



HISTORIC DISTRICTS COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, July 7, 2016

Pursuant to notice duly filed with the Town Clerk's office, the Town of Concord Historic Districts Commission held a public meeting on Thursday, July 7, 2016 at 7:00 P.M. in the First Floor Conference Room, 141 Keyes Road, Concord, Massachusetts.

Present:

Full Members

Mark Giddings, Acting Chair
Dennis Fiori
Justin King

Associate Members

Peter Nobile
Melinda Shumway

Lara Kritzer, Senior Planner

Acting Chair Mark Giddings called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. Voting Members for the meeting were Mr. Fiori, Mr. Giddings, Mr. King, Mr. Nobile, and Ms. Shumway.

CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

John and Madeline Kathe, 40 Lowell Road, North Bridge/Monument Square Historic District, for fencing

The Applicant had contacted Staff before the meeting to say that there was no new information at this time, but that he would be meeting with a contractor about fixing the fence the following week. Members agreed to continue the application to the next meeting on July 21.

OTHER BUSINESS

Approval of Minutes - Members had reviewed and revised the draft minutes prior to the meeting. Mr. Fiori moved to approve the minutes of the March 17, March 31, April 21, June 2 and June 16 meetings and of the June 2 Site Visit as revised. Mr. Nobile seconded the motion and ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

252 Main Street Front Walkway – Staff had recently reviewed the completed work at 252 Main Street and noted that the front walkway to the original house had been removed during the construction. The front walkway was on the approved plans, but the Owners had decided not to install a new one as the original house was being sold to another owner. The Owners had asked the Commission to agree that the project was complete without installing a new walkway. Members reviewed the photos of the site and noted that the bollards at the sidewalk made the area look incomplete without a walkway. Members stipulated that the front walkway to the original house must be replaced.

469 Lowell Road – A Commission Member noted that the construction at this property has been complete for some time and asked whether the new addition was to remain gray or be painted brown to match the house. Staff stated that the approval had been granted with the matching brown paint color. Staff was asked to check in with the homeowner on the status of their project.

12 Bow Street – The Applicants for this project had submitted updated plans for the Commission’s review and planned to attend the July 21 meeting to discuss the project further. A Commission Member stated that he had looked at the submitted plans and thought that it would be helpful to see the proposed new structure in relationship to the existing building. He asked Staff to request the Applicants to develop a side by side comparison with the as built structure and the new building. Another Member noted that the original structure was not shown in the new plans and noted that the Commission would still prefer to see the structure reconstructed rather than have it replaced with a new design. It was noted that the new proposal was a scaled down version of the original one submitted by the Applicants and that the Commission had asked for the original house to be preserved or reconstructed instead.

NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

Thomas Martin, 32 Lowell Road, Monument Square/North Bridge Historic District, for new windows and railings

Architects John Battle and Bob Drew of Battles Associates were present on behalf of the Owners. They explained that there were four changes proposed for the existing house. First, they were proposing to replace two double hung windows located on the second floor of the right façade with a single operable casement window. The existing windows were Eagle brand windows that the Architects believed had been installed within the last ten years. It was noted that the house had been altered several times and that the current design changes involved a new interior layout. The new casement window would be a Marvin window measuring 2’x 2’3” and would match the proportions of the upper sash of the double hung window.

The second proposed change involved installing new handrails on either side of the front entrance porch. The Architects proposed a new Julius Blum style wrought iron handrail with a lambs tongue detailing. The cut sheets for the new railings and the elevations of the front entrance porch were reviewed. A Commission Member suggested that the railings between the wall of the house and the porch columns should be wood and not metal. He thought that this would make the railings more a part of the house, and agreed that metal railings could still be installed between the post and the bottom of the stairs. The Architects agreed with this change and Members suggested that the new wooden railings match the existing wood railings on the side entrance. The Architect was asked about the height of the front entrance porch and answered that the landing was about 38” above grade.

The third change proposed to remove the chimney located in the front right side of the main house. The Architect explained that it was not a functioning chimney and that the Owners wanted to remove it to reclaim the interior space. Members reviewed photos of the chimney and had no concerns with its removal. Lastly, the Architects explained that the Owners wanted to change the paint colors on the front, side, and garage doors to the building. The existing doors were painted in a rust red color and the Architects proposed to paint it “Muted Mulberry” instead. The rest of the house would be repainted with the same colors. The Architects explained that paint color consultant Karen Germain had suggested the color as one that worked well on historic properties. A Commission Member noted that the Commission general preferred to have less pronounced colors used on garage doors. A second Member thought that the purple/gray new color would recede more than the existing red doors.

