

MINUTES
TOWN OF GROTON
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
OCTOBER 19, 2010 - 7:00 P.M.
GROTON TOWN HALL ANNEX - COMMUNITY ROOM 2

Members Present: Nado, Mitchell, Sarasin, Cole (7:05)
Alternates Present: None
Staff: Quinn, Galetta

Chairman Nado called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. Mitchell read the Call of the Hearing.

I. PUBLIC HEARINGS

HDC 10-50 – 10 Orchard Lane; Eric Benker, owner; Dwight Olmsted, applicant; Rear entrance. PIN # 261806295850

Dwight Olmsted presented to the Commission regarding 10 Orchard Lane, which is owned by Eric Benker. The property is a 3-family rental unit that must be brought up to fire safety code specifications per the Fire Marshall. The owners are proposing to add a rear entrance to the property to provide the egress required for the second floor. An existing shed roof will be rebuilt and enclosed below with the addition of 2 new entrance doors. One door will lead to a breezeway and the other door will lead to a staircase for the second floor. The doors will be standard height. A new landing and steps will be build out of wood. The roof will have a 5/12 pitch. Clapboards will be used on the exterior. The Commission felt that the rear entrance was simplistic and appropriate to the structure and surrounding neighborhood.

The following exhibits were presented:

- Drawing
- Picture

Chairman Nado asked for comments in favor or against and there were none. The public hearing closed at 7:15 p.m.

HDC 10-51 – 18-22 West Main Street; Historic Mystic, LLC, owner; Carl W. Gehring, Esq., applicant; Extension of original COA #1506. PIN # 261918412081

Attorney Carl W. Gehring, representative for the principals, requested a continuance.

The public hearing closed at 8:39 p.m.

HDC 10-52 – 27 High Street; Denise Wakim, owner; William Bertsche, applicant; Addition & renovations. PIN # 261806392984

Architect William Bertsche presented to the Commission regarding additions and renovations at 27 High Street, which is owned by Denise Wakim. He is proposing to construct an addition to the existing house, construct an enclosed porch, construct a garage, and add authentic window shutters to the existing house and addition. He is also proposing a porous, asphalt paved driveway to meet with zoning requirements for steep driveways. Additionally, the applicant would like to remove the remaining asbestos

shingles on the north and south sides of the house. The clapboards will be repaired or replaced to match the existing clapboards on the east and west sides of the house. The addition has been redesigned to address some concerns the Commission had during the preliminary presentations. The garage is reduced in width and moved away from house. This gives the garage the perception of being built separately. The driveway is narrower and curved downhill. The elevation to the street is lowered and the retaining wall is eliminated. This gives a less direct look straight in to the driveway. The face of the addition is moved back. The addition will have Brosco wood windows, asphalt roof shingles to match existing roof, wood clapboards and corner boards. On the back side of the house the windows will be Andersen with permanently adhered muntins inside and outside. The shutters are operable and intended to be used during extreme weather conditions such as a hurricane. They will be a Pinecrest or an equal with painted wood. Gutters and downspouts are to match existing. The finishes will all be paint. The plan is to use red cedar for the clapboard. A natural stone veneer will be adhered over the addition foundation. The applicant discussed neighboring properties that have garages and double drives with the Commission. The applicant feels that the garage location and its scale is the same as others found in the surrounding area. The Commission feels the applicant has made a significant improvement in scale and materials for the project. The Commission had concerns about the stone veneer matching evenly throughout. The applicant has done a number of these foundations and is confident they can do a good job. It will be specified that the garage doors must be painted. The Commission was not in favor of the double doors which give the appearance of French doors. This will be changed from two doors to one Brosco wood storm door and a Brosco fixed wood window. Windows on the south side will not be modified. The Commission felt that the read of the project was as a legitimate addition to the home. However, the Commission was concerned about paving materials for the driveway. They felt the proposed treatment maintained the prominence and dominance of the pavement at the site. The issue is with the amount of pavement and the visibility. The applicant is willing to remove an existing gravel parking area on the south side of the property and create a grassy area as long as parking will be permitted there. The applicant also agreed to use two treatments for the driveway. A portion will be paved with porous asphalt and a portion will have chip-stone paving.

The following exhibits were presented:

- Elevation drawings
- Photographs

Chairman Nado asked for comments in favor or against.

