

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES
February 12, 2014 Meeting
Town Council Chambers – 6:00 PM HDC meeting

Present: Kim Balkcom, Chair; Andrew Barkley; Kingston Fallon, Matthew McGeorge, Erinn Calise and Kristen Carron.

Staff: Lea Anthony Hitchen, Assistant Town Planner.

Ms. Kim Balkcom, Chair of the Commission, started the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Ms. Balkcom read the procedures into the record. She 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. Balkcom 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. All applications can be appealed to the Zoning Board of Review. Ms. Balkcom added that each application is reviewed in of itself.

Ms. Balkcom introduced Commission members and Staff and reviewed agenda.

Historic District Commission Hearings

- 1) Jeff Lynch and Janelle Byrnes**
68 Friendship Street; Map 75 A.P. 2 Lot 214
New Construction (Shed) - Final

Ms. Balkcom read into the record the standard that applies to this application, being Standard #5 which requires that new construction be compatible with surrounding buildings in size, scale, materials and siting and with the general character of the historic district.

Ms. Balkcom summarized how the Commission found out about the Applicant's already built shed. Mr. Lynch acknowledged the shed has already been installed and apologized.

All Commission members verified the shed was good looking and blended in with the neighborhood.

Ms. Carron inquired about potential other work that has been done on the property. Mr. Lynch stated that he had installed a temporary red cedar fence to shield the garbage bins until he comes up with his plans for a proposed addition on the right side of the house.

The Commission reminded the Applicant that all future exterior work needs to be reviewed by the HDC prior to it being performed. Mr. Lynch said he understood.

With no further comments, Ms. Balkcom asked for a motion.

Mr. Fallon made the following findings of fact:

- 1) A written application has been submitted by Jeffrey Lynch.
- 2) The property in question is located within the East Greenwich Historic District.
- 3) The structure in question is a contributing structure; it is representative of a c.1950 mid-Twentieth century ranch.
- 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 Mr. Fallon to approve the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for a new shed and wood fence on the side of the house.
Seconded by Mr. Barkley.

VOTE: 6 - 0.

**2) Kevin Prest and Patricia Reynolds
84 Reynolds Street; Map 74 A.P. 2 Lot 260
Revision to Final Approved Plan - Final**

Mr. Kevin Prest represented the application; he explained that he is amending the original application which was a gable roof on the garage and would now like a hip roof design instead. He noted that after living in the house he and his wife have changed their minds for a few different reasons; those reasons being when he looks outside from the house the original roof design would have blocked his view and the neighbor's view as well; he wants the roof to be consistent with the porch of the main house which is a hip roof and lastly, he wants to be consistent with all the other roofs in the area.

Mr. McGeorge commented that he has always liked the project. Ms. Balkcom added that the main house came out great and she finds herself driving down Reynolds Street more often just to see the progress of this house.

Ms. Balkcom read into the record the standard that applies to this application, being Standard #5 which requires that new construction be compatible with surrounding buildings in size, scale, materials and siting and with the general character of the historic district.

Mr. Fallon and Ms. Balkcom stated that they did not have any issues with the change in the garage roof line.

Mr. Prest advised the Commission that the original plan also had a masonry wall in between the house and garage and the plan is to now have a cedar fence for some privatization. The Commission also had no problems with this minor change.

Mr. Prest also queried the Commission about weathervanes as his wife would like a fish or sailboat. The Commission and Staff verified that weathervanes are considered an appurtenance which is considered exempt.

With no further comments, Ms. Balkcom asked for a motion.

Ms. Carron made the following findings of fact:

- 1) A written application has been submitted by Kevin Prest and Patricia Reynolds.
- 2) The property in question is located within the East Greenwich Historic District.
- 3) The structure in question is new construction.
- 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. Carron to approve the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness at 84 Reynolds Street for a revision to the final approved plan – change garage roof line from a gable to hipped roof design which will reduce the height from 17'-6" to 13'. Additionally the masonry wall between the garage and house will now be flatboard cedar fence. This is consistent with Commission Standards #5.

Seconded by Mr. McGeorge.

VOTE: 6 – 0.

**3) Douglas and Tracie Truesdell
163 Spring Street; Map 84 A.P. 2 Lot 103
Replace Garage Doors - Final**

(Mr. Fallon and Mr. Barkley recused themselves from the application.)

Ms. Balkcom stated Standards 2 and 4 apply to the application. *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 architectural changes shall be appropriate to the original design of the building or to later changes that have acquired historic significance of their own.

Mr. Truesdell advised the Commission that since the submittal he has found an alternative garage door that he prefers to use instead of the original requested

steel/composite door. He added that a neighbor had received approval for the Cambridge Series Insulated Wood Composite Doors by General Doors and he is asking approval for the same door; it will have the same exact design as originally intentioned, it is wood and wood composite versus the metal.

Mr. McGeorge had no problems with the revised submission.

Mr. Truesdell confirmed that there will be no hardware on the garage doors.

Ms. Calise made the following findings of fact:

1. A written application has been submitted by Douglas and Tracie Truesdell.
2. The property in question is located within the East Greenwich Historic District.
3. The structure in question is a contributing structure; it is representative of a c. 1897 late Victorian/early Twentieth Century.
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 a Certificate of Appropriateness at 163 Spring Street for replacement garage doors. This is consistent with HDC Commission Standard #2 and 4.

Seconded by Ms. Carron.

VOTE: 4 – 0.

**4) Denis Marchand
240-242 Main Street; Map 85 A.P. 1 Lot 165
Addition – Conceptual**

Mr. Denis Marchand, owner of the building, and Mr. David Spaziano, owner of the Greenwich Oyster Bar, were present to represent the application.

Mr. McGeorge noted that this is a conceptual plan.

Ms. Balkcom stated that 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* requires that new construction be compatible with surrounding buildings in size, scale, materials and siting and with the general character of the historic district.

Mr. Spaziano asserted that he is requesting to construct an addition to the back of the building to accommodate kitchen space. Ms. Balkcom noted that the information and drawings submitted is sufficient for conceptual approval but once the final plan phase is reached she recommended a more detailed package.

As far as materials go, Ms. Balkcom suggested using products consistent with what is already on the structure now.

Mr. McGeorge noted that a shed roof addition would not be uncommon as far as an accessory as it is clearly is an addition – this is how buildings evolve. He commented about the siding and asked the Applicant to think more about the relationship between the siding and cornerboards as he would not like to see a continuous plane. Mr. Barkley suggested looking at the front Greek Revival style façade of the building to get some ideas on how to finish the back.

Mr. Spaziano realized that more details were necessary and plans to make the addition as seamless as possible.

Mr. McGeorge added that the plan just needs more refinement and that the actual conditions should be drawn to scale, clapboards drawn to scale, the hatch of the shingles can be ignored but the overhang of eaves and fascia, etc. should be quantified dimensionally. He added that conceptually there are no problems with the overall approach.

Ms. Balkcom advised that since the entire structure has original wood windows the new window should also be wood and not vinyl. She commented that the HDC welcomes all successful business owners on Main Street and the Greenwich Bay Oyster Bar is one of them.

Mr. McGeorge acknowledged that buildings evolve over time and it is important to be smart on how the addition is done – it is not about matching every detail – it is about being sensitive to the details and sometimes it takes a different kind of understanding to make sure that it works. From a form, mass, size, and profile perspective, Mr. McGeorge was comfortable approving the conceptual application noting that definitely needs more details when submitted for final plan.

Ms. Balkcom commented that 240 Main Street is one of the nicer, well maintained and preserved structures on Main Street.

The Commission unanimously approved the conceptual plan.

With the last applicant not present, the Commission moved forward with Commissioner's Business.

Historic District Commission Business

- 1) MINUTES: Action on the minutes of the November 13, 2013 and December 11, 2013 meetings.

Motion by Mr. McGeorge to approve the November 13, 2013 minutes. Seconded by Ms. Calise. Approved 3-0.

Motion by Ms. Carron to approve the December 11, 2013 minutes. Seconded by Mr. Barkley. Approved 3-0.

Both the November and December meetings only had four members present, one member (Steve Tyson) has since resigned; therefore only three current members could vote on the above referenced minutes.

- 2) Commissioner Comments/Other

The Commissioners discussed Mr. Tyson's resignation.

- 3) Tax Credit Approval for 17 Marion Street

- 4)

Ms. Balkcom reviewed and signed the tax credit application for 17 Marion Street.

5) Election of Vice-Chair

Ms. Balkcom explained the role of the Vice-Chair is to fill in for the Chair and fill out an applicant's Certificate of Appropriateness when approved.

Ms. Balkcom nominated Mr. McGeorge as Vice-Chair. Ms. Calise seconded the nomination. Mr. McGeorge accepted the nomination.

VOTE: 6 – 0.

Ms. Balkcom reminded the Commission that they are now down a Commission member and she would like to have the alternate position filled as well. She suggested if the members knew of any interested and qualified people to have them submit their letter of interest to the Town Council as the Board should be proactive with appointments.

Mr. Morris arrived to the meeting just before the meeting was adjourned.

5) Brian Morris

55 Greene Street; Map 75 A.P 3 Lot 5

New Construction, Addition, and Modification - Final

Mr. McGeorge disclosed that he has full objection to the entire project.

Ms. Balkcom recalled at the December meeting that the Commission members present originally had the same gut reaction that Mr. McGeorge has.

Mr. Morris noted the house has shrunk in size by 400+ feet and everything that the Commission asked him to do at the December meeting he has done. Mr. McGeorge clarified that he was not at the December meeting.

Mr. McGeorge took issue to the pitch of the addition roof – it is inappropriately flat.

Mr. Morris stated that since the last meeting he has gutted the inside of the house. He had taken all the comments from the last meeting (mostly from Mr.

Barkley) and incorporated them into the new plan; he has also determined that he likes the shed dormer that exists on the left side and plans to keep it.

Mr. Barkley recalled the street elevation being correct and adding a shed dormer but did not recall the right side being so wide.

Mr. Morris stated the addition has been reduced; originally was 22', now 18' and the back was originally going to be 14' and now it is 12' – this change is giving him more pitch to the new portion of the roof.

Mr. McGeorge explained originally the existing roof was being raised now it is being lowered back down; the issue is the headroom on the second floor of the existing house – in order to get full height of the addition the eave line has to be brought up which squashes the roof pitch. He added the mass has no business being in the historic district or on the existing building – it does not conform to Standard #5 in terms of size and scale and is simply not appropriate.

Mr. Morris asserted that the addition will be dwarfed by the existing landscaping and sloping.

Mr. Barkley explained the side has to be reduced in order to keep things in proportion (approximately 8') – it is not about losing height but about losing width.

Mr. McGeorge thought that raising the roof on the existing structure is extreme and to go to that level to bastardize the existing structure is obscene to him; just his own opinion.

Ms. Balkcom clarified, based on Mr. Barkley's comments from the December meeting, that now the addition is not being sympathetic to the original structure – now it is too massive. Mr. Barkley noted that a reduction by 8', 9' or 10' will change the proportion.

Mr. McGeorge reiterated that it is the width and the pitch of the addition that read clunky.

Mr. Morris repeated that he did everything the Commission asked at the last meeting right down to the little features on every window. He said simply

cannot change the pitch of the roof. The only way to resolve the roof pitch he noted was to allow him to raise the roof on the existing house.

Ms. Balkcom stated that it was important to the Commission that the existing home's roof not be raised.

(Ms. Balkcom left the meeting at 7:05 pm.)

Mr. McGeorge recommended two ways to rectify the mass and scale of the addition – shrink the footprint to bring the pitch in line with the existing home or increase the pitch without reducing the footprint – this option will compromise the ceiling height of the second floor and it will end up with a similar ceiling condition of the existing home. He explained again the two basic solutions – narrow the width of the addition in order to increase the pitch and match the existing mass or simply increase pitch and compromise the second floor ceiling height.

Mr. Morris was not sure he wanted to go with either option because the house has already been sold; he has a buyer that is purchasing it based on the proposed 2,800 square feet. Mr. Morris added that the only reason why he bought the house was because he lives directly behind it.

Mr. McGeorge commented that if the Applicant truly cared about the integrity of the existing house he would protect what is there.

Mr. Barkley and Mr. McGeorge tried to redesign a solution that would be amenable to both parties; they came up with a solution that does not change the overall plan but just modifies the framing which Mr. Morris was amenable to.

The Commission agreed that the revised idea and sketch that the architects just drew had to be redrawn and resubmitted and reviewed at the next meeting. Ms. Carron also inquired about type of windows to be used.

Ms. Hitchen recalled at the December meeting Mr. Morris informed the Commission he wanted to use the Anderson 200 Series in both the existing and new addition parts of the project. She noted that the Commission members present (Balkcom, Tyson, Barkley and Carron) indicated they would be fine allowing the Anderson 200 windows be installed in the new addition but would

prefer to see a wood or aluminum clad window be used in the existing window openings. Mr. McGeorge agreed with that suggestion.

Mr. Morris explained that he is trying to get a foundation only permit and the Building Official has no problem with issuing him one. Ms. Hitchen commented that the Applicant still has to go before the Zoning Board for relief as he is intensifying a nonconforming structure and the Building Official does not have final building plans yet; therefore she asserted that she did not feel comfortable at all giving a Certificate of Appropriateness based on sketches or just for a foundation permit.

Mr. McGeorge verified that the footprint of this building will comply with the Certificate of Appropriateness in the future. Ms. Hitchen will notify Mr. Pimental, the Building Official but zoning relief is still needed.

The Commission unanimously decided to continue the discussion to next month. The recommended that Mr. Morris provide renderings that show angles of the project as one is walking up the hill. All other materials including windows will be approved at the next meeting.

Ms. Hitchen suggested the application and revised sketches be submitted on time.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Barkley. Seconded by Mr. Fallon. Adjourn at 7:50 p.m.

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

Lea Anthony Hitchen, Assistant Town Planner