



## DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

*Planning Division*

### **m e m o r a n d u m**

**TO:** The Urbana Historic Preservation Commission

**FROM:** Rebecca Bird, Historic Preservation Planner

**DATE:** December 30, 2008

**SUBJECT:** HP 2008-COA-09, Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace rotting wood on front porch with like materials; repair existing wood elements; and replace front and side steps

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### **Introduction and Background**

On December 15, 2008, Carolyn Baxley, on behalf of the Urbana Development Group, submitted an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for work at 508 W. Elm Street. The proposed work includes replacing rotting wood on the front porch with like materials, repairing existing wood elements, and replacing the front and side porch steps.

The house at 508 W. Elm Street was designated a local historic landmark by the Urbana City Council on October 6, 2008 by Ordinance Number 2008-09-117. Section XII-6.A of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance requires a COA for any alteration, relocation, construction, removal, or demolition that affects the exterior architectural appearance of any locally designated landmark. Table XII-1 specifies that “change of porch/deck/steps” requires review by the Historic Preservation Commission.

The subject house was built in 1889 by Frank Bills, an Urbana postmaster and prominent businessman. The house is an example of the Queen Anne / Classical Revival transitional architectural style. (See Exhibit C for current photographs of the house as well as photos circa 1980s and circa 1960.)

### **Discussion**

According to the application, the porch requires stabilization for safety reasons as well as to make it more attractive. The applicant is requesting permission to replace rotting wood on the front porch with like materials; repair existing wood elements; and replace the front and side steps.

Currently, the porch has some rotting floor and ceiling boards, as well as some rot on the balusters and parts of the railing. The floor boards are one inch by four inch tongue-and-groove porch flooring. The ceiling is one inch by four inch beaded ceiling board. The applicant is proposing to replace the rotting boards with new wood boards and repair the balusters and railing. Both the front and side porch steps

need to be replaced as the treads are too narrow and the rise-and-run ratio is not up to current building code standards. Also, current building code standards require guardrails on both sides of the steps. The applicant is proposing to install new stairs that are up to code, as well as guardrails that will mimic as much as possible the existing porch railings and balusters. The City's Building Inspector has reviewed the plans and indicated that they will meet the building code requirements.

The petitioner is proposing the work outlined in the application to remedy an unsafe situation. As the porch steps will be replaced, this work requires review by the Historic Preservation Commission (Table XII-1). The other work can be considered general maintenance.

### ***Requirements for a Certificate of Appropriateness***

According to Section XII-6.B.2 of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance, the criteria to be used by the Preservation Commission in making its determination for a Certificate of Appropriateness shall include:

- 1) *The maintenance of the significant original qualities or character of the buildings, structures, sites or objects including, if significant, its appurtenances. The removal or alteration of any historic or distinctive architectural features should be avoided when possible.*

The proposed work is necessary maintenance of the porch. The existing stairs do not appear to be original to the house and need to be replaced to bring the stairs up to code. The application is proposing to repair existing wood architectural elements (balusters and railing) and replace other rotting wood (floor and ceiling boards). When replacement is necessary, it will be with the same material. The proposed changes will not affect the significant original qualities or the character of the building.

- 2) *The compatibility of proposed new additions and new construction to the original architecture of the landmark shall be evaluated against general guidelines of height, proportions of the structure's front façade, proportions of openings into the facility, the relationship of building masses and spaces, roof shapes, appurtenances, the scale of building or structure, and the directional expression of front elevation.*

None of the proposed changes in the application would affect the original architecture of the house in terms of height, proportions of the front façade or of the openings, relationship of building masses and spaces, roof shapes, appurtenances, scale, or directional expression of the front elevation. This criterion, therefore, does not apply.

- 3) *The Secretary of the Interior's "Standards for Historic Preservation Projects," as revised from time to time.*

The final criterion relates to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the treatment of historic properties. The proposed work meets the Secretary's of the Interior's Standards as the property will be used as it was historically, the historic character and distinctive features will be preserved, and the work will be physically and visually compatible.

## Options

The Historic Preservation Commission has the following options in this case:

1. Grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for any or none of the changes proposed in the application.
2. Grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for any or none of the changes proposed in the application, subject to certain conditions.
3. Deny the requested Certificate of Appropriateness. If the Commission finds the application is inconsistent with the criteria and denies the application, the Commission should provide the reasons for denial and may recommend to the applicant ways to comply with the criteria.

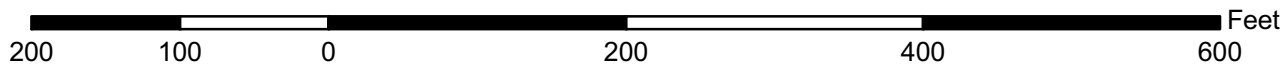
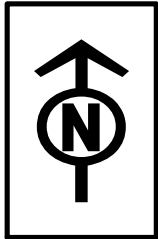
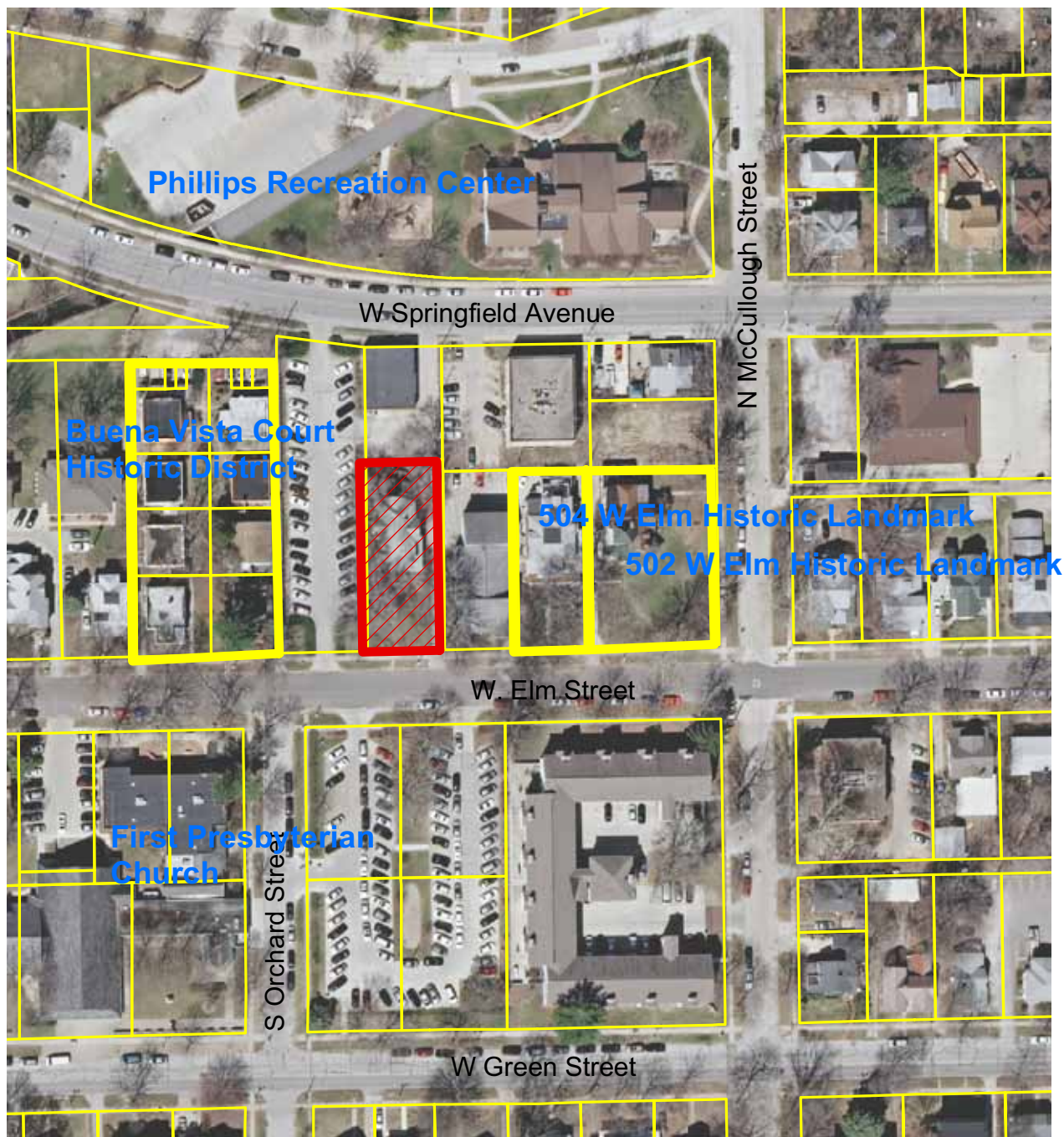
## Staff Recommendation

City staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission **GRANT** the requested Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed changes to the porch as being consistent with the review criteria of Section XII-6.B of the Zoning Ordinance.

