

MINUTES  
OF  
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
October 13, 2021

The Historic Preservation Commission met via Zoom on Wednesday, October 13, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. Commissioners present on Zoom were Leah Rogers, Mary Evans, Ed Sauter, Janet Budack, Suzette Astley, Donnie Moore, Wade Squiers, Susan Hargus and Guy Booth. Also present was Edith Dawson, a Friend of HPC.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Minutes of the October 2, 2021 meeting were approved.

The first item of design review was a request from the owners of the building at 101 1<sup>st</sup> St NE, Mount Vernon. This building is located on the corner of 1<sup>st</sup> St and 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. and has recently been the Skillet Café. The building is now owned by a company that will use it as a pharmacy. Chris Cummings, the architect for the owner, presented plans for the changes that will be noted on the exterior of the building. The change that needs our review is the removal of a door at the rear of the building and replacing it with a window. The window will be the same as the windows on either side of the door. The frame of the window will be a dark bronze. Also, the rear deck and stairway of the building has been removed. Ed Sauter inquired as to the necessity of a second exit from the building, and Mr. Cummings indicated that the plans have received approval from the Linn County Building Dept. Upon motion made by Ed Sauter, seconded by Leah Rogers, a certificate of appropriateness for this renovation was approved. Mr. Cummings also presented a diagram of how the interior of the building will be realigned to accommodate the drugstore/pharmacy.

The second design review application was from Cornell College for the re-roofing of a garage that is located at 126 1<sup>st</sup> St. SE. This is a stand-alone building that is at the back of the lot. It is not very noticeable from 1<sup>st</sup> St. The request is to replace the roof shingles with a shingle that is similar to what has been on the building. The re-roofing is as a result of the derecho. Upon motion by Leah Rogers, seconded by Susan Hargus, the commission approved a certificate showing no material effect.

Donnie Moore discussed a meeting he has had with Scott Ladwig, which resulted in a tour of King Chapel. Donnie indicated that there are substantial structural damages to the building, and the repair of the building will take a good deal of funding, as well as time. Donnie felt that the commission should be aware of what is happening with King Chapel. Scott Ladwig has presented information to the commission on several occasions, and has indicated that there are continuing engineering studies to determine what needs to be done to stabilize and repair the building. Cornell has been quite responsive to our previous requests for information. They are working with the insurance carrier for the building, as well as an engineering firm that can identify what needs to be done. It was suggested that the commission request Scott to give an update as to what Cornell has learned about the structure, and what plans they have and the timeline they are establishing for repairing the damage.

Under old business, it was reported that Jennifer Price, who we have retained to prepare the application to get the Visitor's Center designated as a significant building in the Cornell

Historic District, will be starting her work shortly. She has also researched the presence of Altoona Hall and the old water tower that was on the site near to the present location of the Visitor's Center. The Visitor's Center was moved from the corner of 1<sup>st</sup> St and 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. SW to its present location. It will be important to have this building recognized as a contributing structure in the district so it will be eligible for grants that will help restore and stabilize the building. At the same time, Jennifer will have the district acknowledge the demolition of Altoona Hall and of the water tower. It appears this work may not be completed and approved by the state until August of 2022.

Mary Evans reported that all of the archive material has been moved from its former location into the new archival room in City Hall. However, we still need to move the glass plate negatives from the basement to the new archive room. Mary indicates this will take very careful personal transportation of the boxes. The negatives are fragile and the boxes must be handled with care. Mary also indicated that it would be a good idea to have an air purifier in the room at this time, as there still is a strong paint odor from the renovation of the room and to remove mold and dust that had accumulated in the old archive room.

It was also reported that a former intern who worked for HPC several summers ago is now in her Masters program in Scotland. Her Masters Degree will be in historic preservation. Her experiences working for the commission several years ago caused her to complete her education and become involved in a career of working on historic preservation.

Mary also talked about correcting inaccurate information about various structures in the district, as well as providing additional information regarding the ownership and location of certain houses. The information that is in the records may not be accurate because of the pace with which Cornell students uploaded the information prior to the establishment of the Cornell and Ash Park historic districts.

Suzette indicates that the next meeting of the commission will be Saturday, November 6 at 9:15 a.m. Because the Covid epidemic is still apparent, we will conduct our next meeting via Zoom. It is hoped we will be able to go to a hybrid presentation in the near future.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary