

Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

2024-07-09

7:00 PM

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

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

Absent: David Shoemaker is unavailable and thus absent

Opening:

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

1. Regular Business.

- A. Citizen's Concerns – None
- B. Approval of Meeting Minutes – 11 June, 2024: DH moved their adoption, seconded by AL. AR, DH, AL approve. ZT abstains; not present at June 11 meeting. Minutes approved.
- C. Review Project Tracking Spreadsheet / Chair Updates:
Outstanding and Completed COAs/CNAs/Denials
 - Amendment for 25-27 School Street - details for siding stair tower (AR)
 - CNA for 28-30 School Street gutter (DH) DONE
 - 17 Woodbury Lane (Asa Parlin House) MHC Update: MHC reviewed and approved the plans to date by letter; HDC to conduct continued review of project; FA: SB working on funding.

Upcoming July 23

 - 544 Mass. Ave. # 2401 windows PH
 - 111-113 School Street violation discussion
 - 10 Wood Lane pergola pre-application discussion; Owners seeking preliminary advice before hiring architect

2. New/Special Business or other applicable agenda items

- A. 7:15 Application #2418 450 Main Street Public Hearing: Proposed Window Replacement. Eugenio Fernandez Ventosa (EFV), Owner/Applicant present. DH invokes the Rule of Necessity because both David Shoemaker and Zach Taillefer are

300-foot abutters and thus unable to participate in the hearing. David Shoemaker is unavailable and thus absent. Without David Shoemaker and Zach Tallefer, there would be only three HDC members present and thus the HDC would be without a quorum. Zach Tallefer acknowledges that he will participate under the Rule of Necessity. EFV explains project, consisting of replacement of 13 windows, one of which was destroyed by winds in a recent storm. The windows being replaced were installed in the 1990s or early 2000s, and they need to be replaced because they are no longer functional. The building is a converted stone barn built beginning in 1907 and continuing until about 1923. DH: All windows to be re[placed in the stone walls? EFV: Seven are in the stone walls; six are in the gable ends. Shows photos of the windows. DH: Does the project include the big window wall in the front of the house? EFV: No. Leaving those for another day. All current windows are two-over-two double-hung with storm windows. Intends to replace them with Marvin Elevate double-hung two-over-two windows. DH: Board Comments: AR: HDC has approved Marvin Elevate before. How cased in the gable ends? EFV: Front opening reduced to rough opening; using new-construction windows rather than replacements; better flashed. AR: Cover frame with trim or butted against? EFV: Butted against, with trim over the flange. AR: Consider windows that come with wood casing. Can order with extended sill horns. Windows cased that way look more like wood windows. In ordering the surround, can be Azek. AL: Fine with the proposed Marvin Elevate windows as described. Would note that the windows are so far from the Main Street that the use of non-traditional materials as distinguished from traditional materials could not reasonably be discerned by the unaided eye and thus likely are excluded from HDC jurisdiction under Bylaw P, sec. 9.1.10. DH: Not really relevant; we have approved Marvin Elevates before. ZT: No questions. DH: AR covered all of my concerns. AR: Moves to approve the replacement of the 13 windows as set forth in the application with the Marvin Elevate, new-construction windows described in the application. AL seconds. Vote: AR: aye, AL: aye, ZT: aye, DH: aye. CoA approved; AR to write the CoA.

B. 7:31 Application #2419 25-27 School Street: Porch, Window and Entry Details. Alex Mota (AM), Owner/Applicant present. AM puts drawing attached to the application on screen, explaining that it was prepared by DH and AR after visiting the project in order to provide guidance to AM in finishing the front facade of the house. DH: Explains the drawing. Top image depicts (1) appropriate decking to be installed 20" above grade using 1x6 wood or synthetic material such as Trex, (2) appropriate placement of the four posts (6x6, wrapped by ¾" wood trim) supporting the porch roof, and (3) the stairs from the front door to grade. The middle image depicts (1) deck lighting – no recessed lights; use surface-mounted fixture(s) – something simple, i.e., a 12" by 12" fixture, 4 or 5" deep with black metal frame, and (2) decking materials described in top image. The bottom image depicts the front elevation showing (1) crown molding to cover porch-roof fascia, and (2) a wood trellis or vertical-board skirt covering the space between the decking and the ground. AR: Appreciate that the deck is something AM would like to avoid, at least now, but it has to be part of the long-term plan. Peculiar for posts to be on the ground. The posts need a platform on which to rest, even if not immediately. AM: Will figure something out. The two internal posts might look better if closer together. Agrees that the posts to ground looks silly. Will figure something out for the platform. DH: Consider a light between each of the posts. AM: Could have one for each of the three

bays. Would prefer vertical boards for skirt like those on a house on River Street rather than lattice for the skirt. DH: Moves to approve the design of the front facade as depicted in the drawing, as modified in the discussion. AL seconds. Vote: AR: aye, AL: aye, ZT: aye, DH: aye. CoA approved. DH to write. AM: Need approval for mail boxes? DH: Not in HDC jurisdiction. AM: All set.

