

**MINUTES  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
REGULAR SESSION**

5:30 p.m.

Tuesday, June 17, 2025

City Council Chambers, Historic Federal Building

**Commissioners Present:** Chairperson Janice Esser; Commissioners, Bill Doyle, Tim Gau, Heidi Pettitt, Rick Stuter, Adam Schwendinger, and Chad Witthoeft

**Commissioners Excused:** Christina Monk

**Commissioners Unexcused:** None

**Staff Members Present:** Travis Schrobilgen and Jason Duba

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Janice Esser at 5:30 p.m.

**MINUTES:** Motion by Gau, seconded by Stuter, to approve the minutes of the May 15, 2025 meeting as submitted. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Janice Esser, Bill Doyle, Tim Gau, Rick Stuter, Chad Witthoeft, Adam Schwendinger; Nay – none; Abstain – Heidi Pettitt.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

**DESIGN REVIEW:**

Applicant: Justin Rainey, Southend Tap

Owner: BRP Properties, LLC

Address: 55 Locust Street

Project: Installation of wall sign on façade of building

District: Cathedral Historic District

Staff Member Duba presented the staff report noting the characteristics and the history of the building, its status as a contributing member of the district, and its current presence in the neighborhood. He described the proposed changeable copy sign and reviewed it relative to the Architectural Guidelines for signs: character, materials, color, installation, lighting, content, and wall signs. He asserted that the proposed sign appeared to meet the guidelines.

Justin Rainey, 2415 Queen Street, owner of the Southend Tap, spoke in favor of the application. He stated that he's put a lot of my time and energy into the building and

business. He said with the highway right in front of the building, the sign would go a long way to attract customers.

Commissioner Stuter asked what material the letters were and if they were magnetic, and Rainey replied that they are plastic letters that slide in and out, with the goal of advertising to the thousands of people that drive past on the highway each day.

Chairperson Esser noted that the guidelines were met and asked about the materials section. Duba explained that section refers to “materials that reflect the Dubuque context,” and he noted that he wasn’t sure what that meant as it relates to the review.

Commissioner Gau said that he understands the need for this sign, he would expect to see it at a bar (which this is), and said the sign doesn’t stick out or change the building. Esser concurred that the sign does not permanently alter the building.

**DESIGN REVIEW:** Motion by Doyle, seconded by Schwendinger, to approve the application as submitted. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye –Bill Doyle, Tim Gau, Heidi Pettitt, Adam Schwendinger, Rick Stuter, Chad Witthoeft, and Janice Esser; Nay – none.

Chairperson Esser recused herself from the next item, and Vice Chairperson Gau chaired the item.

**DESIGN REVIEW:**

Applicant: Freddy Kammiller  
Owner: Franklin Investments, LLC  
Address: 39 Bluff Street  
Project: Construction of new apartment buildings  
District: Cathedral Historic District

Staff Member Schrobilgen presented the staff report noting that while the applicants are looking to build two apartment buildings, just one was in the historic district and therefore the Commission would review only the north building, the parking lot alterations, and the dumpster enclosures. He described the history of the site, that it is within the Cathedral Historic District, the surrounding area, and noted there are supporting and contributing buildings in the area and that should be considered with this review. He displayed the architectural designs and site plan. He noted that the architectural guidelines refer to infill development being mostly near the right of way and said this building and parking lot will be at the rear of the property but can still be seen from the public right of way. He discussed the orientation of the building and parking lot and listed the materials and treatments to be used in construction. He said this is a new building, and it would not modify the school or other structures already on the property. He went through the Architectural Guidelines noting the relevant headings for all the aspects of the project. He noted buffers, landscaping, architectural character, materials, roof form, massing, context within the district, and others as noted in the staff report. He

concluded that the Commission are welcome to detail each of the guidelines as part of their discussion.

Micah Spivey, 2417 Pinehurst Court, and Fred Kammiller, 17436 Kammiller Lane, spoke on behalf of the application. They referred to the submitted photos and application for materials and finishes. They stated they seek to blend the new building with the existing school and make it look similar to the garage.

Commissioner Witthoeft asked questions regarding the dimensions of the windows, siding materials, and what they would call the architectural style. Spivey replied they are using wood siding with horizontal orientation on the first floor and vertical orientation on the second floor. He noted they are working with architect Adam Johnson. Kammiller stated they were open to suggestions with regard to any materials or detailing but needed it to remain cost effective. Witthoeft referred to apartments on Arlington Street that look like townhouses with a vertical scheme to break up the monotony of the wall. He said the current design reminded him of a motel. Witthoeft noted that the character of the neighborhood should be incorporated a little more. He later noted that a new structure in a historic district should have historic value, a certain aesthetic, that windows should be longer/taller than they are wide, and there should be more overhang if it's intended to be Prairie style architecture.

