

Newburyport Historical Commission

October 8, 2020

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

3. Demolition Delay

490 Merrimac St. Realty Trust

490 Merrimac Street

Full Building Demolition

The applicant requested an extension. Peter McNamee moved to continue the application to the October 22 meeting. Ron Ziembra seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Patricia Peknik, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Ron Ziembra, yes; Christopher Fay, yes).

James Bourque Construction, Inc.

3 Hancock Street

Roofline Change

Olympia Bowker represented the applicant, who is proposing to raise the roof of a structure that was built around 1800. Christopher Fay moved that the structure is historically significant and preferably preserved. Ron Ziembra seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Patricia Peknik, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Ron Ziembra, yes; Christopher Fay, yes).

Scott Brown presented the proposed plans. He said the height of the tallest ceiling is 6' - 6" and some ceilings are as low as 5' - 11". The roof would be raised 20 inches to make the interior more livable. It would also be safer because it would be possible to make the stairs less steep. He said two other options were considered. One of these was the lowering of the first floor, which proved not to be feasible. Mr. Brown said the proposal would maintain the existing roof pitch and would not change the character of the house in his opinion. No other changes would be made to the exterior of the structure.

The hearing was opened to comments from the public. Tom Kolterjahn, 64 Federal Street, said the plans as presented would destroy the building. The entire original roof structure would be restored and the center chimney would be removed. He said the chimney is the heart and soul of the building and it would be replaced with a fake cap on the top of the structure. He urged the Commission members to impose the demolition delay. He said a similar proposal was approved for 12 Harrison Street with unsatisfactory results. Stephanie Niketic, 93 High Street, said the Commission members should impose the delay and visit the site. She asked if the siding would be replaced or if it would remain vinyl. She would like more information to be provided on the details of

the proposal, such as the proposed treatment of the windows and roofing materials. Phil Heffernan, 2 Hancock Street, said the outside of the structure is in need of repair and raising the roof would make the house more livable.

Scott Brown said that, unlike 12 Harrison Street, the front roof would be left intact, as would the side walls. The eave line would remain the same and the doors and windows would be in their same locations. He said the chimney is not original and the fireplaces have been covered. Restoration brick would be used to rebuild the chimney. Asphalt shingles would be used for the roof and the vinyl shingles would be replaced with cedar clapboards. The windows would be of wood with aluminum cladding and simulated divided lights. Olympia Bower said the application must be considered on its own and should not be compared to other structures. Glenn Richards responded that the Commission members should build on lessons learned from past applications.

Christopher Fay said that during their deliberations, the applicant's attorney should not instruct the Commission members as to what they are or are not allowed to think. He added the chimney should be retained. Peter McNamee said he likes the proposal for the most part. He understands need for more head height. He said he would not want to lose the original chimney. He said a chimney should only be rebuilt when there are no alternatives, which is not the case for this application. He would prefer alternative C, which changed the pitch of the roof at the rear of the structure and did not raise the height of the ridgeline. Scott Brown responded that he thinks the roof in that alternative would be too flat and the character of the house would be changed. Ron Ziemba said low ceilings are not acceptable. He said the question of the chimney is academic because it is not functioning, a comment with which Peter McNamee did not agree. Mr. McNamee said the chimney is a strong feature and part of the character of the house. He asked about the fenestration on the west elevation, which would change significantly from the original configuration. Scott Brown said the windows would be made symmetrical around the new ridgeline. Joe Morgan said he would accept the raising of the roof at the rear of the structure, but the ridgeline, chimney and windows should remain in their original locations.

Christopher Fay moved to impose the demolition delay in order to obtain more clarification on the design, especially with regards to the chimney. Joe Morgan seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Patricia Peknik, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Ron Ziemba, yes; Christopher Fay, yes).

4. General Business

Daniel and Judy Lynch

342 Merrimac Street

Preservation Restriction Discussion

Lisa Mead represented the applicant, who received a Section VI-C Special Permit from the Planning Board to build a second single-family house at the rear of the property. A preservation restriction is being placed on the 1785 Federal-style structure to fulfill the public benefit requirement. Glenn Richards reviewed the elements that the Commission members determined at the June 11, 2020, meeting must be included in the restriction.

These include: 1) the exterior features of the historic structure shall be preserved, including the window and door trim, the molding and sidelights on the front door, and the door with its transom and trim on the east elevation, 2) the existing wood windows shall be restored and all replacement windows in the original structure shall be of wood with true divided lights, 3) the existing chimneys shall be retained, 4) a single window without sidelights shall be installed on the second story above the front door, 5) the window to the right of the door on the east façade shall be restored and its sill height shall not be changed, 6) the windows in the new addition may be of the Marvin Integrity series and 7) the addition of a door on the west façade shall be allowed.

Patricia Peknik said the reference made in the document to the use of CPA funds should be deleted. She was concerned that the window trim was not listed as one of the elements to be preserved. Glenn Richards said that the restriction states that all exterior historical features are to be retained, which would include the trim.

Ron Ziemba moved to approve the draft preservation restriction and forward it MHC for review and approval. Peter McNamee seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Patricia Peknik, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Ron Ziemba, yes; Christopher Fay, yes).

Institution for Savings

93 State Street

DOD Review/Advisory Opinion

Peter McNamee recused himself from the discussion. Glenn Richards said the Planning Board is the permit-granting authority for the application. The role of the Historical Commission is to determine whether or not the proposal meets the standards of the Secretary of the Interior for new construction and to prepare a report for the Planning Board.

