

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

APPROVED

DATE: January 5, 2005

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rich Cahill, Scott Dossett, Alice Novak, Trent Shepard, Art Zangerl

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Bill Rose

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Rob Kowalski, Planning Manager; Paul Lindahl, Planner; Teri Andel, Planning Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT: Wayne Badger, Reverend Jong Hean Ham, Linda Lorenz, Reverend Don Mason, Steve Ross, Dick Underwood

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 present.

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Dossett made a motion to approve the minutes from October 27, 2004 as corrected. Mr. Zangerl seconded the motion. The minutes, as corrected, were approved by unanimous vote.

4. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

■ Memorandum from the Urbana Free Library

5. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

City staff requested that this item be done during the New Business, since most of the public was present on behalf of the Korean Mission Center. The Commission agreed.

6. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

7. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

8. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

9. NEW BUSINESS

Korean Mission Center Church Addition – Ricker House Impact

Paul Lindahl, Planner, presented the staff report to the Historic Preservation Commission. He explained the process of which the proposed development would need to go through in order to be able to build the church addition. He talked about the responsibility of the Historic Preservation Commission to serve in an advisory capacity and to consider the potential impacts that the proposed church addition may have on the nearby Historic Landmark of the “Ricker House”. Mr. Lindahl described the proposed church addition. He showed pictures of the existing church and of the existing house located next door to the west that would be demolished and replaced with the Korean Mission Center.

Mr. Zangerl asked if the existing trees located on the west side of the property between the house at 608 West Green Street and the Ricker House located at 612 West Green Street would be preserved. Mr. Lindahl understood that the trees would be untouched; however the Historic Preservation Commission could make a recommendation to the Development Review Board that the trees be preserved.

Mr. Cahill pointed out that the site plan did not show the garage apartment on the north side of the property, which the church also planned to demolish. The church was planning to move the property line further north in the proposed development. Rob Kowalski, Planning Manager, mentioned that there would be an administrative process to shift that particular lot line to the north a little bit. This needed to be done in order for the church to meet the setback requirements for the proposed new building. Since the church had a common ownership between the two lots, the church would be able to accomplish this.

Don Mason, Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Urbana, spoke about how the church had become appreciative of the multi-cultural diversity in the City of Urbana and particularly in their partnership with the Korean Mission Center. The two churches had been in a partnership for 30 years, and had continued to grow in unexpected and exciting ways. About a year ago, the two churches signed a covenant with each other to become partners in solidarity in a more dramatic way by working together to meet needs in the community and to share in a variety of ways including worship, but also in service and mission.

The most dramatic outcome of the covenant partnership was a proposal by the Korean Church Session, which is the governing board of the Korean Mission Center, to the governing board of the First Presbyterian Church of Urbana to work together to build a new Korean Mission Center. The house that the Korean Mission Center had been using became unusable and was closed down by Illinois Power. The proposal was for the two churches and their governing bodies to work together to build a new addition. The new building would be paid for and used primarily by the Korean-Presbyterian Church; however, it would be on property that was owned and managed by the First Presbyterian Church.

Ms. Novak inquired as to how Illinois Power could close down a house. Mr. Mason stated that the power had been shut off. Illinois Power claimed that it was no longer safe to operate the furnace due to gas leaks, amongst other numerous problems with the house itself. Mr. Cahill verified that the house had a very old, steam heat system. There was also a lot of asbestos abatement to deal with.

Jong Hean Ham, Pastor of the Korean Church, was excited about the proposed church addition. It would have a good influence on their neighbors and on the community.

Ms. Novak inquired if the trees on the west side of the property would be preserved. Mr. Mason noted that the trustees of the existing church had obtained a professional opinion about the various trees on the entire property. There was a strong desire to keep most all of the trees located between the existing house at 608 West Green Street and the Ricker House.

There was a concern expressed by some members of the Historic Preservation Commission regarding the issue of whether the proposed new addition would be closer to Green Street than the existing house currently was. After some discussion, Ms. Novak stated that she understood the site plan to show that the proposed new addition would not extend as far as the front of the existing house with the front porch steps did.

Wayne Badger, President of the corporation of the church, explained that the dotted line was not a structural element at all. The proposed addition would curve back and would be set further back from the existing building. He added that the roof structure was higher by ten feet than what they were proposing in the site plan.

Mr. Dossett expressed concern about what the proposed addition would do to the church's community and property and what projection there would be on the Ricker House. He stated that he was not as concerned about the setback of the proposed addition from the south part of the block as he was with the general concept as applied in the Mixed, Office Residential (MOR) Zoning District with the massing of the proposed structure. He liked the west elevation best, because it offered some break up of large solid planes, which was a lot more attractive than the south elevation to him. The west elevation from an aesthetic point of view would be more compliant with the MOR regulations. He talked about the tree in the front of the church that was closest to the steps. This tree would help break up the massing problem that would be created by the proposed southern elevation. The bay area would also help the massing problem by cutting into the flat side of the southern roof.

Mr. Dossett inquired about how many feet there were between the foundation of the proposed addition to the foundation of the Ricker House. Mr. Lindahl figured that there would be about 54 feet.

Mr. Dossett questioned where the church planned to have the drainage go after it left the addition area. Did the topography allow for the drainage to slowly roll over the land toward the Ricker House or would a drainage system be installed to allow for quick removal of stormwater runoff? Mr. Kowalski answered by saying that the Zoning Ordinance required that the lot be graded in a manner that would drain the water to the storm sewers in the street and not onto adjacent properties.

