

## **MINUTES**

### **Cheney Historic Preservation Commission January 5, 2006**

**Commissioners Attending:** Bettye Hull, Martin Seedorf, Fred Lauritsen, Nikki Gamon, Steve Emerson, Aimee Flinn and Chris Stewart.

**Commissioners Absent:** None.

**Staff Attending:** Glenn Scholten and Susan Beeman.

**Councilpersons Attending:** None.

**Call to Order:** Chairman Hull called the meeting to order at 5:18 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Emerson, to approve the minutes of the November 3, 2005 Regular Meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission with corrections to show a reference to WWI, not WWII, on page 3, and to correct the spelling of Marion Malmoe's name. Motion carried.

**Citizen Participation:** Chairman Hull welcomed Rita Seedorf. Fred Pollard introduced his family and explained that they are new to Cheney and is considering purchasing a property in downtown Cheney that is potentially a historic building. Mr. Pollard explained his interest in the building and plans for establishing a business here. He has been working with Charlie Dotson of Pathways to Progress.

Discussion followed on the building and various businesses which had operated there. Ms. Beeman noted that the building has a stone foundation which was built in the 1890s, and the brick building was built in 1929. Mr. Pollard may be interested in local register listing and the special valuation program. He knows the roof will need to be replaced immediately.

Commissioner Emerson said the most important thing would be to retain the brick facade. The windows do not appear to be original; you could probably look at photographs of downtown Cheney to see how window & entry treatments were done during that period.

Discussion continued. The Commission agreed that since the brick building has been painted, it would be appropriate to repaint the building if removing the paint proves to be prohibitively expensive. Mr. Scholten mentioned a short movie that was shown during the College Avenue renovation project which contained footage of a 1950s parade, and featured numerous scenes of this building, and the automobile dealership alongside. He will try to find someone who has a copy of that film.

**Old Business: Written Decision on Kennedy House Local Register Nomination – 105 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Street.** Commissioner Stewart asked about the repetition in document; Ms. Beeman explained this is a common format used by the Planning Department for written decisions on land use issues. The document conveys the reasoning behind the recommendation to City Council.

Commissioner Seedorf made a motion to approve the written decision as distributed. Motion seconded by Commissioner Stewart; carried unanimously.

**New Business: Identifying Building Styles & Providing Physical Descriptions.**

Commissioner Emerson recommended several books as helpful references in identifying architectural styles:

A Field Guide to American Houses by Virginia & Lee McAlester is a classic reference book, and is readily available. This really emphasizes high style, from English Colonial to Gothic, Victorian, Classical, and Modern styles. The drawback is that not many Cheney houses are going to be here. There will be some Craftsman bungalows, but there are not very many high style houses in Cheney, other than the Queen Anne style Lowe House. But this book is a great introduction.

A Visual Dictionary of American Domestic Architecture by Rachel Carley is similar to the first book, and emphasizes high style.

The Old House Dictionary by Steven Phillips, published by Penguin Books, is one of Commissioner Emerson's favorites, covering American architecture from 1600 to 1940. It is a dictionary to architectural terminology with pictures. You can look up building terms, or look at pictures and try to identify the building part you are seeing.

American Vernacular Design, 1870 to 1940 may be out of print, but most of the houses you look at in ordinary neighborhoods are vernacular. This doesn't necessarily mean "no style;" it may mean a collection of lots of styles. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, lots of houses were built from plan books. Mr. Emerson emphasized that there is nothing wrong with your house if it is a half-breed. That's the way America was built.

Commissioner Emerson explained that this is how you go out to look at a house, and then write about it. He suggested the following guideline.

1. First impression: maybe a high style just jumps out at you. Familiarize yourself with the literature and see if something jumps out at you. The most common style for houses in Spokane County from the 1920s through 1940s is Craftsman.
2. Then look at the plan of the house. Imagine you're looking at it from the sky. Most houses are rectangular, or maybe a combination of several rectangles. A T-shape or L-shape is a variation of a rectangle. Square and round houses do exist. Occasionally you see a round house, like the Flintstone house.

3. Next, look at the number of stories. One story, or two? One and a half? This can be confusing. Look at the front of the house, at the gable. If there is a window in the gable, there's a story there – it's a one and a half story house.

