



MEETING MINUTES

PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Tuesday, February 11, 2025

7:00 P.M. Council Chambers Room 2800

Members Present: Carl Klein, Thomas Ahleman, Amanda Ziehm, Sarah M. Dreller, Stuart Cohen, Lesa Rizzolo, John Jacobs, Beth Bodan, Matthew Johnson, Charles Smith, Joshua Bowes-Carlson

Members Absent: N/A

Staff Present: Cade W. Sterling

Presiding Member: Carl Klein, Chair

Minutes Taken by: Cade W. Sterling

CALL TO ORDER/DECLARATION OF A QUORUM

PUBLIC COMMENT

Members of the public are afforded three minutes per person to provide testimony related to items listed under discussion, or to otherwise address the Commission generally. Members of the public wishing to provide testimony on new or unfinished business shall be given the opportunity to do so during those agenda items in a manner and under time limits determined by the Chair.

- Resident Steve Test provided comment in relation to Envision Evanston 2045, encouraging the Commission to continue to advocate for a more sensitive and context based approach to the draft zoning changes as well as for a preservation chapter in the comprehensive plan that appropriately balances and mitigates the plans otherwise widespread development and growth goals.
- Resident Tina Paden provided testimony related to Envision Evanston 2045, and the consequences of past widespread redevelopment and unchecked growth on the City's cultural heritage. Specifically, Ms. Paden provided context related to the Research Park concept included in the past comprehensive plan which resulted in widespread land clearing and forced relocation of minority and vulnerable families through eminent domain, demolition of culturally significant

built resources, and a widespread change in social and physical character in the name of economic development.

- Resident Cecile McHugh, provided comment asking the Commission to clarify the impact of proposed zoning changes to historic properties that are not in currently zoned R1-R2 districts and whether the preservation ordinance and standards would still apply to other zoning districts within historic districts. She encouraged the Commission to make sure the comprehensive plan and zoning code respects historic preservation and commits to retaining historic structures.
- Resident Mary Roskinski provided comment on the proposed zoning changes, urging the Commission to continue pushing for more strategic and context sensitive solutions. Right now the beauty and character of the community is at great risk.

NEW BUSINESS

25PRES-0010 - 1140 Hinman Ave. - Lakeshore Historic District

Stuart Cohen and Julie Hacker Architects, LLC, applicant on behalf of the property owner, submit for a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish a covered rear entry porch, raised open deck, first floor bay, and second floor sleeping porch at the homes rear volume; construct a new covered entry porch, and raised deck. reconstruct the existing roof where it extended to cover the second-story sleeping porch proposed to be removed, and alter the pattern of fenestration at the homes rear volume including new French doors, and new double-hung windows in new and existing openings.

Applicable Standards: Alteration [1-10]; and Construction [1-8; 10-13; and 15].

- Commissioners Cohen and Jacobs recused themselves due to a conflict of interest. Commissioner Jacobs stepped down from the dais and left Council Chambers.
- Chair Klein reminded Commissioners to review the proposal through the standards, noting that a proposal by a fellow Commissioner should not be held to a higher nor lower standard than any other application.
- Stuart Cohen provided an overview of the proposal, which is limited to the rear volume of the building. A non-original second-story sleeping porch and recent bay addition and deck at the rear of the structure will be demolished and removed. A small addition, new deck, and rearrangement of windows and doors will occur at the rear elevation.
- Mr. Cohen walked through the design vocabulary of the home and noted the awkward positioning and relationship between the ground floor of the home

and the second-story sleeping porch which reads as an appendage to the structure rather than a compositional element.

- The sleeping porch is not conditioned, not insulated, and not used by the current homeowners.
- The proposed composition is more sympathetic to the overall design vocabulary of the home and creates additional functionality for the homeowners.
- Commissioners asked about the sleeping porch and when it was constructed. Mr. Cohen did not have an exact date of construction but noted that the majority of sleeping porches were added during the fresh air movement of the early 20th century as a response to the outbreak of tuberculosis. Many are visually interesting, some architecturally significant and harmonious with the character of the home. This one is none of those things.
- Commissioners asked if alternatives were explored that retained the sleeping porch but made its relationship with the ground floor more sympathetic and increased its comfort for use by the homeowner.
- Mr. Cohen stated that this was never considered due to the current condition, clients needs, and what would be a much more involved project with little gain for the homeowners or the homes integrity.
- Commissioners noted that standard for alteration 1 asks that applicants only pursue the minimal change necessary to adapt a property and questioned whether removal of the porch was a minimal change.
- Commissioners also noted that the home, although eligible for landmark designation, is a contributing structure and the work is proposed on its tertiary elevation.
- Mr. Cohen noted that the rear of the home is also minimally visible even from the alley as its obscured with adjacent garages.
- Commissioners agreed, but did note that the sleeping porch was visible from Hamilton Street to the north as well.
- Commissioners noted that if someone came in today to construct the sleeping porch, it would likely not meet the standards and would be seen as incompatible. However, other members noted this wasn't entirely relevant and many aspects of the historic district and historic homes may not be replicable today under the standards, but that doesn't mean they have less significance or more significance.
- Losing the sleeping porch may be a loss of a historical element to the home and its evolution, but the proposed change is likely one that meets the standards for such an alteration and in some ways is another evolutionary

chapter to the home where the need for a sleeping porch is no longer evident.

