

MINUTES
OF
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
April 13, 2022

The Historic Preservation Commission met at Mount Vernon City Hall, and via Zoom on Wednesday, April 13, 2022. Commissioners present at City Hall were Suzette Astley, Grace Chamberlain, Duane Eash, Wade Squiers and Guy Booth. Attending via Zoom were Donnie Moore and Mary Evans. Also attending via Zoom was Edith Dawson. Guests at the meeting were Scott Ladwig representing Cornell College, Ben Lawrence, present for design review, Kevin Carpenter and Leland Turner, present for design review, and also Suzette Astley for design review.

The Minutes of the April 2, 2022 meeting were approved.

The first design review item is from Ben Lawrence, who resides at 314 5th Ave. SW in the Cornell College District. He has submitted an application for removing and re-installing a retaining wall along the north side of his driveway. The previous retaining wall was made of cement blocks, and was collapsing. Mr. Lawrence has designed a more permanent cement wall structure to replace the deteriorating wall. The retaining wall would be approximately 27 feet in length and will extend in an easterly direction from the garage. The wall will not be visible from the street. Upon motion by Booth, seconded by Squiers, a motion to approve the application as having no material effect was passed.

The next design review item is from Kevin Carpenter and Leland Turner. They reside at 725 5th Ave. NW in Mount Vernon. Their property is in the Ash Park Historic District. Their house is 100 years old and is in need of window replacements. The windows had been replaced in the early 1970's with vinyl windows. Kevin and Leland will be replacing the old windows with new vinyl windows, which will have a very similar appearance. It was mentioned that these more modern vinyl windows have much better duration and will easily outlive the earlier types of vinyl windows. There will be no change in appearance on the exterior of the house. Upon motion by Squiers, seconded by Booth, the motion to approve the application as no material effect was approved.

The third design review request comes from Suzette Astley and Larry Hansen, who reside at 703 5th Ave. NW in Mount Vernon. This property is also located in the Ash Park Historic District. The request is for approval of a plan to replace the current backyard fence, which has deteriorated. The replacement fence will be a French Gothic picket fence that will have spaces approximately 2 inches wide between each picket. This will be similar to the fence that is being replaced. The height of the fence and the location of the fence will meet Mount Vernon zoning standards. Upon motion by Squiers, seconded by Eash, the application for the new fence was approved as no material effect.

Under new business, Scott Ladwig, from Cornell, gave a preview of projects that will be undertaken during the summer. Most of these projects will require building permits so they will come before the Commission as the permits are being issued. In particular, there is still roof damage that occurred during the derecho that needs to be repaired. This will include a portion of the roofs at the West Science Building, Cole Library, Olin Hall and Bowman Hall. The college is negotiating with the insurance carrier regarding the amount of loss and the responsibility for

costs of repair. Mr. Ladwig also indicates that there are negotiations ongoing for the roof and chimney repair on Plattner House. The old roof, which is of a copper metal material will need to be replaced. It is very difficult to find a similar replacement material. Scott indicates he has found a company on the west coast that can provide a metal roof that will be quite similar. There is still a question about the cost of the project and the insurance company's responsibility for covering the cost. There are also questions about the renovation of the interior of Plattner House. This is a question that will be reviewed by Cornell so the Plattner House can become a useful building on the campus.

Proposed work on McWethy Hall for repair of the tile roof and the interior of the building is being reviewed. The college is looking at constructing a digital arts lab in the building. Ally Chapel will have updating. Windows may be replaced and repair will be done to the bell tower, which could include a lighting of the tower. Thomas Commons will receive an update for a new student success center. College Hall will undergo masonry work. King Chapel is still under review. A forensic engineering firm from Minneapolis has been retained to give more accurate analysis of what damages were caused by the derecho and what may have been evidence of deferred maintenance. The college is committed to repairing the chapel and having it once again become an important, dominant meeting place on the campus.

Under old business, Suzette and Duane discussed the upcoming workshops. The first will be May 21 concerning structure and repair of historic windows. The second will be June 18 on restoring porch posts. Duane is doing research for both workshops, which he will be presenting. The Commission will have a story in the Mount Vernon paper three weeks before the first workshop. A flyer regarding the workshop will be prepared and sent to numerous homeowners, as well as other interested groups. The workshops will be held at the Buresh Community Center and will be open to the public.

The annual Historic Preservation Summit will be held in June at Mason City, Iowa. During the summit, the state Historic Preservation Board will review the application for amendment of the Cornell Historic District. Suzette will be present for that meeting. Suzette reported that we will need to have a public hearing in Mount Vernon before the June summit meeting.

There was no further business for the meeting. Suzette announced that the first meeting in May will be held on May 14, rather than on the first Saturday of the month. The first Saturday of May is the Chalk the Walk Festival in town. The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary