

REPORT TO HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

FROM: Bruce A. Knight, Planning Director

DATE: September 26, 2003

SUBJECT: Case No. HPC 03-0087: Application for Landmark Designation for 106-108 S. Neil Street (Precision Graphics)

A. Introduction: The Historic Preservation Commission is requested to make a recommendation to the Plan Commission to designate 106-108 S. Neil Street as a landmark.

B. Recommended Action: Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission recommend to the Plan Commission that the nomination and findings be approved as proposed.

C. Background:

1. **Applicant.** T.J. Blakeman

2. **Owner.** Jeffrey Mellander

3. **Location.** 106-108 S. Neil Street

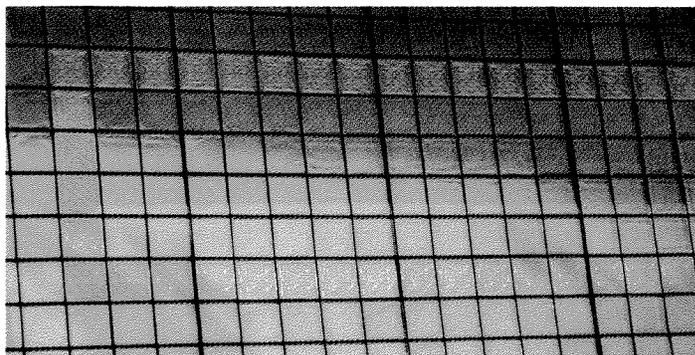
4. **Description of Property.** The building at 106-108 S. Neil Street, located in downtown Champaign, is an excellent example of a Richardsonian Romanesque building. Built in 1904, Samuel P. Atkinson's new building for his monument company was in itself a monument to his company's stone crafting skills. The most notable feature of the building is probably the green marble column on the NW corner, which was identical in style to those on the (now long gone) downtown landmark flatiron building.



Richardsonian Romanesque architecture was uniquely appropriate for a stonecutting/monument company, as its rough-hewn masonry and strong rounded arches clearly emphasize the strength and permanence of stone, further emphasizing the durability of their product.



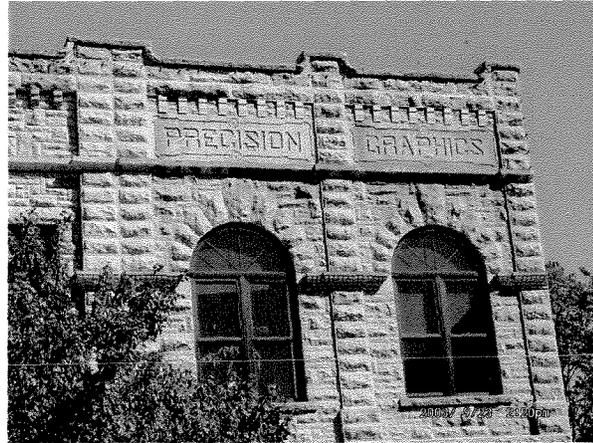
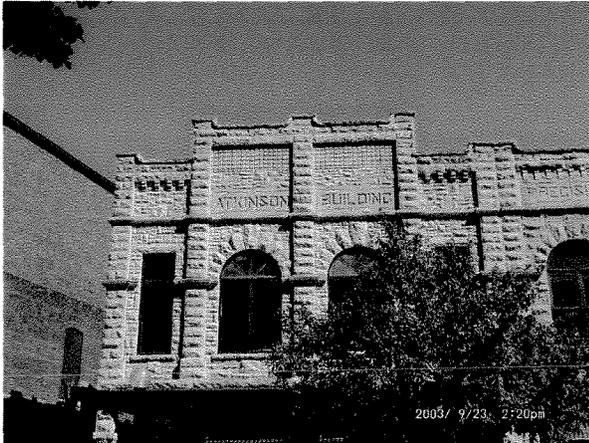
The first floor is dominated by a cast iron storefront with large plate glass windows, these windows are topped by prism-glass multi-light transoms of Frank Lloyd Wright design.



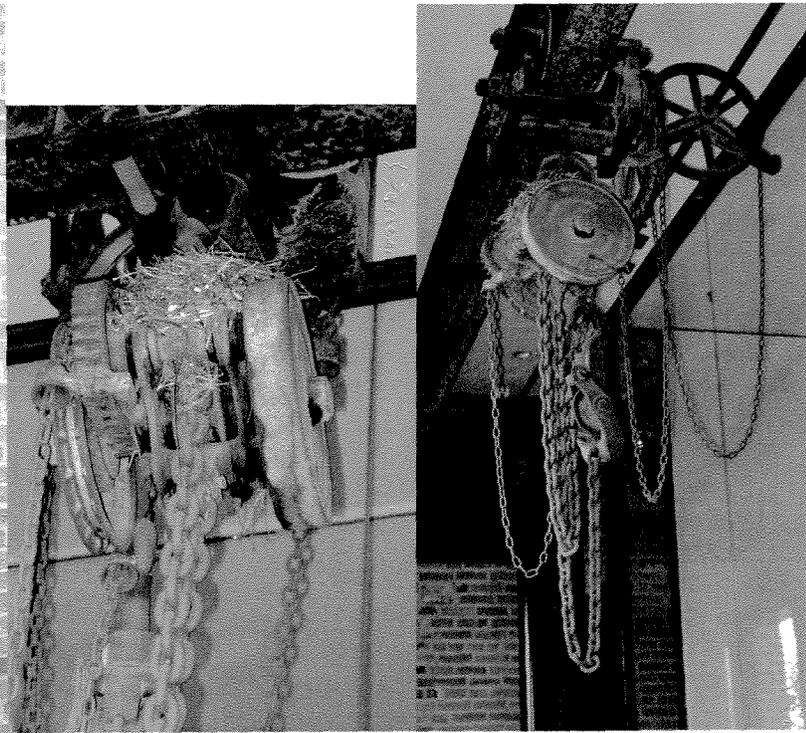
The second story of the principal west façade is covered with extensively detailed rough-hewn stonework that dramatically showcased the masonry talents of the business. The second floor has large windows, the center ones with arches typical of the style.

It should be noted that while the building at 106 remains in virtually the same condition it was when it was built, the building façade at 108 is completely new, but built meticulously to match

the building to the north. In this way, the current owner was able to expand his business and have a unified storefront while retaining the beautiful historic appearance of the Atkinson Monument Company's building. It would be difficult to overstate how well this building was matched when the Price Paint store's façade was remodeled to match the Atkinson Monument building, and incorporated into a unified storefront for Precision Graphics.



The details of the other facades are extensively outlined in the attached application, but worthy of special note is the retention of the original antique stone lifting mechanism in the eastern façade's doorway.



5. Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Plan. The Comprehensive Plan and the Downtown Plan recognize historic preservation as a tool for achieving healthy neighborhoods and commercial areas. The Plans encourage the preservation of buildings that have historical and architectural significance as a means of promoting visual environments of high aesthetic quality and variety. According to the Downtown Plan, “The structures and the street context in which they are set make Downtown distinctive and generate a positive emotional response among members of the community.”

6. Historic Criteria. The applicant proposed the following findings and has requested that the Commission make a determination that 106-108 S. Neil Street meets the following criteria from Sec. 37-491 of the City Code:

(c) The property or structure is representative of the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type inherently valuable for the study of a period style, craftsmanship, method of construction or use of indigenous materials.

This building is a very good example of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture with rusticated masonry walls and strong heavy rounded arches over its windows.

(e) The property or structure is identifiable as an established and familiar visual feature in the community owing to its unique location or physical characteristics.

Located within a few steps of the busy intersection of Neil Street and University Avenue, this storefront is a familiar sight to downtown visitors. Its visibility has increased with the removal of the storefronts which used to line the west side of Neil Street, now it is a very memorable sight for traffic eastbound on University Avenue as it enters the downtown commercial area.

(f) One of the few remaining examples of a particular architectural style or use, or is an example which clearly represents a major architectural style, and has undergone little or no alteration since its construction.

The Richardsonian Romanesque style was never very prevalent in Champaign-Urbana, and this building is one of the few remaining local examples of the style.

D. Alternatives:

1. Recommend to the Plan Commission that the nomination be approved and make findings on all applicable designation criteria.
2. Recommend to the Plan Commission that the nomination be denied based on all designation criteria.

