

MINUTES
OF
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
Thursday, September 1, 2016

The Historic Preservation Commission met on Thursday, September 1, 2016 at 5:30 PM. Commission members present included Ed Sauter, Leah Rogers, Sarah Kelly, Mary Evans, and Guy Booth.

Guests who were present include Elias Schroeder, Christian Andrews, Peter Ault and Renee Ault.

Two items on the agenda include requests for design review. The first design review request was from Christian Andrews, who resides at 610 5th Ave. NW, Mount Vernon, IA. Christian has been in the process of reconstructing the front porch of the house. Christian provided photos of the house, as well as diagrams of the work that is to be done.

This project was observed by a local citizen and was reported to the City zoning department, as it appeared to be a project that should need a building permit, and consequently, because it is in the Ash Park Historic District, will need approval from the Historic Preservation Commission.

Christian Andrews indicated that he was not aware that he needed a building permit for the project. It started out with his thought that it would merely take a small amount of time to repair a few pieces of rotten wood. It turned out that this is a major project and it will take several months to get resolved.

It was determined by the Commission that this was not an intentional violation of the zoning ordinances by Mr. Andrews. Further, the diagram of work to be done indicates that the footprint of the porch, as well as its construction and its appearance will match the historic nature of the porch. Upon motion to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the project, made by Ed Sauter, seconded by Sarah Kelly, the motion was approved.

The second design review related to the porch repair at 609 5th Ave. N, Mount Vernon, Iowa. The homeowner is Elias Schroeder. Mr. Schroeder had planned to repair the steps on his front porch, as well as replace the columns. Much of the porch had been repaired and/or replaced in past years. Mr. Schroeder indicates that he will be replacing very narrow columns with a larger column, perhaps 8" in diameter. This may or may not be similar to the original porch construction. There are no early pictures of the house, and it is difficult to determine if the porch had previously extended across the entire front of the house. It is Mr. Schroeder's intent to continue the work on restoring the house, including removal of the vinyl siding and getting back to the original wood siding. Mr. Schroeder also discussed how he would be re-doing the steps and the covering of the open spaces under the porch with vertical PVC material. He will not be reinstalling the railing.

Sarah Kelly moved, and Ed Sauter seconded a motion for approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the porch repair work. However, the motion further includes the explanation that this is not an original porch, but that the intended repair and renovation

will be compatible with the construction in the Ash Park Historic District. The motion carried.

Both of the owners of these two projects indicated they had not been sufficiently aware that their houses were in the historic district and that there were additional steps that needed to be taken when making changes to the exterior of the houses. In each instance, the porch repair was well under way before the City discovered the renovation. The City zoning administrator requested that both projects be suspended until the appropriate application for building permit, and appearance before historic preservation to receive approval of the project. The Commission has decided to inform City Administrators of the necessity of providing updated information to people who purchase homes in the historic district so they are aware of the regulations that need to be met.

Peter and Renee Ault also appeared at the meeting to give a preliminary proposal for removal of the metal covering on the front of the building at 120 1st St. SW. Peter indicated that as he was doing some work on the front of the building, he discovered that the major iron beam that ran across the front of the building is a metal beam with ornate rosettes along the front of the beam. Peter has decided to leave the beam exposed, and to set back the front of the building several inches so the beam will be visible. Peter is also doing work on the interior of the building. The remainder of the metal facing of the building below the upper level of the door will remain until further work is necessary. It appears this repair work will not require a building permit. However, if the zoning administrator requests the filing of a building permit, Mr. Ault will return to HPC for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary