



TOWN OF WATERTOWN
Historical Commission
Administration Building
149 Main Street
WATERTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS 02472

Elise Loukas, Chairperson
David Russo, Vice Chairperson
Thomas Melone, Member
Susan Steele, Member
Marilynne K. Roach, Member
Joseph Panto, Member
Matthew Walter, Member

Minutes: Thursday, October 10, 2019 Philip Pane Lower Hearing Room 7:00 p.m.

Historical Commission Members Present: Elise Loukas, Chair, Marilynne Roach, David Russo, Vice Chair, Mathew Walter, Susan Steele

Member(s) Absent: Joseph Panto, Thomas Melone

Public Present: Jason Hwang, Holly Hamilton, Michael Rego, Regina Landers, Richard Smith, Jean Garbier, M. Emily Merrill, Klaus Prinz, Maria Natale, David O'Sullivan, Jamie Gordon, Vicky Sak, Diane Cinar, Matthew McNeff, Vincent Piccirilli

Staff Present: Gideon Schreiber, Susan C. Jenness

Loukas opened the meeting with the minutes.

1. Minutes- From September 12, 2019 Historical Commission Meeting.

After a review of the minutes from the September 12, 2019 a motion was made.

Motion: A motion was made by Russo accepting the minutes from the September 12, 2019 meeting. Steele seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached accepting the minutes of the September 12, 2019 meeting.

2. Public Hearing- 276 Westminster Ave. - To review the Application for Demolition of a 1 family cape style home built in 1950. Michael Rego, Applicant/ Bill Agnatovech, Owner

Appearing for 276 Westminster Ave. to review the project for the commission was Mr. Rego. He explained the project was proposing to replace the existing structure with a 2 family

house with 2 off street parking spots consisting of a construction that would match the new construction on Edenfield St. Rego was asked if he was the developer of the construction on Edenfield and said he was not.

Historical Commission Questions

Steele asked Rego about the siding and trim of the building. Rego said he had used vinyl and Hardy Board on other projects and planned to take into account what was on the surrounding houses in the neighborhood. Steele declared that she liked the detailing on the house and mentioned she would like to see a good amount of green space around the house.

Public Comments- N/A

Commission Discussion

Russo referred to the permit cards from 1958 and said they suggested a simple structure. He confirmed he agreed with Steele's comments overall. He cautioned Rego against choosing siding material based on the lowest possible common denominator and clarified that this board could not tell anyone what materials to use. Russo was enthused about the nice details and said they add a lot value to the project.

Walter said he agreed with Steele and Russo's comments.

Motion: Russo made a motion that the structure at 276 Westminster Ave. was not preferably preserved. Steele seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached that the structure at 276 Westminster Ave. was not preferably preserved.

3. **Public Hearing- 35 Purvis St-** to consider the demolition permit application submitted for a 2 car garage at 35 Purvis St., Jason Hwang, Applicant/John Andrews/Owner

Jason Hwang appeared to review the project and answer questions for the board.

He directed the board's attention to his cover letter and modified proposal dated September 26, 2019 and explained it was submitted once he discovered that only one of the garages was under the jurisdiction of the Commission after all during the course of his research. Aside from that, he said he found no exceptional historical or architectural value of the garage in his research at the Watertown Free Public Library.

He said he would not present elevations until he found out whether or not he would be allowed to demolish the structure.

Commission Questions- N/A

Public Comments

Vicki Sacks who lives across the street from this site rose to speak. She pointed out this was not a huge property and said she was afraid that taking down the garage would lead to additional demolition for the Town.

Commission Discussion

Russo reported his research on the garage which uncovered the permit for the garage was taken out on August 22, 1923 and that Marion Healey was the builder. He said he found nothing distinguishing about the building.

Steel expressed her appreciation that the applicant had done research on the history of the site at the Watertown Free Public Library.

Motion: Walter made a motion that the garage at 35 Purvis St. was not preferably preserved. Steele seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached that the garage at 35 Purvis St. was not preferably preserved.

4. Public Hearing- 74 Fitchburg St- Request for Determination of Restoration of 1 family Colonial style home built in 1930. Applicant/Robert Annesse, Esquire, John Carney, Owner

Attorney Annese appeared on behalf of Mr. Carney the owner and developer. He expressed deep apologies for Carney's having taken too much of the structure down, based on a misunderstanding over what 50% of the structure was.