Commission Members reviewed how the new railings would be installed. A Member asked why the metal railings were proposed for the stairs. The Architects explained that it would have a lighter appearance that would disappear from view and that there were many precedents for it in the Districts. Members next reviewed the impact of the window changes to the streetscape. It was noted that the area in question was difficult to see from the public way. A second Member was not sure that the window change looked appropriate but felt that it would not be seen from the street.

The Acting Chair opened the discussion to public comment and there was none at this time. Mr. Nobile moved to approve the replacement of the two double hung windows on the right façade with a new square casement window as submitted; to install a new black wrought iron handrail along the front steps and new wooden railings on either side of the front entrance landing to match the wood railings on the side entrance; to completely remove the existing chimney as proposed; and to change the paint color of the front, side and garage doors “Muted Mulberry” (California Paints Exterior 2010). Mr. King seconded the motion and ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

Suzy Watters on behalf of Federal Investment Trust No. 1, 17 Walden Street, Main Street Historic District, for signage

Toby and Jack Owner Suzy Watters was present in response to a violation letter sent by the Commission concerning the unapproved signage on the front entrance to her store. She explained that she had received approval from the HDC for her blade sign and that it had never occurred to her that her door sign also needed to be reviewed. The sign had been on her door for four years now and was attached to the metal door with magnets. She noted that the sign was removable and had occasionally come off in bad weather. It was noted that the new sign matched the design of the approved blade sign.

A Commission Member asked if there was a more permanent way to install the sign than the magnets. She explained that the magnets had proved to be an easy way to install and remove the signage when needed. Another Member noted that the door sign was very similar to one at Walden Antiques down the street. A third Member asked if the new sign met the requirements of the Sign Bylaw and the Owner stated that she had not checked. The first Member thought that a more permanent installation would be better but had not issues with the sign itself. Several other Members agreed that the door sign was appropriate.

The Acting Chair opened the discussion to the public at this time. John Robblee, 324 Sudbury Road, suggested that the Owner try installing magnets all the way around the sign for better adherence. Strip magnets were suggested to create a seal around the sign. Mr. Fiori moved to approve the existing 3’x27” door sign as installed on the lower half of the main door at 17 Walden Street. Ms. Shumway seconded the motion and ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

Charles Wilson, 229 Lexington Road, American Mile Historic District, for new fencing

Owners Charles and Lydia Wilson presented their application to replace their existing stockade fence with a new board fence. The Owners explained that the fence was 15-20 years old and in bad condition. The deteriorated fence was a modern stockade style fence and had partially fallen over already. A few years ago they had added another fence as a privacy screen on the other side of the year and they wanted to replace the deteriorating stockade fence with a new one that matched that privacy fence. The existing stockade fence was a 6’ unpainted wood fence. They proposed to install a 42” high wood board fence topped with 18” of lattice instead. The new fence would be cedar and would remain unpainted.

A Commission Member asked if there were any historic precedents for this kind of fence and Staff stated that she did not aware of one but that they were prevalent in the area. The Commission Member stated his concerns with the fence style and another Member noted that the fence would be set well back from the street and that the heavy vegetation in the area would make it nearly invisible. Members reviewed photos of the site and agreed that it would be difficult to see.

The Acting Chair opened the discussion to Public Comment and there was none at this time. Mr. King moved to approve the application to install a new 42” tall cedar board fence topped with 18” of wood lattice in place of the existing stockade fence along the right property line as submitted. Ms. Shumway seconded the motion and ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

Erin Cummings, 47 Lexington Road, American Mile Historic District, for new chimney

Owner Richard Cummings was present to explain their proposed work to reconstruct the left side chimney on their home. He explained that they needed to replace the brick on that chimney and presented photos and a sample of the new brick. A Commission Member noted the different sizes of the brick in the chimney and thought that it could be very old. He asked if the new bricks would match the color of the existing bricks and the Owner stated that they believed it would match, although there was probably more variation in the existing bricks. A second Member asked that the Owner make sure that the new mortar matches the color of the existing mortar on the chimney. Other Members agreed and asked that the new mortar not be too white. The Owner agreed and noted that the left chimney would be reconstructed but that the right hand chimney only needed to be fixed.

