the City of Urbana. He hoped their concern for historic properties could be seen as an element that could work strongly in cooperation with economic development in Urbana.

Mr. Zangerl moved that the Historic Preservation Commission's comments be allowed to be recorded and transmitted to the Zoning Board of Appeals and to the Development Review Board. He would be happy to go to those meetings and clarify where it would be necessary. Ms. Novak did not feel that a motion was necessary. Ms. Cardman was concerned about getting a copy of the minutes to verify that they are accurate. Ms. Tyler stated that the minutes would be in draft form. The Planning Secretary uses a transcriber and should be accurate in summation. Mr. Zangerl withdrew his motion. Ms. Cardman asked if the Historic Preservation Commissioners could appear as individuals to make comments at the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Development Review Board? Ms. Tyler replied that staff would find out and get back to them. If they were allowed to, then it would be as individual residents and not as commissioners, because Mr. Zangerl would be the designee of the Historic Preservation Commission.

## 10. MONITORING OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

There was none.

## 11. STAFF REPORT

Ms. Bell reported on the following:

- **The Historic Preservation Forum:** Ms. Bell announced that the forum would be held on Saturday, April 12, 2003 from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon at Cobb Auditorium in the Urbana Senior High School. Admission would be free with refreshment provided. There was discussion about the roles of the Commissioner's at the forum and the methods of publicity used to make as many people possible aware of the forum.

Mr. Kowalski reported on the following:

- **Elm Street/Green Street Walking Tour:** Staff would not be able to pull together the walking tour in time for Preservation Week. The planning and organizing of the tour was not as far along as staff had thought it to be at the last Historic Preservation Commission meeting.
- **Kid's Buildings Fair:** Ms. Novak mentioned that the fair would be held on Saturday, May 17<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Commissioners would be responsible for a small display about the Commission, the local landmarks, and information to give out to the adults and would help children make rubbings.

**12. STUDY SESSION**

There was none.

**13. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There was none.

**14. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Zangerl moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:03 p.m. Ms. Cardman seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

Submitted,

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Rob Kowalski, Secretary