

Newburyport Historical Commission

September 23, 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 Patricia Peknik, Joe Morgan, Glenn Richards, Marc Cendron, Malcolm Carnwath and Peter McNamee. Christopher Fay was absent. Also in attendance were Planning Director Andy Port, Planner Katelyn Sullivan and note taker Gretchen Joy.

3. Demolition Delay

a) 64 Liberty Street

Marc Cendron moved that the structure is historically significant and considered for preservation. Malcolm Carnwath seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, yes; Patricia Peknik, yes; Marc Cendron, yes; Peter McNamee, yes).

Lisa Mead and Juli McDonald represented the applicant. Attorney Mead said the house was built in the mid 1700s. The 1888 Sanborn map showed that a small one-story addition had been constructed on the side of the structure. This was later expanded to the width of the house and a second addition was constructed in 1969.

The applicant is proposing to remove the addition and replace it with a one and two-story addition on a larger footprint. The proposed addition would be set back to differentiate it from the original structure. Wood clapboards would be used for the siding and cedar shingles for the roof. An existing third-floor window would be replaced with a shorter window to accommodate the addition. Two existing second-floor windows would be covered by the addition and one window would be added in a new location. The windows in the addition would be wood simulated divided lights with a spacer between the panes.

Patricia Peknik asked about the height of the addition. The existing ridge height is 12'-7" and the proposed ridge height of the two-story addition would be 22'-4".

Marc Cendron asked about the windows in the proposed addition, which are shown as being wider than those in the main structure. Juli McDonald said the windows in the house are narrow. She also wished to differentiate the addition from the main structure. She agreed that narrower windows would be more in keeping with the historic house and was agreeable to changing the width of the windows on the Liberty Street facade.

The hearing was opened to comments from the public. Tom Kolterjahn, 64 Federal Street, said the addition would not intrude on the original structure. However, the historic house has heavy posts and beams and he is concerned the framing would be damaged through the creation of a passageway between the main structure and the addition. He also said the lot is a small one and the addition would fill too much of it.

He said the proposed windows seem to be too large for the addition and they should be the same width as those in the main house. The public comment period was closed.

Marc Cendron said he is concerned about the width of the proposed windows and the size of the addition in relation to the existing structure.

Peter McNamee said he does not oppose the proposed windows. He likes the massing of the addition and said it improves the aspect of the house. He is concerned about infill and shares the concern about structural damage.

Joe Morgan said the addition is a great solution and he is in favor of the proposal. Malcolm Carnwath said he likes the plan and he is not worried about the width of the windows.

Patricia Peknik said the two-story addition would impair the historic structure. She would like to receive more specific information on the proposed materials and dimensions.

Glenn Richards said he is also concerned about infill but the proposed design would be more consistent with the appearance of the structure than the existing conditions. He also would like to receive more information on the design of the addition and said he does not want the structural integrity of the original structure to be jeopardized.

Attorney Mead requested a continuance. The applicant will provide additional information on the dimensions and the window openings. Malcolm Carnwath moved to continue the public hearing to the October 14 meeting. Peter McNamee seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, yes; Patricia Peknik, yes; Marc Cendron, yes; Peter McNamee, yes).

b) 12 Horton Street

Marc Cendron moved that the structure is historically significant and considered for preservation. Peter McNamee seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, yes; Patricia Peknik, yes; Marc Cendron, yes; Peter McNamee, yes).

Lisa Mead and Kevin Latady represented the applicant. The Queen Anne style structure was constructed around 1891. A porch was added at the rear of the structure in 1980 and was converted to an enclosed mudroom in 2005. The applicant is proposing to remove the second-story bumpout at the rear of the home. A two-story addition would be constructed over the existing footprint. The work would be the rear of the structure and would not be visible from the street. No changes would be made to the front of the house. Attorney Mead said the addition would be complimentary to the main structure and subservient to it. The roofline would be lower than that of the main structure.

Kevin Latady said the east wall of the addition would be stepped in from the main structure but the west wall would be on its same plane because of the flare at the base of the second floor. The two chimneys would be removed. The location of some windows on the west side of the structure would be changed to accommodate a new staircase. The siding and trim would be consistent with the existing structure. The existing windows would be restored. New windows would be wood simulated divided lights with muntins

that would match those of the existing windows. Mr. Latady said the details of the addition would be historically appropriate and match the existing house.

