

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES
June 11, 2014 Meeting
Town Council Chambers – 6:00 PM HDC meeting

Present: Kim Balkcom, Chair; Matthew McGeorge, Vice-Chair; Erinn Calise, Andrew Barkley, and Kristen Carron

Absent: Kingston Fallon.

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

Historic District Commission Hearings

1. Denise Taliaferro
25 Union Street; Map 75 A.P. 3 Lot 268
Replace Windows/Door and Minor Modifications – FINAL

Mr. Dan McLaughlin, the contractor, represented the application. Christopher Nichols, the owner, was also present. Mr. McLaughlin explained the application includes swapping out 12 sets of window sashes for the Anderson Woodwright 400 Series windows with the same 2/1 light pattern as the existing as well as replacing the rear exterior door with a new Therma-Tru fiberglass door, to be a 2-panel, ½ light Smooth Star 2100 series. He added the doors that face the front will be refurbished.

Mr. Barkley questioned the condition of the back door. Mr. McLaughlin noted that it was pretty beat up and had many many layers of paint on it.

Mr. McLaughlin confirmed the main original chimney is not being touched; the slender brick chimney located in the middle of the ell which does not serve any purpose is the chimney which will be removed. Mr. McGeorge did not have any issues with removing the chimney as it has no historic significance.

Ms. Balkcom read into the record the Commission Standards that apply to this application; those being 2, 4, 8 and 9. *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 architectural changes shall be appropriate to the original design of the building. *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. *Standard 9* states that demolition, either partial or total, shall only be acceptable provided it would significantly benefit the Town, would serve the greater interest of the greater interest of the community as a whole, and that there no alternatives to demolition available.

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 Denise Taliaferro of 25 Union Street.
- 2) The property in question is located within the East Greenwich Historic District.
- 3) The structure in question is a contributing building; it is representative of a c.1840 Greek Revival.
- 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 25 Union Street to make minor modifications and replace windows (with spacer bars) and one door. This is consistent with Commission Standard #2, 4, 8 and 9.

Seconded by Ms. Calise.

VOTE: 5 – 0.

2. Sheila Cooley
178 Division Street; Map 84 A.P. 2 Lot 71
Replace Garage Door – Final

Mr. Mark Fagan, owner of the property, represented the application.

Ms. Balkcom read the Standards that apply to the application; those being Commission Standards # 2 and 4. *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.

Ms. Balkcom confirmed the small and large garage doors will be replaced and the circled garage door on the catalog cut is the proposed door to be replaced. Mr. Fagan assured the Board that was accurate. Ms. Balkcom said she preferred that the Applicant do not use hardware on the garage doors as it does not truly function as “hardware.”

Mr. Barkley asked about the condition of the garage doors as they appear to be in decent condition from the submitted pictures. He suggested simply replacing the garage door motors. Mr. Fagan explained that the two doors do not match to begin with and neither one is operational for the last 15 years.

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

Ms. Calise made the following findings of fact:

1. A written application has been submitted by Sheila Cooley of 178 Division Street.
2. The property in question is located within the East Greenwich Historic District.
3. The structure in question is a contributing building; it is representative of a c.1865 bracketed early 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 building.

Motion by Ms. Calise to approve the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness at 178 Division Street to replace the garage doors. This is consistent with Commission Standard #2 and 4

Seconded by Ms. Carron.

VOTE: 5 – 0.

3. Thomas Testa
17 Bridge Street; Map 75 A.P. 3 Lot 168
New Construction, Window Replacements, Roofing, Replacement
in Kind – Final

(Ms. Calise recused herself from the application.)

Ms. Balkcom read the standards that apply, those being 1, 2, 5, 7, and 8. *Standard 1* says 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 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 7* says that exterior siding must be appropriate for the buildings to which it is applied. *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. Window manufacturers offer a wide variety of factory-made windows appropriate for installation in historic buildings. Storm windows of appropriate design are also available and should be installed to be as unobtrusive as possible.

Representing the application was Thomas Testa, owner of the property, and Jason Corsini.

Mr. Testa explained that based on last month's feedback he has researched and found the Harvey Majesty window that he is now asking to use which will be 2/1 on the first and second floors and 6/6 on the basement level.

Under the circumstances Mr. McGeorge did not disapprove of the Harvey Majesty (clad window with interior spacer bar) as long as the profile was 5/8"; this is a similar window to the Anderson 400 Series.

Moving on to the proposed porch/deck, both Ms. Balkcom and Mr. McGeorge felt as though the drawings were simplistic at best and would not be able to approve it. Mr. McGeorge explained the Board prefers to see a fully detailed submission consisting of plans, dimensions, elevations, material notes, context and scaled information; he feels as though this particular HDC makes a lot of compromises compared to other HDCs. He noted that the proposed railing system is not appropriate.

Mr. Menard stated that he looked at various other railing systems in the district to design the one that has been proposed. Mr. McGeorge explained that one cannot necessarily go by the design of other railings in the district because they may not have been approved. He added that the subject home is a nice, classic well-proportioned structure and to glob on a tacky deck would be disappointing; there is an opportunity to do a better job while being sensitive to the proportion, scale, and details of the existing home.

Mr. Testa commented that the next door neighbor said she was grateful for the work being done as she has to look at it as well.

Ms. Balkcom agreed that the pressure treated wood is not an appropriate material to use for the deck. Mr. McGeorge suggested using cedar, western red cedar or mahogany which is ideal.

Ms. Balkcom asked for clarification regarding the type of construction being added since a deck is not is not historic per se and a porch typically has a cover over it. Mr. Testa confirmed that it is a deck and will not have a cover on it.