C. 7:54 Application #2420 508 Main Street. Replace window. Jen Stephens (JS), Owner/Applicant, present. JS: Due to an interior renovation of kitchen, have to replace existing window. Propose three two-over-two casement windows aligned side-by-side on the south-facing wall of rear part of house, replacing three larger windows on the same wall. The current windows are not visible from Main Street, the governing way, but the outer one foot of the proposed replacements are visible at a substantial distance from Main Street. As shown in the attachment to the application, the proposed windows are Andersen 400 series casement windows with white trim. The windows to be replaced are not original. DH: Are the other windows in the house original? JS: Yes. DH: The low e-coating typically used in replacement windows make them darker than clear glass. You are exempt from the energy code, and Andersen may make windows with clear glass. Might want to consider clear glass. It would be consistent with the lighting provided by the original windows. AR: Moves to approve the installation of the new windows described in the application, copy attached, i.e., three Andersen 400 series casement windows with four-lite pattern, with simulated divided lites as indicated in the attachment to the application. CoA to include a recommendation of clear glass for the windows. AL seconds. Vote: AR: aye, AL: aye, ZT: aye, DH: aye. AR to write CoA.

D. 8:11 Application 2422 28-30 School Street. Replace railing and install new railings on granite stairs. Lisa Bullock (LB), Owner/Applicant, present. LB: The house is in need of railings. The one that exists leading off the front porch consists of a plastic rail attached to two wooden posts. The posts are fine; the railing is not. There are no railings on the granite steps, one set of steps leading off the walkway onto the front sidewalk and the other leading from a walkway to the driveway. Wants to replace the plastic railing with a cast-iron, Victorian railing and to attach similar railings on iron posts installed on the two sets of granite steps, all as shown in the photos attached to the application. The metal posts will be square, 1 5/16 inches in width as shown in diagram attached to application, and the railings themselves will be a Volute style, as shown in the documents attached to application, to match the style of the house. DH: Good for 1874. The cast-iron railing on the porch will be Volute and will be attached to the existing wood posts. None of the railings will have balusters. Might add a railing on the front steps coming off the porch. DH: Two ways to anchor the metal posts into the granite steps, but recommends using a core drill to cut a 3" hole in the stone, inserting the post into the hole, and then using grout to solidify, holding the post in place. Important to bring the railing in from the side slabs, at least four inches. AR: Moves approval of the proposed railings, as described and shown in the application and its attachments, railings to be cast iron, Volute style as shown and posts of new railings to be 1 5/16" metal per diagram appended to application, installed by means of core-drilled hole at least 4" from granite sides, with grout to solidify the post, no balusters. Railings to be finished by Owner as described in application. AL: seconds motion. Vote: AR: aye, AL: aye, ZT: aye, DH: aye. AL to draft CoA.

E. 8:38 49 Windsor Ave. Preliminary discussion of proposed demolition of chimney on

workshop behind house. Ben Glazer (BG), Owner, present. BG: Seeks to improve the interior of the workshop, and Town Building Inspector refused to issue necessary permits because the 140-year-old, brick chimney (apparently used to vent a stove no longer in the workshop) is supported by a wood platform, supported by wood braces (BG showed picture of the braced platform), which the Inspector deemed unsafe. Inspector would allow the chimney to remain if a licensed structural engineer signed off on its safety. BG seeks HDC guidance on options, including removing the chimney. Public comment: Anne Forbes, founding member of HDC, unable to attend, sent note stating that the building and its chimney has significant historic importance, and she believes it's important that the visible part of the chimney remain. DH: Agrees. As long as the Building Inspector did not condemn the building, there are two options. First, finish the chimney with 18" footing, removing the wood brackets. BG: That would be very expensive, requiring floor cuts. DH: Second, make the chimney a faux chimney, from the roof up, with load distributed properly among the joists. This is something that has been done and approved with other properties. AR: Building Inspector will want an opinion of a licensed structural engineer regarding the safety of the project. BG: Will I have to take down and rebuild? AR: I don't think so. Ask the contractor with whom you are working for some names of structural engineers. DH: Even if the appearance of the chimney is not altered by the fix, we will want to sign off on it, so in that event, you should apply for a CNA. There is no fee or need to appear, but we use them to keep track of what has been done to historic buildings.

3. Consent Items

None

1. Adjournment

8:53 DH moves to adjourn the meeting, AR seconds. DH takes a roll call vote: AR, DH, AL, ZT all approve.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting.

- All relevant Applications and Documents, in Docushare