E. Discussion of Alternatives:

Alternative 1 should be chosen if the Commission determines that the application meets at least one criterion listed in the Zoning Ordinance, Section 37-491, Criteria for Designation of

Landmarks. The designation of 106-108 S. Neil Street as a landmark would be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

a. Advantages

- Recognizes the historic character of this community resource.
- Consistent with the recommendations of the Comprehensive and Downtown Plans.

b. Disadvantages

- None.

Alternative 2 denies the recommendation for 106-108 S. Neil Street to be designated as a local landmark. The Historic Preservation Commission should choose this alternative if it determines that the application for 106-108 S. Neil Street meets none of the criteria listed in the Zoning Ordinance for designation as a landmark.

a. Advantages

- None

b. Disadvantages

- This would indicate that the Commission believes that 106-108 S. Neil Street does not meet any of the criteria for designation.
- Action would be inconsistent with the Comprehensive and Downtown Plans.

F. Community Input: A public notice advertising today's public hearing for this case appeared in the September 18, 2003 edition of the News Gazette.

G. Budget Impact: There is no significant budget impact for a historic designation.

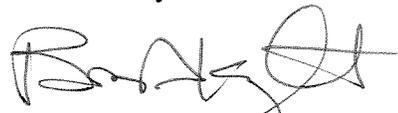
H. Staffing Impact: In the future Staff may be requested to review an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness, but the processing of such occasional individual applications falls well within the Planning Department's routine baseline services.

Prepared by:



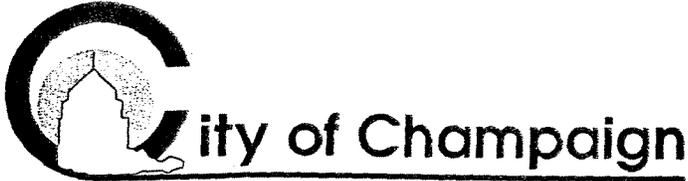
Kevin Phillips
Zoning Administrator

Reviewed by:



Bruce A. Knight, FAICP
Planning Director

Attachments: Application for Landmark Designation – 106-108 S. Neil Street
Aerial Photograph
Proposed Findings



For Office Use Only

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
 C/O PLANNING DEPARTMENT
 102 N. NEIL ST.
 CHAMPAIGN, IL 61820
 Phone: 217/403-8800
 Fax: 217/403-8810

Designation

Case No.: PL03-0087

APPLICATION TO NOMINATE (LANDMARK)

PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION (please print or type):

PROPERTY INFORMATION

1. Common street address of Property to be nominated:

106 South Neil Street - Atkinson Monument Company
108 South Neil Street - Price Point Store

2. Legal description of property to be nominated:

Parcel 1 (106 S. Neil) The North 21ft 9 1/2" of lot 3 in Block 9 of the ICRR Addition to
Urbana, now part of the City of Champaign in Champaign County Parcel 2 (108 S. Neil) That
part of vacated Bailey St. 10ft in width between Neil St & Walnut St lying North end adj. to Parcel 1

3. Property Index Number:
(from tax assessor's roll)

42-20-12-477-001

4. Name of Property Owner:
(from tax assessor's roll)

Jeffrey J. Mellander

5. Address of Property Owner:
(from tax assessor's roll)

Jeffrey J. Mellander
33 E. Taylor Street
Champaign IL 61820

6. Attach a location map showing the boundaries and location of the property.
7. Attach/enclose photographs and 5 – 8 color slides of the property. Each facade and any significant features of the property or structure should be shown in the set of photos and slides.
8. Indicate which of the following criteria apply to the property or structure (check all that apply):
 - The property or structure has significant value as part of the historical, cultural, artistic, social ethnic, or other heritage of the nation, state or community.
 - The property or structure is associated with an important person or event in national, state or local history.
 - The property or structure is representative of the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type inherently valuable for the study of a period style, craftsmanship, method of construction or use of indigenous materials.
 - The property or structure is the notable work of a master builder, designer, architect or artist whose individual genius has influenced an era.
 - The property or structure is identifiable as an established and familiar visual feature in the community owing to its unique location or physical characteristics.
 - The property or structure is one of the few remaining examples of a particular architectural style or use, or an example which clearly represents a major architectural style, and has undergone little or no alteration since its construction.
9. Attach a general statement describing the property and its historical significance and the reasons why it should be designated as a historic landmark. Include a statement describing how the property meets the criteria listed above in #8. At the end of these statements, please list your sources of information, including bibliographic references.

