

Newburyport Historical Commission

December 6, 2017

Present: Sarah White, Malcolm Carnwath, Mark Bilodeau

Absent: Ned McGrath, Steven Dodge

Meeting called to order at 7:32pm

129 Ferry Road

Public hearing to demolish a portion of the historic structure that serves as a “connector” between the main house and the barn.

Veejay Joyce – of Cummings Architects of Ipswich. Briefly explained the request to remove the connector between the house and barn.

(Note: two members of the NHC, Sarah White and Malcolm Carnwath, had previously performed a site visit with the property owners and Mat Cummings, architect.)

Chair White opened the public comment portion of the hearing.

Tom Kolterjahn – only comment is the size of the addition. Doubles the size of the historic building. At the same time, readily acknowledges that the property is in a country setting which is a different thing than if it were in the south end of Newburyport. Otherwise, supportive of the project.

Chair White closed the public comment portion of the hearing.

Motion: NHC moved to approve the removal of the “connector” portion of the property between the house and the barn with the proviso that the replacement portion be built as depicted on plan sheet A-2 that was submitted for the NHC demolition delay process. Motion also included that louvered shutters were to be added to main structure and that it would be left to the discretion of the owner and architect if the front porch is to be re-constructed. Motion passed 3-0 in favor.

Additionally (but not part of the motion) the NHC strongly encouraged the Applicant to retain the existing late 19th-century outhouse at the rear of this connector as they are rare to find still extant and are typically archaeological treasure troves of information into domestic life in past centuries.

101-103 State Street:

Tim Johnson, contractor for the condo association, explained that the association wants to replace the front porch columns that have rotted and otherwise fallen in to varying states of disrepair. Mr. Johnson stated that the association wanted to replace the wood columns with fiberglass columns but retain the original wood Corinthian capitals.

The NHC advised Mr. Johnson that it would not be supportive of fiberglass being used for the replacement columns and that the columns should be replaced in-kind with wood. One member of the NHC noted that they would be fine with fiberglass being used, but two other Commission members were not in favor of the use of fiberglass. The NHC noted that this property was a contributing structure to the National Register District and, as such, due consideration should be given to the quality of the materials used. The NHC also noted that Mr. Johnson should assess the condition of the plinths supporting the columns in the event that they also needed replacement. Lastly, the NHC noted that Mr. Johnson should check each column to determine to what extent the rot was present along the columns' length; if the entirety of the column was not compromised, then it would be possible to replace only a portion of a column rather than going to the expense of replacing an entire column.

A member of the public in attendance, Tom Kolterjahn, asked to speak and noted to Mr. Johnson that there were businesses in the area that could produce the appropriate columns in wood at reasonable prices. Mr. Kolterjahn and Mr. Johnson exchanged contact information to work together on finding suitable providers for the column project.

Motion: The NHC moved to advise the Planning Board that it would support only the use of wood for the column replacement/repair and that fiberglass or other synthetic materials shall not be used. Also included in the motion was the retention of the Corinthian capitals. Motion passed 3-0 in favor.

43 Fair Street

The Applicant, George Haseltine, and his architect, Scott Brown, presented their proposal for the single-family historic property located at 43 Fair Street.

Though not a public hearing, the NHC allowed for an abutter to the property to speak. The right side abutter to this property attended the NHC meeting and stated her concerns regarding the size of the addition, the water runoff from 43 Liberty onto her property and the proposal to add a second story onto the existing single-story porch at the rear of 43 Liberty.

The NHC advised this abutter that her concerns were not within the purview of the NHC, but that the Commission would add her comments to the public record. The NHC encouraged the abutter to state her concerns to the Planning Board which would be the proper city board with which her questions/issues should be discussed.

The NHC suggested that the Applicant consider not including the second story over the existing single-story rear porch from a mass and historic design standpoint. The Applicant indicated to the NHC that he was planning on discussing this and related issues with the abutter.

Motion: The NHC made a motion to approve the proposed alterations to the structure at 43 Liberty Street with the following conditions:

- all siding (except for that on the right elevation which must be a fire-rated material due to its proximity to the property line according to building/fire safety code. This elevation's siding is proposed as HardiePlank -cementitious siding.)

- The Applicant should work to re-use the few remaining original 6-over-6 windows. If these windows are not to be re-used in this project, the NHC recommends a condition requiring the Applicant to donate these historic windows to a local non-profit, an historic window restoration practitioner, or an organization specializing in teaching historic building and restoration techniques (for example, the North Bennet Street School in the North End of Boston). These windows should not be reduced to finding a new home in a landfill due to their historic merit.

The NHC advised the Applicant to take care with the proportions of the building - window placement and sizing along the facades, eave returns and other architectural details.

The NHC also advised the Applicant that, in the plan set submitted to the NHC for their review, the second floor window and first floor door on the street-facing portion of the proposed "L" addition to the left elevation of the house are not properly aligned within their vertical vertical plane. The NHC recommended that the Applicant work on a solution to this, ideally in time for the Planning Board hearing on December 20th.

1690 House Interpretive Panels

Lisa Mead, Counsel for the Applicants, informed the NHC that they were not ready to present on the panels on December 6th. Counsel did provide the NHC with a handout for our consideration. This was not discussed at the meeting. There was no discussion of the panels by the NHC at the meeting. The NHC will discuss the panel content and design at a future meeting once full draft proposals are ready.

Section 106 Advisory Review: Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Program

The NHC determined unanimously that the agency undertaking the action that triggers the Section 106 review has not provided the NHC with sufficient information.

Motion: A motion was made to require photo sims of the proposed project that shows from multiple angles, the materials proposed and the dimensions and exact locations of the curb extensions. Existing and proposed conditions shall be provided in these photo sims. Until this additional information is received and can be reviewed by the NHC, the NHC considers the review packet incomplete and therefore, is unable to make a determination of adverse or no adverse effect at this time. The NHC's determination shall be rendered once sufficient materials for our review and comment have been received. Motion passed 3-0 in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm.