

MINUTES
TOWN OF GROTON
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
AUGUST 21, 2012 - 7:00 P.M.
GROTON TOWN HALL ANNEX - COMMUNITY ROOM 2

Members Present: Sarasin, Kimenker, Somers
Alternates Present: Brady, Moriarty, Everett
Absent:
Staff: Vandenbosch, Galetta

Vice Chairman Sarasin called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Sarasin sat Brady and Moriarty as regular members. Moriarty read the Call of the Hearing.

I. PUBLIC HEARINGS

HDC 12-26 – 27 Gravel Street; Michael Sarasin, owner/applicant; Stone wall & fence. PIN #261918422097 – Continued

The applicant requested the withdrawal of this application.

HDC 12-35 – 232 Noank Road; Lisa A. Gilbert, owner/applicant; Roof shingles. PIN #261806288777

Richard King presented to the Commission for Lisa A. Gilbert owner of 232 Noank Road. The applicant is proposing to replace the existing 3-tab, asphalt roof shingles with architectural shingles. The shingles are GAF Timberline in pewter gray. The house, which was built in 1910, has vents at the gable ends rather than a ridge vent.

The following exhibits were presented:

- Materials list

Vice Chairman Sarasin asked for comments in favor or against and there were none. The public hearing closed at 7:10 p.m.

HDC 12-36 – 1250 Gold Star Highway; JJMA Realty LLC, owner; Chelsea Groton Bank, applicant; Renovations. PIN #179020811110

Jay Fisher of Accubranch and Architect Ron Reilly presented to the Commission regarding property located at the northwest corner of Routes 117 and 184. The subject property bears the address of 1250 Gold Star Highway which is currently owned by JJMA Realty LLC. Their client, Chelsea Groton Bank, is proposing the re-creation of the former Tim Horton's/Bess Eaton site to one that will be a local financial institution. The requested design changes have been kept minimal in an effort to lessen the impact to the existing building. The addition of a tower is a design element to allow more area for signage. Existing signage is 34 sq. ft. per code. On the opposite side of the building a drive-up already exists, to which a canopy will be added. The existing cupola over the entrance will be removed and the roof completely redone using architectural shingles in the same color. The so-called Widow's walk will be removed and the height of the parapet will be increased. An additional dormer will be added which will match existing dormers on the building. The structure will remain as one story with no plans for second floor offices. The proposed siding is HardiePlank with Azek trim. Synthetic

brackets will be added. All existing windows will be left in place with the addition of 4 new windows and a door at the rear of the building. Muntins will be applied to the existing windows. A freezer located at the rear of the building will be removed and the elevation view will be upgraded because of the prominence of the location from that vantage point. The brick water table will be painted. Signage will consist of prefinished signs with metal cut letters using the color PMS 512. The existing pylon sign will be refaced. Sign lighting is still being discussed; however, this proposal includes gooseneck lamps for front-lit signage. Although the applicant is still working with the Planning Department regarding the site plan, there is no plan to add more impervious surface. The Commission noted that details for lighting fixtures are not finalized. The Commission also noted that the most important consideration for this application is the context of the location. It is primarily commercial and the renovations will be an improvement over the existing building design.

The following exhibits were presented:

- Proposed site plan
- Floor plans
- Existing & proposed elevations
- Photographs

Vice Chairman Sarasin asked for comments in favor or against and there were none. The public hearing closed at 7:26 p.m.

HDC 12-37 – 81 High Street; Rod Desmarais, owner/applicant; Garage. PIN #261918302416

Rod Demarais, owner of 81 High Street, presented to the Commission regarding a garage on the subject property. The house at this location was built in 2004. Subsequently, construction of a detached garage was started in 2006 and finished in 2007. During construction a mistake was made and the pitch of the roof was changed from a 9-pitch to a 6-pitch. The applicant thinks that the garage is congruent with his house and the other houses in the neighborhood. He is seeking to have a COA issued for the garage as constructed with a shallow pitch roof. He stated that the principal building on subject property has the same roof pitch. Additionally, 5 out of 7 houses on the block have congruent structures with similar roof pitches. He displayed a number of photographs from the historic district to illustrate the many structures with similarly shallow roof pitches, which he numbered as approximately 20. The applicant assured the Commission that the garage was built to be compatible with the house at the same address. It was constructed using a brick foundation, and vertical, cedar-board siding; in contrast to the detailed clapboard of the house. He used Brosco windows and painted steel garage doors. The garage siding is stained. The Commission noted that an application for the garage, as constructed, was denied by the previous Commission and a lawsuit ensued. The applicant lost in Superior Court and is before the Commission to request an approval for what was denied by that Commission. The applicant stated that a civil lawsuit is the only appeal process available. The Court reviews the case procedurally rather than aesthetically. Procedurally the Commission and the Town did things correctly as far as time lines, therefore, the appeal was denied.

