

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES
April 8, 2015 Meeting
Town Council Chambers – 6:00 PM HDC meeting

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

Absent: Kingston Fallon, Kristen Carron, and Lauren Drury.

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 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. Balkcom 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.

Ms. Balkcom introduced the Board members and Staff present and read the application items into the record. She noted the fourth agenda item for Joshua Brumberger, has been withdrawn.

Historic District Commission Hearings

1. Dino Caparco
48 Prospect Street; Map 75 A.P. 2 Lot 206
Minor Modifications and Siding- FINAL

Ms. Balkcom read the applicable standards into the record, those being commission standards 1, 2, 4, and 7. *Standard 1* requires that original materials and architectural features shall be maintained or repaired whenever possible rather than replaced. *Standard 2* requires new material to match the original in composition, design texture and other visual qualities if the existing materials

have deteriorated beyond repair. *Standard 4* states that all proposals for 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* notes that 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.

Mr. Dino Caparco, owner and applicant, represented the application. He submitted additional pictures to the Commission that showed further details of the underlying clapboard. He confirmed that the existing paint is lead based paint.

Mr. McGeorge felt that that by approving this application would be setting a precedent and the continual removal of everything that is historic about this structure. He added that due to the fact that he decided to deny the request the first time around he would be sticking with his original decision and voting no again.

Mr. Maxwell commented that this application is a tough call since the Commission can only see .05 percent of the original siding and really has no idea of the condition of the clapboard underneath; he pointed out that the clapboards under the eaves might be in perfect condition.

Ms. Balkcom questioned if the Hardiboard is not approved whether the Applicant would leave the asbestos siding on the structure. Mr. Caparco stated he is open to suggestions; although if it is too costly he might just paint the asbestos.

Ms. Balkcom asserted that the Commission often recommends to applicants in similar situations to remove all the vinyl/asbestos siding in order to assess the underlying clapboard material and then reassess the options. To the other Commissioners points, Ms. Balkcom noted the Applicant just removed a small section of asbestos siding at the bottom of the structure; as you go further up the house the clapboards are most likely to be in even better condition. She asked if that is something Mr. Caparco would consider. Mr. Caparco said he would not consider removing all of the asbestos and then making a decision due to the cost and process involved.

Mr. Barkley commented that the asbestos siding is in structurally fine condition, it is just ugly. He suggested painting over it which will encapsulate the lead paint.

As for ghosting the rear, lower left window, Mr. McGeorge noted it is fairly common practice to ghost a window in the district and he has no issues with this part of the application.

Mr. Caparco verified that the trim on the ghosted window will match that of the other windows.

Ms. Balkcom stated she did not have any problems with the ghosting of the rear window. As far as the siding, Ms. Balkcom was torn on this because the submission looks better than the asbestos siding but ideally if the asbestos siding get removed the clapboards can be stripped, sanded and painted. In her opinion pulling off the asbestos siding would bring back some of the detail that the structure currently lacks.

Mr. Caparco reminded the Commission that he upgraded the vinyl replacement windows to the Anderson 400 Series. Ms. Balkcom commended the Applicant for the work that has been done up to this point as it has been a huge improvement.

Ms. Calise was aware of numerous people in the district who have gone to great expense to maintain and/or restore the clapboard siding; she commented that we also have to answer to those residents as well. Mr. McGeorge commented the bottom line is whether the Applicant meets the standard as that is all the HDC is here to do, and that is the decision this Commission needs to make.

Ms. Balkcom explained the procedure if the Applicant is denied; she suggested approving the ghosting of the rear window only and recommended the Applicant consider removing all of the asbestos siding and then revisiting this issue again – she thought that was a reasonable compromise.

Mr. Maxwell raised the issue of the window trim. Mr. Caparco confirmed he is not set to any trim and will do whatever the Commission desires with the trim work. Mr. Barkley noted the existing trim is wood and if it replaced in kind with

wood the Applicant would not need the HDC approval. Mr. Caparco agreed that he would use wood trim as he had no issues with that.

Mr. Caparco agreed to continue the siding issue.

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

Mr. Maxwell made the following findings of fact:

- 1) A written application has been submitted by Dino Caparco.
- 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 building does contribute to the historic and architectural significance of the district.
- 5) The work proposed by the applicant does not affect the character defining elements of the existing building.

Motion by Mr. Maxwell to approve the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness at 48 Prospect Street to ghost the rear lower level window. This is consistent with Commission Standards #1, 2, 4 and 7.

Seconded by Mr. Barkley.

VOTE: 5 - 0.

**2. Nelson Niles
136 Spring Street; Map 85 A.P. 2 Lot 171
New Construction (Detached Garage); Continuation from 3/11/15
meeting – FINAL**

Mr. McGeorge noted for the record he was not present for the March hearing but it appears the application has made enough changes to be a reasonable compromise. (Staff commented Mr. McGeorge reviewed the conceptual plan late last year.)

Mr. Nelson Niles asserted the changes made to the original plan were due to his own comments as well as input from the neighbors.

Staff inquired as to whether the neighbors have seen the revised plan. Mr. Niles said no but they are more than welcome to take a look.

Mr. Maxwell stated he sees a lot of changes starting with the orientation of the building as the garage has been turned. Mr. McGeorge noted the changes look great and the structure is hidden by landscaping; he is comfortable with the changes.

Ms. Balkcom also agreed the changes are a huge improvement compared to what was shown last month and appreciated the Applicant taking the HDC comments as well as the concerns from the neighbors into consideration.

Mr. Niles explained he felt there was room for improvement in terms of the landscaping so he therefore went with another company to make changes to the landscaping.

Mr. McGeorge acknowledged there was an internal agreement amongst the Commission members on them liking the changes to the project. He felt by opening the hearing to public comments in order to help the neighbors understand the project as well as to ask questions was the best approach to reviewing this particular application.

Mr. Robert Mazzeo of 34 Mawney Street, stated at the last meeting he thought there was an accomplishment because the Commission voiced the opinion that if the Applicant was going to continue as presented he would be turned down. Mr. Mazzeo recalled that at last month's hearing the HDC listened to neighbor concerns who also made suggestions for the garage. He reiterated the garage was obnoxiously too big for the neighborhood – the garage was bigger than his house as well as other homes nearby and it spoiled the whole historic nature. Mr. Mazzeo was under the impression that the Applicant would tone down the garage; i.e. to narrow it and make it smaller to fit the size of the property – he is now proposing to turn it 90 degrees; from the Mawney Street perspective it is less objectionable but he did not think a garage of this size belongs in this neighborhood.

Ms. Balkcom verified the Applicant made more changes than just turning the direction of the garage. She commented that the Commission can all agree that the way it was presented last month there could be some changes made that would make an impact as far as visually with size, windows, etc.

Mr. Barkley asserted the comments made from last month were about the overall mass of the building - the alterations to the original plan include a shift in the roof plane to give it more character, the window size and orientation, the orientation of the structure is reduced and the overall building is much more refined; and the scale of the building actually looks smaller. He also confirmed there are now three breaks/elevations to the ridge line. He asserted the owner and applicant have been very receptive to the comments made last month noting the end of the garage looks very similar to that of the front end of the existing home. There are a lot of aspects that have changed and the building is much more refined; he understood there are small homes in the neighborhood but there are also very large carriage houses two blocks away – there is precedent of this size structure already existing.

Mr. Mazzeo attested that the Applicant was interested in compatibility to the neighborhood and he would inform the neighbors of what was going on. Mr. Mazzeo felt as though the neighbors have been blindsided; he did not want to deny the use of anyone's property but just wants the neighborhood to be kept the way that it is.

Ms. Balkcom did not feel that anyone had been blindsided; it was noted last month that this application was continued to this month and the HDC always meets on the second Wednesday of every month. She added that submitted plans can always be reviewed in the Planning Department prior to a meeting. In her opinion, Ms. Balkcom stated the Applicant has been very receptive to all comments.

Ms. Mary Lou Wernig of 24 Mawney Street commented she does not like the negative energy coming from this application but noted the HDC is now calling this proposed structure a "carriage house;" when she first visited the Planning Department it was referred to as a 3-car garage.

Ms. Balkcom interpreted the comments made by Mr. McGeorge to mean that the proposed garage now reads more as a carriage house than a 3-car garage – that was the point and the HDC is not trying to change it.