- The majority of Commissioners agreed that removal of the sleeping porch, although an interesting element, would not diminish the integrity of the home and that the proposed composition and use of materials was sympathetic and compatible with the homes design vocabulary.
- Commissioners discussed the proposed fenestration at the rear volume of the home. Mr. Cohen noted that the existing window opening proposed to be retained is centered on the dormer above it and the center of the home. The proposed covered deck/porch is off-center, but the addition of the new windows align with the fenestration at the first floor and creates localized symmetry at the rear elevation that is appropriate.
- A motion to approve as presented was made by Commissioner Bowes-Carlson and seconded by Commissioner Rizzolo. The motion carried on a vote of 8-1-2 with Commissioner Bodan dissenting under standard for alteration 1 and Commissioners Cohen and Jacobs abstaining.
- Commissioners Cohen and Jacobs rejoin the full body at the dais

2025 Annual Work Plan

Adoption of the proposed 2025 annual work plan with the following priority initiatives within Preserve 2040 identified for implementation: Coordinated Initiatives 1.4, 1.7, and 1.11; Initiative 2.10; Initiative 3.6; and Initiative 4.4.

- Mr. Sterling presented an overview of the initiatives outlined in the work plan for implementation.
- Commissioner Dreller discussed initiative 2.10 and specifically asked that the work plan include reference to this including the creation of a corps of volunteers and consortium. The language in Preserve 2040 is a little different than the way the concept has evolved over the past year.
- Commissioners discussed survey and documentation efforts as well as the study list of eligible resources. The list itself is nice to have and helps inform future decisions, but it would be nice to see some actual conversation or attempt to landmark some of these resources.
- Mr. Sterling noted that the first step should be communication with property owners that their property has been identified as significant and eligible for designation, what that means, etc and also engage with them about potentially nominating these properties and trying to get owner consent.

- Commissioners asked that some resources be developed that can communicate these things easily since there are so many misperceptions with what being a landmark means.
- Commissioners and Mr. Sterling discussed the two types of survey, reconnaissance and intensive, and clarified that what is intended is a reconnaissance survey to provide an initial judgement on potential eligibility and also to identify otherwise character giving resources.
- Commissioners noted that many eligible landmarks are within local historic districts. These may be really easy opportunities to designate since there is no change in process or requirements for these properties since they're already covered by binding design requirements. It would act as a celebration of their property more than anything.
- Commissioner Dreler made a motion to approve the work plan with the addition of development of a volunteer corps program, and create a framework and goal to designate buildings or districts listed as eligible and thereby increase the number of landmarks within the City. Seconded by Commissioner Jacobs. The motion carried 11-0.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of December 10, 2024

- Approved without amendment

Minutes of January 21, 2025

- Approved without amendment

DISCUSSION (NO VOTE WILL BE TAKEN)

Envision Evanston 2045 - Draft Zoning Code

Pursuant to City Code Sections 2-8-3 (G) 15, 20, and 24 the Commission will review the draft City-initiated amendments to the Zoning Ordinance -- providing written testimony and recommendations on their appropriateness for the protection and continued use of existing landmarks and properties, structures, sites, or

objects within historic districts, as well as their potential affect on other historically, culturally, architecturally, or archaeologically significant areas, sites, structures, and objects throughout the City. **Continued from January 21.**

- Mr. Sterling walked the Commission through a series of locations within the downtown in addition to the previous areas discussed at the January meeting. Many of these areas are currently zoned D2, which is a zoning designation which restricts development potential in areas identified as having historic development patterns and character significant to the downtowns sense of place.
- North Sherman Avenue, North Orrington, Clark Street, and Elgin
 - Mr. Sterling noted that these areas also contain several eligible resources. These areas previously zoned D2 with a FAR of 1.75 and height of 45' are proposed to allow either 135' in height and a FAR of 7.0. or in other locations no height limit and a FAR of 9.0.
 - Commissioners agreed that these locations have special value to the downtown and community, currently facilitate small business through lower rent structures, and remind us of the downtowns past identity.
 - Commissioners agreed it would be very difficult to insert taller buildings into this fabric without destroying its character. There are strategic opportunity within the downtown for more height, but a wholesale rearrangement of space is not desirable.
 - Commissioners noted the Evanston Labs building at Clark and Orrington as being an example of what could be built as-of-right throughout these areas and questioned whether that's what the community wants or needs. It would fundamentally change the downtown and its experiential qualities.
 - Commissioners also noted that these locations act as a transition zone between the downtown, the University, and moderate density residential neighborhoods to the North, something that is really successful currently.
- Copy Cat Building and Sherman Gardens.
 - Mr. Sterling also noted that the landmark Copy Cat Building, Asbury Hall, and eligible for designation Sherman Gardens further north are also zoned for the same change allowing no height limit and a FAR of 9.0.
 - Commissioners agreed that this change would severely threaten these resources and create incompatible relationships between existing and proposed built fabric and sense of place.