No one from the public spoke in favor of or in opposition to the proposal. Joe Morgan said he has no concern with the application, as the work is at the rear of the structure and no changes would be made to its front. Patricia Peknik said she supports the application. Glenn Richards said the rear of the structure would be significantly improved.

Marc Cendron moved that the structure is preferably preserved. Peter McNamee seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, yes; Patricia Peknik, yes; Marc Cendron, yes; Peter McNamee, yes).

Malcolm Carnwath moved to release the structure from the Demolition Delay based on the plans that were submitted. Marc Cendron seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, yes; Patricia Peknik, yes; Marc Cendron, yes; Peter McNamee, yes).

c) 22 Olive Street

The Demolition Delay was imposed at the July 22 meeting. Lisa Mead and Ernie DeMaio represented the applicant. Attorney Mead said the plans have been revised based on comments made at that meeting and during a site visit. The proposed elevation of the first floor of the addition has been lowered by 18 inches. The height of the connector roof has been lowered by 4'-2" and the highest ridge of the addition has been lowered by 2'-5". Architectural relief has been added by stepping back a portion of the addition. The addition would cover a smaller area of the rear wall of the original structure. The amount of proposed new living space has been reduced 247 square feet and the footprint of the addition would now be smaller than the footprint of the historic structure. The proposed pitch of the roof of the middle section was lowered so that it would not overlay the roof of the original building. The skewed portion of the addition was changed so that all the walls are at right angles. Roof overhangs were added to the front and rear entry doors. The connector would have a metal roof to differentiate it from the historic structure. The siding was changed from a cementitious material to a brick veneer. The windows would be double hung. The materials and color of the addition would differentiate it from the main structure.

Marc Cendron asked if the chimney in the addition is functional. Mr. DeMaio said the chimney is not functional and he is still working to improve the awkward arrangement of the windows around it.

Patricia Peknik asked about the amount of the floor area in the addition. The floor area of the addition and connector was reduced from 1,758 square feet to 1,511 square feet. Ms. Peknik commented that the combined floor area of the original structure and addition appears to be around 5,000 square feet.

The hearing was opened to comments from the public. Tom Kolterjahn, 64 Federal Street, said the revised plans are a substantial improvement over the original proposal, but further work is needed. He suggested that the applicant consider

Newburyport Historical Commission
September 23, 2021

simplifying the rear addition by removing the wing with the bay window. This would reduce the size of the addition and improve its aspect.

Amy Badger, 21 Olive Street, said the green space on the property benefits the residents of the neighbor. She said it is a back yard, not open land, and should not be developed. She is concerned about density and the number of cars on the street. She said the existing two-family structure is nearly 4,000 square feet. It could house two families without the construction of the addition.

Elizabeth Hallett, 23 Olive Street, said she agrees with the previous comments. The addition would change the atmosphere of the neighborhood. She said the bay window would not go with the rest of the house and she finds the connector hideous.

Carol Lipsky, 26 Olive Street, said she is concerned about the increase in the number of cars in the neighborhood. The public comment period was closed.

Joe Morgan said the architect has done a good job with the presentation. He had no comments on the design of the addition. He said the connector has been well handled.

Marc Cendron said he does not like the placement of the windows near the chimney. Peter McNamee said he does not like the bay window.

Malcolm Carnwath asked if the windows on the north side of the addition could be made more symmetrical and if sidelights could be added to the doors in the connector. Mr. DeMaio said he is still working to improve the location of the windows. He said the mission is to have the original building be the focus of attention. The connector is to be simple and subtle. Sidelights would call more attention to it and would detract from the original structure.

Patricia Peknik said that while the proposed size and scale of the addition has been improved, it should be further reduced. The addition reads as a second house. It has the appearance of conjoined masses rather than an integral whole. She said the ridgelines of the connector and the addition should be lowered and she does not like the metal roof. She does not support the proposal in its current form and said it should not detract from the historic character of its setting.

Glenn Richards said the architect seems to have found a reasonable solution. He has reached a compromise between the connector being too obvious and too skimpy. The addition and historic house read as two separate structures. He summarized the comments of the Commission members but saying the revised plans are an improvement, but some concerns about the size of the addition remain. There is a question about the need for a non-functional chimney in the addition. The bay window on Russia Street is of a different period than the remainder of the windows and might draw too much attention. The location of the windows on the north and west facades needs more consideration.

