

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES
January 8, 2020 Meeting
Town Council Chambers – 6:30 PM HDC meeting

Present: Kristen Carron, Chair; Matthew McGeorge, Vice-Chair; Andrew Barkley, Nicole D’Amato, Gregory Maxwell and Erinn Calise.

Staff: Lea Anthony Hitchen, Assistant Town Planner and Peter Skwirz, Assistant Town Solicitor.

Ms. Carron, Chair of the Commission, started the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Ms. Carron read the procedures into the record as follows: Each person addressing the Commission will state his/her name for the record. Although the Commission does not generally swear in applicants or their representatives, all witnesses are responsible for providing the HDC with true, accurate, and complete information. The applicant or the applicant’s representative shall present the request before the Commission along with arguments and material in support of the application. HDC members will then have the opportunity to discuss the proposal and ask questions which are pertinent to the application. All other persons wishing to speak in favor of or against the application will then be asked to do so. All speakers are asked to avoid repetitive comments and confine their comments to those which are relevant to the application at hand. Cross examination by the general public may be allowed only if the Commission feels it would be appropriate and useful. All questions from the floor will be directed through the Chair only. After all of the relevant facts have been heard, the Chair will call for a motion. Once the motion has been made and seconded, the HDC only will discuss the motion followed by the Chair’s call for a vote. Only active members of the Commission shall vote. The alternate will sit as an active member with full voting rights only when a regular member is unable to serve at any meeting. During the discussion among voting members, no further testimony from the floor will be accepted unless specifically requested by a Board member. Every effort will be made to render a decision this evening. The minutes of this meeting will be on file in the Planning Department within 14 days. Certificates of Appropriateness granted this evening will be available in the Planning Department within two (2) days of this hearing. The hearing of any HDC application which has not yet started before 10:30 p.m. will not be heard this evening and a special hearing date will be scheduled. This rule, however, may be waived by a majority vote of the Commission. All decisions of the HDC

are final and legally binding under the authority of Article XI of the East Greenwich Zoning Ordinance and Article 45, Section 24.1 of the RIGL. All decisions of this Commission may be appealed to the Zoning Board of Review.

Ms. Carron added the HDC considers local standards as well as Federal guidelines when reviewing applications and noted this is a collaborative process between the Board and the applicant. Ms. Carron explained the sequence for review of applications and its helpfulness to understand how the process works before the Board hears the applications. She noted each application is reviewed in of itself; the Commissioners receive the applications prior to the actual meeting in order for each Board member to review the content. The Board members identify properties and character defining features and historical and architecturally significant to the district that are taken into consideration. When applicants come before the Board there is a discussion in order to better understand the project at hand and answer questions that arise. The Board determines the standards that apply; hearing applications in this type of forum allows the Board to discuss alternatives, offer suggestions and provide support for the applicant to hopefully have a successful outcome and possibly save money.

Ms. Carron introduced the Board members and Staff present and read the application items into the record.

Historic District Commission Hearings

- 1. Russell Knight**
163-165 Peirce Street; Map 73 AP 3 Lot 91
Proposed Work: Remove Aluminum Siding From Garage and Cottage; Restore/Replace Underlying Clapboard. Minor Modification – Remove Door on North Elevation of Garage and Move Window on South Elevation of Garage – FINAL

Ms. Carron stated commission Standards 1, 2, and 4 apply to the application. *Standard 1* states original materials and architectural features shall be maintained or repaired whenever possible, rather than replaced. *Standard 2* states if existing materials have deteriorated beyond repair, the new materials shall match the original in composition, design, texture, and other visual qualities. *Standard 4* states that all proposals architectural changes shall be appropriate to the original

design of the building or to later changes which have historic significance of their own.

Mr. Russell Knight, property owner, represented the application. He explained the work to be done is specifically for the small cottage and detached garage. Work consists of removing the aluminum siding and restore or replace as necessary the wood clapboard siding underneath. Mr. Knight commented the aluminum siding was removed from the primary structure several years ago and wants the cottage to match. Secondly, the detached garage which fronts on Liberty Street, is also wrapped in aluminum siding. Mr. Knight is requested to remove the aluminum siding from the garage and restore or replace as needed the clapboard siding underneath. In addition to restoring the siding the petition also includes removing an incorrectly installed door on the left/north elevation (to be planked and clapped over). Finally, considering the garage has a zero setback from the street, backing out of the garage can be problematic, particularly from the south view. In order to alleviate the problem the Mr. Knight thought of originally moving the existing right/south window 70" closer to the street to provide the driver backing out of the garage a view of oncoming traffic and pedestrians. He later thought of simply adding a window in the location for site visibility.

