

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES
August 13, 2014 Meeting
Town Council Chambers – 6:00 PM HDC meeting

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

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. She noted that the applicants for 69 Rector Street have asked to continue the hearing to the August 13th docket.

Historic District Commission Hearings

**1. Will and Lynn Wright
69 Rector Street; Map 85 A.P. 1 Lot 287
New Construction (Shed) - FINAL**

Ms. Balkcom recused herself from the hearing; Mr. McGeorge was the Acting Chair.

Mr. McGeorge read standard #5 as it applies to the application; new construction must be compatible with surrounding buildings in size, scale, materials and siting and with the general character of the historic district.

Mr. Will Wright represented the application; he explained that he would like to construct a new 8'x10' shed.

Ms. Carron asked if the shed siding will have clapboard siding or board and batten siding. Mr. Wright stated he had not yet decided but wanted it to look like a garden shed. He noted the paperwork provided shows a shed that has both clapboard and board and batten siding but if the Commission is not satisfied with that he can construct a shed that has either material.

Mr. McGeorge commented that either material was fine but not both as the picture of the shed submitted appears to be a "hybrid looking shed."

Mr. Wright noted that the proposed shed will have a low profile roof.

The Commission and Applicant discussed the different siding materials for the shed; i.e. shingles and clapboard, all clapboard.

Mr. Wright confirmed the shed will be built on site by a contractor.

Having been through the whole HDC and Zoning process for a shed, Mr. McGeorge stated that he did not have any issues with the shed.

Mr. Wright commented that in terms of opening, i.e. doors and windows, he plans to have windows and a door just like the sheds in the submitted left picture – window on the left side and front right and double door on the front left.

Mr. McGeorge commented that he liked the idea of the board and batten on the sides because it is complimentary to the primary structure and it should not match the house as it is a separate structure.

Ms. Hitchen questioned whether the Applicant was aware of the setbacks for the garden shed. Mr. Wright was not sure therefore Ms. Hitchen reiterated that due to the fact the subject lot is considered a substandard lot of record the rear and side setback requirements may be reduced in the proportion that the area of the substandard lot is reduced. In this particular case Ms. Hitchen stated the garden shed can be no closer than 11.8 feet from the side property line and 3.9 feet from the rear property line; if the Applicant prefers to have the shed closer to the property lines a dimensional variance from the Zoning Board must be obtained.

Mr. McGeorge commented that at this juncture the submission is great for conceptual approval but suggested to see the final drawings from the contractor and that those drawings be refereed. He thought the submission was nowhere close for final approval but under the circumstances based on the size and scale the HDC could give the application a Certificate of Appropriateness conditional on a referee for final design.

Mr. McGeorge summarized the Applicant's steps going forward – the HDC will issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval this evening; the Applicant will obtain dimensional relief from the ZBR and then the contractor/applicant will submit a final design/sketch to Ms. Hitchen who will have it refereed by two HDC Commissioners.

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

Ms. Carron made the following findings of fact:

- 1) A written application has been submitted by Will & Lynn Wright.
- 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. 1875 late Victorian.

- 4) The proposed shed will not contribute to the historic and architectural significance of the district although the main house does contribute to 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 69 Rector Street for the construction of a garden shed conditional upon zoning relief and final design of shed to be refereed. This is consistent with Commission Standard #5.

Seconded by Ms. Calise.

Referees to be Mr. McGeorge and Mr. Barkley.

VOTE: 4 – 0.

Ms. Balkcom returned to the dais.

**2. Erin and Stephen Nelson
173 Main Street #4; Map 85 A.P. 1 Lot 219 Unit 0004
Replace Windows - FINAL**

Ms. Balkcom noted the subject property is very historically significant to the district and one of the few that remains intact and has not had too many alterations to it. She noted that Standard #8 applies to the application which states that 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 today 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.

Ms. Nelson represented the application.

Ms. Balkcom questioned whether there are condo units in the building. Ms. Nelson explained there are two commercial units on the first floor and five

residential units upstairs; she was the only resident interested in replacing the windows. She noted that she has also incurred other maintenance issues as well – the panels above her windows on the front façade were installed without flashing which has caused a significant amount of water leakage. Ms. Nelson explained the paneling/flashing is being repaired which is the reason behind her asking to replace the windows at the same time; she would like to have new windows which happen to be in her two bedrooms, to be operational, not water damaged and not have any lead paint.

Mr. Barkley explained the best route to go is to salvage the existing windows. Ms. Nelson noted that she has talked to a few different companies such as Heritage Restoration.

Mr. McGeorge advised that due to the building having the original wood windows and sashes and its historical and architectural importance to the district, he would only approve a true divided lite wood window.

Ms. Balkcom questioned whether Ms. Nelson was the only unit owner interested in replacing windows at this time. Ms. Nelson confirmed yes. Ms. Balkcom wanted to know for sure whether the other unit owners would definitely use the submitted window when it came time for the other windows to be replaced.

Ms. Balkcom agreed with Mr. McGeorge; she noted the building is so significant historically and so well preserved that she was concerned the requested window does not match the existing window composition material etc. and it is only going to be replaced in a few of the entire building's window openings. Ms. Balkcom also brought up the issue of if the window did receive approval and another unit owner did not want to install this particular window spec – this building could end up looking like a mish mash mess of windows.

Ms. Carron questioned the HDC if an application from the condo association requesting blanket approval for 1 particular window would have been an easier route.

Mr. McGeorge and Mr. Barkley further discussed the window detailing.

Ms. Balkcom advised the Applicant that from what she is hearing the application might not get approved as submitted. She explained if the HDC were to deny

the application there is a one year waiting period before the same application can be reapplying. Ms. Balkcom suggested continuing this application and in the meantime obtaining more quotes to restore the existing windows.

Ms. Hitchen stated she would forward the Applicant the list of window restoration contractors she obtained from RIHPHC.

The Commissioners reiterated that if the windows are restored and storm windows are added then the Applicant does not need to return to the Commission for approval.

Ms. Carron suggested that if the Applicant decides to take the window replacement option then to get the condo association on board and come back for the whole building approval.

When asked by the Applicant what type of windows to further research, the Commissioners suggested Pella, Marvin, Little Harbor and Kolbe to start.

Mr. Barkley added that as a benefit to the other residential unit owners, they will get a better price if more windows are purchased at once.

Ms. Hitchen requested Ms. Nelson inform her of whichever decision she makes regarding the windows.

Ms. Balkcom appreciated the Applicant being so understanding.

Historic District Commission Business

- 1) MINUTES: Action on the minutes of the June 11, 2014 and July 9, 2014 meetings.

Motion by Mr. McGeorge to approve the June 11, 2014 minutes. Seconded by Ms. Calise. Approved 5 – 0.

July minutes tabled to September.

- 2) Commissioner Comments/Other

Motion to adjourn by Mr. MGeorge. Seconded by Ms. Carron. Adjourn at 7:10 p.m.

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

Lea Anthony Hitchen, Assistant Town Planner