Ms. Wernig said to her it is still a 3-car garage. Mr. McGeorge asked Ms. Wernig if she was aware that from her perspective she would now be viewing the side of the garage. Ms. Wernig confirmed she was talking in terms of the scope of the project – at 18' tall, a 3-car garage being in a neighborhood like this, it appears to be a huge precedent. Ms. Balkcom responded that the historic district has tiny charming houses next to huge Victorian homes – we have a mix of different styles and that is what makes this neighborhood eclectic. Ms. Wernig stated she is opposed to the project.

Mr. Mazzeo advised the Commission it is not your job to convince the neighbors to change our minds but to listen to information being presented and listen to neighbors objections and make a decision based on your professional judgement which is appropriate to the neighborhood. Mr. McGeorge interjected noting the job of the Commission is to uphold the Commission standards. Mr. Mazzeo reiterated the proposed building is too big for the neighborhood and there are many people present who are objecting to it. Ms. Balkcom said this new construction project does indeed meet the standards.

Ms. Cheryl Ernst of 45 Mawney Street had concerns with the size of the proposed garage and the additional drainage issues it may bring to the existing properties. Ms. Hitchen explained that if the project was approved the Applicant's next step is to go to the DPW/Assistant Town Engineer to make sure the project complies with stormwater regulations.

Mr. Sauerbrey confirmed that he does have a Civil Engineer lined up to specifically deal with drainage issues.

Ms. Calise questioned the size of the landscaping when planted. The Commission noted it would have to be mature.

Ms. Hitchen asked if the Commission is fine with the rear windows, removal of decorative hardware and other changes not mentioned in this evening's hearing. Mr. Maxwell noted the Anderson 400 windows, the removal of the decorative hardware – he had no issues with the changes.

Mr. Barkley stated two blocks from this site down Spring Street going out of town there is a 4-car garage – it is a beautiful structure so there is precedence here and it is taller than 18’ which brings into the discussion of scale and size which is in keeping of the argument that this proposed garage fits in the neighborhood. Mr. Barkley confirmed that he did not have an argument against the scale of this application.

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 Nelson Niles.
- 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. 1890 late Victorian.
- 4) The building does contribute to the historic and architectural significance of the district.
- 5) The work proposed by the applicant does not affect the character defining elements of the existing building.

Motion by Mr. McGeorge to approve the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness at 136 Spring Street for the construction of a detached garage to face Spring Street (based on plans dated 3/31/15). This is consistent with Commission Standards #4 and 5.

Seconded by Ms. Calise.

VOTE: 5 - 0.

3. Daniel Szetela
48 Bridge Street; Map 75 A.P. 3 Lot 211
New Construction (Shed) – FINAL

Mr. Dan Szetela, owner and applicant, represented the application.

Ms. Balkcom stated the Standard that applies to this application is #5. It 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.

Mr. Barkley was very impressed by the amount of information supplied by the applicant; he asserted all the material to be used would be appropriate.

Fundamentally, Mr. McGeorge felt as though option #2 was more contemporary but would be more fun to construct but would go with option #1 with a slightly steeper roof. Due to the structure being an accessory structure, located next to the train tracks Mr. McGeorge did not have any objections to option #1 as the siting, scale, mass and materials all conform to the standards.

The Commission recommended matching the shed roof pitch to that of the house which is most likely a 12/6 pitch.

Mr. Maxwell agreed that he also like option 1 with a matching roof pitch to the main house.

Mr. Szetela commented the rear of the shed is for wood storage.

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 Daniel Szetela.
- 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. 1860 mill house.
- 4) The building does contribute to the historic and architectural significance of the district.
- 5) The work proposed by the applicant does not affect the character defining elements of the existing building.

Motion by Ms. Calise to approve the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness at 48 Bridge Street for the construction of a new shed (Option #1) with a 12/6 roof pitch to match the pitch of the house. This is consistent with Commission Standard # 5.

Seconded by Mr. McGeorge.

VOTE: 5 - 0.

