

Newburyport Historical Commission

December 12, 2019

City Council Chambers

Minutes

1. Call to Order

Chair Glenn Richards called a regular meeting of the Newburyport Historical Commission to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

In attendance were members Ron Ziemba, Christopher Fay, Glenn Richards, Malcolm Carnwath and Patricia Peknik. Stephen Dodge was absent.

3. Demolition Delay Public Hearings

Eric Primack

14-16 Purchase Street (accessory building)

Full Demolition

The applicant is proposing to demolish a barn, the rear portion of which is not historic. The Commission members visited the site and found the front part of the structure to be of some interest. It is not of timber frame construction but contains old glass.

The hearing was opened to comments from the public. No members of the public spoke in favor of or in opposition to the demolition.

Glenn Richards said that not much of the barn remains to be preserved. Christopher Fay commented that while he agrees the barn probably could not be preserved, it is an interesting structure that represents a part of the city's history. Glenn Richards moved to approve the demolition application. Malcolm Carnwath seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Eric Primack

14-16 Purchase Street (two-family structure)

Partial demolition/roof line change

The applicant is proposing to make several changes to a Greek Revival structure. Dormers would be added to the front façade. The bay on the right side of the structure would be demolished. The one-story accessway at the rear of the structure would be removed and replaced with a two-story addition.

The hearing was opened to comments from the public. Tom Kolterjahn, 64 Federal Street, said the proposed changes would ruin a wonderful building. He said more demolition is being proposed than is apparent from the application. The applicant implies that the door would be replaced with windows, but in fact the existing window openings would be repositioned, which increases the amount of demolition. He thinks it likely the amount of demolition exceeds the 23% claimed by the applicant and an advisory review should be required. The entrances on the front and both sides are original to the structure. The front entrance, which is an important feature, would be removed or covered. Bump outs are typical of the Victorian period and the one on the right side of the structure should be preserved. All of the window trim is Greek Revival and should be retained. The pitch of the roof does not lend itself well to any style dormer and what is being

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proposed is out of proportion with the structure. The drawing submitted does not accurately depict the existing condition on the left side of the structure.

Lisa Mead, 13 Purchase Street, said she is concerned about the loss of architectural detail and the dormers proposed for the front of the structure. The plans are inconsistent, as they show the dormers placed in two different positions. She said the other houses on the street do not have dormers. The desired third floor could be achieved by adding dormers only to the rear of the house. There would be no reason to remove the corner boards, which are an important feature of the style. The front and side doors could be restored. She does not agree with the assertion made by the applicant that the bay impedes the use of the driveway. The applicant has submitted only a drawing of the existing conditions and the public should be able to review a full set of plans. She asked that the hearing be continued in order for the applicant to provide complete and consistent plans. She also asked that the amount of proposed demolition be recalculated.

Glenn Richards said the applicant must provide plans that more accurately depict the existing conditions and the proposed changes. Patricia Peknik said the addition of highly visible dormers is contrary to the standards of the Secretary of the Interior. They are not appropriate for the Greek Revival structure and would compromise its historic integrity. The Commission members should consider not just the size and shape of the proposed dormers but also their appropriateness for the period of the structure.

Christopher Fay said the Purchase Street streetscape is a gem that should be kept intact.

Glenn Richards moved to continue the public hearing to allow the applicant to provide a plan review of the proposed changes and details on the materials and windows and to correct errors on the plans and for the zoning enforcement officer to review the demolition calculations. Ron Ziemba seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Brian and Erin Callahan

29 Warren Street

Full demolition

The applicant is proposing to demolish a post and beam barn-like structure at the rear of the property, which he said has been heavily modified and is in poor condition.

Members of the public were asked for their comments. Tom Kolterjahn, 64 Federal Street, said he hates to see the demolition of early barns.

Patricia Peknik commented that the barn was probably built at the same time as the house. Christopher Fay said the condition is poor and at the site visit he did not feel safe on the second floor. The applicant agreed to allow members of the Preservation Trust to determine if any of the materials from the barn could be salvaged.

Ron Ziemba moved to allow the demolition of the accessory structure. Glenn Richards seconded the motion. The motion was approved with Patricia Peknik abstaining.

4. Demolition Delay Historic Significance Determinations

Jeff Stott

7 Dove Street

Lisa Mead represented the applicant, who is proposing to demolish a small barn behind a house that dates from 1775-1800. The barn is in an unsafe condition. It would be replaced in the same location and a lean-to would be added on its side.

Patricia Peknik commented that the main house has been meticulously maintained. Glenn Richards moved that the barn is historically significant but not preferably preferred and to release it for demolition. Patricia Peknik seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

James T. Warnat

25 Erie Avenue

The applicant is proposing to demolish the house and replace it with a new structure located more towards the center of the lot. The neighborhood in which the structure is located has experienced a great deal of development in recent years. The Commission members do not believe the reconstruction would adversely impact the streetscape. Christopher Fay moved the structure is historically significant but not preferably preferred as it is not a good example of its style and to release it for demolition. Ron Ziemba seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Gregory Elliot and Candace McMahon

12 54th Street

John Sava represented the applicant, who is proposing to remove the roof on a Plum Island cottage and add a second floor. The cottage has been significantly changed over the years and its original character has been lost. Malcolm Carnwath moved the structure is not historically significant. Ron Ziemba seconded the motion. The motion was approved with Patricia Peknik and Christopher Fay voting against it.

5. Correspondence

Letter from Joseph Giallenella re: 223 High Street PR violation

The property owner responded to a violation notice for the construction of an illegal deck. Some of the supports still remain on the site. The applicant intends to submit plans for the construction of a new deck in the near future. The supports would be addressed at that time. No NHC action is currently needed.

Draft MOA for 57 Low Street

The MOA for the garage at the Armory states that any changes to the exterior of the structure would require MHC review and approval. NHC input would be sought at that time.

Draft Letter to Institution for Savings

The Commission members approved a letter Glenn Richards drafted to congratulate the bank on the quality of the recent restoration work.

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6. Minutes

Malcolm Carnwath moved to approve the minutes of the November 14, 2019, meeting as submitted. Christopher Fay seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

7. Adjournment

Malcolm Carnwath moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:56 p.m. Ron Ziemba seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.