

Decorah Historic Preservation Commission  
Minutes of July 27, 2022 Meeting (FINAL)

1. **Roll Call.** Mark Muggli, chair, called the meeting to order via Zoom at 4:35pm. Present were Mark Branum, Diane Scholl and Adrienne Coffeen. Hayley Jackson and Judy van der Linden were absent.
2. **Review and approval of June 29, 2022 minutes - *distributed in an updated version by DHPC secretary Judy van der Linden.*** Minutes were approved as written.
3. **C-3 Design Permit Application.**
  - a. **130 W. Water St. (Morpho Properties LLC) for window changes, window additions, and canopy removal.** Mark Muggli wrote the response to this application. Commissioners discussed their concern about a rear window with a rounded top. Mark and Adrienne felt the last sentence of the response (“But since all the other windows...Victorian building.”) should be removed. MOTION: A motion was made to remove the last sentence from the original draft and adopt the edited draft. Motion passed 4-0. (See final response, attached.)
4. **Report on July 7 meeting with City Manager and Mayor.** Judy and Mark M. met with the city manager and mayor. Judy stated DHPC’s position about downtown apartments and housing proposals to Lorraine and Travis. They replied that “nothing has been decided,” so there’s been no reason to consult with DHPC up to this point. Travis said that according to city code, DHPC can and will be able to weigh in when a C3 design permit application is ready for the commission’s consideration, but not before that time. Mark M. responded that DHPC’s purpose is to advise the city on all historic preservation matters, and he believes the commission should be called on for advice on any downtown construction project, even in its early stages. He and Judy pointed out that plans are often too far along to change once a C3 permit application is filled out and presented to DHPC for comment. Travis offered to discuss the matter more later. DHPC members might consider – does the commission want to consult with the city on pending projects like the north alley, city hall and/or others?
5. **Decorah Demolition Procedures.** Decorah’s C3 district does require a permit for demolition. City Zoning Administrator Greg Swanson told Mark M. that demolition permits are actually required for any building in the entire city. Greg receives those permit applications and they are signed off on by the city engineer, the street department and the police department. Greg emailed Mark that “he (Greg) would consult with DHPC on any historic property if it was to be demolished.” Commissioners might consider whether DHPC wants authority to refuse demolition of **all** historic properties in town, not just those within the C3 district. Adrienne suggested the full commission discuss this at a future meeting.
6. **DHPC Membership.** Ideas for DHPC candidates can be referred to Mark M.
7. **Significant Decorah Properties project.** No discussion at this meeting.
  - a. **Project Guidelines (SHPO, Site Inventories, etc.)**
  - b. **List development**
8. **Contacts:**

- a. **222 W. Water St. for building history.** Current *Ethos Architect* building owned by Ben Harman, who would like to learn about the building itself.
- b. **702 Center Ave. concerning Altfillisch light fixture globe replacement.** This is an Altfillisch home. Owner is trying to replace an original globe light fixture that broke. Any information on possible replacement would be appreciated.

**9. Commissioner Reports.** There were none.

**10. Public Comment.** There was none.

**11. Upcoming meeting: Wednesday, August 31, 2022, 4:30pm**

**12. Adjournment.** Meeting was adjourned at 5:09pm.

July 27, 2022

TO: Decorah Zoning Administrator, P&Z Commission, City Council  
FROM: Decorah Historic Preservation Commission <historicpreservation@decorahia.org>  
TOPIC: 130 W. Water St. (Morpho Properties LLC) Design Permit Application

#### I. The Property

130 W. Water may be a nineteenth-century building, but its exterior shell is relatively modern. The National Register consultant identified the facade style as "Mission-style inspired," noted that the "projecting rooflet is supported by robust brackets," and commented on the decorative brickwork. It's a reasonable guess that the modern facade was introduced in 1946 when the building was changed from a newspaper office to a furniture store, although the renovation could easily date back to the 1930s. A Vesterheim photo indicates that the board inserts had not yet in 1966 been added at the top of the first and second story windows.

II. The proposed design includes several elements: removing the board insert and expanding the street-level window to its full height; removing the aluminum storefront canopy; adding a window on the ground-level north elevation; and adding two windows on the ground-level west [identified as "east" on the drawings]. One drawing suggests that the wood insert would be retained over the storefront entry door; another seems to suggest replacing the wood with glass. There is a blade sign bracket included on one drawing.

#### III. DHPC Response

We applaud that the new owner of 130 W. Water is moving towards restoration of the building's facade, and we note the complete appropriateness of restoring a now-historic 1930's-40's facade rather than somehow attempting to recreate the lost Victorian facade. We hope that the one drawing is correct, and that the intention is to replace the board with a transom over the business entry door. We note that the current rear elevation second-story doorway and window seem to have their transoms intact, and expect them to be retained. We do wish that the owner had gone one step further and replaced the board inserts with transoms on the front elevation second story windows (while retaining the distinctive existing 9 x 1 windows) and on the second entryway (the ground-level right hand doorway that leads to the upstairs). Given the relative obscurity of the west and rear elevations, we don't have hesitations about the addition of the three new windows.

**On July 27, 2022, the DHPC voted 4-0 to endorse the changes to 130 W. Water, noting the laudatory ground-level facade restoration, encouraging further restoration of the second story windows and of the right-hand front entryway, and permitting three new windows on the side and back elevations.**