

Historic Preservation Commission
Proceedings of the November 7, 2023 Meeting

A meeting of the Lake Forest Historic Preservation Commission was held on Tuesday, November 7, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. at the City of Lake Forest City Hall, 220 E. Deerpath, Lake Forest, Illinois.

Historic Preservation Commissioners present: Chairman Maureen Grinnell and Commissioners Lloyd Culbertson, Elizabeth Daliere, Robin Petit, Geoffrey Hanson, and Leif Soderberg.

Commissioners absent: Tina Dann-Fenwick

City staff present: Catherine Czerniak, Director of Community Development
Jennifer Baehr, Planner

1. Introduction of Commissioners and staff, overview of meeting procedures.

Chairman Grinnell reviewed the meeting procedures followed by the Commission and asked the members of the Commission and staff to introduce themselves.

2. Consideration of the minutes of the September 27, 2023 meeting of the Commission.

The minutes of the September 27, 2023 meeting were approved as presented.

3. Recognition of the 25-year anniversary of the establishment of the City's Historic Preservation Commission – Lake Forest Preservation Foundation.

Art Miller, 1100 Pembridge, spoke on behalf of the Lake Forest Preservation Foundation and recognized the 25th anniversary of the Historic Preservation Commission. He noted that the positive impact of the Commission over more than two decades is evident throughout the Historic Districts. He stated that the work and oversight of the Commission has helped to preserve the integrity of the Historic District and Locally Landmarked properties. He stated that although sometimes individual petitions do not work out as hoped, in the context of the overall community, those projects have not significantly diminished the character of the community. He stated that the Foundation is proud of the Commission, City Council, and staff for the leadership on preservation matters through the years.

Chairman Grinnell thanked the Commission for the recognition and for the support offered to the Commission by the Foundation.

4. Consideration of a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for wall, door, and window signage for Evereve, an existing retail business that is expanding into the adjacent space in Market Square.

Property Owner: STRS L3 ACQ2 LLC

**Project Representatives: Carli Sperling, Evereve
Keith Hlad, Integrity Sign Company**

Chairman Grinnell asked the Commission for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest. Hearing none, she invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Ms. Sperling stated that Evereve, a women's clothing store has been in Market Square since 2015 and is expanding into the adjacent space. She stated that as part of the expansion, updated signage is proposed. She stated that three signs are proposed along with window graphics. She presented images of color options that were considered and stated that the preferred color combination for the band sign is a black background with gold letters. She stated that the sign is proposed over the existing covered transom windows. She stated that the transom windows will be preserved. She noted that the options, one with a white background and the other with a green background, are not preferred by Evereve ownership.

Mr. Hlad explained how the transom window would be covered with the sign. He discussed the proposed window graphics noting that the window signage is a reverse white and reverse black on the windows. He noted that it softens the signage.

Ms. Baehr reviewed that the petition includes a wall sign in the transom window area, signage in each of the storefront windows, lettering on the entrance door, and lettering on the awning flap. She stated that a total of seven signs are proposed on the storefront. She noted that the black background with gold lettering is not unprecedented in Market Square and referenced the signage at Williams-Sonoma and Talbots. She suggested reducing the number of signs noting that the proposed number seems excessive and repetitive. She stated that the wall sign as proposed is aluminum and recommended that a matte finish be used to avoid a glossy appearance. She stated support for the petition subject to conditions.

In response to questions from Commissioner Culbertson, Ms. Baehr confirmed that no changes to the storefront are proposed.

In response to questions from Commissioner Soderberg, Ms. Sperling pointed out that the adjacent space into which Evereve is expanding, is architecturally different from the existing space. She stated that the expansion has been challenging and stated that unifying the storefronts of the two spaces would be difficult. She stated Evereve's interest in respecting the existing architectural details.

In response to questions from Commissioner Culbertson, Ms. Sperling stated that the images behind the glass in the transom and bulkhead will be removed.