He previewed the elevations and said they had been previously presented to the commission along with a photo that show the proposal is not out of character with the neighborhood. He clarified he was asking that the board consider the proposal which looks very much like what was there before the demolition, as a restoration of what existed before the structure was taken down to 50% as perceived by Carney.

Commission Questions

Steele pointed out she was unclear what the rendering was showing. Annese explained she was looking at a streetscape view of a 2 family that had a structure in the rear.

Russo pointed out the stairway to the left and right were not shown on the rendering as they were on the original structure. Carney confirmed that they will be the same in the proposed restoration design. Russo confirmed the rendering of the rear of the house.

Public Comments

Jen Garbier of 72 Fitchburg Street said she thought this was a much better approach and although the elevation is not showing the side stair stairwells there is a lot being put back in through the new proposal. She emphasized the stairways, driveways and set backs were different as she assessed what they would be getting in the neighborhood. She also stated she felt they had reason to be concerned after the experience that took place with the demolition.

Loukas read an email written on behalf of Jon Roy & Katie Chilson of 78 Fitchburg St that was sent by Jon Roy to be read in his absence at this hearing. The email summarized his opinion after a series of conversations that had taken place between Roy and Schreiber, Senior Planner for the Town in response to Roy's inquiries about the proposal for a determination for restoration. Roy thanked Schreiber for passing the most recent information along which he found helpful and reassuring. He said it seemed the situation was moving in a positive direction that allows for development that appeared to be honoring the character of the immediate neighborhood. He said that he appreciated Schreiber's responsiveness and patience with the concerned parties as they learned about the process and timeline, given all the questions they had throughout the neighborhood.

Loukas took a pause to pull in everyone's attention on what had taken place to get them all to this point. She recounted that 74 Fitchburg had been demolished on the applicant's perception of a 50% rule that resulted in a stop work order and triggered a demolition delay hearing before the Historical Commission, through the Town's Ordinance. She explained the commission was directed to make a finding of whether or not the building was preferably preserved, which they did so, and then the ordinance invoked a 2 year delay of all construction on the site. She explained that Magoon informed her he had reached out to the Town Attorney who told him that the Historical Commission could make a determination of restoration should the applicant file a proposal to restore the structure to what it had been before the demolition occurred.

Loukas explained that the Historical Commission was here to make a determination whether or not this new structure is *a restoration to the point that it was no longer a demolition*.

Commission Discussion

Walter began the commission discussion by pointing out how satisfied the neighbors seemed to be with the design. He pointed out that the original siding that was torn down had been wood and that was part of the reason why the original structure had been found preferably preserved in the previous hearing.

Loukas pointed out that this was about whether or not the new structure would be sufficient restoration of the old structure.

Walter pointed out the overhang of the roof and compared it to the old structure.

Steele said she could not classify this proposal a restoration, but might be able to agree it is an approximation. She asked if they could request additional details be added to the proposal.

Walter asked if the commission would have that kind of leverage.

Russo said the proposal was not a restoration and pointed out some windows were narrower and that some were larger windows making them different than the original design. He agreed with Steele that this was an approximation and stated he was very sympathetic to all parties.

Roach agreed it was an approximation.

Schreiber reviewed how the sections of the house had come down piece by piece. Loukas reminded him that applicants do not come to this commission to discuss taking down sides, or just roofs from a structure. Walter pointed out that they were all here now and suggested that might be opening up the door for discussing that.

Loukas said she could see what everyone was saying about massing, walls, shape and she could even hear why they would be discussing shingles. But she said she did not see in the ordinance where it was that they could tell them what to put into the design when it gets directed back to the Commission for a determination of restoration.

Roach said we do not have any authority over siding. Walter asked for a definition of restoration.

Schreiber said that they could ask the applicant to “*consider*” another type of siding.

Schreiber said the commission needed to look at the restoration to the point it is no longer a demolition. He explained that they could not vote if this was an approximation, and clarified it has to be a restoration at a certain point, and if it is determined a restoration, the project can move forward so that this is no longer a demolition. He clarified the question for this commission is whether or not it is restored enough.