Lisa Mead represented the applicant, who has submitted revised plans. She said these plans reflect the neighborhood setting of Prospect Street and Otis Place rather than the commercial setting of State Street. The eave line along Prospect Street has been reduced in the new plans. She said that the new addition would be compatible with the scale and character of the historic structure. It would be sided with wood clapboards and have a pitched roof with gable ends. The doorways would be reflective of a residential design. There would be one egress from the garage, which would be into the parking lot rather than the neighborhood. She said the new building would not detract from the original structure and would be in keeping with the neighborhood. With the design changes and the distance from the original structure, the new building would meet the criteria for new construction in the DOD.

Christopher Angelakis said the design has been changed in terms of how it responds to Prospect Street and it would maintain the character of the neighborhood. The front door would be located on Prospect Street. The windows would look into occupied space and none would look into the parking garage. There would be one curb cut, which is existing, and one entry into the garage. The generator room would be enclosed in a sound-blocked room. The new building would give the appearance of separate masses

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that match the scale of the adjacent homes. It would have painted wood clapboards, wood trim, clad wood windows and painted wood doors.

The meeting was opened to comments from the public. Peter Mackin, 13 Prospect Street, said the proposal is still not in harmony with the neighborhood. The new structure would be larger than the historic building and its height and footprint would be too big for the space.

Dr. Saira Naseer, a trustee of the bank whose office is located at 28 Green Street, said the plan is a great one and it would maintain the integrity of the neighborhood.

Mark Griffin, 4 Otis Place, said he objects to the size and massing of the proposed building. It would be larger than the original structure and the 1980s addition combined. He said the plan does not respect the historic neighborhood. He said that just because the proposal improves upon the previous design, it does not make it palatable.

Claire Papanastasiou, 4 Otis Place, said the applicant has only made superficial changes. The abutters have been consistent with their message, which is that the proposal is too large. The City has asked the bank to collaborate to the neighbors four times, but this has not been done.

Cindy Johnson, 99 Lime Street, a trustee of the bank, said the revised design is world class and would not take away from the historic structure. It would blend with the scale of the neighborhood and have the same appearance as the crowded south end.

Colleen Turner Secino, 15 Otis Place, said the design should be modest and respectful with reasonable setbacks. The building should not be massive and not be located right on the sidewalk. She said the proposal is insensitive to the neighborhood and the renderings distort the size and scale of the building.

Tom Kolterjahn, 64 Federal Street, said the peak of the building would be at 37 feet, while the city's largest Federal-style structures are at 30 feet. The eave on Prospect Street would be higher than the ridgeline of the abutting house. The proposal still would detract from the original structure. He said it is critical that the bank work with the neighbors.

Steve Charette, 16 Prospect Street, said that while the design has been improved, the new building would still be larger than the original structure and would create a tunnel on the street.

Sean Sullivan, 9 Prospect Street, said the proposal would not be subordinate to the original building. The bottom of the windows would be at the eave line of his house.

Dave Tibbetts, 26 Titcomb Street, a trustee of the bank, said the proposal is an improvement over the original plans. An attempt has been made to reflect the neighborhood. He asked the Commission to recognize the efforts of the bank. The public comment period was closed.

Christopher Angelakis of ARC said the applicant has listened to the public comment and has adjusted the design in an effort to be sensitive to the needs of the neighborhood. He said there is a large range in the size of buildings on the street.

Patricia Peknik said she would feel rushed to complete the deliberations at this meeting and she would appreciate more time to review the plans. Christopher Fay said he also would like more time to look at the plans and to give the bank an opportunity to

continue the dialog with the neighbors. He questioned if the bank needs an addition of this size, given that many people are now working from home.

Joe Morgan said the architect has done a good job of interpreting the program relative to the comments made at the previous meeting. The building has been reduced to a more residential scale along Prospect Street and the materials have been changed. He said the applicant has acted in good faith to improve the product. He would like more time to review the details of the proposal to make a constructive contribution at the next meeting. Ron Ziemba said that he is encouraged that a way could be found to break up a polarized conversation and time should be taken to find a new way to proceed. Lisa Mead said the applicant met its deadline and the Commission has had ample time to review the plans. She asked the members to continue their deliberations.

Patricia Peknik moved to continue the deliberations at the October 22 meeting. Christopher Fay seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Patricia Peknik, yes; Peter McNamee, abstain; Joe Morgan, yes; Ron Ziemba, yes; Christopher Fay, yes).

Crane Properties, LLC
123 State Street
Demolition Delay Plan Revisions

Lisa Mead and Bill Nolan represented the applicant, who is proposing to remove the later-added rear portion of an 1875 second-empire structure. The plans have been modified based on comments the Commission members made at the last meeting. The proposed siding would be wood clapboards and corner boards would be added. The arched windows from the rear of the structure would be reused. More information was provided on the existing features which are to be retained. All of the woodwork on the front façade would remain in place. The frieze, shadow boards and brackets would remain and would be refinished or repaired as necessary. Any rotten wood would be replaced in kind. The existing double door would be reused. The windows would be of wood with cladding and the existing casings would be retained.

Peter McNamee said the applicant has incorporated the comments of the Commission into the plans. He recommended that the front railing be replaced with one more appropriate for the period of the structure.

Ron Ziemba moved to release the structure for partial demolition according to the plans dated September 30, 2020. Joe Morgan seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 4-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Patricia Peknik, absent; Peter McNamee, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Ron Ziemba, yes; Christopher Fay; abstain).

5. Correspondence

A notice was sent by MHC stating that the deadline for the upcoming Survey and Planning Grant cycle is November 16.

6. Approval of Minutes

Peter McNamee moved to approve of the minutes of the September 24, 2020, meeting as submitted. Ron Ziemba seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 4-0 vote

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(Glenn Richards, yes; Patricia Peknik, absent; Peter McNamee, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Ron Ziamba, yes; Christopher Fay; abstain).

7. Adjournment

Joe Morgan moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 p.m. Glenn Richards seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.