

MINUTES

**TOWN OF NORMAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
UPTOWN STATION, 3rd FLOOR (Union Pacific Room)
11 UPTOWN CIRCLE
NORMAL, ILLINOIS**

**REGULAR MEETING
December 8, 2015
12:30 p.m.**

Members Present

Nancy Armstrong, Kathy Burgess, Laurie Christensen, Anne Matter, Bruce Warloe

Members Absent

Kristen Allen, Bob Ward

Others Present

Mercy Davison, Town Planner; Curt Billingsley, owner of 507 N. School; Casey Dawson, owner of 620 N. School

Call to Order

Ms. Matter called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. noting that there was a quorum.

Minutes

Ms. Armstrong moved to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2015 meeting. Ms. Christensen seconded. The motion carried 5-0.

CA-15-12-41: New Front Door, 507 N. School

Mr. Billingsley introduced himself as the new owner of 507 N. School, which he purchased in September 2015. He intends to continue its use as a student rental. He explained that he had made many improvements to the interior of the house and to the landscaping, and he found the original wood front door to be in too poor a condition to repair. Given the onset of winter and the needs of his tenants, he decided to remove the original wood door and put up a modern storm door. He also removed the existing outer door – a nonhistoric glass door with metal frame – and replaced it with an identical new outer door.

Ms. Matter noted that the replacement of the outer door was a “like-with-like” situation which is permitted. Thus, the only issue to discuss is the main door.

Mr. Billingsley noted that he had checked at the Old House Society for a replacement wood door but could not find anything suitable that met his immediate need to replace the door. He also decided

that the replacement door needed to have less glass for reasons relating to security and to his tenants being college students.

Mr. Billingsley then showed the commission an illustration of a solid wood door that he proposes to install in place of the new door. The proposed door has glass on the upper half, exterior mullions that provide the appearance of true divided lights, and two panels on the lower half. He asked if he would be able to use the hardware (knob, deadbolt, hinges) from the new door that he recently purchased, noting that the knob from the original door was much less secure.

Ms. Burgess asked for details on the hardware on the recently purchased door. Mr. Billingsley said the hardware is aluminum and the knob is round. Ms. Burgess noted that the appearance of aluminum is not historically appropriate and that more appropriate hardware could be purchased, including something with a darker color (perhaps a rubbed bronze look) and with a larger plate.

Mr. Billingsley asked why the appearance of the hardware matters given that the exterior storm door will cover it up. The commissioners explained that the outer door could be removed in the future, in which case the hardware will be important.

Ms. Matter asked if there was any concern with the style of the door. Ms. Burgess said it would be better to have a plain bottom half of the door – no panels. Ms. Armstrong noted that the window on the proposed door matches the design of the windows on the second story.

The commissioners told Mr. Billingsley that he has a year to complete the project, which he said would be very helpful given the time of year and weather. He intends to replace the door after the tenants depart in May. He also asked if the new wood door must be stained or if he can paint it. The commission said he can do either, and Ms. Burgess suggested that the right color could really look sharp.

Ms. Burgess moved to approve the proposed replacement door with the following conditions:

1. The hardware must be approved by the chairperson and should reflect a more historic appearance, including a darker color and larger plate.
2. The mullions must be external to the glass. If this is not an option, eliminate the mullions altogether.
3. Eliminate the panels on the lower half of the door if possible.

Ms. Armstrong seconded. The motion carried 5-0.

CA-15-12-42: New Rear Porch, 620 N. School

Casey Dawson explained that she and her husband purchased the house in October. Her father surprised them by building a deck on the back of the house while they were out of town over a weekend. She then received a letter from the Town explaining that the project required a Certificate of Appropriateness. Her father also failed to obtain a building permit as is required for all such projects in town.

She further noted that she plans to paint the deck in the summer and perhaps add skirting.

Ms. Burgess said that the scale of the deck is very appropriate for the house. The commissioners agreed that the deck needs a more finished appearance, which could be achieved by adding a cap to the top rail and a trim piece at the top and bottom of the spindles. Historically, porch railings would not have had spindles affixed to the exterior in such a manner.

The commissioners also stated that the steps have an unfinished appearance due to the lack of a vertical board at the back side of each step.

Regarding paint, the commissioners agreed that the flooring can be stained but everything above the floor should be painted after the wood has cured.

The commissioners also said that skirting is not necessary given the limited amount of space under the deck and the uneven terrain.

Ms. Burgess moved to approve the project with the following conditions:

1. Add a trim piece to the top and bottom of the spindles on the outer face of the railing.
2. Add a cap to the top of the rail, which would go over the added trim piece.
3. Add vertical boards to the back side of each step.
4. Paint everything above the floor.

Ms. Armstrong seconded. The motion carried 5-0.

Ms. Dawson asked if they could replace the existing chain link fence with a wood fence. The commission said it would require a Certificate of Appropriateness, and they have approved wood fences in the past. Because it is a corner side yard, the overall Town code restricts the height along the north side of the lot to a maximum of 4 feet.

Other Business

1. Ms. Davison said she is waiting to hear back from Payne Place property owners.
2. Ms. Burgess asked if anything had transpired with the proposed demolition of 501 Broadway. Ms. Davison said that the Town Council has not taken action, nor does she anticipate that they will take action.

No further business was discussed.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Mercy Davison
Town Planner