Attachments:     Exhibit A: Location and Aerial Map  
                      Exhibit B: Zoning Map  
                      Exhibit C: Photographs  
                      Exhibit D: Application

cc:                 Carolyn Baxley, Applicant  
                      Gordon Skinner, Building Safety Division Manager  
                      Elizabeth Tyler, CD Director

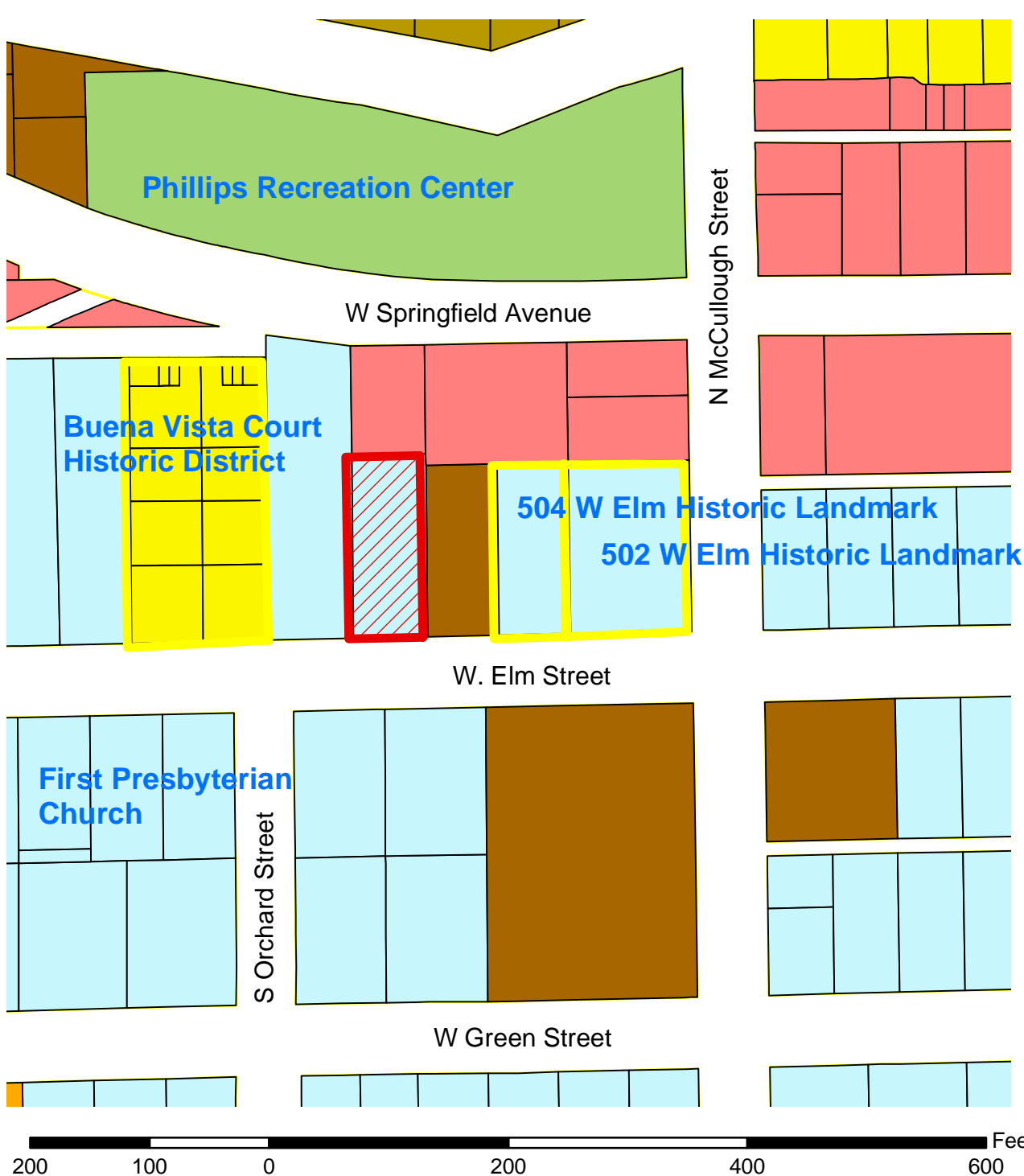
# EXHIBIT A: Location & Aerial



**HPC Case:** HP-08-COA-09  
**Subject:** Bills House, Certificate of Appropriateness  
Repair/Rebuild Front Porch  
**Location:** 508 W Elm St.  
**Zoning District:** MOR  
**Petitioner:** Carolyn Baxley