In response to questions from Chairman Grinnell, Ms. Sperling confirmed that there will be an interior connection between the two tenant spaces to create a single store.

In response to questions from Commissioner Culbertson, Mr. Hlad stated that an awning is not proposed over the eastern storefront. He stated that the existing awning over the original space can remain or be removed.

Commissioner Culbertson stated that if the awning is not going to be used, it should be removed.

In response to questions from Commissioner Petit, Mr. Hlad explained that the sign will be installed in an aluminum frame affixed around the window and will hang away from the transom window. He stated that as proposed, the band sign will have gold lettering and the window sign will be black and white. He confirmed that two different fonts are proposed.

In response to questions from Commissioner Petit, Ms. Sperling added that the font for the band sign was selected to fit in with the historic character of Market Square. She stated that the Evereve font is used elsewhere and can be used on the band sign if desired.

Commissioner Petit stated concern about the inconsistency of the various signs that are proposed. She stated that the various types of signs and lettering is distracting to the eye.

In response to questions from Commissioner Petit, Ms. Sperling explained that the large sign is announcing the store location as expanded since there are no unifying storefront elements between the two spaces. She stated that the smaller Evereve logos that flank the entry serve the function of a blade sign. She noted that they are only four inches to be readable to pedestrians passing by. She stated that the door signage is a final arrival point. She acknowledged that various types of signage of different scales, colors and materials are proposed. She explained that on the signs with the larger graphic, changing it to white creates a more subtle image.

In response to questions from Commissioner Soderberg, Ms. Sperling stated that it is not Evereve's practice to always post store hours on the door. She stated a preference for applying the Evereve graphic to the door at eye level.

In response to questions from Commissioner Dalieri, Ms. Baehr stated that some of the signs in Market Square are wood. She stated that she is not aware of aluminum signs in Market Square.

In response to a question from Chairman Grinnell, Mr. Hlad stated that aluminum is proposed because it is light and low maintenance and will allow the transom windows to be preserved.

In response to questions from Commissioner Dalieri, Ms. Sperling acknowledged that the back board for the sign is large and explained that the length is purposeful to avoid breaking up the appearance of the storefront. She stated that the back board is proposed to be a soft black color. She confirmed that the west door will be the entrance to the combined tenant spaces. She stated that the handle on the door into the east tenant space will be removed to allow the door to appear as a window without making any alterations to the historic storefront.

In response to questions from Chairman Grinnell, Ms. Sperling stated that the expanded store is expected to open within the month.

In response to questions from Chairman Grinnell, Mr. Hlad confirmed that as proposed, the letters are aluminum painted gold. He confirmed that the letters will be raised.

In response to questions from Commissioner Hansen, Ms. Sperling confirmed that the window above the entrance to the stairway to the second floor will not be modified. She stated that the company's preference is to use the Evereve font but noted that a more historic font is presented to align with other signs in Market Square. She agreed that if so directed by the Commission, neither the letters, nor the background of the sign will be glossy. She distributed color samples.

Hearing no further comments from the Commission, Chairman Grinnell invited public testimony.

Art Miller, 1100 Pembridge Drive, stated in the early 1980s, John Vinci, a Chicago architect, re-opened and cleared out the transoms in Market Square. He noted that the transom in the Evereve space was not addressed because the space was occupied by a long time tenant. He stated that the ideal approach would be to clean the glass and open the transom for consistency with the tenant space to the east. He suggested that the Evereve sign could be shortened and placed just over the entrance. He questioned how visible any sign in the proposed location will be through the trees. He stated that awnings may be historic and could remain.

In response to questions from Commissioner Petit, Ms. Sperling reiterated that a soft black back board for the sign with gold lettering is preferred.

Hearing no further questions from the Board, Chairman Grinnell asked for staff comment related to the recommendation to reduce the number of signs from the number proposed.

