

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES
October 14, 2015 Meeting
Town Council Chambers – 6:00 PM HDC meeting

Present: Kim Balkcom, Chair; Matthew McGeorge, Vice-Chair, Gregory Maxwell and Lauren Drury.

Absent: Erinn Calise, Kristen Carron and Andrew Barkley.

Staff: Lea Anthony Hitchen, Assistant Town Planner.

Ms. Kim Balkcom, Chair of the Commission, started the meeting at 6:15 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.

Historic District Commission Hearings

- 1. Russell Knight**
163 Peirce Street; Map 73 A.P. 3 Lot 91
Replace Windows & Minor Alteration - FINAL

Ms. Balkcom read the applicable standard into the record, being commission number 4 and 8. *Standard 4* states that all proposals architectural changes shall be appropriate to the original design of the building or to later changes which have historic significance of their own. *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 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.

Mr. Russell Knight of 163 Peirce Street presented the application. He explained that he would like to replace a total of six windows, four of which are located in a mud room and two located in a stairway.

Mr. Maxwell inquired as to the number of original windows in the home. Mr. Knight the original windows are located on the front of the house; the back side is a hodge podge of window types. He added that 5 of the 6 – one is an aluminum insert and the other 4 have channels for ropes and weights but there are no ropes. Mr. Knight noted the window on the second floor is a 50s era designed window with vinyl tracks which have significantly deteriorated.

Mr. McGeorge commented that one can see how the home has been added to over the years; based on location and the fact the proposed work is to a later addition he has no problem with the application.

Mr. Maxwell questioned the reason behind the request to reduce the size a window. Mr. Knight explained that particular window is due to the proximity to the staircase as the bottom of the window sits on top of a stair which is not safe for people coming down the stairs plus it looks cumbersome. He is in the middle of remodeling the interior and would like to reduce the size of the window. He asked for guidance with regard to the exterior appearance of closing the lower half of the window.

Mr. McGeorge suggested maintaining the original exterior window trim at the sill and casing and infill former lower sash with siding or fixed panel.

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 Russell Knight.
- 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. 1850 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 building.

Motion by Mr. Maxwell to approve the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness at 163 Peirce Street to replace six windows, reducing the size of one of the windows. This is consistent with Commission Standard #4 & 8.

Seconded by Mr. McGeorge.

VOTE: 4 – 0.

2. Jeff and Beth Corcoran
38 ½ Castle Street; Map 85 A.P. 1 Lot 107
Replace Windows & Minor Alteration – FINAL

Ms. Balkcom read the applicable standard into the record, being commission number 4 and 8. *Standard 4* states that all proposals architectural changes shall be appropriate to the original design of the building or to later changes which have historic significance of their own. *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 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.

Mr. Keith Briggs, project manager of Davitt Design Group and Ms. Beth Corcoran, property owner, represented the application.

Mr. Briggs explained the owners ended up earlier this year in an involuntary remodel due to a water freeze pipe and break; the entire house has been completely gutted to the studs. He noted they are in the process of a complete interior rebuild and would like to take advantage of the opportunity to replace

windows because it is the right time to do it with everything else that is going on. Mr. Briggs stated the plan is to replace 11 windows “in kind,” 2 of which we would like to redesign to accommodate a better flow of the kitchen which would be to merge 2 windows together and shorten the height. He added the location of this change is on the south side of the structure which cannot be seen from Castle Street; only the front façade is visible from the street. He is looking to install the Anderson 400 Series 2/2 grille pattern which matches closely to the existing 7/8” wide grille.

Ms. Balkcom commented that the issue with this house is it of its simplicity and her preference is that the original windows remain. She noted the Anderson 400 Series has been approved in prior applications but her main concern is changing the window exterior frame and altering the window height is not something she would approve. Ms. Balkcom noted the structure is so simple with symmetrical windows being one of its main character defining features that she would not like to see the windows altered.

Mr. Briggs asked the Commission to consider the fact that the house cannot be seen from the street. Ms. Balkcom said as far as she is concerned that fact is irrelevant.

Mr. McGeorge asserted he would approve the new Anderson 400 Series windows. Mr. Maxwell interjected noting that as long as the windows are simulated divided lites. Mr. McGeorge went on to say that the staff report notes the structure might have been a barn at one point so it has been reconfigured; with this specific site and specific building he did not necessarily have a problem approving the window modification.