4. Next, the roof: the most popular cladding now is 'composition' – a combination of asphalt, sand, and other things mashed together to make a shingle. Composite roofs are hardly ever original. If you see a wood shake roof, it might be original. Very few houses have the roofs they were built with; they change all the time. There will be occasional tile roofs, like the terra cotta tiles on a Spanish Mission style, such as the Kennedy House.

5. Determine the roof plan: gable or hip roof? A front gable is when you see the triangle; side gable is when you see the angle. One example of a hip roof is a pyramid. Or it can have a long ridge and be hipped at the ends. Between those two are lots of different variations, and most houses will be gabled or hipped.

6. Look at the chimney, and the treatment of the eaves. Ranch houses are characterized by low pitched roofs, wide eaves, and enclosed rafters. On the other hand, Craftsman houses usually have wide eaves, but the rafters are exposed, sometimes with decorative ends. A primary characteristic of the Craftsman style are the open rafter ends. Modern or traditional houses ususally have almost no eaves.

7. The foundation is usually easy; the most common foundations since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are poured concrete. Stone foundations were expensive, because you had to gather the stone, hire a stone mason, and stack the stones just right. Concrete foundations were much easier to work with, and cheaper to build.

A variation on the concrete foundation is concrete block, which has been used since the 1920s and 30s. You still have to know what you're doing to build a concrete block foundation, but it's easier to do than a stone foundation.

8. The exterior walls of the house, usually called cladding, or sheathing, or siding. In older houses, the siding is almost always horizontal. The older it is, the narrower it is. As the years went by, boards got wider, because it was cheaper and easier to put up wider boards. Eventually the use of milled wood became less common, and composite sheets became popular. There's also vertical board, or board and batten siding, which consists of 2 wide boards placed vertically, with a skinny board to cover the gap between them.

Brick cladding is almost always original to the house, because it is the most durable cladding there is, and people usually don't cover up brick. Asbestos panel siding became popular in the 1950s and 1960s, and you often see it covering up wood siding.

Commissioner Hull asked why the narrower boards were earlier; it seems like it would have been the opposite, because trees were larger then. Commissioner Emerson explained that it is hard to be certain, but again, it took more skill to install narrower boards, and the wider boards came

later, as economics played a larger factor. Many of the wider boards are artificial, like the T1-80 composite boards. But as a general rule, the older the siding, the narrower the boards.

9. Windows: Commissioner Emerson noted that modern replacement windows will quickly disqualify a house from register listing. It's not the glass we look at, but the sash. If the sash looks too neat, it's probably vinyl. Metal predates vinyl, as it became popular in the 50s, usually in sliding windows. The most popular windows from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are double hung windows, usually two glass units made with a contraption of rope and counter-balances so the window isn't too heavy to open. There are now modern double-hung windows being manufactured, which can be wood, metal or vinyl. The windows in Showalter Hall are modern, with wood sash, and with a certain profile, to make them look older.

10. Next, look at the front facade. Take note of the front more than the rest of the elevations (sides of the house). The word "fenestration" refers to windows and doors. Commissioner Emerson gave a brief history lesson on the defenestration of Venice, where the people in power collected everyone they didn't like and threw them out the windows. Commissioner Seedorf noted that this was a common occurrence in Prague, as well.

11. Doors often get replaced. Sometimes you can recognize a nice older door by the brass handle and hardware, sometimes with a nice window, and maybe some detailing around the door. Because doors are cheap and easy to replace, they get changed often.

12. Porches: Victorian houses often have extensive wrap-around porches. Craftsman houses usually have substantial front porches with wide canopies, sometimes with stone walls or piers to support them.

Craftsman houses are also known for exterior chimneys made of brick or sometimes stone, usually going past the eaves, and not through them. There are often small fixed windows, one on either side of the chimney, to let in light to the 'inglenook' – the area beside the fireplace where people would gather.

13. Brick: There are lots of different terms for patterns of brick; any of the reference books should be a good resource as you try to identify them.

Discussion followed. Commissioner Lauritsen asked how often you run into blueprints for these older buildings. Mr. Emerson said that you seldom find blueprints, because if you have blueprints, you have an architect. Some people hired an architect, but the plan books were more common sources of building plans. The Ballard Plannery was located in Spokane, and many of those plan books are available in the Museum of Arts & Culture.

Commissioner Gamon recommended Google Image as a resource. (Go to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) and type your term in the search bar, then select 'Image;,' it will bring up pictures illustrating your term.)

