

Newburyport Historical Commission
City Council Chambers
March 20, 2018
Minutes

1. Call to Order

Chair Sarah White called a special meeting of the Newburyport Historical Commission to order at 7:30 p.m.

2. Roll Call

In attendance were members Sarah White, Malcolm Carnwath and Stephen Dodge. Ned McGrath participated by telephone.

3. Public Hearing

Virginia Lasala □

15 Eagle Street □

The applicant is proposing to demolish a small addition at the rear of the structure and construct a two-story addition in its place. The plans have been revised based on the comments the Commission members made at the February 28 meeting. These plans were not posted on line or provided to the members prior to the start of the meeting.

The hearing was opened to comments from the public. Stephanie Niketic, 93 High Street, said the plans the Commission are now being asked to consider are different from those posted with the agenda, which is not fair to the public. She believes the measurements on the Assessors Office's card is not accurate. This would invalidate any argument that the work involves less than 25% of the structure. The applicant appears to be seeking approval for the work in a piecemeal manner: a building permit has already been issued for alterations of, and renovations to, the original part of the structure. These plans include the demolition of the tower roof, which Ms. Niketic contends should not be allowed without Commission approval. She said the proposed changes would double the size of the house, continuing the trend of destroying modest homes in historic neighborhoods. The public comment portion of the hearing was closed.

While the applicant has responded to some of the concerns expressed at the previous meeting, the Commission members continued to have concerns about the plans. The volume of the rear addition would overwhelm the structure and the proposed addition of a dormer over the tower was not acceptable to the members. The tower is a key element of structures of this period.

The Commission members worked with the applicant at length during the meeting in an effort to reach an agreement on the design and avoid the imposition of a one-year delay. The members were also mindful of the need for the public to have access to the more recent set of plans. The applicant was asked to refine the plans such that they reflect the discussion that took place during the hearing and are available to be reviewed by both the Commission and members of the public.

Sarah White moved to continue the hearing to the March 28 meeting and advise the applicant to revise the plans as discussed, which includes removing the dormer from the tower, changing the dormer on the left side of the structure from eight to six feet, adding a six-foot dormer to the right elevation that is pulled back four to six feet from the front façade, using the flat-roofed concept shown on Sheet 7A for the rear addition, shifting the rear addition 18 inches

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to the left, making the flat roof lower than the tower and adding the chimney to the plans, showing it on the right side of the structure and clad with faux brick. Stephen Dodge seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

4. General Business

A. 130 High Street Informal Discussion

The item will be rescheduled.

B. Minutes

The approval of the minutes of the February 28 meeting was tabled.

C. Correspondence

The Commission was copied on a letter from Michael Steinitz to Lisa Mead listing MHC comments on the draft preservation restriction for 260 Merrimac Street.

5. Adjournment

Malcolm Carnwath moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 p.m. Stephen Dodge seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.