

**Newburyport Historical Commission**  
City Hall Conference Room  
December 5, 2013  
Minutes

**1. Call to Order**

A regular meeting of the Newburyport Historical Commission was called to order by Chair Linda Smiley at 7:30 p.m.

**2. Roll Call**

In attendance were members Linda Smiley, Stephen Dodge, Margaret Welch, Malcom Carnworth, Ned McGrath, Sarah White and Bill Todd. Assistant Building Inspector Peter Binette was also in attendance.

**3. General Business**

**Office of Planning & Development**

**Discussion of Preservation Restriction for Kelley School**

Kate Newhall-Smith said the City might wish to sell the Kelley School and would want a preservation restriction to be placed on the structure. She distributed the model preservation restriction used by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. She asked for input on the document as a whole but especially Exhibit C, where the features to be preserved would be identified. Margaret Welch said she would be concerned about how the treatment of the brick would be specified, as the Secretary of the Interior's standards are very general. Linda Smiley said she would like some of the interior features to be included in the preservation restriction. Kate Newhall-Smith said it would be possible to include the preservation of some interior features in the system to rank the responses to the RFP. She will schedule a site visit for a Saturday in January.

**4. Demolition Applications**

**BullDawg USA Realty I, LLC c/o Law Offices of Robert L. Brennan, Jr., PC  
37 Middle Street**

**Roofline change**

Robert Brennan appeared for the applicant, who wishes to convert the structure to three residential units with parking in the rear. The applicant is proposing to alter the roofline because the third floor is not up to code for living space. The proposed new ridgeline would be 18" above the 35' allowed under the zoning code. The change to the roofline would not be considered a dormer because it extends the length of the building and raises the ridgeline. The alteration would be visible from both Middle and Liberty Streets.

Mr. Brennan said the roof must be fully replaced, as the structure is insufficient. He added that the addition of living space in the attic would be necessary for the economic viability of the project.

Linda Smiley moved the structure is historically significant. Sarah White seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Ned McGrath said he is disturbed by the design, in part because it gives the appearance that an entire floor has been added. He said the structure was designed for a certain volume of

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occupancy. He commented further that the proposal ignores the architectural value of the structure and he is concerned about the architectural fabric of the community being sacrificed. Sarah White said the design is not compatible with the historic streetscape. A neighboring unit has undergone a similar change that is only visible from the rear of the structure and is therefore less objectionable. Linda Smiley said allowing the roofline change would set a precedent that could alter the character of the city.

Linda Smiley read letters in opposition to the roofline change submitted by Stephanie Niketic and Tom Kolterjahn. She said she also has received emails from individuals requesting an opportunity to speak about the application. A public hearing will be held at the January 2, 2014 meeting. A site visit will take place on Saturday, December 14 at 8:30 a.m.

## **5. Continuation of General Business**

### **Steve Bergholm, Newburyport Public Schools**

#### **Discussion of High School Exterior Woodwork Restoration**

Steve Bergholm, Director of Facilities for the Newburyport Public Schools, and Patrick Guthrie of the Spencer and Vogt Group discussed the project to restore the exterior woodwork at the high school. When it was noticed that the woodwork was beginning to deteriorate, an RFQ was issued for an existing conditions survey. The work was divided into four phases, the first of which includes the middle of the High Street façade. The bid documents are currently being developed and the project will be put out to bid in the spring. A CPA grant in the amount of \$150,000 was received for the work. The paint would be stripped to the bare wood and a sealer, primer and finish coat would be applied. The plans call for the placement of a load-bearing structure inside of the hollow columns. The capitals would be replicated and would no longer support the portico. Mr. Bergholm asked for input on the bid documents.

Linda Smiley said the project is heading in the right direction. She said the quality of wood used today is not good and does not hold up well. She said would be prudent to take advantage of modern materials and resins are used successfully for replacing rotted wood.

## **6. Minutes**

Linda Smiley moved to approve the minutes of the November 7, 2013 meeting as submitted. Margaret Welch seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

## **7. Correspondence:**

The following items were received and filed:

- a letter from the Massachusetts Historic Commission concerning the intermodal transit center proposed for Titcomb Street.
- a letter from the Massachusetts Historic Commission concerning 42 Merrimac Street.
- a letter from Jeanne Quinn concerning historical research. She will be advised to contact the Historical Society of Old Newbury.

## **8. Adjournment**

Linda Smiley moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m. Margaret Welch seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.