Jeff Blevins of Ashby Street stated that statistically there are a number of garages in the district with skylights. Also, statistically there are a number of houses with detached garages. If the house was already built with a detached garage, would the HDC allow a connector to be built? The point that Mr. Blevins said he is making is that the trend in this case is not towards improvement.

The public hearing closed at 8:33 p.m.

II. DISCUSSION ON ITEMS OF PUBLIC HEARING

HDC 10-50 – 10 Orchard Lane

MOTION: To grant a Certificate of Appropriateness as submitted.

Motion made by Cole, seconded by Sarasin, so voted unanimously. Issued Certificate of Appropriateness #1770.

HDC 10-51 – 18-22 West Main Street

MOTION: To continue the hearing to the next regularly scheduled public hearing.

Motion made by Mitchell, seconded by Cole, so voted unanimously.

HDC 10-52 – 27 High Street

MOTION: To grant a Certificate of Appropriateness as submitted.

Motion made by Sarasin, seconded by Cole, so voted unanimously. Issued Certificate of Appropriateness #1771.

III. PRE-APPLICATION HEARINGS

Architect Peter Springsteel and Theresa McShane, owner of 9 Orchard Lane, appeared before the Commission. The existing property is a 1920's Bungalow style house. It is a simple bungalow without the high-end features of some bungalow style structures. The house has a front entrance canopy and returns on the gable ends. They are proposing to keep the main roof line and cut out a section of the front roof to add shed dormer. This feature is seen often in Bungalow style homes. The owner is seeking to extend out the front canopy to cover the entire stoop entrance. The current canopy is a little shallow. The owner would also like to add a larger dormer in back with a 3' cut out. Commission had concerns with the views of the dormers from the public way.

James Gibbs appeared before the Commission along with Alfred and Sherry Fritsche owners of 15 Ice House Lane. The Fritsche's own property that is transitional in the district between a suburban subdivision and the Historic District. The applicant presented three proposed designs for the Commission to review. The Commission has concerns with the size of the footprint for the main house. The look is one of a new building that was built all at the same time, which is not desirable. The feeling is that it is better to have the read of a main house with an addition added at some later time. The Commission thought that pushing the garage back, giving the look of a detached structure, is going in the right direction. The applicant is proposing to use white or red cedar shingles with a 4 1/2" exposure on the exterior. The Commission also had concerns that the drawings were lacking windows on second floor.

Cheryl Robdau appeared before the Commission regarding an existing garage at 81 High Street. The garage is an existing structure with a number of details approved by the Commission. However the pitch of the roof is not as originally approved. The existing pitch is slightly under 6/12 and the applicant is proposing a pitch that is slightly under 8/12. The applicant felt this would be compromise that might meet with Commission approval. The Commission felt that in the context of the surrounding properties the pitch of the roof should be steeper than proposed. The Commission requested that the applicant present drawings of what was approved and what they have actually built.

Bill Middleton appeared before the Commission regarding 3 Fort Rachel Place, which is owned by Comet Holdings LLC. The property is currently a commercial use structure. The owners are exploring a mixed use of the property. They are considering retaining a commercial use for the first floor and modifying the second floor to use as residential. The applicant is here to discuss adding a door to make a separate entrance for the commercial tenant. However, he is apprehensive about using the side door as the main entrance. He thinks it would be preferable to put the main entrance on the back of the building, adding columns and a cover. The back façade cannot be seen from the District. The Commission felt that two front doors will not work. The feeling is that he will need a treatment to make the door read as an entrance but not so formal. The applicant is concerned about being able to clearly distinguish the commercial entrance from the residential entrance. The Commission felt that signage might be used to overcome the concerns about directions. An L-shaped addition might work on the structure. A second means of egress from the second floor might also be preferable. It might be reasonable to incorporate the egress into an addition.

IV. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS - None

V. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF October 5, 2010

MOTION: To approve the minutes of October 5, 2010

Motion made by Sarasin, seconded by Cole, so voted unanimously.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

The Commission requested the status of the Rod Desmarais matter at 81 High Street. Staff stated that the case is still being pursued by the Town Attorney.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Staff distributed the proposed 2011 meeting schedule.

MOTION: To adopt the 2011 Historic District Commission meeting schedule.

Motion made by Mitchell, seconded by Cole, so voted unanimously

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 10:51 p.m. made by Mitchell, seconded by Sarasin, so voted unanimously.

Elaine Cole, Secretary
Historic District Commission

Prepared by Lynda C. Galetta, Office Assistant II