Attorney Mead requested an extension. The applicant will examine the bay window, the windows on the north elevation and the windows on the west elevation in relation to the chimney. Malcolm Carnwath moved to continue the matter to the October 14 meeting. Marc Cendron seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, yes; Patricia Peknik, yes; Marc Cendron, yes; Peter McNamee, yes).

d) 30 Winter Street

The Demolition Delay was imposed at the August 12 meeting. Eric Primack provided plans that show the interior floor heights. He said he has been told the windows are not original and were built in the 1980s or 1990s. The quality is good but the windows have been neglected and are beyond repair. He said the new windows would be vinyl simulated divided lights with grates on the outside and a grid between the panes.

Mr. Primack said the front façade would not be changed. The proposed rear ridge would be raised two feet and the slope would be changed to almost flat. This would allow for a ceiling with a height of 101 inches on the first floor and 97 inches on the second floor.

Joe Morgan said he would not support the proposal, which has not changed since it was originally presented. A portion of the rear gable would be covered by the increased height of the roof. The gable is a part of the original structure and is a significant historic feature that should not be obscured. He also wishes to receive an existing condition report that verifies the structure would be able to support the proposed changes. Peter McNamee and Marc Cendron agreed with this position. Malcolm Carnwath said he did not object to the plans.

Patricia Peknik said the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and the City's guidelines that were put in place by City Council would require for the replacement windows on the front elevation to be of wood. She wishes to receive specifications on the proposed windows. She said the City website recommends certain window brands. She also said the proposed ceiling heights at the rear of the structure are contemporary in nature and would be antithetical to the character of the 18th century house. The preservation of the roof slope at the rear would mitigate the impact of the height increase. She said the roof pitch could be preserved while providing adequate head height. She said a flat roof would not be compatible with the historic structure. She also wishes to receive an engineering report that states the proposed changes would not compromise the structural integrity of the house.

Glenn Richards summarized by saying the Commission members are opposed to the use of solid vinyl windows on the front elevation. He said the rear of the structure is very visible from the Rail Trail. Ceiling heights of eight feet on the first floor and seven feet on the second floor are a luxury and the applicant should be able to arrive at a compromise.

Mr. Primack said he had done everything the Commission has requested. The covering of two feet of the gable would not be detrimental and would not have any impact on the historic features. The left side of the gable would remain visible.

Peter McNamee said the comments about the height of the rear ridgeline have been consistent since the first presentation of the proposal. The applicant has not made any changes to the plans. The gable remains hidden and the height of the ridge has not been reduced. The gable end in the proposal would be significantly changed and the applicant has not provided any mitigation. This continues to be an issue.

Newburyport Historical Commission
September 23, 2021

Glenn Richards said the ell that would be impacted is old and probably original. The Commission is attempting to preserve its historic feature. The applicant should be able to preserve the gable while creating additional living space.

Joe Morgan said an architect should be able to provide a creative solution. The height could be redistributed between the first and second floors. Improved living spaces could be achieved while preserving the gable end.

Glenn Richards said the gable end is a significant feature that should be preserved from its ridge to its eave. The windows on the front façade should be wood. The applicant requested a continuance. Malcolm Carnwath moved to continue the matter to the October 14 meeting. Peter McNamee seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, yes; Patricia Peknik, yes; Marc Cendron, yes; Peter McNamee, yes).

4. Correspondence

Anne Joyce submitted a letter requesting that 211 Storey Avenue be listed as a contributory structure. It will be added to the list of properties to be surveyed.

5. Updates from the Chair

Glenn Richards said he and Matthew Blanchette of Historic Home Towns will meet to discuss ways to collaborate on educating the public on the benefits of historic preservation. Patricia Peknik commented that the members should discuss the appropriateness of the Commission assisting with a private preservation project. She added that if members have available time, she would welcome help in preparing for the inventory.

6. Minutes

Joe Morgan moved to approve the minutes of the September 9, 2021, meeting. Marc Cendron seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Peter McNamee, absent; Patricia Peknik, yes; Marc Cendron, yes); Malcolm Carnwath, yes).

7. Adjournment

Malcolm Carnwath moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:27 p.m. Joe Morgan seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Peter McNamee, absent; Patricia Peknik, yes; Marc Cendron, yes); Malcolm Carnwath, yes).