Mr. McGeorge said he also wanted more details about the circulation, i.e. flow, as in getting on and off to the landscape. He questioned where the stairs would be located, how many stairs, how wide the stairs would be, etc. Those types of questions are the little details that are not shown on the plan.

Mr. Barkley suggested in lieu of a deck adding a stoop and giving it a little “beef” – the intent would be to cover the steps from rain; at a minimum the “overhang” could have a molded crown flashing over the door where the intent is to prevent rot so it is not just decorative but practical as well. The Commission recommended the simpler the better stoop in this case.

Ms. Balkcom commented that there are not many homes in the district with vinyl siding; since there is already vinyl siding on the house technically it is considered replacement in kind. Her feeling is that the structure is so small and it is so simple and the HDC is already compromising on the windows that the home would aesthetically look so much better with the vinyl removed. She asked that since there is so much of the vinyl removed on the south side wouldn't the Applicant want to rip off the remaining vinyl. Mr. Barkley asserted that the clapboard underneath must be in decent condition.

Ms. Balkcom felt strongly that there was a window opening underneath the vinyl to the left of the front door which if the vinyl was removed would allow additional light into the structure.

Ms. Balkcom asked about the existing vinyl shutters and if they were going to be reused. Mr. Testa confirmed they would most likely be spray painted and put back on. Ms. Balkcom noted one of her pet peeves is non-functioning shutters. Mr. McGeorge advised that the shutters will look ridiculous but technically they are a replacement in kind.

Mr. McGeorge guessed it would cost approximately \$15,000 to remove the vinyl siding and restore the clapboard, not including paint.

Ms. Balkcom asked if the Applicant is going to live there. Mr. Testa said no and he plans to resell the building. Mr. McGeorge suggested that once it gets to the point of being marketable could the Applicant offer to strip the siding and restore the clapboard as an upgrade (just as a sales idea since the HDC cannot enforce the removal of vinyl.) Mr. Testa said that is an idea he would consider.

Mr. Barkley stated that the subject property has the opportunity to go from the most unpleasant looking house to become the nicest house in the neighborhood by a minor investment. Ms. Balkcom attested that most people looking to buy a home in the historic district want renovated homes and if they end up purchasing a home that needs to be restored the first thing that ends up happening is the vinyl will be removed. She asked is realtor who works specifically in the historic district has been involved. Mr. Testa said he has talked to David Iannuccilli.

Mr. McGeorge understood the financial implications involved but the small investment now could be very valuable.

Ms. Carron questioned if a buyer does want the vinyl removed as part of an upgrade package would the Applicant need to come back to the HDC for approval. The Commission noted this could be approved within the Certificate of Appropriateness or at the administrative level; staff noted it would be considered a replacement in kind.

The Commission reiterated that the Applicant may be amazed as to what he would find underneath the vinyl siding, possibly a skirt board, corner boards as well as a water skirt although they admitted patch work would be needed.

Ms. Hitchen stated that this property reminds her of 72 Duke Street, the old schoolhouse that Sean Webster refurbished that went from glum to glam; it had a similar situation where it was encapsulated in vinyl which was removed and had decent clapboard underneath.

Ms. Carron asked if the entire vinyl siding would be replaced or just the damaged vinyl. Mr. Testa said just the damaged vinyl siding would be replaced and then power wash the rest of the building.

The Commission and Applicant discussed and agreed to replace the front and basement door – for the front door the replacement door will be a Harvey Fiber Classic Stock Door style FC61 Oak clear while the basement door which fronts on Bridge Street will be the FC808 Oak Solid Panel.

Ms. Hitchen reminded the Applicant about the setbacks for the property, being 10 feet for both the front and side as it is located in an R-6, residential zone.

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

Mr. McGeorge made the following findings of fact:

- 1) A written application has been submitted by Thomas Testa.
- 2) The property in question is located within the East Greenwich Historic District, located at 17 Bridge Street.
- 3) The structure in question is a contributing building; it is representative of a c.1870 early Victorian style 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 building as follows: the Harvey Majesty windows approved with spacer bar and SDL 5/8"; roofing is asphalt replacement in kind; the replacement front door will be a Harvey Fiber Classic Stock Door style FC61 Oak clear while the basement door which fronts on Bridge Street will be the FC808 Oak Solid Panel and will not affect the character defining elements of the building. The entrance/porch/stoop/patio will be continued for further discussion.

Motion by Mr. McGeorge to partially approve the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness at 17 Bridge Street to include the following: windows and doors and asphalt roof. This is consistent with Commission Standards #2 and 8.

Seconded by Ms. Carron.

VOTE: 5 – 0.

Historic District Commission Business

- 1) MINUTES: Action on the minutes of the April 9, 2014 and May 14, 2014 meetings.

Motion by Ms. Calise to approve the April 9, 2014 minutes. Seconded by Mr. McGeorge. Approved 4 – 0.

Motion by Mr. McGeorge to approve the May 14, 2014 minutes. Seconded by Mr. Barkley. Approved 5 – 0.

- 2) Commissioner Comments/Other

Ms. Balkcom informed the Commission that Mr. Morris has installed vinyl windows with the muntins sandwiched between the glass at 55 Greene Street – a completely different window than what the HDC approved. She was very upset with Mr. Morris' blatant lies as there was no confusion between his request for the Anderson 400 Series and his decision to install the 200 Series. She went on

to say that Mr. Morris stood in front of the Commission on several occasions, told us all about the great work he did with the “Nest Egg” and he promised he would do just as good work with 55 Greene Street – 55 Greene Street is practically right on the road and everyone can see that the windows he installed are vinyl.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. MGeorge. Seconded by Ms. Calise. Adjourn at 7:30 p.m.

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

Lea Anthony Hitchen, Assistant Town Planner