Mr. McGeorge commented the application is pretty straightforward. He had no issues with clapboarding over the entire door frame since it was not original.

Mr. Maxwell also has no objection to completely removing the door and clapboarding over it.

The Commissioners unanimously agreed there was no objection to adding a window to the south side of the garage instead of moving the window but would want to referee the new window. Mr. Knight noted the new window will obviously match the 2/1 configuration and molding of the other windows. There was no opposition to the idea of installing a reconditioned window.

Mr. McGeorge and Mr. Maxwell volunteered to referee the new window.

With no further comments Ms. Carron asked for a motion.

Mr. Maxwell made the following findings of fact:

- 1) A written application has been submitted by Russell Knight.
- 2) The property in question is located within the East Greenwich Historic District, specifically 163-165 Peirce Street.
- 3) The property in question is a contributing structure; it is representative of a c.1900 late Victorian cottage.
- 4) The building does contribute to the historic and architectural significance of the district.
- 5) The work proposed by the applicant would improve the character defining elements of the existing building for the cottage and not affect the character defining elements by adding a window and removing a door to the detached garage.

Motion by Mr. Maxwell to approve the application as submitted at 163-165 Peirce Street with modification to referee the new window as proposed in relocated position. New window to be refereed. This is consistent with Commission standards #1, 2, and 4.

Seconded by Mr. Barkley.

VOTE: 6 – 0.

2. East Greenwich Cove Builders, LLC
11 Lion Street; Map 85 AP 1 Lot 395
Proposed Work: Complete Exterior Renovation – CONCEPTUAL

Ms. Carron stated commission standards 1, 2, 4, 7, and 8 apply to the application. *Standard 1* states original materials and architectural features shall be maintained or repaired whenever possible, rather than replaced. *Standard 2* states if existing materials have deteriorated beyond repair, the new materials shall match the original in composition, design, texture, and other visual qualities. *Standard 4* states all proposals for additions and architectural changes shall be appropriate to the original design of the building or to later changes which have historic significance of their own. *Standard 7* states exterior siding must be appropriate for the building to which it is applied. Vinyl and other modern

composition sidings which may damage historic buildings are not appropriate and shall not be approved. *Standard 8* states original window sashes can usually be repaired and retained. In the event that a window sash must be replaced the replacement shall match the original in size, operation, materials, configuration, number of lights, muntin width and profile.

Mr. Jerry Zarrella, Jr. explained he was before the Commission to obtain conceptual ideas in order to properly renovate the building. He acknowledged various zoning relief is required therefore will return to the HDC after receiving the necessary variances. He noted the structure pre-dates the railroad tracks as the original “front” of the building is now the rear. The home was built for factory workers and there was never a kitchen in the structure and tenants had to use the neighbor’s house to shower. Mr. Zarrella pointed out the existing backside of the house has perfect symmetry compared to the front which is how he knows it is the original front. He purchased the subject property with the intent to restore it and make the neighborhood sellable particularly for his Castle Street Cottages project located at 15 Castle Street. He originally wanted to extract affordable units from 15 Castle Street and put the units at 11 Lion Street but has since abandoned that idea.

When asked how many units Mr. Zarrella anticipates constructing in the building he said it was all being based on the architect’s design.

Mr. McGeorge acknowledged he had been in the subject building with the former owner and it is clear the original front façade faced in the westerly direction. From a conceptual level Mr. McGeorge overwhelmingly supported the rehabilitation of the building. In his opinion Brewster Thornton architects is a very reputable company that does fantastic restoration work; he did not think anything they recommend would counter the HDC’s mission.

Mr. McGeorge pointed out if the building is restored he was not sure exactly what the HDC would be reviewing considering a restoration would consist of wood clapboard siding, water tables, corner boards and wood windows, etc. As far as guidance Mr. McGeorge said he support the applicant replicating the east elevation as the west elevation. Additionally, the building is a very simple colonial structure and there is not a lot of question what can be done provided the applicant follow Brewster Thornton’s guidance and keep the integrity of the structure.

