

**TOWN OF GROTON
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
JULY 19, 2005 - 7:00 P.M.
GROTON TOWN HALL ANNEX - COMMUNITY ROOM 2**

Members Present: C. Nado, E. Cole, R. Seager, R. Keyes
Members Absent: K. Vaughn
Staff: K. Quinn, S. Discordia

Chairman Nado called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. Cole read the Call of the Hearing as it appearing in The Day.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public hearings opened at 7:03 p.m.

HDC 05-39 – 15 ½ Water Street; Unit 1; Helen Babcock & Tom Buttacavoli, owners; Joe Collelo Co. LLC, applicant; for installation of balcony. PIN #261918307079

The applicant requested that the public hearing be continued until the next regularly scheduled meeting.

HDC 05-42 – 19 Pearl Street; Mystic Pearl Assoc., LLC, owner; Chris & Stephanie Zauner, applicants; replace landing and stairs. PIN #261918319627

Mr. Zauner discussed how he would like to replace his small landing and stairs. The supports will be left the same, but he will be adding one more support. Mr. Zauner is changing the landing from 4' x 4' to 4' x 6' and replacing the lattice with railing. Mr. Zauner stated he would install ballisters all the way down the stairs to meet the building code. The material used to build the stairs and landing will be pressure treated wood.

Chairman Nado asked for public comments and there were none.

The following exhibits were presented:

- 3 pictures
- 3 drawings with dimensions

HDC 05-43 – 32 West Mystic Avenue; Lawrence A. Reiter, owner/applicant; rebuild front porch. PIN #261805280285

Lawrence Reiter, of 32 West Mystic Avenue, would like to replace his front porch from the roof down. He will replace the fir flooring with mahogany. Mr. Reiter is not going to change the roof or shingles. The columns will be replaced with fiberglass columns and everything else will be like for like. The Commission did not see a problem with this replacement of the porch.

Chairman Nado asked for public comments. The following exhibits were presented:

- 3 pictures with notes

HDC 05-44 – 17 Water Street; Randall’s Wharf Condominium Assoc. Inc., owners; Todd F. Brady, applicant; replace sliding glass doors and windows. PIN #261918306046

Todd Brady, President of the Randall’s Wharf Condominium Association Inc., represented the owners at 17 Water Street. They are proposing to replace sliding glass doors and a few windows in a couple of the units. Mr. Brady handed out drawings and pictures of the building and used these to explain the proposed changes.

In unit A-15 they would remove and change the size of a sliding glass door and a sliding glass window and two sliding glass windows on the 3rd floor to four new bronze aluminum sliding glass doors. Mr. Brady stated they would install a new continuous rail without balcony in front of the two new doors per building codes.

Unit A-1 will have the same replacement of the sliding glass doors and a window. In unit A-2 they would like to remove the existing sliding glass door and two sliding glass windows and replace with three new bronze, aluminum, sliding glass doors. The existing aluminum railings are to remain.

Seager stated that he was concerned about regularizing the facade. He was not in favor of the railings across the windows. Seager stated it makes it look like a motel with all the railings.

Keyes stated that the way the building was situated she didn’t think it impacted the district that much and would be in favor of it.

Cole stated she felt that the top two floors were added on at a later date and it has always looked more contemporary.

Chairman Nado stated he felt the same as Seager with the building beginning to take on a Motel 6-type charm.

Mr. Brady suggested taking the metal rails off the outside and mounting railings on the inside made of wood.

Chairman Nado and Seager stated that it would help, but they are still concerned with the uniformity of windows making it look like a motel. Seager stated it was once an industrial building and should have more of a utilitarian look. Seager felt that the building should not look like a cookie-cutter apartment building.

The Commission and Mr. Brady discussed options for replacing the windows and doors.

Mr. Brady decided to withdraw the application and will resubmit at a later date.

The following exhibits were presented:

- None

HDC 05-45 – 47 Water Street; Anna Marie Slowik, owner/applicant; install sign and awning. PIN #2618063962771

Anna Marie Slowik of 47 Water Street would like an awning and a new sign. The awning is burgundy, with stripes of green and gold. She is also applying for a sign that is 36” x 24” to be put on the entrance door that will be carved and painted.

Chairman Nado asked for public comments and there were none.

The following exhibits were presented:

- One picture
- 3 drawings with dimensions

HDC 05-46 – 15 Gravel Street; Jane Brannegan, owner; Robert Mercer, applicant; replace garage. PIN #261918412428

Bill Bertsche, an architect, representing the owners, Dan & Jane Brannegan of 15 Gravel Street. Mr. Bertsche stated the owners would like to tear down the existing garage and replace it with a garage that has more square footage and matches their existing house. He handed out drawings to the Commission.

Mr. Bertsche stated they were trying to match the house with the same trim and roofline. The Commission asked if the weathervane depicted would be installed and Mr. Bertsche stated it would. The Commission noted that the weathervane would need to be approved as well. The windows will be aluminum clad and the doors will be painted wood. The roof will have asphalt shingles. He stated that the arched doorways were eliminated and they opted to make them look like straight barn doors.

The Commission felt that this scaled down version of the garage was much better than the previous and thought it fit in better with the historic district.

Chairman Nado asked for public comments and there were none.

The following exhibits were presented:

- 5 computer enhanced pictures
- 5 drawings

Public hearings closed at 8:03 p.m.

DISCUSSION ON ITEMS OF PUBLIC HEARING

HDC 05-39 – 15 ½ Water Street

The public hearing was continued until the next regularly scheduled meeting on August 2nd, 2005.

HDC 05-42 – 19 Pearl Street

MOTION: To grant a Certificate of Appropriateness as submitted.

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

HDC 05-43 – 32 West Mystic Avenue

MOTION: To grant a Certificate of Appropriateness as submitted.

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

HDC 05-45 – 47 Water Street

MOTION: To grant a Certificate of Appropriateness as submitted.

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

HDC 05-46 – 15 Gravel Street

MOTION: To grant a Certificate of Appropriateness as submitted.

Motion made by Keyes, seconded by Seager, so voted unanimously.

PRE-APPLICATION HEARINGS

Keyes left the meeting at 8:12 p.m.

31-35 Steamboat Wharf, Abby Parkinson, vice president of the condominium association and a contractor Mike Lord, would like an overhang over the common entrance for protection from the weather. The contractor stated he had put up an overhang already not realizing he needed to go through the Historic District Commission. The contractor showed pictures to the Commission. The common entry doors lead into a common hallway. He showed how the rain came into the front doors when they had screens and caused the whole threshold to rot, therefore they constructed an overhang above the doors.

Seager stated he thought the overhang looked better than before. Chairman Nado stated he thought it looked nice and Cole agreed.

Ray Williams, 424 High Street, would like to replace the windows in the front of his home. He presented the Commission with pictures and a sketch. The three columns are being removed. Seager asked if the columns could be replaced and Mr. Williams stated he can't replace them and they need to be removed as they are not level and are starting to rot. Discussion continued on design elements including continuing the trim to give the facade more continuity.

Chairman Nado stated that the columns and the porch were a decorative element on the house and they hate to see the corner board put up in its place.

The Commission asked the applicant to bring revised drawings to the hearing.

Todd Brady, 17 Water Street, president of the Randall's Wharf Condominium Association submitted a packet of proposed changes to the Commission. It involved 4 different items. The first is to install a balcony on the 1st floor on the north side.

The first proposal is to install a balcony on the 1st floor on the north side. There is also a proposal to add awnings to the upper level and lower level on the south side of the building. Mr. Brady stated they are also proposing a hot tub flush behind lattice, but he doesn't think it will be visible. The Commission stated they would like to see sketches and drive by to see how much is actually visible from a public way.

Frances Harkins, Art Gallery owner in Factory Square, stated she would like to put up a sign in front of her business. The sign will be held up by brackets on the outside and placed further down the building away from all of the other signs.

The Commission stated they would like to see the sign in place where the previous owner's sign was instead of putting more holes in the building. The Commission agreed that they would go down and take a look and Ms. Harkins would discuss with the owner moving Zang's Restaurant sign.

Peter Springsteel represented the owners of 9 Ashby Street, John and Jane Stambach. They would like to tear down the old garage and replace it with a combination 3-bay garage and apartment.

