

Newburyport Historical Commission

April 23, 2020

Online Meeting

Minutes

1. Call to Order

Chair Glenn Richards called a regular meeting of the Newburyport Historical Commission to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. Roll Call

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

3. Demolition Delay Applications

Nadine Ritchie

22 Munroe Street

Roofline Change/Partial Demolition

The applicant is proposing to demolish a one-story addition with a shed roof at the rear of a half house in the DCOD. It would be replaced with a two-story addition with a pitched roof on an expanded footprint.

Glenn Richards commented that the structure is a part of the historic streetscape. Patricia Peknik moved the structure is historically significant and preferably preserved. Christopher Fay seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Patricia Peknik, yes; Christopher Fay, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, yes).

Glenn Richards opened the hearing to comments from the public. Chris Currier, 18 Munroe Street, said the addition would be consistent with the abutting property and would not be detrimental to the neighborhood. The public comment portion of the hearing was closed.

Patricia Peknik moved to approve the roofline change and partial demolition for 22 Munroe Street. Peter McNamee seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Patricia Peknik, yes; Christopher Fay, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, yes).

Michael J. Gray

12 Harrison Street

Roofline Change

The applicant is proposing to revert a two-family structure to a single-family house and change the roofline on the back part of the main structure to make it more in keeping with its original form. The footprint would remain the same. The edge of the roof at the front of the house would be raised three feet. The plans show that brackets would be installed along this edge of the roof. The siding would be shiplap with a 10" face and would be of a cementitious material. Brick would be used for the sides of the original part of the

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structure. The applicant said the windows would be nine-over-nine or six-over-six, but this is not what is shown on the plans.

The Commission members pointed out the brackets would not be appropriate for a house of this period. Patricia Peknik said the gambrel roof line at the rear of the main structure would be an improvement. She said the proposed rear roof deck would be highly visible from the Rail Trail and added that decks are late 20th century features that do not have a place on historic houses. She wants to receive more information on the windows. Christopher Fay said it is not enough to clean up the rear of the house; the whole house must be considered. A large house would be made larger still. He said the roof deck would not be historically appropriate and he is not in favor of the raising of the roof on the front facade. Malcolm Carnwath said raising the roof would change the proportions of the front façade. He said shiplap is not appropriate for a house of this period and clapboards should be used instead. He is not in favor of the brick side walls but does not object to the roof deck. Joe Morgan said he does not find raising the roof objectionable and he understands the need for useable space on the third floor. He pointed out the third-floor ceilings are to be nine feet in height and asked if they could be lowered as a compromise. He said the shiplap would change the texture of the façade. Peter McNamee said the building needs attention and he is not opposed to the brick end walls or the roof deck. He is concerned about the mixing of architectural styles and the shiplap. This flush treatment would not be appropriate for the period of the house. Glenn Richards said the raising of the roof would alter the proportions of the older part of the house. Clapboards would be more appropriate than shiplap and windows should be installed that are historically appropriate.

Glenn Richards opened the hearing to comments from the public. Stephanie Niketic, 93 High Street, asked the Commission to impose a demolition delay. She said many questions remain about the proposal and she is not in favor of it. She agreed with the concerns of the Commission members. Josh Weiss, 13 Harrison Street, said the house is in dire need of work and he would welcome the improvements. Mary Gene Clavin, 8 Harrison Street, said she supports the improvement of the property although she is unable to address the way in which the proposal would impact the historic character of the house. The public comment portion of the hearing was closed.

Glenn Richards said the rear addition was not done well and he appreciates that the property would be improved. The demolition delay would provide the opportunity for the Commission to work with the applicant to make changes to the plans that would be more historically appropriate. The applicant said he would be agreeable to raising the roof 1.5 feet instead of three, removing the brackets and using clapboards instead of shiplap and brick.

Glenn Richards moved to continue the public hearing to the May 14 meeting in order that the applicant might address the concerns of the Commission. Patricia Peknik seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Patricia Peknik, yes; Christopher Fay, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, yes).

4. General Business

Vera Ristorante, LLC c/o John A. Santaniello

31-35 Market Square, Unit 1

DOD Advisory Review

The applicant is proposing to change the first-floor windows to bi-fold ones that he would be able to open in the warm weather. The Commission members had previously informed him that the existing windows are not appropriate for the historic structure. Large pane windows would have been used in commercial building of this period.

Patricia Peknik said the new windows should be compatible with other windows in the square. Joe Morgan said the applicant should follow the design guidelines for revitalization in the downtown overlay district. Wood windows that can be opened would have wider sight lines than the original ones, which were stationary. The one material that could be used to create an acceptable profile would be steel. This would set a precedent but might be acceptable if painted black. The new windows should look the same as the existing ones, with no reduction in the size of the pane or widening of the dividers.

Glenn Richards will prepare a letter based on the comments and forward it to the Planning Board.

Geoffrey Holmes

32 Franklin Street

DCOD Historical Report

The applicant is proposing to remove a two-story addition at the rear of the property and replace it with a three-story addition on the same footprint. He said the property is so small that his only opportunity for expanding the house is to go upwards. Casement windows would be installed in the addition and a picture window is planned to allow the installation of furniture.

Glenn Richards said the applicant has not provided documentation on the existing condition of the structure. He is concerned about massing and the height of the proposed addition. The applicant has stated the chimney would be retained but this is not shown on the drawings. Patricia Peknik said she is concerned about the window pattern and the height of the addition. The third-story deck would be very visible from the public way. Joe Morgan said the footprint of the house is small with regards to those of the neighboring structures. He would like a drawing to show the addition in the context of its neighbors. Christopher Fay said the addition would be a tower and is too high.

Glenn Richards asked for comments from the public. Lisa Mead of Mead, Talerman and Costa said she represents the abutters to the right and rear of the property who are concerned about the height of the proposed addition. She said the three-story addition would change the context of the neighborhood. It would dwarf the original structure and the house at 15 Salem Street. While she does not doubt the condition of the property, the applicant has not supplied the required evidence. The plan also lacks information on materials and the drawings are not properly scaled. Patty Snyder, 15 Salem Street, said the house needs attention but it is very close to the surrounding properties and the addition would tower over her backyard.

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Glenn Richards moved to continue the public hearing to the May 14 meeting in order that he might work with the applicant to complete the application. Patricia Peknik seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Patricia Peknik, yes; Christopher Fay, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, yes).

5. Minutes

Patricia Peknik moved to approve of the minutes of the February 27, 2020, meeting as submitted. Glenn Richards seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Patricia Peknik, yes; Christopher Fay, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, absent).

Glenn Richards moved to approve of the minutes of the March 26 and April 9, 2020, meetings as submitted. Patricia Peknik seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Patricia Peknik, yes; Christopher Fay, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, yes).

6. Adjournment

Malcolm Carnwath moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 p.m. Christopher Fay seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Patricia Peknik, yes; Christopher Fay, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, yes).