Ms. Carron agreed no one has issues or objections with the building being restored. Mr. Barkley said he was enthusiastic the building will be restored but acknowledged it will be a tough project zoning wise and difficult to obtain anything more than two residential units.

Mr. McGeorge highly recommended Mr. Zarrella follow the lead of the architect and follow the standards and guidelines meaning the HDC would not support the use of composite materials or vinyl windows but simply maintaining the intact structure.

Mr. Maxwell commented the existing siding is in decent condition to which Mr. Zarrella agreed.

As for the configuration of the windows Ms. Carron recommended that all windows be consistent but fell short of suggesting a particular pattern noting the design architect would most likely propose an appropriate configuration.

Mr. Zarrella was concerned with not wanting the building to appear so massive. Mr. McGeorge said to embrace the building for what it is as it was a laborer/worker building and meant to be simple and “boring;” he said by adding fake columns, porticos and porches is the wrong route to take for this renovation but to simply maintain the period of the structure and do the best to restore it as is. Mr. Barkley agreed adding the building was originally constructed to be simple and straightforward; by making it something it was not detracts from the appearance. Speaking for the structure, Mr. Barkley said it does not want cornices, columns and fancy window treatments. When asked if the Commission would be opposed to a portico over the front door they might be inclined to go with a small modification but the overhang needed to have a simple design.

Mr. Zarrella agreed with the Commission that he did not see any problem with bringing the structure back to its original appearance.

Mr. Maxwell pointed out at some point it appeared the two chimneys have been eliminated which he called important features of the building. He suggested having both chimneys “reinstalled” even if that feature were from the roof up.

As for the window replacements Mr. McGeorge commented he could envision the windows being a 2/2 or 6/6 configuration but more importantly it is the submitted window specification to be submitted at the final plan is the most critical.

With regard to the change in front fenestration of the window pattern to match that of the rear Mr. McGeorge was inclined to leave the windows alone and just fix what is currently in place. Mr. Maxwell acknowledged the HDC conceptually approved the idea of matching the windows to the back when Mr. Amirault submitted an application and he would be inclined to follow suit.

**3. Sandra Saunders and Fred Griffith
105 Spring Street; Map 85 AP 1 Lot 295
New Construction: Installation of 18 Module Solar Panels on
Primary Structure South Roof Elevation – FINAL**

Ms. Carron stated Commission Standards #4 and 5 apply to this application. *Standard 4* states all proposals for additions and architectural changes shall be appropriate to the original design of the building or to later changes which have historic significance of their own. *Standard 5* states new construction includes substantial additions or modifications to the exterior of existing buildings. The design of new construction need not be an exact or modified copy of historic styles and could be totally different in concept. However, all proposals for new construction shall be compatible with the surrounding buildings in size, scale, materials and siting, as well as with the general character of the historic district.

Ms. Sandra Saunders and Mr. Fred Griffith, the property owners, along with SolPower representative Mr. Eric Beecher, represented the application. Mr. Griffith stated the application consists of installing 18 solar panels (2 rows of 9 panels) on the south side of the primary structure's roof, being the front façade. All of the panels will be uniform black panels with no lines.

Mr. Maxwell acknowledged the property has an excellent exposure to the south light and there will be no trees removed to accommodate the project.

Mr. Barkley asserted he supports solar projects as it is something that can be integrated into a house although it will still be visible most of the time.

Mr. McGeorge has always had the opinion that humans need to be reasonable stewards of the environment without ruining it; he cannot justifiably deny something that has a positive and significant impact on the greater good.

Ms. Carron and Ms. Calise agreed the proposed project was not altering the character defining features of the structure nor was it changing the roof line or pitch and acknowledged the panels can be removed.

Mr. McGeorge noted for the record the subject structure has an asphalt shingled roof, not a wood shingled roof that is being compromised.

Mr. Beecher recognized the fact that panels have a 25 year lifespan before needing replacement.

The Commission discussed the inverter, equipment and accessory hardware; it was noted the meter will be installed on the west elevation being inconspicuous.

With no further comments Ms. Carron asked for a motion.

