

**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES**  
**February 12, 2020 Meeting**  
**Town Council Chambers – 6:30 PM HDC meeting**

Present: Matthew McGeorge, Vice-Chair; Gregory Maxwell, Erinn Calise  
and Andrew Barkley

Absent: Kristen Carron, Chair and Nicole D'Amato.

Staff: Lea Anthony Hitchen, Assistant Town Planner and Andrew Teitz,  
Town Solicitor.

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Mr. McGeorge, Vice-Chair of the Commission, started the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. McGeorge 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.

Mr. McGeorge 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. Mr. McGeorge 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.

Mr. McGeorge introduced the Board members and Staff present and read the application items into the record.

#### Historic District Commission Hearings

- 1. The Washington Trust Company  
695 Main Street; Map 75 AP 3 Lot 76  
Proposed Work: New Construction of a 2,500 s.f. Financial  
Institution with Drive-Thru - FINAL**

Mr. McGeorge stated Commission Standard # 5 applies to this application. *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, material and siting, as well as with the general character of the historic district.

Mr. McGeorge explained the final plan before the Commission is a follow up to the conceptual plan that was approved back in November which was very detailed.

Ms. Hitchen summarized the applicant was before the HDC on November 13, 2019 and received a favorable conceptual review with a couple minor modifications. The Applicant obtained Master Plan approval from the Planning Board on December 10, 2019 and most recently secured a Use Variance for the drive-thru from the Zoning Board on January 28, 2020. The Applicant still needs to secure Preliminary and Final plan approval for the land development review.

Mr. Anthony Autiello, of Autiello Construction, and Mr. Dennis Algieri of Washington Trust Company represented the application.

Although Mr. Maxwell was not present for the conceptual review he commented the submitted plans were very thorough and well prepared. He acknowledged the proposed building is replacing a non-historic structure which the site is blighted to begin with. His overall impression is the project is great with a great selection of materials. Conversation ensued regarding the window jambs and headers.

Mr. Algieri recognized the importance of the site and the sensitivity of the site which has been vacant for many years. In trying to develop a new building, he explained the team tried to incorporate historic features that are Federal and Georgian Colonial in style which is why there is brick, copper and a slate-like roof. Mr. Algieri also understands the property is at the gateway to the historic district which is why there are working shutters, dormers, and divided glass in the windows.

Mr. McGeorge said it was evident a lot of thought went into the design as it does not look like a fake Disney plastic box.

Mr. Algieri added there will be additional landscaping, less asphalt, appropriate lighting, and pedestrian friendly accessibility. He pointed out the signage will be a granite monument which will also require HDC approval at a later date.

Mr. Maxwell was very happy with the scale and proportion of the project. Mr. Maxwell commented that given the intent, the Applicant has definitely met the standards and guidelines as most Applicants do not go to this level of effort.

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

Ms. Calise made the following findings of fact:

- 1) A written application has been submitted by The Washington Trust Company.
- 2) The property in question is located within the East Greenwich Historic District, specifically 695 Main Street.
- 3) The property in question will be new construction.
- 4) The building will contribute to the historic and architectural significance of the district.
- 5) From a contextual viewpoint the work proposed by the applicant will enhance the area, will be compatible in size, scale and siting to surrounding properties, and there will be landscaping improvements.

Motion by Ms. Calise to approve the application as submitted at 695 Main Street for the new construction of a 2,500 s.f. bank with a drive-thru. This is consistent with Commission standards #5.

Seconded by Mr. Barkley.

VOTE: 4 – 0.

- 2. Pamela Unwin-Barkley of Greenwich Bay Design for Seth & Sophia O'Donnell  
17 Marion Street; Map 85 AP 1 Lot 268  
Proposed Work: Demolition of Rear located 10'x12' structure & outhouse; replace with 2-story addition – FINAL**

Ms. Hitchen explained Mr. Barkley will be recusing himself for the 17 Marion Street application therefore only leaving three remaining members to review the application and not being a quorum.

Motion by Mr. McGeorge to continue the hearing to Wednesday, February 26, 2020 at 5pm. Seconded by Ms. Calise. VOTE: 3 – 0.

