

## **Newburyport Historical Commission**

April 27, 2023  
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 Glenn Richards, Joe Morgan, Biff Bouse, Chris Sawtelle, Andrew Bernhardt and Marc Cendron. Christopher Fay was absent. Also in attendance were Planner Katelyn Sullivan and note taker Gretchen Joy.

### **3. Demolition Delay Applications**

#### **69 High Street**

Lisa Mead represented the applicant, who is proposing to remove a porch with a lean-to roof at the rear of the structure and construct a one-story addition on a larger footprint. The Georgian-revival structure was built as a single-family home in 1865 according to the District Data Sheets. It was converted to a two-family residence sometime in the past 25 to 30 years.

Marc Cendron moved the structure is historically significant and considered for preservation. Andrew Bernhardt seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Biff Bouse, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Marc Cendron, yes; Chris Sawtelle, yes; Andrew Bernhardt, yes).

Architect Jeff Tucker said the applicant is proposing to revert the structure back to single-family use. No changes would be made to the front façade. A missing window would be returned to the two-story section on the right side of the structure. The siding and details of this section are different from those of the main house, but it is original to the structure.

The porch with the lean-to roof that is to be removed is also original to the structure. The proposed one-story addition would provide for modern living while allowing the historic interior spaces to remain intact. The addition would have French doors and a roof terrace above it. It would step in from the corner of the main structure and would be subservient to it. The siding and details would match those of the two-story portion of the structure. Stairs would be added to provide access to the basement level.

The hearing was opened to comments from the public. Stephanie Niketic, 93 High Street, asked about the size of the footprint of the addition. Mr. Tucker said it would be 800 square feet. Ms. Niketic said the roof deck would be very large and she is aware an abutter is concerned about this.

Biff Bouse said the house is large and had been successfully used for two families. He said it should be large enough to accommodate the interior changes needed for one family. The addition is the size of an entire home for some people.

Glenn Richards said the role of the Commission is to determine if a proposal would meet the standards of the Secretary of the Interior. The size would only be a

consideration if the addition were not subservient to the historic structure or it would negatively impact it.

Chris Sawtelle said he has no objection to the proposal. Joe Morgan said the addition would not be visible from the street and he has no comment on its design.

Marc Cendron said the new chimney would be visible from the street. It would be visually prominent and not in proportion to the other chimneys on the structure. The brick is shown as extending to the ground. Attorney Mead said the base of the chimney could be absorbed into structure but its size is a function of the building code. Jeff Tucker said he would be able to replicate the size and proportion of the existing chimneys within the modern code.

Andrew Bernhardt moved that the structure is preferably preserved. Joe Morgan seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Biff Bouse, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Marc Cendron, yes; Chris Sawtelle, yes; Andrew Bernhardt, yes).

Glenn Richards moved to accept the plans as presented with the condition that the new chimney proposed for the rear addition shall be an interior chimney, with clapboards visible on the exterior of the first floor and the masonry visible only above the level of the roof deck and the proportions and details of the chimney shall be as close as possible to those of the existing chimneys as the building code allows. Joe Morgan seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-1 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Biff Bouse, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Marc Cendron, no; Chris Sawtelle, yes; Andrew Bernhardt, yes).

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

##### **6 Pine Street**

Glenn Richards explained that when the amount of proposed demolition exceeds 25% for a structure in the DCOD, the Zoning Board of Appeals is the permit granting authority and the role of the NHC is to provide an advisory report to that Board on any adverse impact the proposal would have on the historical values of the property.

Lisa Mead represented the applicant, who is proposing to remove 42.9% of the exterior walls of a contributing structure that was built in 1850 according to the District Data Sheets. She said the existing rear and side additions were constructed sometime after 1924. The foundations of these additions are made up of cinder blocks and their structural integrity is questionable. The existing structure is 882 square feet and is only 13 feet wide. The new structure would be 1,642 square feet. Although it would nearly double in size, the house would remain one of the smallest on the block.

Architect Scott Brown said the historic eaves and sills have been covered in vinyl. The replacement windows were inserts that fit inside the existing frames, making them appear smaller than the original windows. The main entry is on the right side of the structure, where it is close to the neighboring property. The existing additions were poorly constructed.

Mr. Brown described the proposed changes to the property. The structure would be lengthened and additions would be constructed on both of its sides. The main entry would be moved to the new addition on the left side of the house. The vinyl siding and vinyl windows would be removed. They would be replaced with cedar siding and two-

over-two, aluminum-clad wood windows with simulated divided lights. The existing freestanding shed would be removed and a two-car garage would be constructed at the rear of the property. The second floor of the garage would be used for storage in the short term, as there is no attic in the house, but eventually might be used for office space.

Attorney Mead said the neighborhood is eclectic and asked the Board to find that the proposed renovations would not take away from its historic nature.

The meeting was opened to comments from the public. Stephanie Niketic, 93 High Street, said the detail on the garage could be made simpler to be more in keeping with the style of the house. She pointed out that the existing masonry chimney would be removed. George Haseltine responded that the existing chimney is unstable structurally but he would be happy to build a replica chimney. The public comment period was closed.

Biff Bouse said additions such as the existing ones that were built cinderblocks do not have much historic value. The proposal for the new additions and new garage is not objectionable, but he would like the garage to be more in keeping with the Greek-revival style of the house.

Chris Sawtelle said a small house such as this would be at risk for full demolition. He said the proposal for the addition would be truer to the Greek style than others in the city and he likes the plan.

Joe Morgan said it would be difficult to preserve the diminutive nature of the structure. The best outcome would be to maintain its dimensional reference points, which the architect has done. The perpendicular extension on the left side of the structure keeps the eye on the original scale of the building.

Marc Cendron moved to authorize the Chair to draft an advisory report for review and approval at the May 11 meeting. Joe Morgan seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote (Glenn Richards, abstain; Biff Bouse, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Marc Cendron, yes; Chris Sawtelle, yes; Andrew Bernhardt, yes).

## **5. Updates from the Chair**

Glenn Richards reminded the Commissioners about the information session on Boards and Commissions that is to be held on May 4. He said a new applicant is interested in joining the Commission and would be an alternate.

## **6. Minutes**

Joe Morgan moved to approve the minutes of the April 5 meeting. Chris Sawtelle seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 4-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Biff Bouse, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Chris Sawtelle, yes; Marc Cendron, abstain; Andrew Bernhardt, abstain).

## **7. Adjournment**

Marc Cendron moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:06 p.m. Biff Bouse seconded the motion. The motion was approved.