

# **Newburyport Historical Commission**

February 24, 2022

Online Meeting

Minutes

## **1. Call to Order**

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

## **2. Roll Call**

In attendance were members Joe Morgan, Glenn Richards, Peter McNamee, Malcolm Carnwath and Christopher Fay. Marc Cendron was absent. Also in attendance were Planning Director Andy Port, Planner Katelyn Sullivan and note taker Gretchen Joy.

## **3. DOD/DCOD Advisory Review**

### **24 Center Street**

Lisa Mead represented the applicant and requested that the Commission issue a report to the Planning Board on the historical significance of the structure to be demolished and the relative importance of the structure to its setting in the DOD.

The brick building first appears on the 1851 Sanborn map. It has elements of the Federal, Greek and Georgian styles. The brick on the north elevation has been parged and some of this parging has deteriorated. Many changes were made to the fenestration in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including the addition of storefront windows on the Middle Street façade. The windows are not original, with the exception of one in the attic, and the doors have been replaced. A 1.5-story clapboard addition was constructed at the rear of the structure sometime prior to 1914. The structure is covered with vines and the wood-framed addition is in poor condition.

Aileen Graf described the proposed changes to the structure. The wood addition would be removed. It would be replaced with a 2.5-story wood addition on a smaller footprint. The addition would have a gambrel form and would be wider on the second floor than the first. The roof height of the addition would be lower than that of the brick structure. The addition would not be visible from Middle Street. It would be further from the property lines and stepped in from the main structure. On the west side, the reveal would be one-tenth of a foot. The new addition would be clad with wood clapboards and shingles.

The vines and parging would be removed from the original structure. The brick would be repointed and the slate roof would be repaired. Skylights would be added on the western-facing side of the roof. The cornice, window lintels and sills, fanlight and sidelights would be repaired and repainted. The chimney nearest Middle Street would be restored. The second chimney would be rebuilt in the same location and with the same proportions as the existing chimney. Both chimneys would be parged and painted.

An existing attic window would be removed, as would one second-story window. A window on the first floor that is currently overlapped by the addition would be exposed. All of the windows would be replaced with fiberglass-clad two-over-two windows. Both the sashes and frames would be replaced.

Attorney Mead said the neighborhood is dense and contains many 2.5-story buildings. Most of the structures along Middle Street between Center Street and State Street are brick. Many buildings in the neighborhood have wood additions.

Public comment was allowed. Tom Kolterjahn, 64 Federal Street, said he is pleased that the building would receive much-needed attention. He said the plans seem to be reasonable, although he questioned the painting of the new brick of the chimney.

Christopher Fay said he has no concerns about the plans. Joe Morgan said the architect has done a good job. Malcolm Carnwath said the plan looks good. Peter McNamee said it would be good to see something happen with the building. Glenn Richard said the structure will get the attention it deserves. He will prepare a draft report for review at the next meeting.

### **East Row Condos**

Rob Ciampitti, Trustee of the East Row Condominium Association, described the proposed plans to resolve an issue with leaking in the crescent-shaped building. The structure was built in 1811 and contains 26 commercial, retail and residential units. At least one residential unit is experiencing leaks. The Association is requesting a permit from the Planning Board to repair the masonry on two of the five brick roof structures.

Photographs from the 1960s show that the roof projections at that time had a lower profile and were not of brick. The stepped gable parapets were added in the 1970s. Bricks from this period are porous and erode over time. The parapets were sealed and the bricks were repointed not too long ago, but this solution lasted only a few years. Architect Matt Carleton said that when a brick was removed, it was found that the interior area was filled with rubble. There is no collar joint and no mass to store the moisture. The only way to prevent the leaks is to provide an overclad.

A study of the water revealed that two of the parapets, as well as the stucco at the rear of the structure, are responsible for the leaks. The applicant is proposing to install a thin brick over-cladding system with a drainage layer and step flashing. Trays with half inch brick veneer tiles would be applied over the 1970s brick. Waterproofing would be applied over the top of the parapets. The brick veneer would match the existing materials and would not be perceptible from the street. The coping material would be aluminum.

Public comment was allowed. Tom Kolterjahn, 64 Federal Street, said modern brick was used to build the firewalls higher than the original condition. Portland cement was used for the mortar, which traps moisture in brick. He also said a groove was cut in the flashing along the entire length of the firewall and layers of caulking were added along the flashing. He said this treatment does not last, while the traditional method of step flashing does. The proposed solution would cover the problem, but would not resolve it. He said he thinks a veneer of fake brick would look horrible. He would like the applicant to implement a permanent solution.

Glenn Richards asked if the applicant has explored alternates, such as a return to the low wall of the original design. Mr. Ciampitti said there is an urgency for the residents. A practical solution must be found. He does not wish to remove the parapets.

Christopher Fay said that while Mr. Kolterjahn made good points, the brick is not historic. The visual change caused by the proposal would not create a significant issue.

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Joe Morgan said it would be best to remove the masonry and rebuild the parapets properly, but he understands this would be too costly. He said the proposed cladding would be an acceptable solution.

Malcolm Carnwath said the applicant is trying to address the problem with leaking. He would not be concerned by the appearance of the veneer.

Peter McNamee said he has no issue with the proposal from the perspective of appearance. He is concerned the approach would only be temporary, but the applicant has a need for immediate relief.

Glenn Richard will prepare a draft report for review at the next meeting.

#### **4. Minutes**

Peter McNamee moved to approve the minutes of the January 27 meeting. Joe Morgan seconded the motion. The motion was approved by 4-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, yes; Christopher Fay, abstain).

#### **5. Adjournment**

Christopher Fay moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m. Joe Morgan seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Christopher Fay, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, yes).