

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES
July 11, 2018 Meeting
Town Council Chambers – 6:00 PM HDC meeting

Present: Kristen Carron, Chair; Matthew McGeorge, Vice-Chair; Kim Balkcom, Gregory Maxwell, and Erinn Calise.

Absent: Lauren Drury and Andrew Barkley.

Staff: Lea Anthony Hitchen, Assistant Town Planner and Gina DiCenso, Legal Counsel.

Ms. Carron, Chair of the Commission, started the meeting at 6:05 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. Aaron and Jennifer Rannenberg
44 Mawney Street; Map 85 AP 2 Lot 177
Second story Addition, Remove & Replace Side Porch, and
Repair/Replace Siding - FINAL**

Ms. Carron stated Commission Standards 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7 apply to this 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 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 the existing building. 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 7* explains 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.

Aaron and Jennifer Rannenberg, property owners, represented the application.

Mr. McGeorge said he appreciated the efforts put in based upon the comments made at the conceptual review last month. He believes the size and scale of the addition is very compatible and will not affect the existing historic property. Mr. McGeorge did notice that the plans do not match the submitted elevation which is not a big deal but will definitely need to be resolved – the floor plan shows rear windows separated but the elevation shows windows together).

Mr. Rannenberg explained the floor plans are an older version before the windows were modified.

Mr. McGeorge noted that his only other comment is regarding the proportion of the revised windows; he pointed out that the drawing is misleading in that the casings window trim is intended to match the details but he could appreciate why those are not complete for a project of this size – he added the final will look much better than it appears on paper. Mr. McGeorge preferred to see a square window or more vertical window.

Mr. Maxwell agreed with Mr. McGeorge and noted the windows should be in line with the proportions of the district and should look more appropriate. Mr. Rannenberg said he was not pushing for any particular style but would like to have some flexibility.

Mr. McGeorge suggested refereeing the window detail as the sill height is the most important thing that relates to a bureau or bed head. He suggested approving the project but working out the window details by way of refereeing that portion of the project.

Ms. Balkcom commented that no matter how the windows get modified it will definitely provide more natural light into the bedroom which is a good thing.

Moving on to the side porch, Mr. Maxwell queried the style of the balusters and asked if the new baluster will be of a turned style. Mr. Rannenberg said he anticipates matching as closely as possible the new balusters to the existing; there will be no square balusters and no pressure treated wood will be used.

The Commission recommended refereeing the balusters as well once a cut sheet is available.

With no one in attendance to speak for or against the application Ms. Carron asked for a motion.

Ms. Calise made the following findings of fact:

- 1) A written application has been submitted by Aaron and Jennifer Rannenberg.
- 2) The property in question is located within the East Greenwich Historic District, specifically 44 Mawney Street.
- 3) The property in question is a contributing structure; it is representative of a c. 1886 early 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 the character defining elements of the existing buildings.

Motion by Ms. Calise to approve the application at 44 Mawnet Street for the second story addition and remove and replace the side porch with the condition the horizontal windows be modified and refereed as well as the final specification for the balusters. The referees shall be Mr. McGeorge and Mr. Maxwell. This is consistent with Commission Standard #1, 2, 4, 5, and 7.

Seconded by Mr. Maxwell.

VOTE: 5 – 0.

- 2. Joe Yammine of Yamdon Properties, LLC
5 Church Street & 155 Main Street; Map 85 AP 1 Lot 222
Remove “side” door facing Church Street & Replace two original windows (5 Church St.) – FINAL
Remove Skylight, Roof Replacement & Replace existing trim with same material (replacement in kind) (155 Main St.) – FINAL**

Ms. Carron stated Commission Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, and 8 apply to this 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 3* states replacement of missing architectural features shall be based on researched knowledge of their original appearance, substantiated by historical photographs, drawings, or other evidence. *Standard 4* states that 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. Commission *Standard #8* applies to this application. It 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. Joe Yammine of Yamdon Properties, LLC represented the application.

Ms. Carron pointed out the application consists of several requests and suggested to first discuss the request to remove the door on 5 Church Street that faces the street. She asked where in the building the door leads to.

Mr. Yammine said the subject door is in the kitchen of one of the residential units. He pointed out there is already an entrance to the unit from the “front” door which faces the rear of Norman’s (155 Main Street); additionally there is another door which leads to an outside deck.

Mr. Maxwell acknowledged the existing door is fairly modern and not original to the structure. Mr. Yammine confirmed the existing door is not the original door.