PLEASE NOTE: Additional detailed information and photographs to support this application may be required if the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the property merits consideration.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

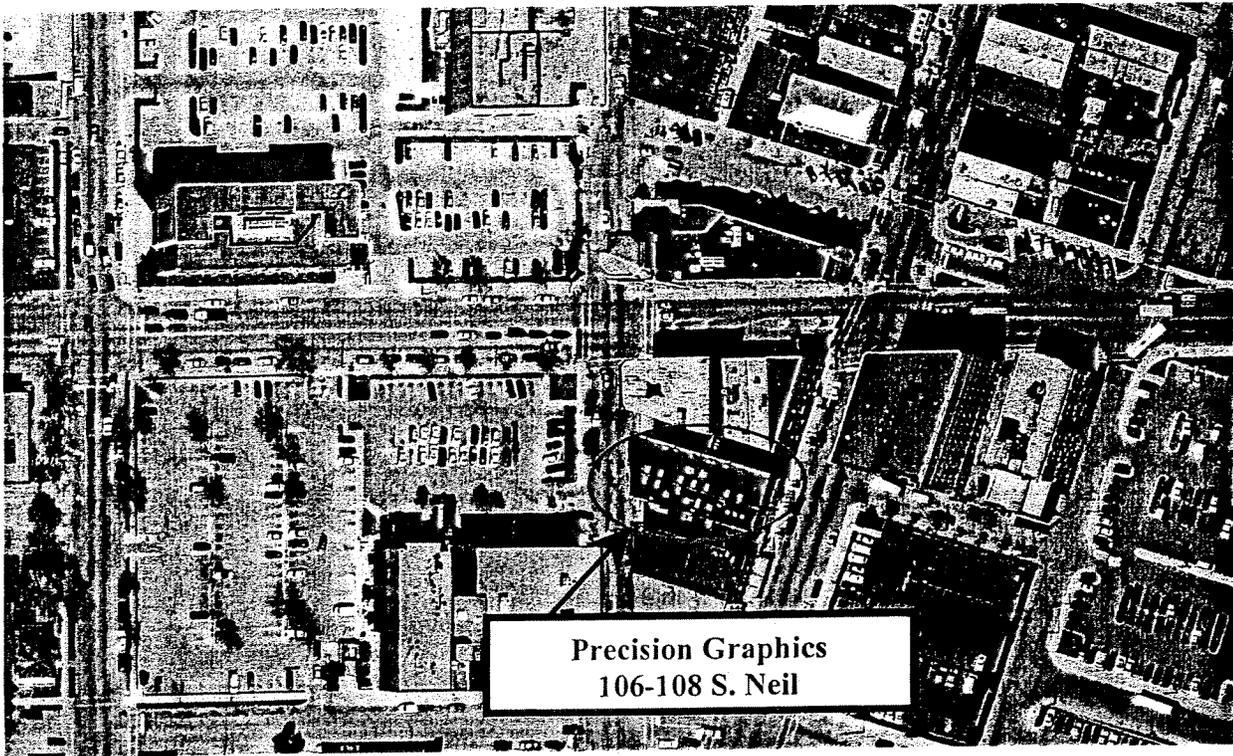
APPLICANT'S NAME: Terry J. Blakeman (T.J.)
ADDRESS: 408 Ginger Bend Drive Apt. 209
CITY: Champaign, Illinois ZIP CODE: 61822
PHONE(day): (217) 403-8817

APPLICANT SIGNATURE: Terry J. Blakeman DATE: _____

Applications should be submitted to the Planning Department three weeks prior to the next Historic Preservation Commission meeting for consideration at that next meeting.

The Historic Preservation Commission meets the first Thursday of each month at 4 p.m. in the City Council Chambers at 102 N. Neil St. in Downtown Champaign.

Location of 106-108 S. Neil



Precision Graphics
106-108 S. Neil

**Findings of Fact
106-108 S. Neil Street
Landmark Designation**

(d) The property or structure is representative of the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type inherently valuable for the study of a period style, craftsmanship, method of construction or use of indigenous materials.

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