

APPROVED

VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE
ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
VILLAGE HALL - COMMITTEE ROOM
801 BURLINGTON AVENUE

MAY 17, 2017, 7:00 P.M.

Chairman Davenport called the May 17, 2017 meeting of the Architectural Design Review Board to order at 7:00 p.m. and asked for a roll call:

PRESENT: Chairman Davenport, Ms. Acks, Ms. Chalberg, Ms. Hollweck, Mr. Larson, Mr. Lerner, Mr. Riemer

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Senior Planner Rebecca Leitschuh and Planner Scott Williams

VISITORS: Ms. Tonie Harrington; Selma Moberg, 844 Maple Ave., Downers Grove; Amy and David Gassen, 5320 Benton Ave., Downers Grove; Rich Kulovany with Friends of the Edwards House, 6825 Camden, Downers Grove; Irene Hogstrom, 1232 Gilbert Ave., Downers Grove; Tom and Kathy Nybo, 6001 Pershing, Downers Grove; Charlotte and Byron Holtzen, 5226 Carpenter, Downers Grove

APPROVAL OF APRIL 19, 2017 MINUTES

A change was noted on page 2, third paragraph from bottom, delete the words “Ms. Hollweck inquired” and insert the words “Ms. Chalberg inquired.” **MOTION BY MS. CHALBERG, SECONDED BY MR. LARSON TO APPROVE THE APRIL 19, 2017 MINUTES, AS CORRECTED. MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE OF 7-0.**

PUBLIC HEARING

Chairman Davenport opened the public hearing and swore in those individuals that would be speaking on the following public hearing. Ms. Leitschuh introduced Ms. Tonie Harrington who will be taking the minutes for the ADRB.

A. 17-ADR-0004: A petition seeking a Historic Landmark Designation for the property commonly known as 5325 Fairmount Avenue, Downers Grove, IL (PIN 09-08-408-017). The property is located at the northeast corner of Summit Street and Fairmount Avenue. David and Amy Gassen, Petitioner; Laurence and Gloria Gassen, Owner. Village Planner Scott Williams noted the location of this circa 1926 Bungalow home. Petitioners were seeking landmark designation because the home represented distinguishing characteristics of the bungalow architectural style. The current plat of survey was referenced, as was the 1933 Sanborn map reflecting the home and another structure.

Mr. Williams reported that the bungalow architectural style was a common style in the village constructed between 1890 to 1930. Details of its style followed. Noting the clipped

gables, Mr. Williams stated they are sometimes called Jerkinhead gables. Many of interior features of the home exist, including lead windows, built-in cabinets and the original front door.

Staff recommended approval of the landmark request, noting the home was constructed circa 1926 and embodies the characteristics of the bungalow style home.

No questions from the board members. The chairman invited the petitioner to speak.

Ms. Amy Gassen introduced herself along with her husband, Dave Gassen, 5320 Benton Avenue and summarized she were seeking landmark status for 5325 Fairmount on behalf of her in-laws, Larry and Gloria Gassen. This was the first bungalow landmark application for the village. Ms. Gassen discussed the style details of the bungalow and described some of the history behind bungalow homes in the Village of Downers Grove. She noted specifically that bungalows are considered a “form” and different styles can be applied to it. Bungalows can be defined as a one- to one-and a half story house with a low pitched gable or hipped roof and wide eaves.

5325 Fairmount Avenue is a one-story bungalow and includes a low pitched Jerkinhead, or clipped, gable roof with wide eaves. Ms. Gassen stated that because the definition of bungalow can be quite broad, they can be varied in their massing and detailing. Because her in-laws purchased the home fairly recently, research on the home’s history had not been completed. Instead, Ms. Gassen explained the building’s more recent history: In 2015 the home was sold to a builder as a tear-down. The home sat around the corner from her house and she and her husband referred to it as the “green cottage.” Fortunately, the builder decided to rent the home until a purchaser was found. She believed the home was ideal for her in-laws and inquired if the builder was interested in selling the home, which, he did.

Ms. Gassen shared that she and her mother-in-law walked through the home and recollected the interior floor plan for her husband, who eventually created various options for the home. Her in-laws closed on the property in March 2017 but tenants current live in the home. Ms. Gassen indicated that renovations will take place but the overall footprint will remain the same. The property tax assessment freeze will be pursued with this home.

Per Ms. Gassen, the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency reviewed the plans for the home and made some suggestions but believed it will be a good candidate for the program. Ms. Gassen intends to update the board on the home’s application progress and if the home is approved for the tax freeze program she will share the experience with the board in case other residents want to take advantage of the program.

Mr. Dave Gassen walked through a slide presentation of the home’s current conditions, noting an addition that was added during the 1950s and further discussed future renovations for the home.