 Subject Property

# EXHIBIT B: Existing Zoning



F



**HPC Case:** HP-08-COA-09  
**Subject:** Bills House, Certificate of Appropriateness  
 Repair/Rebuild Front Porch  
**Location:** 508 W Elm St.  
**Zoning District:** MOR  
**Petitioner:** Carolyn Baxley

 Subject Property

-  B2
-  CRE
-  MOR
-  R2
-  R5

## EXHIBIT C: PHOTOGRAPHS

### Current Photos

#### Front Façade



#### Front Stairs



East Façade Porch Stairs



Rotting wood on porch ceiling



Rotting wood on porch balusters



**Circa 1980s Photos (Source: Champaign County Historical Archives)**

Front Façade



Front and West Façade





**Circa 1960s Photos (Source: Catherine Conner)**

Front Façade



Front Porch



West Façade



North (Rear) Façade



East Façade





# Application for Certificate of Appropriateness

## Historic Preservation Commission

### APPLICATION AND REVIEW FEE – NO CHARGE

Although there is no fee to file an application for Certificate of Appropriateness, the Applicants are responsible for paying the cost of any legal publication fees. The fees usually run from \$75.00 to \$125.00. The applicant will be billed separately by the News-Gazette, if applicable.

### DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE - FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Application Filed 12/15/2008 Case No. HP-2008-COA-09

### PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION

1. Location 508 W. Elm
2. PIN # of Location \_\_\_\_\_
3. Name of Applicant/Petitioner(s) Carolyn Baxley Phone 384-2253  
Address 510 W. Main, Urbana IL 61801  
(street/city) (state) (zip)
4. Property interest of Applicant(s) owner - member of Board of Directors
5. Name of Owner(s) Urbana Development Group Phone 369-6247  
Address 807 W. Main, Urbana IL 61801  
(street/city) (state) (zip)
6. Name of Professional Site Planner(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
(street/city) (state) (zip)
7. Name of Architect(s) Kim Smith Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
(street/city) (state) (zip)

Received 12/15/08

8. Name of Engineer(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
(street/city) (state) (zip)

9. Name of Surveyor(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
(street/city) (state) (zip)

**DESCRIPTION, USE, AND ZONING OF PROPERTY: Attach an additional sheet if necessary**

Legal Description Lot 3, except the North 100 feet thereof,  
of Sutton's Subdivision of Lot 3 of Assessor's  
Addition of a part of the Northwest Quarter of the  
Northeast Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of  
Section 17, Township 19 North, Range 9 East of the  
Third Principal Meridian, as per plat recorded in  
Book "A" at page 160, in Champaign County, Illinois.

Lot Size 62.36 feet x 146 feet = 9104.56 square feet

Historic Designation (check one) -  Landmark \_\_\_\_\_ District \_\_\_\_\_

**PROPOSED WORK FOR WHICH CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS IS BEING REQUESTED**

1. Describe and/or illustrate fully the proposed work to be done: (Plans associated with building permit applications can be referenced. If approval of an addition or detached accessory building is requested, submit a site plan showing the measurements of the lot, the existing buildings and proposed changes and the front, back and side yard setbacks. If approval of a demolition is being requested, submit a site plan of the property and the structure(s) to be demolished.)

Replace rotting wood on front porch with like materials.  
Repair existing wood elements <sup>hand side</sup> possible.  
Replace front <sup>hand side</sup> steps with new ones that meet code; add handrails and balusters to match porch balusters if required by Building Safety.

2. Describe how the proposed work will change, destroy, or affect any external feature of the structure or site:

It will stabilize the porch and make it safer and more attractive.

3. How will the proposed work affect the preservation, protection, perpetuation and economic use of the structure or district?

It will enhance all four. Replacement railings and balusters will look like the originals.

4. Attach a statement indicating how the proposed work meets each applicable criterion provided in "EXHIBIT A", which is attached to this application form.

1. The proposed porch repair complies with criterion #1. It will maintain the character of the house since we will avoid removal of any detail on the porch that can be repaired and replace as necessary with like materials.