Ms. Carron inquired if there was always a door in that location. Mr. Yammine said he was not sure but the Staff Report (Figure 9) shows a historic photo of the building with the original fenestration pattern and door in that location.

Mr. McGeorge felt as though there were three options in his opinion as to how to proceed – 1. Remove the door in its entirety which he could not support; 2. Remove the door and ghost with trim; and 3. Replicate the door panel and treat it as an exterior finish; wall it inside which will not affect the kitchen layout while not changing the exterior composition which is important to this building. Mr. McGeorge preferred option 3.

Ms. Calise asked if option 3 will read like a fake door. Mr. Maxwell said it will look like a fixed door. Mr. McGeorge added that from an architectural perspective it will maintain the existing structural framing, headers, jambs, casing and trim so that in the future it can possibly be restored and will maintain the original historic significance.

Mr. Yammine did not have any objections with option 3.

Mr. McGeorge noted that additionally the historic fabric will not be erased and the fenestration pattern will remain which has a vertical alignment and this modification will not affect the interior work which the HDC does not have purview over.

Ms. Hitchen asked if Mr. McGeorge could provide an example of what he was suggesting. Ms. Balkcom asked if the “door” will actually have a doorknob on it. Mr. Maxwell commented that it will be the same concept as ghosting a window; it will have a wood paneling system with possibly 4 vertical boards put together to fill in the gap with no hardware and no door knobs.

Mr. Yammine asked if a window will look better in the door opening. Mr. McGeorge said no it will actually look worse. Ms. Carron added that it will look worse because all of the existing windows are long and the new window will be

much shorter. Mr. McGeorge added the vertical boards will be in a plane of the existing door and the jamb, casing, etc. do not have to be removed.

Ms. Balkcom recommended the fill-in of the door be refereed. The Commission members agreed.

Mr. Yammine inquired whether the steps leading up to the door can be removed. Mr. Maxwell said yes they should be demolished since they are located in the right-of-way, they are not to building code and they are a safety hazard.

Moving on the window request, it was noted there are two remaining original windows located on the “front” of 5 Church Street which faces the rear of 155 Main Street. Mr. Yammine said he would like to replace the last two in order to match the windows to all others in the structure.

As a point of reference Ms. Carron saw in the HDC procedures that a Certificate of Appropriateness is only valid for one year; if an applicant does not obtain a building permit then a certificate has to be renewed. For this particular application, Ms. Hitchen pointed out the prior owner did receive blanket approval to replace all the windows; they just failed replacing these two windows. Furthermore, the Commission has discussed upholding the one year validation rule before but maintaining a business friendly atmosphere is also very important and there are instances where it may take a property owner that amount of time to obtain a contractor which is why that rule has not been enforced.

Ms. Carron noted for the record that due to the last window approval being more than 13 years ago, for good measure the HDC should review and approve the window request before the Commission.

Mr. McGeorge found that due to the windows being located in an “alley” and no longer fronting on Main Street, not being visible from the street and the rest of the windows have already been replaced – in this case he does not have an issue with the subject windows being replaced with vinyl to match the others. Additionally, the overall improvements being done to the building outweigh the two windows.

Moving on to the skylight request, Ms. Carron said she had a problem with the skylight being removed. Mr. Yammine said he needed the space on the roof for mechanical equipment.

Mr. McGeorge felt as though the skylight is an existing significant roof feature. He asked about the type of mechanical HVAC units to be installed. Mr. Yammine said there will be condenser units installed to supply the first and second floors. Mr. McGeorge commented that in his experience the size of the units, based on the size of the building are about the size of a suitcase for each unit. Mr. Yammine said he plans to install two large condenser units. Mr. McGeorge said the condenser sure does not need to be where the skylight is located.

Ms. Hitchen noted that at the last meeting the HDC asked for detailed pictures of the skylight. Mr. Yammine did not have any pictures.

Mr. Maxwell said he stopped by the property and viewed the skylight through binoculars; he saw that the skylight is in deplorable condition and it is sealed up with caulk and is completely rusted out and it appears it is too far gone to be saved. He recommended the Applicant should obtain a quote to show how much it will cost to repair and/or replace the skylight or show a hardship in order for the Applicant to argue for its demolition. Mr. Maxwell said he simply needs for information regarding this element of the application.

Mr. Yammine requested to put it on hold for the next meeting.

Mr. Maxwell said in this particular case he is sympathetic to the Applicant and demolition may be a real thing for the skylight but will definitely need to see evidence before he can commit to have it removed.

Mr. McGeorge said he too will need more “expert testimony” as the Commission is getting an underqualified opinion on something purely for the convenience of development which does not pass the standards.

Mr. McGeorge and Mr. Maxwell volunteered to referee the door.

Mr. Yammine said he also needed approval to replace the trim at 155 Main Street. The HDC did not have any objections to that portion of the request.

With no further questions, Ms. Carron asked for a motion.

Mr. McGeorge made the following findings of fact:

- 1) A written application has been submitted by Joe Yammine of Yamdon Properties, LLC.
- 2) The property in question is located within the East Greenwich Historic District, specifically 155 Main Street and 5 Church Street.
- 3) The buildings are contributing structures; 155 Main Street is representative of a c. 1925 early-Twentieth century commercial building while 5 Church Street is representative of a c.1771 Georgian Colonial building.
- 4) The buildings do contribute to the historic and architectural significance of the district.
- 5) The work proposed by the applicant to remove the door at 5 Church Street would remove character defining elements of the building therefore the existing jamb casing and head casing are to be maintained and a wood panelized infill is to be provided and shall be refereed.
- 6) The work proposed by the applicant regarding the removal and replacement of the two remaining windows (at 5 Church Street) are no longer contributing to the historic and architectural significance of the structure.
- 7) The work proposed by the applicant to demolish/remove the roof monitor/skylight will be continued to the next appropriate hearing along with the roof replacement specifications.
- 8) The wood trim replacement at 155 Main Street is a replacement in kind project.

Motion by Mr. McGeorge to approve the application at 5 Church Street and 155 Main Street as noted above. This is consistent with Standards #1, 2, 3, 4, and 8.

Seconded by Mr. Maxwell.

VOTE: 5 – 0.

- 3. Julie Rocheleau**
37 Rector Street; Map 85 AP 1 Lot 279
Fencing (New fence replacing a previous installed fence) – FINAL

(Ms. Balkcom recused herself from the application.)

Ms. Carron stated the fencing as installed qualifies as new construction and thus must comply with Commission Standard *Number 5* which states that such work must be compatible with its surroundings in size, scale, materials and siting, as well as with the general character of the historic district.

Ms. Julie Rocheleau, property owner, represented the application. She explained there was a fence in the location which was removed as the posts were rotted and was falling down noting the former fence was a 5' dog-eared fence. The new fence will match the front fence that was approved in January – it will be more of the same style but it will have lattice on top. Additionally, Ms. Rocheleau stated the fence will have a 4' base and 1 1/2' top in order to meet the 3:1 ratio. At this point she was not sure whether the top will be square or criss-cross lattice. She commented that the front fence is painted black forest green and intends to paint the new fence the same color.

Ms. Rocheleau said the new fence will be 6 panels long or 48' in length and will be installed in the highlighted area on land survey as submitted in the application.

Ms. Hitchen verified that the fence will be entirely on the subject property and not on the property line. Ms. Rocheleau said the fence will be entirely on her property.

Ms. Rocheleau said the abutting property, being 44 Brayton Street, is currently for sale and under a purchase and sales agreement; the new buyer for that house is interested in installing a fence. Ms. Rocheleau said she may consider the new buyer to paint the side facing 44 Brayton Street black but has not committed to anything at this point.

Mr. McGeorge asked why the subject application was not approved administratively. Ms. Rocheleau specifically requested the full board review the application so there are no problems that she ran into with the prior application and desired to have the application on record.

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

Mr. Maxwell made the following findings of fact:

- 1) A written application has been submitted by Julie Rocheleau.
- 2) The property in question is located within the East Greenwich Historic District, specifically 37 Rector Street.
- 3) The building is a contributing structure; it is representative of a c.1890 late Victorian building.
- 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 buildings.

Motion by Mr. Maxwell to approve the fence application at 37 Rector Street. This is consistent with Commission Standard #5.

Seconded by Mr. McGeorge.

VOTE: 4– 0.

(Ms. Balkcom returned to the dais.)

**4. Paul Vespia of Hill & Harbor Design & Build
39 Union Street; Map 75 AP 3 Lot 204
Addition - FINAL**

Ms. Carron stated Commission Standards 4 and 5 apply to the application. *Standard 4* states that 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 the existing building. 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.

Mr. Paul Vespia, architect and Mr. Patrick Bristol, property owner, represented the application.

Mr. McGeorge liked the submission. He understood the needs for a contained space and did not see a need to provide a door to the exterior as it simply provides unnecessary circulation. The new space will be an intimate private space not intended to have people passing thru it. He added that is most likely going to be a family room with the longer solid wall dedicated to an entertainment system/bookshelves, etc.

Mr. Vespia confirmed all of Mr. McGeorge's statements. He added there really will not be a blank wall per se there will be paneling on the solid wall to give it texture.

One concern Mr. McGeorge had was the intersection of the fascia boards on the rear; he believes it to be more of a sketch issue than construction issue. Mr. Vespia agreed noting the intent is to carry the board all the way through.

Mr. McGeorge felt the project was well thought out, competent, and fits in with the scale and proportion of the existing building and district; therefore he had no issues with the proposal. Furthermore the project seems to be a natural evolution to a relatively modest structure. Mr. McGeorge said if the Commission got more of these types of applications the board would be happier.

Ms. Carron also liked the addition particularly how it is designed to be different from the main structure.

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

Ms. Balkcom made the following findings of fact:

- 1) A written application has been submitted by Paul Vespia for Patrick and Heather Bristol.
- 2) The property in question is located within the East Greenwich Historic District, specifically 39 Union Street.
- 3) The building is a contributing structure; it is representative of a c.1875 late Victorian.
- 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 buildings.

Motion by Ms. Balkcom to approve the application at 39 Union Street for a new addition. This is consistent with Commission Standard #4 and 5.

Seconded by Mr. McGeorge.

VOTE: 5 – 0.

**5. Aurora Sesista
559 Main Street; Map 75 AP 3 Lot 84
Signage – FINAL**

Ms. Hitchen pointed out the applicant is not present to represent the application. She noted it is a fairly straight forward application with the property owner having conditions stipulated in tenant lease regarding signage and gooseneck lighting.

Mr. McGeorge felt as though all signage requests that he has reviewed in the CVS Plaza have been fairly simple requests.

Ms. Hitchen recommended reviewing the application without a representative being present; if questions become evident then the application will be continued to August.

Ms. Carron stated signage is a new type of 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.

For the record Ms. Carron said the Applicant is requesting to install new signage for A&Co. Salon, a new business to be located in the East Greenwich Commons Plaza (also known as the CVS Plaza). The new tenant will be located at the former Highlights Salon space. The new signage will be mounted onto the building; there is no indication any signage will be on the freestanding sign. The proposed signage is consistent with past approved signs in the plaza; i.e lettering and logo attached directly to the wall with exterior gooseneck lighting mounted

above. The subject wall sign will consist of red non-illuminated letters to be 104"x18.625" in size and 5" deep and within the sign ordinance requirements.

Mr. Maxwell stated the building is a non-contributing structure and has no objections to the proposed signage.

The only question Ms. Hitchen had was generally a tenant in the subject plaza has the ability to have signage on the freestanding sign; the applicant did not request signage on the freestanding sign. If the Applicant wants signage on the freestanding sign then she will have to make another request.

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

Mr. McGeorge made the following findings of fact:

- 1) A written application has been submitted by Aurora Sesista.
- 2) The property in question is located within the East Greenwich Historic District, specifically 559 Main Street.
- 3) The building is a non-contributing structure; it is representative of a modern commercial style plaza/strip mall.
- 4) The building does not 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 buildings.

Motion by Mr. McGeorge to approve the application at 559 Main Street for signage. This is consistent with Commission Standard #5. No one was present to speak in favor or against the application

Seconded by Ms. Calise.

VOTE: 5 – 0.

Historic District Commission Business

1. Minutes: Review and approval of the June 13, 2018 Meeting Minutes.

Minutes were continued to the following month.

Motion by Ms. Calise to approve the May 9, 2018 minutes as written. Seconded by Mr. Maxwell. Approved 7 – 0.

2. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS/OTHER: Commission members are invited to comment on any observations they have made within the District, ask questions about past approvals, request updates on violations, etc.

Mr. Maxwell noticed the chimney had been removed at 34 Liberty Street with a pile of bricks in the backyard. Ms. Hitchen said a notice of violation was issued.

Ms. Calise will give a picture of the well house to staff that was located and since removed on Kenyon Avenue.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Mr. McGeorge. Seconded by Mr. Barkley. Adjourn at 7:20 p.m.

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

Lea Anthony Hitchen, Assistant Town Planner