

Newburyport Historical Commission
City Council Chambers
February 22, 2017
Minutes

1. Call to Order

Chair Sarah White called a regular meeting of the Newburyport Historical Commission to order at 7:35 p.m.

2. Roll Call

In attendance were members Sarah White, Malcolm Carnwath and Stephen Dodge. Ned McGrath participated by telephone. Mark Bilodeau was absent. James Bone was also in attendance.

3. Public Hearing

Jonathan Young

7 Butler Street

Roofline change

The applicant is proposing to raise the roofline of a single-family home and add a second story to the rear portion of the structure. Revised plans were submitted to the Commission based on comments made at the February 8 meeting. The applicant was asked to provide dimensioned elevations showing the proposed changes. It was recommended the window facing the street on the third floor be two-over-two and double-hung window and made narrower. It was also suggested symmetrical windows be added to the first and second stories of the plain wall.

Sarah White opened the hearing to comments from the public. Tom Kolterjahn, 64 Federal Street, co-president of the Newburyport Preservation Trust, said the historic character of house is often lost when the roof is raised. He said in his opinion the proposed plans would destroy the historic character of the structure. He suggested changes be made at the rear of the structure to gain the additional living space the applicant is seeking. Phil Cody, 9 Butler Street, spoke in favor of the application and said the proposed changes would complement the neighborhood better than the nearby new construction. Stephanie Niketic, 98 High Street, said the house currently is a contributing structure in the historic district. She said if the proposed changes were to be made, the house would no longer resemble the structure that exists today and she questioned if it would continue contribute to the historic district.

Sarah White closed the public comment portion of the hearing and asked for comments from the Commission members. Stephen Dodge said the proposal would improve the property and would fit in with the neighborhood. He said the workers' cottages do not meet the needs of homeowners today. Ned McGrath said the house represents the style of its time. He said the fabric of the community is made up of a variety of houses, not just the Federals or Georgians. He wishes to find a balance between maintaining the architectural heritage of the city and meeting the needs of the homeowner. He asked to receive a drawing showing the proposed plans superimposed over the existing façade. The public hearing was continued to the March 8 meeting.

4. Advisory Review

George Carey

1 Market Square

DOD Advisory Review

Mark Griffin, George Carey, Dan Ricciarelli described the plans for renovating the restaurant space at the Firehouse. The Commission is to provide an advisory report to the Planning Board for the March 1 public hearing on the project. On the front façade, upward-opening doors would be added. New awnings would be installed that attach to the doorframes. Signage would be installed utilizing existing holes. No damage would be done to the granite lintel or bricks. At the rear of the structure the glass wall would be moved outwards to the face of the upper deck to expand the dining area. A permanent pergola structure with hipped-roof awnings would replace the existing tent. The applicant is proposing to paint a large sign on the brick of the rear façade.

Sarah White opened the hearing to comments from the public. Tom Kolterjahn, 64 Federal Street, said he supports the plan, which is a wonderful adaptive reuse project that benefits both the community and the theatre. He said the paint should not be removed from the interior brick by sandblasting and lime mortar should be used. Lois Honegger said both Mayor Holaday and the board of the Firehouse fully support the project.

Sarah White closed the public comment portion of the hearing and asked for comments from the Commission members. The members emphasized no holes should be made in the brick or granite. Ned McGrath spoke against a sign being painted on the brick. He said the structure houses the theater in addition to the restaurant and any signage for the restaurant should be at street level. Sarah White moved to recommend the project to the Planning Board with the conditions discussed while conveying the concern expressed about signage on the rear façade. Malcolm Carnwath seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

5. General Business

Lisa Mead

1690 House, 262 Merrimac Street

Preservation Restriction

Adam Costa represented the applicant and the First Republic Corporation. A preservation restriction was to apply to certain interior elements of the 1690 House along the exterior features. The staircase, floors, windows, paneling and mantles were all to have been retained. Instead the interior was gutted and most of these elements were not preserved. With regards to the exterior elements, the Greek Revival entrances were not preserved and the entablatures were discarded. Tom Kolterjahn, 64 Federal Street, said what the developer did to the building is a tragedy. The developer made representations that building would be preserved and did not keep these promises. Sarah White said First Republic destroyed the architecture integrity of the structure's interior and what was done was abhorrent. Ned McGrath said the document is a hollow one and does not contain enough detail to warrant being signed. He does not wish to convey benefits to the developer based on what was done to the building. He asked what recourse the City might seek from the developer. Sarah White moved to postpone the vote on the preservation restriction until the March 8 meeting to allow her time to speak with the Planning Director and the City Attorney. Malcolm Carnwath seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

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6. Minutes

Malcolm Carnwath moved to approve the minutes of the February 8, 2017 meeting as amended. Stephen Dodge seconded the motion. The motion was approved with Ned McGrath abstaining.

7. Adjournment

Malcolm Carnwath moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:21 p.m. Stephen Dodge seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.