

Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes
2024-07-23
7:00 PM

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

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

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 – Michaela Moran (MM) joins. The screen porch project is proceeding. The angle of the roof was still in discussion. If the roof were to be more steep slope, it would block the windows above it. MM would like to move to a flat roof, with a parapet around the periphery to hide the fact that it is a flat roof. Work is stopped until a decision can be taken with approval from the HDC. The footprint is set as the floor work is done. MM: it would take an expert to look at that. A rapid decision is desired. AL: believes it should have a Notice of Waiver (NOW) for a reconsideration of the issue. AR: fine with discussing it later in the meeting. DH: invites MM to return at a target of opportunity; rejoins at 19:35. BR shows a sketch. The extension of the roof, if the pitch were retained, would interfere with the windows. AR: could raise the roof for the flat approach, and a very nice rake detail this could be attractive. 2/12 slope might be ok for shingles. DH: if the roof is higher, the fact that the roof is flat will be less apparent. MM: can't even make 2/12. Gingerbread might be good, echoing or copying the current decoration elsewhere on the eave. AL: no objection the design. Might return to the preceding system; could vote on it, and hold the decision until the NOW has had 10 days in the field (August 4). DS, ZT; design is fine, but the procedure we follow will make a precedent. MM: could ask abutters in person? was a practice before. AL: 10 days is in the statute, so that does not help. We will file the amended COA after 10 days. ZT wrote the original COA; will add an amendment. AR: Suggests a search of photos for some porches in e.g., Concord on Hubbard St. to try to get a more concrete view. Would be great to have an architect to get the design and its rendering done well. Don't want to see the metal drip edge on the fascia or on the rake. DH moves to amend the previous COA to eliminate the sloped roof; will be flat. Fascia with molding detail and decorative feature on the fascia board. Recommend

that the height of the porch be raised insofar as possible. AL Seconded. AL, AR, ZT, DH approve

B. Approval of Meeting Minutes – 9 July Minutes. DH moved their adoption, seconded by AL. AR, DH, ZT AL approve. DS abstains; not present at 9 July meeting. Minutes approved.

C. Review Project Tracking Spreadsheet / Chair Updates:

Outstanding and Completed COAs/CNAs/Denials

- #2418 450 Main Street Windows COA-(AR) Done
- #2420 508 Main Street Window COA (AR) Done
- #2419 25-27 School Street Porch COA (DH) Done
- #2422 28-30 School Street Railings (AL) Done
- # TBD CNA dormer on 537 Mass Ave
- # TBD CNA for a roof repair Theatre III, 250 Central St.

2. New/Special Business or other applicable agenda items

A. 7:15 Application # 2401 Public Hearing 544 Massachusetts Avenue Windows. BR reads the public meeting notice. Eric Kaye (EK) joins. Since last meeting in February, reviewed windows and worked on specifications. Quotes were obtained for Marvin Elevate windows. Wish to use this window, 2/2 SDL. Want to use new construction around the windows. In addition, the aluminum wrap on the casing would be removed and painted PVC used in place. Siding work will be deferred. Luciano Alvez (LA) is the contractor, and joins. AR: Elevate is good, along with new construction. The sill must be ‘historic’. If there were extended horns, that should be replicated – if on surrounding houses, that’s a sign it would be appropriate here. The exact casing detail to be used would be good to see. Thought should be given to the future re-siding and ensuring it is compatible with the casing design. A ‘J-channel’ is present and is necessary given the vinyl siding. Any later re-siding may require a redesign of the casing. EK: planning on white. Some 42 windows, 24 HDC-visible ones are Elevate, and Pella for the non-visible windows. AR: thanks EK for patience with the HDC process. AL: No technical comments, also extends thanks. DS, ZT agree. No public comment. AR: Requests photos for documentation. Moves we approve the installation of the 24 Marvin Elevate double-hung SDL with spacer bars. Butt-jointed casings of PVC, to stand proud of the siding. Historic sills, with extended sill horns. This is all of the windows visible from the public way. AL Seconds. AL, AR, ZT, DS, DH approve. AR to write it up once the elevations have been received. BR requests the window sample be removed from the Town Hall.

B. 8:00 Preliminary Discussion 10 Wood Lane Pergola. Emily Frey (EF), Owner, joins. Looking for guidance. Wood construction. A nearby house serves as an example; BR shares a photo. The pergola would resemble that of 450 Main St. DH: Important to decide if it is to be connected to the house. Need to decide on the actual dimensions and placement. EF: would like to not place it in front of the bay window, but rather in front of the barn door. AR: Likes the idea. Will a door be added? EF: Did not plan to add a door; would probably use the front door, and pull it toward the front. DH: best if the rafters are perpendicular to the house. Free standing or attached? If attached, need to pay attention

to water infiltration. Simpler if free standing. AL: Concept is good. A NOW should suffice for this proposal.

C. 8:15 Application #2347 Violation Discussion 111-113 School Street Railings. As an abutter, DH recuses himself and leaves the meeting. AR takes over the chair. Dan Schiappa (DanS), Owner, joins. DanS: Expresses a desire to work with the HDC. History complicated. Old railings were retained. Photo is shared; asks about reusing elements, while retaining the new PT wood frame. AR: Certainly want the access to be safe throughout the process of revising the design. It is a wonderful house. The old railing was far more compatible. There are code compliant aluminum railings that could work; but AR perceives the bulkiness of the current frame is the fundamental problem. The River St façade, and the current deck, is fine – it is the railing that is problematic. A top and bottom wood rail with a metal railing of the code height could work. DS: Really should be lighter. AL: Inserting the metal balusters into the wood frame does not address the most important visual conflict. Recommends a metal railing; just replacing the interior would not meet the need. The original Denial carried language that carried our shared opinion. ZT: Agree that the issue perceived by the HDC was the heaviness. The 4x4 posts are the most prominent visual problem, and it is not clear that there is an acceptable modification that retains those posts. A metal structure in the heavy wood structure would not be an improvement. DS: The sense is that the deck surface, the stair treads and their support, the skirt board around the deck, and the vertical posts below the deck surface, are all fine. The top railing may be structural presently but could be moved down to below the deck surface. AL: want to be clear that the original denial indicated a metal railing is what's right. DS agrees. AR also thinks this best. DanS: Will try to take this direction. AR: shows the direction communicated to the contractor. The HDC would be happy to schedule a meeting to discuss an approach. BR: will share with DanS. BR: No application needed – just need a photo of the parts to be approved. AR: invites sharing ideas in advance of the meeting.

3. Consent Items

None

1. Adjournment

At 21:36 AR moves to adjourn the meeting, AL seconds. AR takes a roll call vote: DS, AL, ZT, AR all approve.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting.

- All relevant Applications and Documents, in Docushare