The following exhibits were presented:

- Elevation drawings
- Photographs
- Plot plan

Vice Chairman Sarasin asked for comments in favor or against and there were none. The public hearing closed at 7:35 p.m.

HDC 12-38 – 12 New London Road; Kathleen Holdridge, owner/applicant; Fence. PIN #261918209277

The applicant requested the withdrawal of this application.

Vice Chairman Sarasin closed the public hearing portion of the meeting at 7:46 p.m.

II. DISCUSSION ON ITEMS OF PUBLIC HEARING

HDC 12-35 – 232 Noank Road

MOTION: To grant a Certificate of Appropriateness as submitted.

Motion made by Kimenker seconded by Somers, so voted unanimously. Issued Certificate of Appropriateness #1862.

HDC 12-36 – 1250 Gold Star Highway

MOTION: To grant a Certificate of Appropriateness as submitted.

Motion made by Kimenker seconded by Brady, so voted unanimously. Issued Certificate of Appropriateness #1863.

HDC 12-37 – 81 High Street

MOTION: To grant a Certificate of Appropriateness as submitted.

Motion made by Brady seconded by Moriarty, so voted unanimously. Issued Certificate of Appropriateness #1864.

III. PRE-APPLICATION HEARINGS

Jack Collins appeared before the Commission representing Kathleen Holdredge, owner of 12 New London Road. The applicant is proposing to install a 96' solid wood fence across the back of the subject property, which is bordered by Route 1, in order to mitigate noise, dirt and car exhaust. The fence will be located on the top of a rise along Route 1. The original request was to install a 6' fence; however, the Commission was not in favor of that proposal and the applicant is looking for feedback. The Commission is concerned with complete visual obstruction that hides a front or back yard in the district. Additionally, a fence above eye level effectually becomes a wall and a solid wall so close to the street is not consistent with what is found in the district. Commissioners thought a picket fence might work better but cautioned that the higher the height of the fence the farther away from the road it must be. It was suggested that shrubs may also mitigate some of the noise and dirt the applicant is troubled with. The Commission discussed the use of a picket fence versus a solid fence and the placement of a fence on the property. The Commission had some concerns about setting a precedent of a solid fence that hides a back or front yard. The Commission noted that, for the purpose of this discussion, each piece of property is different, that this property has significant challenges to overcome, and that hardship is a legitimate consideration.

Rod Desmarais appeared before the Commission on behalf of Historic Mystic LLC regarding Central Hall. The applicants are in the final stages of site plan applications with the Town of Groton. There are a multitude of items, mostly insignificant, that need approval by the Commission and the Town Planner wants an application submitted. The items are mainly approved already but there have been slight modifications due to changes in the field. The application will encompass the extension of fencing (already approved) with the addition of a removable panel for emergency vehicle access, dumpster pad and enclosure (already approved) but with a change in size because the dumpsters have changed, addition of bollards (already approved) at the Gravel Street Pump Station and on West Main Street, modification of first floor elevations (already approved), parking space reallocation, drop arm gate, public access, public access and parking lot lighting, and a change in screen height for rooftop RTU's. The Commission noted that there were concerns with maintenance of the dumpsters and the enclosure area. The applicant assured the Commission that the dumpsters and enclosures will be well maintained with rules strictly adhered to by the residents.

IV. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Staff distributed information regarding the fall program being offered by the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation. The workshop will cover management of historic districts in Connecticut. Michael J. Murphy, Director of OPDS suggests that Commissioners try to attend particularly those newly appointed to the Commission.

V. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF August 7, 2012

MOTION: To approve the minutes of August 7, 2012

Motion made by Brady, seconded by Kimenker, so voted unanimously.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

Vice Chairman Sarasin has made initial contact with local architects to enlist their help to increase the Commission's knowledge base about new building materials, energy codes, etc. It was suggested that the Commission come up with a list of items they would like to discuss and Sarasin asked for input at the next meeting.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A special meeting will be held on September 4 at 6:00 p.m. to meet with Eileen Duggan, Town Attorney.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 9:04 p.m. made by Somers, seconded by Kimenker, so voted unanimously.

Historic District Commission

Prepared by Lynda Galetta, Office Assistant II