

Newburyport Historical Commission
City Council Chambers
March 28, 2018
Minutes

1. Call to Order

Chair Sarah White called a regular 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 Commission members worked with the applicant at length during the March 20 meeting in an effort to reach an agreement on the design and avoid the imposition of a one-year delay. The applicant revised the plans in response to the discussion: the dormer was removed from the tower, the size of the dormer on the left side of the structure was reduced, a six-foot dormer was added to the right elevation that was pulled back from the front façade, the rear addition was shifted 18 inches to the left, made lower than the tower and given a flat roof and the chimney was shown on the right side of the structure with faux brick cladding.

The hearing was opened to comments from the public. Tom Kolterjahn, 64 Federal Street, said he is opposed to the proposal because it would ruin a small historic house. The house would be diminished and overpowered by the development. Stephanie Niketic, 93 High Street, said the addition would be larger than the original structure. She noted the Zoning Board also has purview over the proposal due to the amount of the lot coverage. She went on to say a shed dormer is labeled on the plans as being existing but the house currently has no shed dormers. The applicant is allowed to add the dormer to the original house by right, but the Commission could mitigate this through its influence on the plans for the rear of the structure.

Ned McGrath said the vernacular house is representative of an era and it concerns him it is being transformed to something it was not designed to be. The additions are overly large. The roofline and massing of the new construction would be out of proportion with the original structure and would overpower it. This overtreatment of a modest structure would cause it to lose its architectural integrity. He asked if the applicant would consider scaling back the addition, retaining the original roofline and extending the addition toward the rear lot line in such a way that it would not intrude on the vernacular elements of the historic structure that are a part of the streetscape. Architect Hilary Ward responded the yard would be bisected if the addition were to extend towards the rear. Stephen Dodge said the roofline change and side additions would overtake the form of the historic house, causing it to disappear.

Ned McGrath moved to impose the demolition delay if the owner has no interest in scaling back the addition. Stephen Dodge seconded the motion. Sarah White acknowledged the applicant had made the changes to the plans that were requested. She said she has found working with an applicant to improve a design to be more successful when it is done prior to the

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imposition of the delay. The homeowner was not in attendance but his representatives said they believe he would prefer to change the plans rather than to have the delay imposed. The Commission members agreed it would be more productive to negotiate a solution. Ned McGrath withdrew his motion. Sarah White moved to continue the hearing to the April 25 meeting. Stephen Dodge seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

4. General Business

A. Claudia and Vahid Karimi c/o Scott M. Brown, Architect

43 Fair Street

Demolition Delay Historic Significance Determination

Scott Brown presented the plans to remove an existing porch that is not original to the first-period structure and to move the rear entrance to the rear elevation. A roofline change is being proposed but the footprint of the structure would remain the same. Mr. Brown agreed to attempt to change the vertical alignment of the windows on one elevation so that they would be symmetrical. He was asked to reuse windows that to be removed in other parts of the structure.

Ned McGrath moved the structure is historically significant. Sarah White seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Sarah White moved to schedule a public hearing. Stephen Dodge seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

B. Minutes

Ned McGrath moved to approve of the minutes of the February 28 and March 20 meetings. Stephen Dodge seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

5. Adjournment

Sarah White moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m. Stephen Dodge seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.