**3. 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 – FINAL**

Mr. McGeorge 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 represented the application for property owner Gary Pollard. She explained the project has essentially remained the same since the conceptual plan approval – there is a 55 s.f. addition planned to the rear of the home which will be for a mudroom off of the kitchen and to include a side door. A new wood and glass door would be located in the same place as the existing side window. Ms. Lawson pointed out the proposed rear door is a Captiva door and the specifications are noted on plans, being a 4-lite 1-panel door to reflect the same design intentions. 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. She explained due to the existing house being legally nonconforming by dimension along the

north side setback line the she and Mr. Pollard recently went to the Zoning Board to obtain a dimensional variance - the rear addition encroaches on the side lot line but its wall plane will not extend any closer to that line than the existing house already sits. The existing house, at its closest point, is about 4' off the north property line; the new addition will sit 5.5' from the property line.

Ms. Lawson asserted a second part of the project includes the removal of 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. She pointed out the original idea was to have a full window system; this portion of the project has since been revised in that it will now be a swing-out door in the center with windows on both sides. The new windows will have similar proportions to the existing windows but just be larger in size. The back porch will 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.

Mr. Maxwell appreciated the added details, particularly noting the bracket details are very important. Ms. Lawson noted the brackets will be replicated to match in kind the existing brackets. Mr. Maxwell also was very keen on the half round proposed gutters. Mr. McGeorge commented that he too preferred this style as well.

In closing comments, Mr. McGeorge found the level of detail, the use of natural materials, and the project being exclusive to the rear of the house, it not being fake history per se but very appropriate in context, he was in favor of the project.

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

Ms. Calise made the following findings of fact:

- 1) A written application has been submitted by Melissa Lawson of Lacuna Design.
- 2) The property in question is located within the East Greenwich Historic District, specifically 95 Rector Street.

- 3) The property in question is a highly contributing structure; it is representative of a c. 1875 late-Victorian, Italianate style 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 the character defining elements of the existing building.

Motion by Ms. Calise to approve the application as submitted at 95 Rector Street for the a 55 s.f. addition to the rear of the structure to accommodate a mudroom and side door as well as a modification to the rear first floor window fenestration. This is consistent with Commission standard #4, 5 and 8.

Seconded by Mr. Barkley.

VOTE: 4 – 0.

**4. Gary Pollard**  
**95 Rector Street; Map 85 AP 1 Lot 328**  
**Proposed Work: Fence Installation Outside of Eligible Staff Level**  
**Review – FINAL**

Mr. McGeorge stated fencing is a type of new construction and thus must comply with Commission Standard Number 5. It states that such work must be compatible with the surrounding buildings in size, scale, materials and siting, as well as with the general character of the historic district.

Mr. Gary Pollard of 95 Rector Street, represented the application. He submitted color photos/illustrations of a similar style fence he was trying to emulate, currently located at the corner of Kenyon and Division Streets, being 206 Division Street.

Mr. Barkley commented the fence at 206 Division Street appears heavier and thicker than the proposed fence. Mr. Pollard explained the proposed fence is made in Australia and is a galvanized steel material; the difference between the two fences is the proposed fence will have 4x4 wood posts with 1x4 slats.

Mr. Maxwell questioned if there were additional fence specifications and whether there will be any top and bottom reinforcements. Mr. Pollard said he anticipated

just to have posts. He noted he had a hard time to find round fitting finial elemental ornaments. Mr. Maxwell pointed out the fence system presented in the photo does have the metal posts which looks great and more finished than the proposed fence. Mr. Pollard agreed but noted he can't find the finials anywhere and anticipated painting the wood pressure-treated posts black. Mr. McGeorge suggested using a cedar wood instead.

Mr. McGeorge was of the opinion the metal posts make the fence appear more elegant as the wood posts make the fence look like a hybrid/farm type of fence that one would find in rural Connecticut that tends to "disappear" in a landscape. Mr. McGeorge inquired about gates. Mr. Pollard noted he has a steel frame gate from the same product which is very well built and sturdy.

Again, Mr. McGeorge acknowledged the proposed fence looks like it is two style fences in one. Mr. Barkley suggested working with a local metal fabricator to create the missing metal parts. Mr. McGeorge suggested removing the middle rail as he finds it distracting. The Commission members agreed the top and bottom rails will be needed for stability.

Considering the application was in flux the Commission decided to referee the fence as there was a sense it could be worked out.

Motion by Ms. Calise to referee the fence. Seconded by Mr. McGeorge. VOTE: 4 -0.

**5. Joseph Colaluca**  
**104 Duke Street; Map 85 AP 1 Lot 415**  
**Proposed Work: Complete Exterior Renovation to Existing Structure; Addition of Shed Dormers on North & South Elevations; Window & Door Replacement & Modifications; Center Chimney Removal; Fire Escape Removal - CONCEPTUAL**

Mr. McGeorge 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. McGeorge noted the project as proposed is a complete exterior renovation to the existing structure which also includes the addition of shed dormers on both the north and south elevations, window and door replacements as well as modifications to the exterior of the structure with a request to remove the center chimney and fire escape. He noted the application is for conceptual approval only.