**4. Allen B. Gammons Jr. and Michael DellaGrotta
74 London Street; Map 75 A.P. 1 Lot 339
Complete Renovation: Addition, Minor Alterations, Replace
Windows/Doors, Repair/Replace-in-Kind, Roofing and Siding -
CONCEPTUAL**

Mr. Allen Gammons represented the application. He explained both he and Mr. DellaGrotta own the property together and currently nobody lives there as they plan to restore the building. He noted the building has been severely altered over the years and there is nothing historic remaining with no curb appeal. Mr. Gammons confirmed the main objective is to comprehensively rehabilitate this home and bring it more in character with the historic district. The primary concerns relate to the addition of three dormers along the front left elevation of the home; a proposed 5' extension of the second floor, and replace the existing T-111 siding with Maibec Eastern White shingles. Another significant change will be to replace the existing contemporary roof with a 6 pitch roof on the second floor. A final major element of the project includes removal of all casement windows, doors, and sliders and replaced with Anderson 400 Series windows, and Simpson WaterBarrier Wood doors.

Mr. Gammons also noted the other activities planned which include removing and relocate the existing bulkhead (new location not shown); install copper gutter and downspouts, remove the existing chimney; and replace the second floor deck system with composite materials. The Applicant will also improve the landscaping by adding a front terrace, rear paver patio, improve the driveway and add additional shrubbery in order to put a finishing touch to the home.

Mr. McGeorge commented that in his own opinion the plan should be more contemporary because stylistically it is a weird funky house and it would be of its

time instead of creating false history. Ms. Balkcom noted that the Applicant does not have to go with a plan to make the building look like it has always been there. Mr. Gammons wanted to go with a Nantucket style plan – a lot of stone, shingles, etc.

Ms. Balkcom liked what the Applicant has proposed and reminded her of the house further up the street. Mr. Gammons stated he is open to do anything but preferred to not build a contemporary structure. Mr. McGeorge said he would not have to, it was just a suggestion.

Mr. Gammons felt as though the conceptual plan was a good start; it will still be a 2 bedroom, 2 bath house.

The Commission's only suggestion for the final plan was to prepare a rendering for a shed dormer instead of three individual dormers on the eastern portion of the structure as that may work better.

Mr. McGeorge thought the plan was appropriate, and it is a great site to have some fun with the project.

Mr. Barkley provided numerous ideas including making the original structure a saltbox house.

Overall the Commission approved the conceptual plan.

5. Ross DiSegna
74 Cliff Street: Map 75 A.P. 3 Lot 40
Minor Modifications, Replace Windows/Doors and Signage -
CONCEPTUAL

Mr. McGeorge recused himself from the application as he is the architect for the project.

Ms. Balkcom read the standards that apply to this application those being # 1, 4, 5 and 8. *Standard 1* requires that original materials and architectural features shall be maintained or repaired whenever possible rather than replaced. *Standard 4* states all architectural changes shall be appropriate to the original design of the building or to later changes which have historic significance of their own.

Signage 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. *Standard 8* states all original 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. Ross DiSegna, Mr. Paul DiSegna and Mr. Matthew McGeorge represented the application.

Ms. Balkcom was overwhelming impressed by the overhead garage doors as the restaurant can be al fresco during the summer months.

Mr. Ross DiSegna explained his intention is to keep the existing Tio Mateo's the same setup when he moves to the new location but with more seating, simply order the food and sit down.

Ms. Balkcom stated she had no issues with the conceptual plan. Mr. Barkley understood the desire to clean the building up and leave it the way that it is.

Mr. McGeorge explained the renovations are not substantial at all and simply include replacing the center and right storefront windows, new signage, a new coat of paint and adding gooseneck lighting.

Mr. Maxwell liked the fact that the new windows will fit into the existing window openings.

Staff inquired about the hours of the restaurant. Mr. DiSegna stated the hours are Monday through Saturday 10 AM- 8 PM and Sunday 7 AM-3 PM and plans to offer breakfast when the new location opens.

Staff asked if the intent is to keep the internally lit sign as it can remain if it is refaced. Mr. McGeorge noted at this point the details are not yet known.

The Applicant noted the dumpster portion of the project is still being worked out.

The Commission conceptually approved the application.

Historic District Commission Business

- 1) MINUTES: Action on the minutes of the December 10, 2014, January 14, 2015, February 11, 2015 and March 11, 2015 meetings.

Minutes tabled to next month due to lack of quorum.

- 2) Historic Tax Credit Application: 17 Marion Street

Staff informed the Commission that the application does not apply for credits and felt the chair could not sign to move the credit forward.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Barkley. Seconded by Ms. Calise. Adjourn at 8:00 p.m.

For additional information, please contact the Planning Department.

Respectfully submitted by:

Lea Anthony Hitchen, Assistant Town Planner