



Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

2023-03-28

7:00 PM

Online, Town Hall, 472 Main St, Acton, MA 01720

Present: David Honn (DH), Art Leavens (AL), Zach Taillefer (ZT), Anita Rogers (AR), David Shoemaker (DS), Barbara Rhines (BR) (Acton Cultural Resources Coordinator), Fran Arsenault (FA) (Select Board Liaison)

Absent:

Opening:

Chair David Honn opened the meeting at 7:02 pm and read the “remote meeting notice” due to COVID-19.

1. Regular Business

- A. Citizen's Concerns – None.
- B. Approval of Meeting Minutes – March 14, 2023: DS moved their adoption, seconded by AL. AL, AR, DS, and DH voted to approve. Minutes approved.
- C. Review Project Tracking Spreadsheet / Chair Updates:
 - 1. Outstanding COAs/CNAs/Denials – none.
 - 2. 96 Main Street NOWs (Application #2305) – Notices of Waiver out.
 - 3. 25 Windsor Heat Pump CNA (Application #2309) – Discuss later tonight.
 - 4. Asa Parlin RFP Responses – DH; Previous architect retired; additional funds procured. ~\$1.2M available. RFP out in February 2023; 5 responses. DH will be on the committee.

2. New/Special Business [or other applicable agenda items]

- A. 7:15. Public Hearing: 446 Main Street Application # 2306 Slate Roof Replacement. DS recuses himself. DH reads the announcement of the Public Hearing. No applicant was present. The application and the MACRIS form were reviewed. Photos by staff and HDC members were viewed. No gutters, copper ridge cap; steel at bottom of the roof segment parallel to Main St. See small metal hooks that appear to be part of the fastening system. May be Vermont slate. Most of the slate pieces appear to be in acceptable condition. The applicants made an estimate of ~\$15,000 for asphalt, and of the order of \$100,000 for a replacement slate roof. With an estimate of the roof surface, some informal queries of



slate installers suggested \$4200/square, yielding ~\$58,000 for re-roofing with slate – a completely informal guess, but would be for a complete replacement. DH reminds the committee that the purpose of the Bylaws is to preserve. Do we allow replacement of the roof? AL: 1) Does the re-roofing meet our requirements? There is no consideration of cost in answering this question; under the Bylaw; cost is only an issue if we deny a COA and then turn to the question of a Certificate of Hardship. Judges the COA is not appropriate. Reads from the Design Guidelines regarding Roofs; it states explicitly that slate roofs are to be preserved whenever possible. The District is prominent and the house is quite visible. AR: Would like to know if repair is possible. AL's points are well taken. It would be quite a loss for it to be removed. Would like to find a way to help defray expenses. Cost aside, the roof should not be replaced with asphalt. DH: Has asked if a removal and re-installation is less expensive; the answer is 'no' – labor dominates the cost. ZT: Without information on a cost for repair or a quote, we don't have a firm number for the cost of re-roofing. Wonders if spot repair is possible. Also wonders about subsidies or offsets for the cost. Believes it is inappropriate to remove the slate roof. DH: After research and pondering, does not believe any HDC would approve the replacement with asphalt. The lifespan of a slate roof is of the order of a factor of 3 longer life, and has a high resale value when selling the house. Agrees that this is not appropriate for a replacement with asphalt. This is the only house with a slate roof in the Center Acton HDC. CPC funding can, rarely, be used for private houses. There does need to be a public benefit. The traffic engineer says that in 2014, 18250 cars passed in front of this house, as a measure of the visibility of this fine house. A church in South Acton was successful in a conversion to condominiums. DH would support a request to CPC for support for repair or replacement. The consensus is that it would be inappropriate to remove the slate; it must be repaired or replaced. AL: If we deny the COA, we must consider the hardship exception. DH: Granting the hardship is not allowed if it will be detrimental to the structure in question. Will need to take it up at the next meeting of 11 April due to lack of time and absence of the applicants. Citizens: Terra Friedrichs: Agrees with the consensus. The owner has already benefited from the slate and should have planned for the consequences of the slate roof. Scott Kutil: Also agrees with the consensus of the HDC. However, SK believes that the application is inadequate; no discussion of the need for replacement, and estimates for repair and for reinstallation of slate. Should also indicate past investments in maintaining the roof, showing that there is not neglect.

- B. 7:54. Public Hearing (Continued) 267 Central Street Application #2218 Demolition and New Construction. Dan Barton (DB), the architect, and Marc Foster (MF), the applicant, and Nicole Kirouac (NK), DB's colleague, join. DB: thanks the committee for patience. Looked at the design to work with the existing front house structure, removal of the 'L' behind the house and removal of the garage; and look at the design concept for the scale of the 'Barn' to ensure that it aligns. A solution has been found that seems to work with the guidance received. Renderings are shown. An attempt was made to re-create the original façade insofar as it is known, including some asymmetries in the original. The 'L' is being reduced, some dormers were added. The 'Barn' gable is not facing the street, the 'box' is smaller, and a shed roof in the back is added. The goal was to diminish the Barn in the overall scope. There are steps back and forward along the street. The front two buildings are in one vernacular and the back in a slightly different vernacular. The