Ms. Corcoran explained there are no windows being removed; the windows are being closer together and shortened. She confirmed windows are not being eliminated. Ms. Corcoran mentioned there are surrounding properties that have done inappropriate work and she is simply trying to do the right thing by getting approval from the HDC.

Ms. Balkcom felt as though she was compromising with the Applicant by allowing the approval of the Anderson 400 Series window which technically does not meet the standard.

Ms. Drury agreed that the proposed window alteration appears awkward since the other windows are symmetrical.

Ms. Balkcom suggested to “ghost” the left south facing window which means leaving the framing and casing of the original window and install a window well behind the sink – this would leave evidence of the original appearance of the historic structure.

The Commission reviewed different options of approval with the Applicant to which the Applicant decided to referee the window modification.

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 Jeff and Beth Corcoran.
- 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.1870 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 (for window replacement only).
- 6) The kitchen window work would affect the character defining elements of the existing building; therefore this portion of the project will be refereed.

Motion by Mr. McGeorge to approve the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness at 38 ½ Castle Street for window replacement only. This is consistent with Commission Standards #8.

The south side window modification is to be refereed by Commissioners McGeorge and Maxwell.

Seconded by Mr. Maxwell.

VOTE: 4 - 0.

**3. Hill & Harbour Holding LLC
408 Main Street; Map 75 A.P. 3 Lot 101
Signage - FINAL**

Ms. Christine Redfern-Kass represented the application.

Ms. Balkcom stated 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.

Mr. McGeorge had no issues with the proposed signage but warned of the dark skies principles in terms of up lighting. Ms. Redfern noted she is working with Mancini Lighting who has been very easy to work with.

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 Hill & Harbour Holding LLC (Christine Redfern).
- 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.1855 early 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 404 Main Street for new signage. This is consistent with Commission Standard #5.

Seconded by Mr. McGeorge.

Mr. McGeorge stated the overall renovation and project is great; the Applicant should be proud of it and the HDC should highlight it and use it in a presentation as what owners should be doing.

VOTE: 4 – 0.

**4. Hill & Harbour Holding LLC
408 Main Street; Map 75 A.P. 3 Lot 101
Replace Window, Roofing, Replacement In Kind - FINAL**

Ms. Christine Redfern represented the application.

Ms. Balkcom read Commission Standard 8 into the record as it applies to this application. *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.

Ms. Redfern explained she would like to replace the existing single plate glass picture window in the front of the building as it currently leaks and is not repairable. She noted the new window will be a Pella Architectural 450 Series fixed window with the same dimensions.

Ms. Redfern also inquired about removing the asbestos siding off of the building. The Commissioners had no problems with the asbestos removal as there are numerous layers of paint on the existing siding and the top layer gives it a “Disney World” appearance.

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

Mr. McGeorge made the following findings of fact:

- 1) A written application has been submitted by Hill & Harbour Holding LLC (Christine Redfern).

- 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 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 408 Main Street for window replacement, asbestos siding removal and roofing replacement. This is consistent with Commission Standard #5.

Seconded by Ms. Drury.

Mr. McGeorge stated the overall renovation and project is great; the Applicant should be proud of it and the HDC should highlight it and use it in a presentation as what owners should be doing.

VOTE: 4 – 0.

- 5. The Division Group
1727 Division Road; Map 79 A.P. 12 Lot 86
Complete Demolition– FINAL
Architectural Style: 1789/1851 early Republican/Greek Revival
(PRELIMINARY MEETING)
(Continued from the September 9, 2015 meeting)**

Motion by Mr. McGeorge to continue the hearing to November 18, 2015.
Seconded by Ms. Drury.

VOTE: 4 – 0.

Historic District Commission Business

1. DISCUSSION: The Town is considering amending Chapter 260 of the Town Code, Zoning Ordinance, Article XI Historic Districts. The amendments would enact a demolition by owner neglect ordinance to help avoid the deterioration of those parcels listed in §260-58. No action or decision is required.

Ms. Hitchen informed the Commission that she and other Planning staff are working on preparing and enacting a demolition by neglect ordinance, noting Providence and Newport have ordinances taken directly from state general law language.

2. MINUTES: Action on the minutes of the September 9, 2015.

Minutes tabled to next meeting.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Maxwell. Seconded by Ms. Drury. Adjourn at 7:30 p.m.

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

Lea Anthony Hitchen, Assistant Town Planner