5. State any additional information which you feel the Zoning Administrator or the Historic Preservation Commission should consider in issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed work:

## Exhibit "A"

(Please respond to the Criteria a through h, indicated by the underlined text)

### Review Criteria for Certificate of Appropriateness.

In making a determination whether to issue or deny a Certificate of Appropriateness, if the proposed activities cannot be considered "minor works" as identified in Table XII-1 and Table XII-2, the Historic Preservation Commission shall consider, among other things, the effect of the proposed alteration, relocation, construction, removal or demolition upon the exterior architectural features and upon the historic value, characteristics and significance of the landmark or of the historic district.

The criteria to be used by the Preservation Commission in making its determination shall include, but not be limited to:

1. The maintenance of the significant original qualities or character of the buildings, structures, sites or objects including, if significant, its appurtenances. The removal or alteration of any historic or distinctive architectural features should be avoided whenever possible.
2. The compatibility of proposed new additions and new construction to the original architecture or the landmark or styles within the historic district shall be evaluated against the following general guidelines:
  - a. *Height*: The height of the proposed building or structure or additions or alterations should be compatible with surrounding buildings or structures.
  - b. *Proportions of structure's front façade*: The proportion between the width and height of the proposed building or structure should be compatible with nearby buildings or structures.
  - c. *Proportions of openings into the facility*: The proportions and relationships between doors and windows should be compatible with existing buildings and structures.
  - d. *Relationship of building masses and spaces*: The relationship of a building or structure to the open space between it and adjoining buildings or structures should be compatible.
  - e. *Roof shapes*: The design of the roof should be compatible with that of adjoining buildings and structures.
  - f. *Appurtenances*: Use of appurtenances should be sensitive to the individual building or structure, its occupants and their needs.
  - g. *Scale of building or structure*: The scale of the building or structure should be compatible with that of surrounding buildings or structures.
  - h. *Directional expression of front elevation*: Street façades should blend in with other buildings and structures with regard to directional expression when adjacent buildings or structures have a dominant horizontal or vertical expression.



WHEREFORE, petitioner prays that this petition be heard by the Urbana Zoning Administrator and if applicable, the Historic Preservation Commission and that the Application for Certificate of Appropriateness be granted.

Respectfully submitted this 15th day of December, 2008.

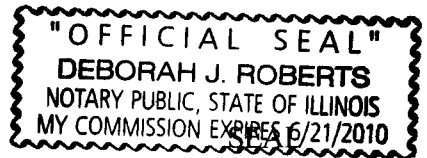
Cassidy Baxley  
Signature of Applicant

STATE OF ILLINOIS }  
                                  }  
CHAMPAIGN COUNTY }

I, DEBORAH J. ROBERTS being first duly sworn on oath, deposes and says, that CAROLYN BAXLEY is the same person named in and who subscribed the above and foregoing petition, that SHE has read the same and knows the contents thereof, and that the matters and things therein set forth are true in substance and in fact as therein set forth.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 15th day of December, 2008

Deborah J. Roberts  
Notary Public



Petitioner's Attorney (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:**

ZONING ADMINSTRATOR AND CHAIR REPORT

Minor Works Determination:

The proposed work described in Section 3 of this application, and/or illustrated in drawings or plans attached as part of this application constitute minor works as defined by the Zoning Ordinance.

The proposed work described in Section 3 of this application, and/or illustrated in drawings or plans attached as part of this application do **not** constitute minor works as defined in the Zoning Ordinance. This application for Certificate of Appropriateness is hereby forwarded to the Urbana Historic Preservation Commission for review and determination.

Zoning Administrator (or designee) R. P. [Signature] Date 12/16/2008

DESIGN REVIEW DETERMINATION FOR MINOR WORKS:

The minor works described in Section 3 of this application, and/or illustrated in drawings or plans attached as part of this application conform to the review criteria established in the Zoning Ordinance in the manner described.

A certificate of Appropriateness is hereby issued for work described in this application only.

The minor works described in Section 3 of this application, and/or illustrated in drawings or plans attached as part of this application do not conform to the review criteria established in the Zoning Ordinance in the manner described.

A Certificate of Appropriateness is hereby denied. At the request of the applicant, this application may be forwarded to the Historic Preservation Commission for review and consideration.

Zoning Administrator (or designee) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Commission Chair \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_