Mr. Maxwell made the following findings of fact:

- 1) A written application has been submitted by Sandra Saunders & Fred Griffith.
- 2) The property in question is located within the East Greenwich Historic District, specifically 105 Spring Street.
- 3) The property in question is a contributing structure; it is representative of a c.1875 late Victorian bracketed residence.
- 4) The building does contribute to the historic and architectural significance of the district.
- 5) The work proposed by the applicant would not affect and improve the character defining elements of the existing building.

Motion by Mr. Maxwell to approve the application as submitted at 105 Spring Street for the installation of 18 solar panels on the south roof elevation. This is consistent with Commission standard #4 & 5.

Seconded by Mr. McGeorge.

VOTE: 6 – 0.

**4. Melissa Lawson of Lacuna Design representing Gary Pollard
95 Rector Street; Map 85 AP 1 Lot 328
Proposed Work: 55 s.f. Addition to rear of structure to accommodate
a mudroom and side door; and modification to rear first floor
window fenestration – CONCEPTUAL**

Ms. Carron stated Commission Standards #4, 5, and 8 apply to this application. *Standard 4* states all proposals for additions and architectural changes shall be appropriate to the original design of the building or to later changes which have historic significance of their own. *Standard 5* states new construction includes substantial additions or modifications to the exterior of existing buildings. The design of new construction need not be an exact or modified copy of historic styles and could be totally different in concept. However, all proposals for new construction shall be compatible with the surrounding buildings in size, scale, materials and siting, as well as with the general character of the historic district. *Standard 8* states original window sashes can usually be repaired and retained. In the event that a window sash must be replaced the replacement shall match the original in size, operation, materials, configuration, number of lights, muntin width and profile.

Ms. Melissa Lawson of Lacuna Design and Interiors represented the property owner, Mr. Gary Pollard. Ms. Lawson explained the two part design includes a small addition to the existing kitchen; Mr. Pollard would like to add 42” to the back of the kitchen for additional space to include a mudroom and a side door; a new wood and glass door would be located in the same place as the existing side window. The existing back windows will be reused in the bumpout located at the same place as the existing elevation. The new addition is 3’-6”x16’-9 1/2” which will add 55 s.f. to the home. Due to the existing structure being legally nonconforming by dimension, the proposed addition will require a variance from the Zoning Board of Review.

Secondly, the Mr. Pollard would like to remove a 12’x8’ section of the back wall underneath covered porch; this includes the removal of an existing window. In its place will be a larger steel and glass wall window system. The new windows will have similar proportions to the existing windows but just be larger in size.

The rear door will also be replaced to reflect the same design intentions. The back porch will also be rebuilt and extended to accommodate the new door where an existing window is currently located. The extension of the deck/porch will match existing materials. There will also be a small standing seam metal roof with wood brackets over the new proposed door adjacent to the mudroom.

Commissioners were comfortable with modifications due to changes being in the rear of the structure. Additionally there is a rear covered porch that shelters the project. Ms. Lawson pointed out Torrance Steel Glass Company, the company she plans to use for the project, has done several projects at Harvard University, MIT and other historic sites. Mr. McGeorge commented that the use of steel for this project will be a benefit in this case because the slender muntin profile cannot be maintained with wooden profile ratio. He also thought that homes evolve over time and additions should speak to the time and should be done with the time.

As a technical observation, Mr. McGeorge suggested a diverter for the downspout gutter connection. There was additional conversation regarding gutters and downspouts between the Commission and the Mr. Pollard. The Commission also discussed bracket style with the homeowner.

Mr. Pollard explained that although the home is fairly large there is hardly any closet space thus the need for a mudroom. Ms. Lawson noted the mudroom will really help with the flow with the home.

Mr. Maxwell commented the presentation was excellent and very well prepared.

The Commission unanimously approved the conceptual plan, noting the project is appropriate to the original design of the building and is a well-conceived project.

Ms. Sandra Saunders spoke in favor of the project.

- 5. East Greenwich Yacht Club
10 Water Street; Map 85 AP 1 Lot 1
Proposed Work: Renovation & Expansion of East Side Deck
(includes new railings, new deck, upper deck expansion and new gazebo) – FINAL**

(Ms. Carron recused herself from the application.)