Ms. Gassen continued, summarizing that this home was a “first” in many regards: 1) it was the first bungalow to be seeking landmark status; 2) it was the first home to be landmarked that was owned by a builder but then saved; and 3) her in-laws were the first to landmark their home prior to living in it. She commended them for going through the process and being committed to protecting it for the future.

Lastly, Ms. Gassen extended her appreciation to all those who helped her with the designation: the builder who was willing to sell the home, the renters, for allowing her to tour the home several times, the previous owner, for providing information to her about the home, and finally her in-laws, for saving the home.

Dialog/comments from the members included their appreciation for saving the home; the narrow size of the lot (50' x 130'); the break in precedence by having a different style of home being landmarked; the fact that the owners were going through the tax freeze process; and whether the applicants would be willing to return to the ADRB to share their experience about the tax freeze program. Additional questions followed if the applicant knew where the original bedrooms were located in the home. Discussion followed on the 1950's addition.

The chairman invited the public to speak.

Mr. Rich Kulovany, 6825 Camden, Downers Grove, was pleased to see that the home was being saved from the landfill, especially after a builder had owned it. He asked that the residents of historic homes try to put them on the market first and not sell them to the builders because the builders were not offering full market value. He commented on how the IHPA wants owners to preserve the interior of their historic home versus just preserving the exterior which was the difference in getting the 8-year tax assessment freeze. Mr. Kulovany was pleased to see the home being considered, noting it was also nice to retain the mix in housing stock.

Hearing no further comments, the chairman closed the public hearing and entertained a motion.

WITH RESPECT TO FILE 17-ADR-004, MS. ACKS MADE A MOTION THAT THE ADRB FORWARD A POSITIVE RECOMMENDATION TO THE VILLAGE COUNCIL TO RECOMMEND HISTORICAL LANDMARK DESIGNATION FOR THE PROPERTY AT 5325 FAIRMOUNT AVENUE IN DOWNERS GROVE.

MS. HOLLWECK SECONDED THE MOTION. ROLL CALL:

AYE: MS. ACKS, MS. HOLLWECK, MS. CHALBERG, MR. LARSON, MR. LERNER, MR. RIEMER, CHAIRPERSON DAVENPORT

NAY: NONE

MOTION CARRIED. VOTE: 7-0

OLD BUSINESS

A. Incentive Strategies – ADRB Ad-Hoc Report and Recommendations to Council (2015) – Chair Davenport recalled he had asked the board to review the Ad-Hoc report a while back, specifically as it relates to increasing the fees on the demolition side to not only offset the cost of reducing/eliminating fees for historic preservation applicants but also as a way to assist applicants financially. He asked for input.

Discussion followed that allocating a portion of the demolition fees made sense; reducing and/or eliminating the fees associated with any historic landmarking or renovations was

beneficial. Members discussed it would be interesting to obtain a report on the number of teardowns versus the amount of historic landmark applications and allocating some of the demolition fee to a fund that supports those who want to landmark their homes. Dialog followed as to the cost of a demolition permit, where the demolition fees go, and the number of demolition permits issued to date. Ms. Leitschuh indicated she could bring more accurate information to the next meeting. Other comments included that funding from the money could be used toward the creation of a grant program for renovations as well as to fund other historic preservation initiatives, such as an awards program, expand the web's presence, or even solicit the public as to what that the fund could be used for.

The chairman proceeded to review the incentive ideas members had discussed prior. He felt it was "inherently right" to collect money from efforts for tearing things down and to use some of that money to encourage, not tear down. Further dialog followed on finding out what other municipalities charged for demolition fees and how they were using the funds. The chairman reiterated that it would be preferable to have a variety of homes, including affordable homes, in the village, recalling a similar discussion taking place years ago on the same topic. He asked staff to keep this topic on the agenda next month.

Ms. Leitschuh reviewed the data she said she could obtain but asked members if they would be willing to obtain information from various municipalities on how they use the fees for historic preservation purposes. Ms. Chalberg and Mr. Lerner offered to obtain that information.

B. Historic Preservation Brochure #2 – "Architectural Styles" final version prior to State approval. Ms. Leitschuh referenced the new brochure, stating it included much information and would be very useable. She asked the board if there was any outstanding issues when reviewing the brochure. No issues were voiced but there were suggestions that the brochure could be used as an educational tool, realtors could use it, and it could be used as introductory piece for homeowners to think about preserving their home. Questions followed as to where the brochures would be located, i.e., on the website, the library, City Hall, etc.

As an aside, Ms. Leitschuh announced that on Wednesday, May 24 2017, 8:00 AM to 11:30 AM, the Community Development department will be holding an informational meeting with various architects and builders regarding the new building code.

C. Historic Preservation Brochure #3 – "Sears Home Tour" draft language and homes. Ms. Leitschuh summarized that Brochure #3 was the result of taking the two previous versions of the walking tour and updating the look to the current brochures with current photographs. She asked for input or that members email her. Positive comments followed on the brochure. Dialog followed on whether the park district still held tours of Sears homes. Ms. Leitschuh said there was an earlier suggestion to entitle this brochure as "Sears and Kit Homes" because there was a concern that other companies offered kit homes and some of the Sears homes were not verified as Sears homes. She asked for the board's thoughts. Comments and discussion followed on a variety of suggestions, with the board finally agreeing to keep the title "Sears Homes" since many of the models listed were the Sears model names. A second brochure could include the other kit homes.

Questions followed if there were other locations in Illinois where kit homes were manufactured, other than Cairo, Illinois.

NEW BUSINESS

The chairman referenced youtube video done for May as Historic Preservation Month. Ms. Leitschuh suggested members also visit another video (Parcel Navigator) featuring the village's different mapping capabilities.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Rich Kulovany, 6825 Camden, Downers Grove, explained that the teardown issue was causing three problems: 1) removing the village's most historic homes; 2) storm water issues; and 3) eliminating certain inventory of the village's homes. He was not sure a fee could be raised high enough to cause a disincentive to a teardown but he agreed it should provide a funding source. Mr. Kulovany verbalized a list of why people move to Downers Grove, one of them was being able to see the charming nature of the historic neighborhoods. Of the over 14,000 units of building inventory, Mr. Kulovany estimated that probably about 1,000 buildings were potentially historic, which was about 8%. And out of the 8%, he asked how many would landmark their home and take advantage of an incentive? He thought the board should consider that.

Regarding the tax assessment freeze program, Mr. Kulovany explained that it was 20% of the fair cash value for someone to invest in their home, which was a sizable number. Mr. Kulovany explained there was not much incentive for the downtown businesses to landmark. Details followed. He also believed it was a worthwhile investment for the village to increase the fees to a reasonable amount, invest the money, and remind the council of this board's hard work over the past summer and providing some recommendations.

Ms. Charlotte Holtzen, 5226 Carpenter St., Downers Grove, stated Carpenters Street was the oldest, platted subdivision in the village with 14 original lots. Seven of the homes were torn down. She shared where the original subdivision began and ended. She hoped the board could come up with something to encourage residents to not tear down.

Ms. Amy Gassen, 5320 Benton Ave., Downers Grove, noted a description error in the Sears brochure – house No. 6. She also mentioned she knew someone who recently found out they lived in a confirmed Sears home and suggested to staff to add the home to the brochure, she did have an example. Regarding the youtube video, she suggested the board visit a video done by Chris Derylo.

Ms. Irene Hogstrom, 1232 Gilbert Ave., Downers Grove, thanked the board for approving the Fairmount bungalow since she admired the home. She also mentioned that 1307 Gilbert Avenue will be demolished soon; it was a Craftsman bungalow.

Ms. Chalberg suggested that after a demolition permit is approved that documentation and photographs of the existing structure take place before it is demolished. Members concurred with the idea. Chair Davenport suggested publicizing those structures that were lost through the demolition process, bringing an awareness to the community.

Ms. Hogstrom, 1232 Gilbert Ave., shared that the 1307 Gilbert home was owned by a real estate agent who sold the home to someone whom she thought, in good faith, would preserve it, but it did not happen. Ms. Hogstrom said she did write a letter to the new owners asking them to

reconsider because there were* potential buyers for the property who wanted to preserve the house. As she understood, there was going to be a large home constructed.

Ms. Leitschuh stated she would take the photograph suggestion to the Community Development department. She also recommended not having an annual presentation showing those homes that were razed. Discussion followed on a documentation process or the idea of incorporating in a future brochure how a historic home can be brought up to modern standards, possibly listing various architects and builders in the area.

On that point, Ms. Leitschuh mentioned that in September 2015 the Drew House received its Certificate of Appropriateness for a major modification and also its building permit. Also, there was an addition to the home that will have part of it visible from the street right-of-way, and another small section. Further details were provided by Ms. Leitschuh.

Ms. Gassen came forward regarding the recommendation to document homes that will be razed. She added that the historic resource application/GIS already provided a link to the survey that was completed in 2013 and brings up information on the home such as when it was constructed, when it was demolished, and the survey sheet. Also the Historical Society has the Centennial Home program (retired) as well as the new Historic Home program, which also had documentation on a structure.

ADJOURNMENT

MR. REIMER MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:30 P.M. MR. LERNER. SECONDED THE MOTION.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE OF 7-0.

/s/ Celeste K. Weilandt
(As transcribed by MP-3 audio)