

Newburyport Historical Commission
Mayor's Conference Room
April 12, 2017
Minutes

1. Call to Order

Chair Sarah White called a regular meeting of the Newburyport Historical Commission to order at 7:31 p.m.

2. Roll Call

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

3. Advisory Review

Travis T. Sumner

101 Lime Street

DCOD Advisory Review

The Commission is to provide advice to the Zoning Board on the proposal to remove a two-story section of the structure and replace it with a two-story addition on a larger footprint. The roofline of the addition would be lower than that of the main house. The windows would be aluminum-clad wood. Mr. Sumner said the details of the original house would be carried onto the addition. HardiePlank has been installed on three facades of the main structure and this material would be used on the addition. The Commission does not recommend the use of cementitious siding and advised for the sake of the integrity of the structure that the material be changed if the opportunity presents itself in the future.

Malcolm Carnwath moved to provide a written recommendation to the Zoning Board that the shed addition be removed. Stephen Dodge seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

4. General Business

Parking Garage Update

The Commission members will comment on the proposed design of the parking garage at the May 17 Planning Board meeting.

1690 House Preservation Restriction

Jim Bone started the discussion by saying the loss of architectural features from the 1690 House was not caused by a lack of zoning enforcement. Andy Port said the policy of the Planning Office now is to recommend to the Planning Board or Zoning Board that a condition be made requiring the preservation restriction to be in place before a building permit shall be issued.

Lisa Mead represented the applicant and reviewed the history of the project. She said in 2007 the project was approved and the decision of the Zoning Board was that the 1690 House would be reconstructed using the rehabilitation standards of the Secretary of the Interior, not the preservation standards. The house was to be converted to a duplex at that time and the plans included the complete replacement of the entry door and sidelights. The stairs and wall paneling were to be saved, but the ceilings and floors were to be removed. The project was put on hold and in July 2015 a special permit was issued that required the applicant to review the

Newburyport Historical Commission

April 12, 2017

interior features of the structure with the City and its representative, the Preservation Trust, and for the Trust to be notified when elements were to be removed. At the walkthrough the project manager said the stairs, floors, windows and interior shutters would be retained. The stairs and floorboards were to be removed. Attorney Mead said while the applicant made a commitment to preserve certain features, it was not a requirement of any permit. She said the exposed beams and the brick arches in the basement would be added to the preservation restriction. As remuneration the applicant would provide \$10,000 towards the updating of the Historic Structure Survey or two projects at the Cushing House.

The meeting was opened to comments from the public. Stephanie Niketic, 93 High Street, said the law required that the significant historic features of the 1690 House be preserved and did not indicate this was to apply to exterior features only. Tom Kolterjahn, 64 Federal Street, distributed photographs of some of the features that have been lost. He said former NHC chair Linda Smiley clearly indicated in a 2007 letter to the Massachusetts Historical Commission the features that were to be retained. He added that the beams would not have been exposed in a house of this period.

The Commission members said that at this time focus should be placed on the steps the applicant might take to compensate for the removal of the historic features of the building because very little is left to added to the preservation restriction. A recreation of the interior features would not provide a meaningful benefit to the general public. The City would hold a 30-year restriction if the MHC declines to hold a restriction on a structure that has been altered. Mark Bilodeau said \$10,000 would not be adequate for the amount of damage that has been done and he would recommend the amount be \$25,000. Malcolm Carnwath said he is concerned that when a developer profits from destroying an antique it encourages others to do the same. Stephen Dodge suggested interpretive signage could be added that includes historic images of the 1690 House and its place in the context of the Towle complex. Eric Ekman of Berkeley Investments said he would be happy to provide signage and would submit a design for review and approval by the Commission.

Ned McGrath moved to consider an offer, the amount of which the developer would propose in writing, to establish funding for a project that would address the need for historic preservation in the city and to review a revised preservation restriction submitted by the developer. Stephen Dodge seconded motion. The motion was approved by a 3-2 vote, with Malcolm Carnwath and Mark Bilodeau voting against it.

5. Minutes

Malcolm Carnwath moved to approve the minutes of the March 8, 2017 meeting as amended. Stephen Dodge seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

6. Adjournment

Stephen Dodge moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:08 p.m. Malcolm Carnwath seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.