

Newburyport Historical Commission

May 13, 2021
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, Peter McNamee, Joe Morgan, Christopher Fay, Marc Cendron, Patricia Peknik and Malcolm Carnwath. Also in attendance were Planning Director Andy Port, Planner Katelyn Sullivan and note taker Gretchen Joy.

3. Demolition Delay

7-9 Hancock Street

Eric Primack is proposing to change the roofline of a rear addition to a two-family structure built between 1850 and 1860. The roof of the rear section would be removed and a second story with a flat roof would be added.

At the April 22 meeting, the Commission members voted that the structure is historically significant and preferably preserved and imposed the Demolition Delay. They did not object to the addition but made clear their strong preference for the removal of the vinyl siding. Mr. Primack said the vinyl siding is in good condition, while the condition of the clapboards underneath is poor. He said the vinyl encapsulates the lead paint and is low maintenance. He said he is not proposing any changes to the front part of the structure and he does not understand the reason he would be required to change the siding.

Glenn Richards said the Demolition Delay was imposed. An applicant may wait out the 12-month delay or choose to work with the Commission to arrive at an acceptable plan and have the Delay lifted. The Commission members take the building as a whole into consideration, as they are permitted to under by the Ordinance, and work to arrive at a better result for the building, the streetscape and the city. Patricia Peknik pointed out that the replacement of the vinyl siding was a part of the ZBA application for a Special Permit that was approved on May 11.

According to the revised plans and the accompanying memo that were submitted, the applicant would retain the existing side doors and the associated wood trim, which would be restored where necessary. The existing exterior vinyl siding and trim would be removed and original clapboards would be restored and replaced where necessary. The cedar shakes would be removed from the rear section and replaced with new clapboards. All original wood trim would be restored and replaced where necessary. The original windows would be retained and replaced in kind if necessary. Six-over-six, simulated divided light windows with flat stock casing would be used for the second-floor addition.

Joe Morgan moved to lift the Demolition Delay and allow the applicant to proceed according to the submitted plans. Marc Cendron seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 4-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Joe

Morgan, yes; Marc Cendron, yes; Christopher Fay, abstain; Malcolm Carnwath, abstain; Patricia Peknik, abstain).

5 Park Street

Lisa Mead and Scott Brown represented Boston North Development. The project involves the demolition of a garage. According to insurance maps, the garage might have been built between 1914 and 1952. No work is being proposed for the single-family house on the property. Photographs showing the poor condition of the existing garage were presented. Joe Morgan said in his opinion the garage is not historically significant.

Peter McNamee moved that the accessory structure is historically significant but not considered for preservation. Malcolm Carnwath seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-1 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Joe Morgan, no; Marc Cendron, yes; Christopher Fay, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, yes; Patricia Peknik, yes).

4. DOD/DCOD Advisory Review

21 Pleasant Street

James Tranghese described the plan to change the entrance to the structure. The building is in the DOD and the Planning Board is the permit-granting authority. The building is currently access through the side of the vestibule. The door would be returned to its original location in the center of the vestibule. It would continue to be recessed. The air conditioner and plywood panel above the proposed location of the door would be removed and two fixed windows would be installed.

Glenn Richards will prepare an advisory report stating the proposal would not negatively impact the structure or streetscape or their historical values.

276 High Street

Lisa Mead, Scott Brown and Arron Sturgis represented the applicant, who is proposing to move a carriage barn to a new location on the property. The relocation of a structure is considered demolition under the Ordinance and the ZBA is the permit-granting authority. No work is being proposed for the single-family structure.

The carriage barn was built between 1849 and 1864 and is listed as a contributory structure to the historic district. Based on insurance maps, additions were made to the structure around 1914 and 1925.

The carriage barn would be relocated to the back left corner of the property in order to open up the yard. Its new location would be about 100 feet from the house. The third bay and later additions would be removed. A new addition with a shed roof would be constructed at the rear. The addition would be clad in cedar shingles to make it distinguishable from the original structure. A cupola would be added to hold a bell was rung during the Civil War. The existing garage doors are not original. They would be replaced with new doors that would reflect the original design.

Arron Sturgis said the structure needs work but is repairable. The rear addition has caused damage to one of the corner posts. He said placing the structure on a new foundation would add to its longevity.

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The meeting was opened to comments from the public. William Bartlett said he is a tenant at the property and is its former owner. He said he agrees with the renovation plan and the new foundation would preserve the structure.

Chris Ragusa said a small forest exists at the back of the property and he is concerned about the loss of trees.

Patricia Peknik asked about the percentage of the structure that is to be demolished. Attorney Mead said there is not a requirement to provide this calculation. Arron Sturgis said the original structure is approximately 432 square feet and 100 percent of this would be retained. The new addition would be about 200 square feet.

Glenn Richards asked if the structure could be reoriented and placed in a different location than what is proposed. Scott Brown said the new location would provide a better view corridor and allow more flexibility for the use of the back yard. Arron Sturgis said the barn in its existing location blocks views from High Street to the back yard. Christopher Fay said it is benefit to the community for the barn to be visible.

Patricia Peknik said the intent of the Ordinance is to prevent the partial demolition or relocation of structures. The Secretary of the Interior recommends against destroying the relationship between buildings. The visually prominent barn would no longer be a part of the public view. She said she likes accessory structures to be visible from the street. There are not many of these structures left in the city. Additions made to outbuildings were often workshops and rented to tradespeople. Outbuildings were simple in design so they did not compete with the features of the house. She admires the simplicity of the existing structure and would like its elements to be retained. She said the design is not entirely coherent and has a contemporary look.

Glenn Richards said he does not like the proposed location of the barn. The later-added sections are old enough to be historic. He questioned why the applicant would wish to destroy the relationship between the house and the accessory building. The proposed design is more grand than original one. The original design was appropriate for its period.

Peter McNamee said the barn would deteriorate if it were to be left as it is, but he does not think it needs to be changed so dramatically. The building is beautiful in its simplicity. The new location would change the character of the property.

Marc Cendron said the location of the barn is a part of the historic character of the property. It needs to be seen in relation to the house. He feels strongly it should not be moved to the back corner of the yard. He commented that a large part of the back yard would be paved in order to accommodate cars and the building would be used for another purpose.

Joe Morgan said the ensemble of buildings should remain intact. If the structure is to function as a garage, it would not make sense for it to be located at the back of the site.

Attorney Mead said the applicant does not want to lose the use of the rest of the back yard. She said the building does not work in its existing location. She asked if the Commission members would prefer for it to be relocated to the rear right corner of the property. She said she has heard no objections to the preservation of original structure or the removal of the additions. She asked for comments on the design.

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Glenn Richards said the Commission would approve of the restoration of the timber frame barn and the removal of the additions. The proposed design is too grand. He said the barn could remain on the right side of the property and be moved back slightly.

Peter McNamee said it would be acceptable to move the building back a little bit. He likes the proposed design, but not for this structure.

Joe Morgan said it would be acceptable to install the new foundation directly behind the building. Attorney Mead said moving the structure back ten or 15 feet would not be enough.

Glenn Richards will draft a report for review at the next meeting. The Commission and applicant did not agree on the degree to which the barn would be moved.

5. Approval of Minutes

Peter McNamee moved to approve the minutes of the April 22 meeting. Marc Cendron seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 4-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Marc Cendron, yes; Christopher Fay, abstain; Malcolm Carnwath, abstain; Patricia Peknik, abstain).

6. Adjournment

Mark Cendron moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:24 p.m. Joe Morgan seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 7-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Marc Cendron, yes; Christopher Fay, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, yes; Patricia Peknik, yes).