Mr. Zangerl stated that he had difficulty with the rounded portion on the south elevation. It seemed to him that the peak of the rounded area should be higher than the rest of the roof. He would rather see the rounded portion squared off with a flat gable on the front. One of the benefits from doing this would be that the church would have more square footage. Mr. Badger explained that the semi-circular design was chosen because the addition on the southeast side of the property was designed in a semi-circle. This would help to balance the two sides. Mr. Zangerl stated that there appeared to be too much in the round part. Also, there were now Design Guidelines to make new developments fit into the rest of the MOR Zoning District. The rounded part on the southeast side was far enough away that balancing the two sides was not a big issue.

Mr. Cahill talked about the visualizations in the staff report. It was hard to visualize how much of an overhang there would be on the roof as it comes off the sides of the proposed building. How would the proposed project impact the view of the Ricker House? From looking out of the back porch of the Ricker House, although the roofline might not be as high as the existing house next door, there would be a mass that went all the way back to the back property line.

Ms. Novak stated that she believed it was a difficult situation, because the Historic Preservation Commission was dealing with two issues. One issue was the context of the neighborhood, and another issue was the context of the church campus, which was entirely different. The proposed new addition needed to blend in with the architecture of the existing church building, as well as with being compatible within the context of historic architecture from the Commission's perspective.

Mr. Shepard discussed the intent of the MOR Zoning District with regards to small-scale business land uses that were limited in scale and intensity. He believed that it was somewhat compatible with existing structures in the zoning district. Mr. Kowalski stated that the church would need a variance for Floor Area Ratio (FAR), because the gross floor area would be larger than what the MOR Zoning District regulations would allow. However, the basement was calculated as usable space. The basement plus the first floor together would throw the church over the FAR allowance. Without calculating the basement space, the first floor space would just about meet the requirements. Therefore, had it not be for the basement, the church would be meeting the requirements of the MOR Zoning District for size and scale.

Mr. Dossett commented that the proposed project would not encourage an adaptive reuse of an existing, older structure. In fact, some older structures were not maintained for one reason or another until they became no longer adaptable. Then, property owners rationalize making a larger impact on the neighborhood. This challenges the Historic Preservation Commission to think about exactly what that means in the context of the MOR and the work that the Commission does. With

the new development on the south side of Green Street and with the proposed project, they would be encouraging development that did not fit into the goal of encouraging adaptive reuse of structures.

Mr. Shepard pointed out an error in the staff report regarding the time of his Nathan Ricker's death. Ms. Novak stated that the time of his death should be listed in the Local Landmark application.

Ms. Novak requested that architects be required to show the footprints of the local landmarks in the future. She believed it would have helped the Historic Preservation Commission in this case.

She went on to say that she appreciated the setback of the proposed building being at least, if not a little more substantial than the existing structure. She felt it made a huge difference. Setbacks were one of the biggest issues that the Commission had to deal with.

She commented that she hoped the church would oversee the construction of the proposed project to ensure that the roots of the trees be protected on the west side of the lot. There were some mature trees that should be preserved.

Ms. Novak believed that the front bay would help to break up the monotony of the façade. It was a good solution considering everything that had to be considered. The stone wall in front of the church on the south side would help to give some dimension to the proposed building as well. However, it should have a slight L-shape to it.

After some discussion, the Historic Preservation Commission agreed to forward the following comments to the architect, the church and the Development Review Board:

1. Particular attention should be given to the root system of the trees that exist on the west side of the property to maintain a buffer between the Ricker House and the church. The large tree in the front of the center addition should be preserved. Also, enhance the landscaping on the west side as well between the two properties.
2. The Historic Preservation Commission discussed the possibility of altering the roof pitch of the front bay extension to add more architectural interest to the main facade of the building.
3. The architect and the church should consider continuation of the window line on the front extending bay.
4. The Historic Preservation Commission applauded the use of slate on the roof.

Ms. Novak stated that it was the goal to preserve as many existing buildings as possible. She understood in this case that it made sense to demolish the house. However, she encouraged the church to try to preserve other historic properties that they owned.

10. MONITORING OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

- The First Baptist Church was sold to another church.
- City staff needs to check up on the City's existing Historic Landmarks and Historic Districts and talk to their owners to see if there have been any changes.
- Ms. Novak requested that City staff check into the roof cresting be returned on the Lindley House. She believed that the roof and gutters had been replaced; however, the cresting had not been returned.

11. STAFF REPORT

Mr. Kowalski reported on the following:

- ▶ **Revised Master Plan for the Urbana Free Library.** The City Council did consider the Historic Preservation Commission's recommendations. The wording of the plan was altered in a way that removed a lot of the discussion about the demolition of buildings and lessened the impact on what the future of those buildings would be.
- ▶ **Stucco Repair Workshop.** City staff had applied for a grant with the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA) to conduct a stucco repair workshop. Our chances for receiving the grant are pretty good. If the City gets the grant, then the workshop would be held in May during Historic Preservation Week.
- ▶ **The Korean Mission Center Church Addition.** A variance request for this case would be heard by the Zoning Board of Appeals on Wednesday, January 12, 2005. The case would then go before the Development Review Board on Thursday, January 13, 2005.

12. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

13. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ▶ Mr. Shepard commented on the MOR Design Guidelines. He thought they looked great!
- ▶ Mr. Dossett mentioned the Comprehensive Plan Update - 2005. Under "Trends and Issues", he noticed that it asked, "To what extent should downtown Urbana be considered for historic district designation in order to preserve significant architecture?" He wondered what this section was about. Mr. Kowalski replied that the section on "Trends and Issues" looks at what kinds of trends were happening in the City of Urbana and what kinds of issues were being created from those trends. One of the trends was that there were not enough historic districts or enough recognition of Urbana's historic attributes. Downtown Urbana is definitely one of Urbana's historic attributes.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Cahill moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m. Mr. Shepard seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

Submitted,

Rob Kowalski, Planning Manager