Seager asked if the home was visible from the street and Mr. Springfield stated you could see it coming down the street, but the grade was much lower and it is tucked away and not totally visible from the public way. Cole asked if this house was simplified from the original sketch and Mr. Springfield stated it was as he had taken the curve out of the doors and lessened the trim.

Chairman Nado suggested tongue n' groove for siding, as it would give it some shadow and not make the walls appear so flat.

Seager asked how high the building would be compared to the old garage and Mr. Springsteel stated it would be approximately 8 feet higher. The Commission stated it seemed appropriate and liked the changes from the original drawing.

Peter Springsteel represented the owner of 27 Gravel Street, Mike Sarasin. The owner would like to put an addition onto his home. Mr. Springsteel set back the 2nd level to break up the façade of the building. Seager stated he would like to see more photos showing the view from the public way, but thought the setback did a lot to break up how large the building appeared and was historically correct for the time period.

Mark Comeau, an architect, and Rod Desmaris presented for the owner, Brian Navarro of 18-22 West Main Street. Mr. Comeau displayed various drawings of the proposed 4-story building at this site. The building would have 16 units. He discussed how their team had done a lot of research of old minutes to come up with these new adaptations.

Mr. Comeau showed a couple of different drawings of the proposed building. The first one would essentially be all brick except for the first floor, which would be white and have the traditional storefront façade like the rest of downtown Mystic. Mr. Comeau showed how they would bring up the white trim to tie in the 2nd floor. A steep-pitched roof basically encloses the 4th floor with dormers protruding from each end to provide the units with cathedral ceilings. Mr. Comeau also showed another drawing depicting the building as all wood.

Mr. Comeau showed a drawing of the back of the proposed building that showed glass doors and recessed porches for the 16 units.

Mr. Navarro stated that they would need to have a lot of windows in order to let in light to these units and they are trying to make the units marketable. He stated that one of the top selling points is the porch overlooking the Mystic River. Mr. Navarro stated that they really need a fourth floor to go forward with this project.

Discussion ensued on two previously approved applications for buildings at this site and the similarities and differences to this proposal.

Chairman Nado stated that the building was still very large for this location, especially compared to the buildings on either side of it. He suggested that this building would be the most prominent architecture coming down Mystic River and down Baptist Hill. Chairman Nado liked the new design of the front of the building, especially the 1st floor and the storefronts, but felt the building was still too massive for this site. Chairman Nado did not like the design of the roof and dormers as there isn't any other architecture like this in historic Mystic, past or present. He suggested that the fourth floor be eliminated.

Seager stated that the proposed building is still too large for this prominent spot in downtown. He asked if they knew what the projected height of the building would be and they didn't know at this time, but gave a rough estimate of 50 feet. He asked if the architect could take out the cathedral ceilings on the 4th floor and drop the dormers on the side and lessen the pitch of the roof. Seager stated that he was not in favor of four stories in this building, but would consider looking at a different design implementing these suggestions.

Seager stated that this building needed to look more utilitarian and have less windows, especially the back of the building as it will be seen from many prominent public ways in historic Mystic. Seager stated that this building should not be identifiable as housing condominium units. Seager suggested making the windows recessed to make it more historic. He didn't like the uniformity of windows and decks advertising that this is a typical apartment dwelling. Seager suggested staggering and breaking up the decks so they aren't stacked one above the other.

Cole stated she liked the brick building and especially the storefront facade with the white trim tying in the 2nd floor.

The Commission felt that the building shouldn't be any larger than 3 stories and should look more utilitarian. They didn't want it to be easily recognizable as residential units as this building is a very prominent building in Mystic. The Commission felt the roof pitch and dormers were not acceptable for the historic district. The Commission did like the brick and white storefront facade and thought this was overall the best design they had seen so far.

CORRESPONDENCE

Chairman Nado reminded the Commission that there would be a special meeting on August 3, 2005 at 5 p.m. at 2 Starr Street.

MINUTES

MOTION: To approve the minutes of July 5, 2005

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

OLD BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS

The Commission asked staff to inspect Jim Sheehan's home on Bank Street as it looks like it might be vinyl siding. The fence next door also looks like it may be plastic.

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ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 10:42 p.m. made by Seager, seconded by Cole, so voted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Cole, Secretary