Mr. Joseph Colaluca, owner of the property was present to represent the application.

Mr. McGeorge commented there was a lot to absorb within the application but did not see anything fundamentally wrong with the application particularly with the fenestration pattern, composition and massing of the structure overall did not give him any concern.

Mr. Maxwell said there were a lot of good things happening with the project – he pointed out the fact the exterior fire escape was being removed for a far superior appropriate interior emergency access. He also liked the proposed pitched roof addition over the existing flat-roofed ell which he saw as a big improvement. Mr. Maxwell thought the materials are generally being replaced in-kind and appreciated the level of detail, particularly with the window detail provided. Additionally, the size and proportion of the proposed dormers he found to be appropriate for the existing structure and had no objection to the dormer addition. In terms of the chimney removal, Mr. Maxwell generally does not like to see chimneys be removed and prefers to see them rebuilt from the roof up but in this particular case since one chimney will continue to remain (being the nicer exposed chimney) he is of the opinion the chimney can be removed as the benefits of the project outweigh keeping the chimney in this case.

Mr. McGeorge agreed with Mr. Maxwell in that the chimney targeted to be removed is not of an exemplary masonry craftsmanship to be removed. Mr. Barkley agreed but suggested the chimney might be of historic accuracy.

Mr. McGeorge asked the Applicant to consider a faux chimney from the roof up in the final plan. He was of the opinion the proposal was a well-conceived and thorough project in terms of fenestration, massing, scale and materials and it is clear a lot of thought went into the project.

Ms. Calise inquired about “Phase II” and whether the rear ell will be completely demolished. Mr. Engle confirmed the ell will be demolished and rebuilt due to there is no existing foundation; the existing structure sits on a slab and it is a hodgepodge of stone and a constant infiltration of water and not even with the sidewalk. He felt by rebuilding the rear ell would be a better solution.

Mr. McGeorge and Mr. Maxwell essentially did not object and considered the project a substantial repair. Mr. McGeorge stated the rear ell is clearly a later addition.

Mr. Colaluca confirmed he had hired C.A. Pretzer to structurally analyze the building. Mr. Engle said Pretzer suggested lifting the whole structure in order to dig out a new foundation.

Mr. Colaluca inquired if the HDC would consider demolition of the structure.

Mr. McGeorge was clear that he would vote no and that it was a whole other process which he explained. He did not think there would be a lot of support for the project from multiple perspectives including neighborhood opposition. Mr. Maxwell was curious to know else was included in the Pretzer report. Mr. Engle explained the structure’s sills are rotted, the front corner is rotted to the point where it has buckled and windows are no longer aligned.

Mr. Maxwell was of the opinion there is a high bar to obtain in order to receive a demolition approval.

Mr. McGeorge said he would consider the demolition and rebuild of the 1-level rear ell as a compromise versus a 100 percent demolition as it appears the rear ell demolition cannot be unavoids.

There was discussion about relief for several zoning issues, particularly density, setbacks, increasing the nonconformity (addition of dormers). Atty. Teitz recommended if the structure is into the street the Applicant should go to the Town Council with a street abandonment request for the part the building is encroaching on the street so at least all the structure will be sitting on property that the Applicant owns; this will require a little bit of time but time well spent. The time will involve going to the Planning Board for an advisory recommendation that has to be advertised before going to the Town Council. The abandonment functions in lieu of a deed. If a building is 2 or 3 feet out of a boundary a survey should show specifically what is to be abandoned. (The ZBR cannot allow a property owner to extend onto the street.)

Ms. Hitchen stated the Planning Department wants the project to succeed and the Town is willing to work with the Applicant. She recommended the Applicant attend next week's TRC meeting which will assist with moving the project along.

### **Historic District Commission Business – After Hearings**

1. Minutes: Review and approval of the October 10, 2019, November 13, 2019, and January 8, 2020 meeting minutes.

Motion to approve the October 10, 2019 minutes by Ms. Calise. Seconded by Mr. Maxwell. VOTE: 4 -0.

November and January minutes tabled.

2. 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.

Atty. Teitz reminded the Commission there is an upcoming all-day workshop to be held at RIC on March 14<sup>th</sup> to assist with conducting effective land reviews and preparing sound decisions.

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

**Adjourn at 8:00 pm.**

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

Lea Anthony Hitchen, Assistant Town Planner