

Historic District Commission  
Town Hall, Room 126  
Final Meeting Minutes, May 5, 2014

Meeting called to order at 7:30 PM. Attending Kathy Acerbo-Bachmann (KAB), David Honn (DH), Pamela Lynn (PL), Ron Regan (RR), Anita Rogers (AR) and David Shoemaker (DS).

Mike Gowing, BofS rep. did not attend.

7:31 PM      Approved minutes by Consent - April 14, 2014 Minutes.

7:32 PM      Citizens' Questions:

David Shoemaker having recused himself and his wife Virginie Landre wished to ask advice concerning renovations to their barn at 14 Newtown Rd.

They have settled on the specific elements they wish for the front/east façade.. The barn door is decorative, not functional. The functional door, the "human door," is intended to be placed on the surface of the façade. AR asked about the planned hinges. They are not wedded to either direction.

Issues concerning the west façade include how to mesh the surfaces. They would wish to brainstorm about windows versus doors.

AR indicated it is difficult to do an out-swinging door unless it is flush. Weather wise out-swinging doors without covers are problematic. It is difficult for two windows to share a casing. Flashing details are important. Refocusing on the other façade, the rake end, it might be a little precious for a barn. The conversation refocused on the possible use of a cornice return. AR clarified that the proposed solution is an "eave return" and asked why there is the intention to add many elements of the house onto the barn structure. AR wished to focus on the area where the barn joins onto the house.

AR summarized being fine with proposed doors, eave return can be

done successfully, and that the expanse can be broken up by a change in plane. The owners are also interested in using a change in materials, using shiplap above and siding below.

KAB agreed with AR and was a bit biased with the eave return. She would preferred that the two structures look a bit different. She preferred greater detail for the house. She also preferred the difference in plane approach to breaking up the façade.

DH asked about the doors suggesting a lead or copper flashing on the top or a little rooflet to prevent delaminating. He found the proposed windows on the west side unconvincing. DH suggested a wood decorative approach above the windows

DH further suggested considering something asymmetrical to be more barn like.

AR suggested carriage houses might be a better model for what the owners are trying to achieve.

7:35 PM Appl. #1412: 450 Main Street: Discussion of Removal of Stable

David Shoemaker remained recused as an abutter.

RR, as liaison, provided photos of the shed which was built in the 1970s and is very simple.

AR, PL, KAB concurred with RR's observations.

DH wished to add a finding recognizing that outbuildings are often quirky and add something special. In this case he does not find such a quality.

KAB reminded the commission that a demolition always triggers a public hearing.

Speaking as a member of the public David Shoemaker would prefer

looking out at the structure beyond the stable.

KAB suggests attempting to get a public hearing in quickly to insure a slot on June 10<sup>th</sup> at 9pm.

Virginie Landre asked about how a new home might be allowed on this parcel.

8:15 PM Appl. #1411: 537 Massachusetts Avenue: New Sign

David Shoemaker rejoined the commission.

The issue is that it is difficult to find the Yoga School located at the backside of the building. AR was pleased with the proposed sign which constitutes a direction sign, typeface is similar.

PL was positive.

KAB suggested reconsidering the font on the "Downstairs" section. She also suggested making the background color darker in order to make much of the type stand out.

DH agreed that the present font for "Downstairs" defeats the impact of YOGA.

RR and DS were okay with the proposed changes above.

A vote is not due until June and so will be taken on June 10<sup>th</sup>.

8:40 PM Appl. #1413: 504 Main Street: Addition to Acton Women's Club

Anita Rogers recused herself and left the room.

DH refreshed the members' memory about the issue, the need to add a handicap bathroom. Tom Pederman is the current architect for the project. Looking at the drawings, which were submitted with the application, the members responded.

DS asked about the width of the inset and noted that there was little space to do anything but a corner board. DS asked about returns and DH indicated that there were ones above.

RR wondered about the windows, whether they should be smaller. He does prefer the flat roof. He can't tell whether the cornerboards are of the same scale. There is nothing he would wish to change.

DH was wrestling with the windows wondering whether they should be smaller. Maybe they could be a different shape, round or octagonal, as they seem too similar to the windows of the original house.

The group would like to see an oblique view from Main Street to better understand the appearance of the windows.

KAB agreed with the concerns about the windows. They are too important for what that space is. They should not match triggering so much attention.

8:35 PM Discussion of Upcoming Public Hearing on 17 Woodbury Rd.

KAB reminded the commission of the need to inform interested parties.

Dean Charter will make the major presentation and the HDC will allow citizen input. The RFP will reflect the HDC's position.

KAB thinks it would be best to close the public hearing and postpone a vote until the next meeting. It is important that the decision be well-reasoned.

DH reminded the group that the HDC has had a policy to have the applicant state as part of the acceptance of a demolition specifically what would be done with the space. That information will likely play strongly into the decision. DS as liaison will alert DC to the need to be clear about the proposed alternative uses of the site.

9:15 PM Appl. #1407: 82 River Street: Garage Addition

KAB relinquished the chair to PL and KAB and DH as abutters left the building.

PL explained the applicant's desire to increase living space by converting the garage to living space based upon the drawing submitted with the application.

Marcos deSouza, the applicant, explained the intent to use similar materials. AR clarified that there would then not be a garage at least for the time being.

MS asked about options for a prospective garage and AR explained some of the constraints, both zoning and architectural. AR explained the constraints of the existing roof and the potential loss of windows if placed next to the living space.

AR clarified that MS may put windows in the back because it is not under the purview of the HDC but DS reminded the commission that the future garage would require HDC approval.

MS asked about whether he could do some of the work and AR explained how building inspections are conducted.

DS likes the proposed plan for the addition that it will be harmonious as does RR.

AR thinks there may be a different pitch on the house from the drawing. As a result a trim board that is drawn does not work well and that the gable end should not have a trim board.

AR moves to approve the conversion of the existing one car garage to a family room by removing the garage door and fixed windows and replacing them with 2 over 2 double hung units, five total per the submitted elevations. It was agreed that there would not be horizontal trim differentiating the gable end of the existing building from the wall plane below it. The new windows are to match the existing windows in size and material. New siding will match existing siding.

**Second by PL.**

**Accepted unanimously pending abutters notification.**

**Adjourned at 9:53 PM.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Pamela Lynn  
HDC Secretary**