Steele said it would be an approximation with the pitch of the roof as it is.

Loukas asked Steele to consider whether she would find the structure was restored if the roof was extended to the original structure.

Schreiber broke it down that the roof is slightly steeper but the height of the ridge is the same. He suggested they could make a list of conditions and ask the applicant to come back with a modified plan.

Loukas asked Schreiber for a definition of what restoration would be. Schreiber said it would be up to Historical Commission to determine that.

Loukas addressed the board saying she really appreciated the work that had been done but did not think this was a restoration.

Walter asked if they consider a list.

Russo said he liked the comments by Steele about the overhang of the roof and how the details of the structure in the proposal blend well with the neighbors.

Roach pointed out the 2 windows and doors and said while they do not look bad, they do not make it restored.

Steele said it would be wonderful if they would move the front stairs.

Loukas said she saw a couple of options in this case and first wanted to say it seemed no members of the board seemed to feel the structure was restored to what it was prior to its restoration. She said she understood the concept about approximation and all the solutions.

Loukas said she was wondering if members of the commission could make a concrete list that the petitioner could use to restore the structure to what it was before the demolition and closed this case for all of them. In the alternative she said they could give the applicant and his attorney a list and ask them to come back again for another review.

Walter said he did not find the structure preferably preserved to begin with so he felt no need to push for everything that was there before but he did have some conditions he would like to suggest.

Russo said he wanted to see details added.

Steele said she wanted to use the word approximation.

Loukas asked if they were prepared to be pigeon holed in the future because if they agree this was restoration they would end up doing this for everyone who does this in the future.

Schreiber said that cases like this are considered on a case by case basis although he could hear what she was saying. He emphasized that the ordinance treats each instance on a case by case basis.

After a discussion about the conditions they would accept, the following conditions were set.

Motion: Russo made a motion that the submission presented by the applicant was a restoration to the point that it is no longer a demolition along with the following list of conditions agreed upon by the commission.

- 3rd level dormer and window are to be brought back to its original form
- Overlay in the eaves is to be lengthened to the original form
- Front stairs shifted slightly right as in the original structure
- The new plans are to be submitted to the Planning Office for approval

The commission also asked the petitioner to side the front façade with wood, and said that the whole façade in wood would be the best condition.

Walter seconded the motion with conditions as made by Russo.

Vote: A vote of 4 to 1 was reached.

5. Public Hearing- 38 Bradshaw St. – To review the Application for Demolition of a 1 family cape style home built in 1950. Klaus Prinz. Applicant/Owner

Klaus Prinz and Maria Natale, the owners of the house introduced themselves to the members of the Historical Commission.

Natale explained that her family moved to Watertown two years ago and said they rent an apartment on Westminster Ave. She said her family loved the town so much they purchased the house at 38 Bradshaw St. which is on a corner lot but too challenging to fit the overall needs of her family who has frequent extended family visitors who live out of the county come to stay with them.

Natale reported that the house was built in 1928 and has only been owned by 2 other families and has had no apparent renovations over the years. She said she found no significance architecturally or historically during her research.

Commission Discussion

Russo reported that the house was owned by Salvatore Camarato built C. A. Vitti as a 1 family cape house with a garage underneath. He agreed that it would be hard to fit the new house design onto this corner lot, and pointed out that the new design is not a block design by any means. He noted that quality materials such as Hardy Board are proposed and that the roof is relatively low and that it would remain a one family structure. Russo also mentioned that Westminster and Bradshaw are key facades.

Steele had no questions, neither did Walter. Commission Questions were closed.

Public Comments- N/A

Russo said that while this is a nice little cape house it just does not work for the family.

Loukas agreed it is an adorable cape style house but the commission's job is to find whether or not it is preferably preserved.

Roach said she saw nothing about this house making it preferably preserved.

Motion: A motion was made by Steele that the structure at 38 Bradshaw St. was not preferably preserved. Roach seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached that the structure at 38 Bradshaw St. was not preferably preserved.

6. Discussion- Demolition Delay Ordinance

Russo handed out material to each member of the Commission to further the conversation on the proposing changes to the Demolition Delay Ordinance. Copies of the documents will be mailed to the two members of the commission who were absent from duty at the meeting.

Motion: Russo made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 PM. Walter seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 PM