front façade has all major known historical elements reproduced; storm shutters are added. On the parking face, there is some more complexity. AR: Appreciate the changes to the scale. Feels like a very positive motion. Will be smaller than surrounding houses, which is nice. DB: this is not a final color but will play with this variable to serve best the built environment. AR: Expanding the single dormer to a double dormer on the Pearl Street side of the el might be a change that could be considered. Look into covers over every door. AL: Thinks this is terrific, with appropriate massing, not overwhelming the historic piece. ZT: Agree that this is moving in the right direction. The HDC's sentiment was captured. DS: Agrees. DH: It is a good direction. It captures the quirky buildings that have been assembled over time. Considering the Pearl St façade, one could consider a window becoming a door and introducing an old granite surface for sitting outside. Shutters on the main house is a very nice touch. DB: did not want to make a 'multi-family' appearance. Want to keep the Barn as simple as possible on the Pearl St façade. Landscape is in discussion. 4 units are preserved. Citizens: Terra Friedrichs. Thanks for the rework; hope to have the renderings online, and would like to have the planned building façade materials available for all to see and touch. Asks that approval wait for a firm proposal. BR: the time for the application renewal is coming up. 25 April would be good for the next visit. DB: the application will be revised to be consistent with the current vision. The public hearing is continued to April 25.

- C. 8:20. Preliminary Discussion: 615 Massachusetts Avenue Renovation/Addition. Lisa Adamiak (LA), architect, and Daphne Schneider (DS), applicant, join. Current and historic photos are shown, and then renderings. Design was modified per HDC comments at previous meetings. The stone walls of the garage/barn are motivating the placement of the Barn. The connector to the house is moved back just a bit to give texture to the point it meets the Barn. BR: can set up a public hearing for April 25th. AR: An informal contribution (AR is recused for a formal application) – finds the current design good. AL: Do we know when the connector was built? LA: do not know. Will be taking down the upper floor of the connector, and the sunroof will be moved over. AL: this is to demolish some house elements, but the 1st floor walls will stay where they are. LA: The L in the back of the house will also be demolished as it is an add-on; difficult to see from the street of reference now, and will be a bit more obvious in the new design. ZT: The chimneys are non-functional? The lack of chimneys in the rendering is striking; faux chimneys might be a nice addition, as any house of this age would have several chimneys. LA: Indeed, the chimneys are not functional. Have not discussed this idea, not planning on it. ZT: At the location of the demolished garage – how will the foundations be interfaced? What will be removed? LA: The existing old foundation will be hidden under the Barn, and a concrete foundation will be poured around it. DS: Likes the overall sense of the new design. Reuse of materials is highly preferred. LA: some windows can be reused, and front windows will be reused. Will reuse anything possible. The structural engineer did not think the present back structure was suitable for reuse. DH: Similar to the Pearl St house-connector-barn topology. All clapboard presently; maybe put a different exterior treatment, a simpler surface, on the connector for visual texture. Faux chimneys can be quite successful. DSchneider: The connector has significant fire damage and requires replacement. The back 'L' is where the plumbing stack would have been installed. The foundation is different. AL: Our demolition guidelines require us to have



evidence of the need for demolition. DH: for the Public Hearing: photos and documentation to help us move forward will be helpful. BR: will be putting the legal notice together.

- D. 8:55. Application # 2307 580 Massachusetts Avenue Window Replacement. Marc Foster (MF), applicant, joins. Looking to replace 9 more of the windows. The same replacement windows installed in the same manner is proposed. Jeld-Win 2500 series wood window. AL: Looks fine. AR: Full or half-screens? MF: looks like a full screen. AR: Some discussion of aluminum-clad sash windows, and with a full screen one could not tell the difference. Maintenance of a metal-clad window would be easier. For the windows not easily seen from the street this could be acceptable. MF: thanks but no thanks. DS: Good to see the building well maintained. ZT, DH: no further comment. DH: moves that we approve 9 replacement windows at 518 Mass Ave with the Jeld-Win 2500 series windows. AL, AR, DS, ZT and DH voted to approve. AR will be the liaison.
- E. 9:03. Application #2310 94 Main Street Window Replacement. Applicant not present. DH: A denial was given for vinyl windows. An alternative with an aluminum clad Pella Pro-line replacement was proposed; grill between the glass. BR: Saw the window; plastic on the outside and wood on the inside, so not in the scope of windows we have approved. DH: HDC has not approved windows with grills between glass. AR sent some suggestions to the applicant – Brosco, Windsor, Jeldwin 2500 replacement sash. Have not heard back. BR: propose to have it on the meeting planned for the 11 April. BR will contact the applicant to try to bring this to a close at the next meeting.
- F. 9:30. Applications # 230 and #2308 25 Windsor Avenue Window Replacement/Restoration; Heat Pump installation. Josh Spero joins. DH: The Heat Pump will be in the back, and all the piping is within the house. Will be a CNA. On the windows: A previous application was not voted; extended to today. Best to vote, close with the applicant's agreement, and move forward. DH makes a motion that #2230 be denied; AR seconds. AL, AR, DS, ZT and DH voted to approve the motion; applicant agrees with the denial. AL will be the liaison. #2308 is shared. Restoration of windows proposed. No physical change to the exterior appearance. Spring balances will be installed, rabbeted into the sash. The visit from DH and AR was very helpful. Consensus is that this is a repair and thus a CNA. DH will write this one up.

3. Consent Items

None

1. Adjournment

At 9:26 DH moves to adjourn the meeting, AL seconds. DH takes a roll call vote: AL, AR, DH, DS, ZT all approve.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting.

- #2306 (Application in all cases)
- #2218



- 615 Mass Ave photos and renderings
- #2307
- #2310
- #2230 and #2308