- Mr. Sterling also noted that when you increase development potential through zoning that is much higher than what is currently realized on landmark properties, you significantly increase the potential for takings challenges or claims of economic hardship. Just because these are landmarked currently does not inherently protect them when the proposed changes to development potential are so significant. It presents very real legal challenges.
- Women's Club of Evanston, WCTU historic district, and Frances Willard Rest Cottage.
 - Mr. Sterling noted that these locations, currently zoned R6 which allows 50% lot coverage and 65% impervious surface with a height of 8 stories. The proposed zoning would allow 135' and a FAR of 7.0 as-of-right.
 - Commissioners agreed that this change is unacceptable and would destabilize some of Evanston's most significant properties. These are National Historic Landmarks. It was noted that as an example, the White House is a National Historic Landmark.
 - Commissioners questioned the entire process for proposing these kinds of changes. What was the desired outcome, and was there any understanding of our current conditions?
 - The proposed zoning changes for a built environment with such history and complexity needs to be highly strategic and sensitive. What's proposed is neither of these things and it needs to be completely re-worked.
- Central Street
 - Mr. Sterling noted that the current code for Central Street acts as a hybrid form-based code and has been successful in integrating new compatible construction into the existing environment.
 - The existing code allows the lesser of 3 stories or 35' and a FAR of 1.4 to 2.0 with required building articulation and stepback requirements above the first floor. The proposed code would remove all the form based references and allow as-of-right 65' and a FAR of 5.0
 - Chair Klein noted that the Central Street corridor and neighborhood won an APA award due to its significance as one of America's great places. Those same neighbors fought long and hard for the current zoning overlay that implements the Central Street Master Plan.
 - Mr. Sterling noted those changes were a result of some incompatible built interventions both at west Central Street west of Hurd and also east Central Street west of Ashland. There was a significant and real

fear at the time that the character of the corridor was at risk and the current zoning really stabilizes it and acts as a companion to preservation efforts.

- Commissioners agree that the proposed zoning would allow built forms that are incompatible with surrounding context and design vocabularies.
- Commissioners stated that the proposed zoning is a real step backward from what exists currently and that the current zoning could be a great model for retention of the built fabric at Main Street and Dempster Street. There is a lot of good things happening along Central Street and it should act as a model and inspiration not an opportunity for widespread change.
- Specifically, it was noted that the large building west of Ashland on the south side of Central is smaller than what would be allowed as-of-right. Is that what we want this entire corridor to become? With no recourse as a community?
- Florence and Greenleaf
 - Mr. Sterling noted this area as being an example of a truly integrated neighborhood business node with significant built fabric and compatible relationships between residential, and commercial building types.
 - The existing zoning allows up to 40' and a FAR of 2.0. The proposed zoning would allow up to 50' and a FAR of 3.0.
 - Commissioners agreed this location has special value and interest to the community and that the change in zoning, particularly the FAR, creates the opportunity for its destabilization.
 - Commissioners also noted that it could have a negative impact on the areas affordability and ability to foster unique arts based uses and live/work arrangements that are key to its character.
 - Commissioners noted that with this change as well as the majority of others, the likelihood for boxes with little articulation and modulation in mass increases. At least with 40' and a lower FAR, a new building here would have to have significant modulation in its form that reduces its overall scale and increased likelihood of compatibility. That isn't true with a FAR of 3.0 where a three-story 40' box could be built.
- Commissioner Jacobs provided a summary of his thoughts after two meetings on the proposed zoning. He noted that the underlying goals for the changes are flawed and the approach is not sensitive to our existing character. If the changes moved forward, the likelihood of a significant

rearrangement of space that isn't desirable is very high, and it would likely lead to increased gentrification and a loss of not just architectural heritage, but the social and socioeconomic framework of our community. He referenced other locations such as Wicker Park and Bucktown that were once filled with well built, visually interesting, and attainable building types and housing that have been torn down and replaced with new construction of lesser quality and higher price.

- Commissioners agreed and suggested that their comments have been very similar regardless of the location. The approach needs to be more strategic and context sensitive. There are locations that are deserving of retention and stabilization due to their ability to meet our Community's needs and City's goals today and into the future. There are other locations that can and should absorb more change, but these need to be identified and the zoning changes need to catered to these unique situations rather than a wholesale change where anything is seen as expendable.
- Mr. Sterling stated that the comments from the three total meetings on the subject would be compiled and sent to the staff members working on the draft zoning as well as the Land Use Commission. He noted that the current direction has been to decouple the zoning from the rest of the planning process for the comprehensive plan. The timeline for reviewing the zoning is up in the air currently.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45pm