

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES
August 10, 2016 Meeting
Town Council Chambers – 6:00 PM HDC meeting

Present: Matthew McGeorge, Vice-Chair, Erinn Carron, Lauren Drury,
Andrew Barkley, and Kristen Carron.

Absent: Kim Balkcom, Chair, and Gregory Maxwell

Staff: Lea Anthony Hitchen, Assistant Town Planner.

Mr. McGeorge, Vice-Chair of the Commission, started the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. McGeorge 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.

Mr. McGeorge 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. Mr. McGeorge explained the sequence for review of applications and its helpfulness to understand how the process works before the Board hears the applications. He 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.

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

Historic District Commission Hearings

- 1. Brian & Bethany Warburton
79 West Street; Map 84 AP 2 Lot 98
Addition – FINAL**

Mr. McGeorge noted the project must comply with Commission standards # 4 and 5. Standard 4 states all proposals for additions shall be appropriate to the original design of the building or to later changes which have historic significance of their own. 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.

Ms. Hitchen confirmed for the record that HDC member Andrew Barkley is not considered an “abutter” and can comment on this application.

Bethany and Brian Warburton, applicants and owners of the property, represented the application. They summarized that the request has essentially remained the same – to construct a 14’x24’ addition to the western side of the home with a 8’x22’ deck and 10’x22’ extension patio. The addition will include a new master bedroom and bathroom, remodeled kitchen, new deck and bulk head. A 4’x16’ second floor balcony is proposed to extend off of the master bedroom and new “Dutch style” dormers will be added to the existing shed-roofed dormers, two on the south side and one on the north side to match the ends of the home.

Ms. Warburton confirmed there are no zoning issues and there is no relief being sought with the proposed addition.

Mr. McGeorge recalled the comments made at the conceptual hearing being varying window styles which HDC asked for more consistency particularly on the front elevation, a few pieces of information missing relative to the back deck but in general the final submitted plan appears the comments have been addressed. Fundamentally the addition is in keeping with all the important aspects of what is considered in Mr. McGeorge’s opinion. In terms of the vinyl windows, in this particular case the HDC would approve the vinyl due to consistency in order what currently exists.

Ms. Warburton clarified Commissioner questions regarding the window specifications but did confirm the windows will be vinyl.

Mr. Barkley queried the bulkhead being moved to under the proposed deck and asked if there would be a “trapdoor” constructed to get to the bulkhead. Ms. Warburton asserted the proposed bulkhead will be under the deck knowing that if it were added to the back of the house it would require dimensional relief from the zoning board. She noted a trapdoor constructed into the deck will be used

to get to the bulkhead; rarely has the bulkhead been used so she felt this would not be an inconvenience.

With no further questions or comments regarding the application Mr. McGeorge asked for a motion.

Ms. Carron made the following findings of fact:

- 1) A written application has been submitted by Brian and Bethany Warburton.
- 2) The property in question is located within the East Greenwich Historic District, specifically 79 West Street.
- 3) The structure in question is a contributing building; it is representative of a c. 1920 Dutch Colonial building.
- 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 79 West Street for an addition to the existing structure as submitted. This is consistent with Commission Standards # 4 & 5.

Seconded by Ms. Calise.

No discussion on the motion.

VOTE: 5 – 0.

**2. Prospect Studio LLC
319 Main Street; Map 85 A.P. 1 Lot 194
Minor Modifications/Alterations, Partial Demolition,
Repair/Replace in Kind – CONCEPTUAL**

Mr. Jeff Butler, owner of the property, represented the application. Mr. Butler noted he engaged the services of Greg Maxwell of Prospect Studio, LLC to repair and restore the once mixed-use building as a follow-up to his last visit to the HDC which was last year.

Mr. Butler explained the proposal includes replacing the entire roof structure due to the poor condition; adding shed dormers which will improve the interior space; raise the main roof and ell roof ridges approximately 1'-8" allowing for a 3:12 pitch at dormers. He noted the new main roof will have a 8.25:12 pitch where there is currently a 7:12 pitch; the new ell roof will be kept at 14:12 pitch with new 5.5:12 pitch dormers.

Additionally the eaves will be rebuilt to match the existing details; the siding and exterior trim will be replaced as necessary to match existing. The proposal includes adding two recessed storefront entries on the Main Street façade with flanking windows as illustrated as well as adding a bracketed portico to the apartment entry door on the Main Street side.

Mr. Butler stated he is very happy with the proposal compared with the plan he submitted last year (a mansard roof). Mr. Butler thought that the proposal will aesthetically look better and the building will fit in with the surrounding area better than in its existing state.

The HDC members queried Mr. Butler about the existing retaining wall and back staircases that he intends to leave as is.

Mr. McGeorge noted his concern with the massing of the project but in looking at the adjacent mansard style building the proposal would carry the line at the street okay. He added that under the circumstances he was of the opinion the proposal is a good solution.

In terms of a final plan review, Mr. McGeorge asserted he would like to see materials to be used, notes and design details on the railings, elevation scaled details, shed dormer information, specifications and notes on the storefront elevation. Ms. Hitchen added that a drawing/sketch should also be submitted as to how the proposal will look next to, as it relates to the abutting existing buildings so it does not look out of proportion.

The Commissioners conceptually approved the submitted proposal.

**3. Dean & Kristin Benjamin
72 Spring Street; Map 85 A.P. 1 Lot 321
Minor Modification & Fencing Enclosure**

(Ms. Calise recused herself from the application.)

Mr. McGeorge stated the project must comply with Commission standard # 4. Standard 4 states 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.

Mr. Dean Benjamin represented the application. He stated the house was constructed in 1996; the house was a spec home which he has upgraded over the years. The side steps and decking were original pressure treated lumber when the house was constructed 20 years ago and it has since deteriorated with loose balusters, cupping boards, etc. The front original steps were precast concrete with metal handrails which have sunk into the ground and were pulling away from the house. Mr. Benjamin admitted he had already replaced the side and front steps due to it being a safety hazard with mahogany steps and cedar posts.

Mr. McGeorge commented the final product looks really good.

Mr. Benjamin stated he did not think he needed HDC review for this type of project but he was proved wrong.

Mr. Benjamin added that the second part of his application consists of adding a trash enclosure between the existing trellis/gate and side landing steps - the enclosure will consist of two panels, constructed of cedar to match the existing fence panels directly behind it.

The Commission had no objections to the request.

With no further questions or comments regarding the application Mr. McGeorge asked for a motion.

Mr. Barkley made the following findings of fact:

- 1) A written application has been submitted by Dean and Kristin Benjamin.
- 2) The property in question is located within the East Greenwich Historic District, specifically 72 Spring Street.
- 3) The structure in question is a noncontributing building; built in 1996.
- 4) The building does not contribute to the historic and architectural significance of the district.
- 5) The work proposed by the applicant would improve the character defining elements of the existing building.

Motion by Mr. Barkley to approve the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness at 72 Spring Street for side and front step alterations and adding a trash enclosure as submitted. This is consistent with Commission Standard # 4.

Seconded by Ms. Carron.

No discussion on the motion.

VOTE: 5 – 0.

4. Edward T. Gallucci
110 Main Street; Map 85 A.P. 1 Lot 60
Window Replacement – FINAL

Mr. McGeorge read the standard into the record stating the project must comply with Commission standard #8 which 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. McGeorge stated this situation is probably the most egregious case of nonconformity particularly considering its location and significance on King Street. He felt as though the vinyl windows are a significant inappropriate window replacement.

Ms. Calise questioned the whereabouts of the original windows that were removed. Mr. Gallucci asserted the five windows were badly rotted and were either kicked or pushed in where it was a noticeable problem. He explained he attempted to reglaze the windows and he could have pushed in the windows with two fingers as it was a really bad and dangerous situation. It was his opinion the situation was dire and dangerous and he thought he was matching the muntins and putting the grates back. Mr. Gallucci thought he was doing the right thing; if he had known he would have come before the Board. He reiterated the situation was dire and had become a safety issue and he was able to obtain the vinyl windows in one week. He truly did not mean for this to happen but it was unsafe.

Ms. Hitchen queried if the tenant ever mentioned to Mr. Gallucci about the windows ready to fall in or weather elements getting into his store. Mr. Gallucci said water was getting into the store but the store owner never said anything to him because he is busy and never noticed it.

Mr. McGeorge suggested giving the Applicant the benefit of the doubt by saying he had to install temporary windows to solve the problem; as far as he is concerned the vinyl windows are temporary that will need to be removed and replaced with something more appropriate. Mr. McGeorge recommended working together to find a solution.

Mr. Gallucci likened that idea. Mr. McGeorge researching a true divided insulated lite window that has a heavier muntin profile but considering the subject area is on the ground floor relatively smaller openings that would be the most appropriate solution. He added that the subject structure is one of the best buildings in town and the Applicant basically erased a significant amount of historic significance of the structure by removing the windows and replacing with a vinyl product.