The Acting Chair opened the discussion to Public Comment and there was none at this time. Mr. Fiori moved to allow the repair of the existing chimney with new “Barrington Red” bricks to match the existing bricks as presented with the condition that the new mortar must match the color of the existing mortar. Mr. Nobile seconded the motion and ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

John Robblee & Michelle Pflumm, 324 Sudbury Road, Hubbardville Historic District, for new lighting and paint colors

Owners John Robblee and Michelle Pflumm presented their application to repaint the house and install new lighting on the garage. Beginning with the house, they explained that they needed to repaint the house now that the construction was complete and had worked with historic paint color expert Bonnie Krims to develop a color scheme appropriate to the Queen Anne style of the house. A Commission Member asked if they had found any evidence of earlier color schemes and the Owners answered that they had found some on the stucco below the clapboards which looked to be the same dark green shown in early photos. The Commission Member noted that the proposed color scheme was period appropriate but not the original one used on the building and the Owners agreed. The Owners felt that the existing all white exterior was not appropriate to the structure and presented their plan to paint the body of the “Van Courtland Blue” (BM HC-145), the trim in “White Dove,” and the fish scale shingles (found in a band across front façade and in the gable ends) with a light gold “Chestertown Buff” (BM HC-9). The shutters, doors, garage doors and bulkhead would be painted black “Sayward Pine” (California Paints S-1).

The Owners explained that the new light fixtures would replace the existing motion sensor flood lights over the garage doors. The new fixtures are proposed to be barn style down lights with a raw copper finish. Members reviewed the cut sheets and asked about the capacity of the bulbs. The Owners agreed to

use LED bulbs with no more than 60 Watt capacity and noted that they had a 2,700 K temperature that would produce a warm white light.

Discussion turned back to the proposed paint colors. A Member asked if the upright pieces across the building would be painted with the trim color and the Owners agreed that they would. They noted that all of the fish scale shingles would be painted gold and that the shutters and doors would be dark. A second Member asked the age of the building and it was noted to be ca. 1879. The Member asked why the Owners wanted to change the paint scheme now and they explained that the additions were now complete and needed to be painted. They explained that the house had been painted in Greek Revival colors and that they wanted to return it to a more appropriate color scheme. The second Member thought that the proposed palette felt too busy and noted that it would be a significant change to a very famous building.

A Commission Member agreed that the house was famous and noted that it had also been heavily altered. He asked if the Owners knew when the fish scale shingles had been added. The Owners were not sure whether these shingles were original and installed with the stucco, or added later over it. The second level had been added in the 1940s. The Commission Member noted that the off white trim would break up the fish scale areas. The Owners noted that after 1876, Colonial Revival details began to appear and thought that some of the alterations may have been done then, when many older homes were being dressed up with the popular style. They felt that it made sense now for the style of the house to change to be appropriate to its period of construction. Another Commission member expressed concern that the dramatic color scheme would draw too much attention. The Owners asked if the proposed yellow was the issue and whether eliminating it would be helpful. They reiterated their feeling that the Greek Revival palette of the existing building was not appropriate.

A Commission Member stated that he liked the yellow and felt that the scheme was period appropriate. Another Member expressed concern that the design was too busy and found it difficult to picture on the house. The Owner stated that they had worked hard to restore the historic structure and make it work for a modern family. They had tried hard to work period details into the interior design to retain the feeling of an 1879 structure and had even bought antique light fixtures. They appreciated the Commission's concern but had worked very hard to bring this house back and make it work. The Owner suggested that the yellow could be used at the lower course of the shingles rather than the whole shingled section. A third Member stated that he wanted to see an appropriate design scheme but also wanted the house to fit in with the rest of the area.

A Commission Member noted that this is a very unusual house that had a boring color scheme now and would draw a lot of interest with the proposed new colors. A second Member agreed that the two tone color scheme was the right appropriate but wondered if there were other options for the yellow that were less extreme. He also suggested using a softer white for the trim but the Owners explained that the trim matched the window sash, which were already clad in white. The proposed trim would match those windows. The Commission Member thought that the proposed palette was fine and agreed that it would be a big change.

A Commission Member stated that she liked their proposal to use a different color on the fish scale shingles as she thought they got lost without that distinction. She thought that the proposed contrast was too much, though, and would prefer another option. A second Member agreed and noted that the house would have big areas of these different colors. The first Member added that the house was not large and feared that the proposed colors would be too strong for the building.

The Owners Stated that they had also received beige and gray palettes and understood the Commission's concerns with the strong color scheme. They offered to continue the discussion to the next meeting and to bring those other color palettes for review. Members agreed that they had no concerns with the proposed new light fixtures. Several Members supported the use of the contrasting color schemes. It was noted that the primary concern was with the proposed yellow fish scales. Further discussion was continued to the July 21 meeting.

Mr. Fiori moved to adjourn. Mr. Nobile seconded the motion and ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.
The Meeting was adjourned at 8:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Lara Kritzer
Senior Planner

Minutes Approved on: August 4, 2016

Nea Glenn, Secretary