Ms. Baehr suggested that the lettering on the awning valance could be removed noting that it appears redundant. She suggested that the store name on the door could also be removed because customers at that point likely know what store they are entering.

In response to questions from Chairman Grinnell, Ms. Sperling stated that to the extent possible, the goal is to have the two spaces appear unified however, because of the historic nature of the storefronts, there is no desire to alter the exterior of the spaces.

Commissioner Soderberg suggested that further efforts to tie the storefronts together could be helpful. He pointed out that care should be taken to assure that the gold letters do not appear as a mustard color.

In response to questions from Commissioner Culbertson, Ms. Czerniak confirmed that the Commission's purview is not to redesign the storefronts and reiterated that no changes to the storefronts are proposed. She stated that the Commission is charged with reviewing the signage request as presented by the petitioner.

Commissioner Culbertson stated that in his opinion, altering the storefronts to make them more consistent could be beneficial but acknowledged that is not before the Commission for consideration. He stated support for the signage as proposed with a black or green background for the band sign, not white.

Commissioner Petit suggested that a consistent font be used for all of the signage.

Commissioner Hansen stated that in his opinion, the Evereve font is elegant and classic. He stated that a true gold, with brilliance to it, would benefit the signage as opposed to a mustard color. He stated that removing the signage on the door makes sense. He stated support for the black background for the band sign.

Commissioner Dalieri stated that restoring the transom above the original storefront would be the best approach. She agreed that the lettering in the sign should be gold rather than a mustard color.

Commissioner Soderberg stated a preference for bringing more consistency to the two storefronts. He stated support for the signage as proposed.

Chairman Grinnell commented that the black signage at the bottom of the window may not be highly visible. She stated support for using the Evereve font on all of the signage. She agreed that a brilliant gold should be used for the letters in the band sign.

Commissioner Hanson suggested consideration of a glossy finish on the gold lettering with a matte finish on the back board.

In response to questions from Commissioner Dalieri, Ms. Sperling confirmed that the rosette detail above the transom windows will remain.

In response to questions from Commissioner Culbertson, Ms. Sperling agreed that either the signage on the door or lower window could be removed but noted that both are very small.

In response to a question from Commissioner Hanson, Ms. Baehr confirmed that the Code permits two types of signage on a space. She stated that the Commission has the ability to grant a variance to allow a third sign if determined to be warranted for a specific petition.

Commissioner Hansen noted that with the three signage types, the square footage of signage proposed overall is still below what is permitted.

Hearing no further comments from the Commission, Chairman Grinnell invited a motion.

Commissioner Hanson made a motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for wall, door and window signage for Evereve, 248 Market Square. He stated that the motion includes the Commission's adoption of the findings as presented in the staff report and is subject to the following conditions of approval.

1. The petitioner shall conduct further investigation of the transom window area. The installation of the wall sign must be done in a manner that preserves the historic integrity of the storefront.
2. The aluminum panel must have a matte finish to avoid a glossy appearance.
3. Gold lettering, with a gloss finish is approved for the band sign.
4. The Evereve font shall be used consistently on all of the signage.
5. Plans submitted for permit must reflect the project as presented to the Commission. If any modifications are proposed in response to Commission direction or discussion, or as a result of final design development, plans clearly detailing the areas of change must be submitted with the application for permit along with the plans originally presented to the Commission. The plans will be subject to review by staff, in consultation with the Chairman as appropriate, to verify consistency with the intent of the Commission and the approvals granted.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Petit and was unanimously approved by a vote of 6 to 0.

OTHER ITEMS

5. Opportunity for the public to address the Historic Preservation Commission on non-agenda items.

There were no additional public comments.

6. Additional information from staff.

The 2024 calendar for the Historic Preservation Commission meetings was approved by the Commission.

Ms. Baehr reminded the Commission that a work session is scheduled for Saturday, November 18, 2023.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Czerniak
Director of Community Development