Commissioner Doyle expressed that the architecture appears to be a craftsman-esque style noting the clipped gable, the window patterns and simple details. He said he appreciates how the massing is broken up horizontally, but he expected entrances on the north side. He said the building is not adjacent to the street and he would like to see brick in the Cathedral District, but they shouldn't demand a completely historic design. Doyle said that it's new traditional architecture when you look back at older styles. Commissioner Pettitt asked if there were other wood apartments in Dubuque of a similar era they should look at. Staff used google maps to show other multifamily buildings in the district. Commissioners noted the windows of area buildings and horizontal massing being visually broken up.

Kammiller looking for clarification, displayed a photo of vertical separation on townhouses on a Fenelon Place property. The commission agreed that breaking up the motel look would be appropriate but noted that it could be done with different paint colors. Staff noted that because paint color is somewhat difficult to enforce, materials could be used as well, noting all horizontal or all vertical in the returns would provide a similar visual effect. Gary Carner said that because the windows are currently coupled together, they could separate them to get a similar effect. Doyle said he can see deliberate decisions by the architect, and he thinks they should keep windows paired, though they could be taller. He asked which elevation is visible from Bluff. Carner answered the east elevation. Pettitt noted that the north windows look into backyards, and Gau replied that the setback its not in their purview.

Doyle said he's glad to see work on an infill project in a popular neighborhood. He said if the commission rejects it, they need to be explicit about what they want to see. He expressed that design by committee could look weird. He asked what is the commission opposed to, and he stated he doesn't want to discourage new construction because Dubuque needs housing.

Commissioner Stuter asked when they planned to start building, and Kammiller said as soon as possible. Pettitt pointed out that the stone water table on the garage is nice, and Carner replied that they're expensive. Doyle asked how much a full brick façade would cost, and Carner estimated half a million dollars for each building.

Commissioner Schwendinger said he sees their need to be economical, so brick isn't feasible. He said this project is a good use of space, and it's not a terrible design, just needs a little reworking. He said it looked like other motels in the area and that he's hung up on matching the historic district but noted that Dodge Street used to have motels and similar development.

Doyle said that it's not easy to see this building from the right-of-way, and he would be pickier if it were right on the street. Carner replied only the east side would be visible, and they are retaining trees in the area, and the building is almost 200' from the street. Schwendinger suggested a stone water table could be added. Doyle noted that more infill projects are likely to come to the commission, so they need to be prepared.

Schrobilgen noted that changes to the site are also under the commission's purview, including dumpster enclosures, and parking lot buffers. Doyle said the dumpsters seemed close to the entrance of the south building but said he didn't have any issues with the enclosures. Pettitt agreed that the location might be problematic for tenants.

Gau asked if any conditions need to be made or if they were ready to make a motion. Schrobilgen stated that conditions of approval should be specific enough for the applicants to follow and enforceable from a staff perspective but said they are welcome to make any reasonable conditions they deem necessary. Commissioners again suggested breaking up the building visually, increasing the height of the windows and using contrasting colors of paint. They noted that the submitted elevations should have used better colors to make review simpler because the tan and green made it difficult to visualize. Gau concluded that it's far enough off the road that most of it won't be visible.

**DESIGN REVIEW:** Motion by Schwendinger, seconded by Gau, to approve the application with the condition that any minor changes to the plan be reviewed and approved by staff provided they are in line with the Architectural Guidelines. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye –Bill Doyle, Heidi Pettitt, Rick Stuter, Chad Witthoeft, Adam Schwendinger, and Tim Gau; Nay – none.

Chairperson Esser returned to the meeting.

**ITEMS FROM PUBLIC:** None.

**ITEMS FROM COMMISSION:** Commissioner Schwendinger stated the Preserve Iowa Summit went well.

**ITEMS FROM STAFF:** None.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Motion by Doyle, seconded by Pettitt, to adjourn the June 17, 2025 Historic Preservation Commission meeting. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Janice Esser, Bill Doyle, Tim Gau, Heidi Pettitt, Rick Stuter, Chad Witthoeft, Adam Schwendinger; Nay – none.

The meeting adjourned at 6:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Wally Wernimont, Planning Services Director

July 17, 2025

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Adopted