Commissioner Emerson described a recent Google search for information on hollow ceramic bricks, which were invented by one of the first woman architects in the country, Anna Keichline.

Commissioner Hull asked how the term “Craftsman” differs from “bungalow.” Commissioner Emerson said that “bungalow” is a misused term, and overused. A bungalow was a style of house in India, and can be very large, and an all kinds of styles, but usually a classic front gable house with a porch to one side. The term goes back to India where it referred to a place for the English to live, like a cottage. The Centralia booklet on building styles makes a distinction between Craftsman and bungalow, but people in this field often do not agree. Craftsman is a variation on the Arts & Crafts movement; lots of different detail. Many vernacular houses will have Craftsman elements, like exposed rafter ends. True Craftsman houses will have numerous elements of the Craftsman style.

Discussion continued. Commissioner Emerson emphasized that identification of building styles is complicated, and there is often disagreement, but it is a fascinating topic to study.

**New Business: 2006 Historic Survey Project.** Ms. Beeman distributed survey record sheets as follows:

1880-1899	Commissioner Lauritsen
1900-1909	Commissioner Hull
1910-1919	Commissioner Gamon & Commissioner Stewart
1920-1929	Commissioner Flinn
1930-1939	Commissioner Seedorf
1940-1949	Commissioner Emerson, Ms. Beeman & Ms. Harder

Ms. Beeman explained that completing the surveys for houses build between 1880 and 1939 meets our requirement for the 2006 grant project, and surveying the additional 90-some properties built in the 1940s substantially exceeds our requirement for the grant. However, if we are able to complete that decade, we will have a good record of all the buildings which might be eligible for register listing from the standpoint of age (50 years or older).

Ms. Beeman will be taking digital photographs, and there are maps showing the locations of the houses in each decade which will be mailed out with timesheets within the next week.

Commissioner Seedorf asked about the timeframe for completing the surveys. Ms. Beeman reviewed a proposed timeline which would allow review of proposals at the February meeting, and selection of a consultant to be approved by City Council by the end of February. The windshield survey should be completed by the end of February, so we can select the 25 properties for the consultant by the first of March.

Commissioner Emerson asked that the number of properties to be inventoried be clearly stated. There are not very many consultants in this area, and they are picking and choosing what jobs they accept. The total number of properties is important information to them.

Ms. Beeman reviewed the format of the survey sheets. If a site address shows the house number with a slash, such as 305/307 A Street, that indicates a single-family house which has been

converted to a duplex. She noted that a couple of houses have notes indicating the building has been moved or demolished, and although they do not need to have anything further recorded, the sheets have been left in the sets to explain the sequence of field site numbers.

Ms. Beeman distributed copies of articles from the National Alliance of Preservation Commissioners on successful public contacts in survey projects, and public participation programs.

**Commissioner Reports:** Commissioner Stewart shared a photograph of former Spokane mayors that was published this week in the Spokesman-Review.

Commissioner Lauritsen reported that the City of Portland is going to close its popular Saturday market. He also noted that he is a member of a county historical society in Minnesota, and they are doing an inventory of Civil War veterans who were buried in local cemeteries. He wondered if anyone would be interested in doing that for Cheney. Commissioner Stewart suggested that would be interesting, since Cheney was established in 1883, and you could track some of the westward movement of Civil War veterans. It was agreed that Helen Boots would be a good resource for that kind of inquiry.

Commissioner Emerson reported that he looked at an interesting house in the Spokane Valley that used to be a pig farmer's house. It was built on a rock outcrop, and the basement is solid rock. There were rock gardens, which are mostly gone, but some of the plants remain, and you can see where the walkways and pools used to be.

Commissioner Gamon said that it was reported in the Region section of the newspaper today that the Moore Turner House received an anonymous \$1 million donation to restore the historic gardens, which are part of the 10-acre Pioneer Park, next to the Corbin Art Center. The donor is also setting up an endowment for maintenance of the gardens.

**Staff Reports:**

Ms. Beeman reported that this year is the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Cheney Light Department. Mr. Richardson would like some volunteers to work on a committee to do some research on the history of the Light Department and help to organize a public celebration during Rodeo Weekend in July.

**Adjournment:** There being no further business, Chairman Hull adjourned the meeting at 6:46 p.m.

**Approved:**

Bettye Hull, Chairman

Susan Beeman, Secretary