Mr. Gallucci questioned if there was any way to work with what he had already installed and incorporate a grate system for the front of the window and paint it and put it over the window in order to give the window depth.

Ms. Calise said she was not wild about keeping the vinyl windows in this particular building. Mr. McGeorge reiterated the HDC reviews applications on a case by case basis and compromises have been made on other structures within

the district. He noted that if the HDC compromises on this particular building the district is doomed and he did not believe there is a compromise for this sash.

Ms. Carron asserted if the HDC went along with Mr. Gallucci's idea the replaced window will have a vinyl interior grill and an applied exterior grill will be another material. Mr. Gallucci said yes as he was just trying to come up with a solution. Mr. McGeorge said the solution is to replace the five windows.

Ms. Calise asked again about the whereabouts of the original windows. Mr. Gallucci confirmed the windows essentially fell apart when they were removed.

Mr. McGeorge did not think he would approve retrofitting a bad decision and Ms. Drury thought Mr. Gallucci's idea would make the windows look worse.

Mr. McGeorge was going to call for a motion since he did not feel as though the HDC and Applicant could reach a compromised solution to maintaining the installed vinyl sash. He preferred the HDC and Applicant work together to remedy the situation at hand. Staff suggested the application be continued in order for the Applicant to research a better window option.

Mr. Barkley advised the Applicant that five custom wood or aluminum clad windows will definitely have a higher price point than the installed vinyl windows; he suggested researching the Kolbe, Pella, Custom Built, Anderson, and Marvin products.

The Commission recommended Mr. Gallucci research alternative window ideas, prices and a timeframe for replacement and path to compliance which will also make sense for the Applicant economically for next month's meeting. The HDC simply desired to make the situation right and that it is resolved.

Mr. Barkley volunteered to put together a list of window vendors that may be helpful for Mr. Gallucci's project.

The Commission unanimously voted to continue the application to September 14, 2016.

5. Christopher George Isdepski
58 Main Street; Map 85 A.P. 1 Lot 55
Signage – FINAL

Mr. McGeorge 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. Christopher Isdepski, owner of Perfect Pooch and applicant for South County Photo represented the application. Also present was Kerri Gotauco, his business partner and Mickey, the owner of Silver Spoon Bakery, a business located also located at 58 Main Street.

Mr. Isdepski explained that since submitting the signage application he has talked to the owner of Silver Spoon Bakery who has designed a new sign schematic that essentially “cleans up” the sign clutter on this building. We are proposing to have projecting signage with Silver Spoon Bakery on top, Perfect Pooch in the middle and South County Photo on the bottom. One bracket will be used instead of multiple brackets which creates better advertising and exposure.

Mr. McGeorge did not have any issues with the application; he felt signage is relatively reversible and does not affect the character defining elements of the building, it is more just the style of the signage.

The Commission felt the proposed schematic drawn by the owner of Silver Spoon Bakery was a much better solution compared to the hodge podge of signage on the building currently.

Ms. Hitchen questioned if the submitted type of sign will still be used. Mr. Isdepski said yes, Silver Spoon Bakery, Perfect Pooch and South County Photo will be designed by Gannon Sign.

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

Ms. Carron made the following findings of fact:

- 1) A written application has been submitted by Christopher George Isdepski.
- 2) The property in question is located within the East Greenwich Historic District, specifically 58 Main Street.
- 3) The structure in question is a contributing building; it is representative of a c.1770 Colonial building.
- 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 58 Main Street for signage as submitted. This is consistent with Commission Standard #5.

Seconded by Mr. Barkley

No discussion on the motion.

VOTE: 5 – 0.

**6. Nicholas Grigorian
178 Main Street; Map 85 A.P. 1 Lot 65
Minor Modification – FINAL**

Applicant did not file application in time and was therefore not heard.

Historic District Commission Business

1. MINUTES: Action on the minutes of the May 11, 2016, June 8, 2016, and July 13, 2016 meetings.

Motion by Ms. Calise to approve the May 11, 2016 minutes as written.
Seconded by Ms. Carron. Approved 5 – 0.

June and July minutes tabled to the following month.

2. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS/OTHER: Commission members are invited to comment on any observations they have made within the District, ask questions about past approvals, request updates on violations, etc.

The following observations were made by Commissioners: fence being installed in vicinity of rear of 461 Main Street (staff is unaware even though fence requires administrative approval).

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Barkley. 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