Mr. McGeorge stated Commission Standards 1, 2 and 4 apply to the application. *Standard 1* states original materials and architectural features shall be maintained or repaired whenever possible, rather than replaced. *Standard 2* states if existing materials have deteriorated beyond repair, the new materials shall match the original in composition, design, texture, and other visual qualities. *Standard 4* states all proposals for additions and architectural changes shall be appropriate to the original design of the building or to later changes which have historic significance of their own.

Mr. John Mollicone, a representative of the EGYC, explained a new bulkhead had just been replaced at the yacht club and now the membership would like to make additional renovations and enhancements to the existing east side outdoor deck and patio area. The existing lower deck has rotted and is in need to be replaced; the new deck will be an ipe wood material. The existing wood baluster railing system will be replaced with a more modern horizontal cable railing with wood posts and rails on the upper and lower decks. Additionally, Mr. Mollicone requested to expand the upper deck where the existing blue striped awning is currently located; the increased deck size is 52'-8"x14'. Lastly, the overall project includes the construction of a 10'x18' gazebo and masonry bench for a grilling area.

Mr. Maxwell commented the proposal is a great improvement to the exterior and has no objection to the request. He referred to the historic photo provided shows the open feel (although not compliant by today's standards) which is why he is comfortable with allowing the cable railing; compared to the vertical pickets being distracting. Mr. McGeorge agreed.

The Commission members agreed the material selection is great and scale is appropriate.

Mr. Hitchen recommended contacting CRMC to obtain appropriate necessary permits from that agency.

With no further comments Mr. McGeorge asked for a motion.

Ms. D'Amato made the following findings of fact:

- 1) A written application has been submitted by East Greenwich Yacht Club (John Mollicone).
- 2) The property in question is located within the East Greenwich Historic District, specifically 10 Water Street.
- 3) The property in question is a contributing structure; it is representative of a c.1890 late Victorian structure.
- 4) The building does contribute to the historic and architectural significance of the district.
- 5) The work proposed by the applicant would not affect and improve the character defining elements of the existing building.

Motion by Ms. D'Amato to approve the application as submitted at 10 Water Street for the renovation and expansion of the east side deck (new railing, new deck, upper deck expansion and new gazebo.) Any changes required by other agencies shall require additional review by HDC staff. No Azek or other PVC trim shall be installed. This is consistent with Commission standards #1, 2, and 4.

Seconded by Mr. McGeorge.

VOTE: 5 – 0.

Historic District Commission Business – After Hearings

1. Minutes: Review and approval of the October 10, 2019 and November 13, 2019 meeting minutes.

Minutes continued to the following meeting.

2. Approval of Historic Tax Credit Application – ACC Holdings, LLC (Arlette Cornwall), 111 Main Street & 9 Court House Lane, being Map 85 AP 1 Lot 229.
3. Approval of Historic Tax Credit Application – Brian Wu & Anne-Marie Fink, 158 Spring Street, being Map 84 AP 2 Lot 153.

4. Approval of Historic Tax Credit Application – Seth W. O’Donnell & Sophia Gee O’Donnell, 17 Marion Street, being Map 85 AP 1 Lot 268.

Chairwoman Carron approved and signed Business Items #2, 3, and 4. Ms. Hitchen will forward applications to the Tax Assessor.

5. Approval of 2020 HDC Meeting Schedule.

Motion by Ms. Carron to approve the 2020 HDC meeting schedule. Seconded by Mr. Barkley. VOTE: 6-0.

6. COMMISSIONER REPORTS: Commission members may report on cases where they have been appointed as Referee, and refer observations or possible violations that they have observed to staff. Any substantive discussion of any such Report shall require addition to the Agenda by motion.

Motion by Ms. Carron to add the property at the corner of Church St and Main St. for discussion. Seconded by Mr. Maxwell. VOTE: 6 -0.

Mr. Maxwell commented the new Anderson windows are finally being installed and look really nice; he wanted to confirm the windows were approved so long ago he wanted to confirm that the windows being installed is what the HDC approved. Ms. Hitchen confirmed the windows are the appropriate style.

Motion to adjourn by Ms. Calise. Seconded by Mr. McGeorge. Approved 6 – 0.

Adjourn at 8:15 pm.

For additional information, please contact the Planning Department.
Respectfully submitted by:

Lea Anthony Hitchen, Assistant Town Planner