

Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes
2024-09-10
7:00 PM

Online, Town Hall, 472 Main St, Acton, MA 01720

Present: David Honn (DH), Art Leavens (AL), David Shoemaker (DS), Zach Taillefer (ZT), Anita Rogers (AR), Barbara Rhines (BR) (Acton Cultural Resources Coordinator, Fran Arsenault (FA) (Select Board Liaison)

Absent:

Opening:

David Honn opened the meeting at 7:02 pm. DH read the “remote meeting notice” due to COVID-19.

1. Regular Business.

- A. Citizen's Concerns – Marcos de Souza joins. For Application #2425, the HDC did not receive drawings which could be opened of what was planned to be built. The allocation was therefore deemed incomplete and denied. DH recommended re-sending the application with the drawings (perhaps by the architect) or printing and putting the drawings in an application would work. With complete documentation the application could be discussed at a Public Hearing October 8 if the new application with drawings is submitted this week. A new application (and number and start date) will be needed to set the calendar correctly. Wish to skip the fee if possible.
- B. Approval of Meeting Minutes –13 August Minutes. DS moved their adoption, seconded by AR. AR, DH, ZT, DS AL approve. Minutes approved.

C. Review Project Tracking Spreadsheet / Chair Updates:

Outstanding and Completed COAs/CNAs/Denials

- --82 River Street Application #2425 – Friendly Denial, more info requested for re-application
- --250 Central Street #2423 (AR sent in)
- --250 Central Street #2424 (AR sent in)
- --111-113 School Street (AR sent in)
- New Applications:
 - --250 Central Street Theater III #2428 Steeple Repairs CNA – DH to do
 - --284 Arlington Street re-roofing #2429 – DH to look at this
 - --461 Main Street Repairs #2430 CNA – DH – will be a CNA will do
 - --113 Main Street #2431 re-roofing building at Erikson's Grain – DH

looked at this transition from 3-tab to architectural shingles. AR: difficult to get 3-tab; short life etc. DH: but odd on a minor outbuilding. AL: covered by categorical review; no review needed. DH to make a CNA.

- HDC Member Site Visit to 25-27 School Street (DH) – Later discussion
- Discuss CPA Sign Application for 25-27 School Street – Later discussion
- Congregational Church Dumpster Violation – BR sent to previous contact, no response; then to Mike Wilson, head facilities; forwarded to leadership 8/21. Wait till next meeting for action
- New application for 95 School

2. New/Special Business or other applicable agenda items

A. 7:15 Application #2426 Public Hearing 14 Newtown Road. DH: Rule of necessity is necessary in order to have a quorum because DS is the applicant, and ZT is a direct abutter. ZT Requests that the rule be invoked. DH: Grants ZT's request and invokes the rule without objection. BR reads the notice. DS recuses himself; DS and Virginie Landré (VL) join as citizen applicants. Matt Jancek, GC, joins. DS shares presentation materials. DS: Reviews the project, a restoration of the east wing of a wrap-around front porch at his and his spouse's home, based on a photo of the porch as it existed in 1910. Prior to applying, both DS and VL presented the plan to the HDC for comment at its meeting on February 27, 2024. The plan presented in the application reflected the earlier plan, incorporating the changes suggested by the HDC at that earlier meeting. As depicted in the application, the planned restoration conforms to the porch depicted in the 1910 photo with the following changes: (1) the east wall of the house to which the restored porch will be attached will have only one window, vice two, because the interior of the house had since been changed, with stairs now existing against the wall where the other window once was; (2) the new porch wing will have four evenly spaced columns instead of three, both to add strength to the porch roof and to improve the aesthetics of the restored porch; (3) unlike the original design, the two-story east wall of the house to which the porch will be attached will have no gutter, causing any rain water from the roof to fall onto the porch roof and then to the ground. The house has long been without gutters, and the applicants saw no need to restore the east-wall gutter. The lights will be simple ceiling mounted as required by Code. DH: Comments? AL: This design reflects the porch as depicted in the 1910 photo with the noted changes suggested by the HDC at the February 24 meeting. It is excellent. AR: Fine with everything. Suggested considering pulling the footings of the porch and columns back a bit, cantilevering the porch deck and roof to the edge. VL: Concerned about the snow load on the roof with such cantilevering. DH: Should not be a problem with either the deck or the roof, even with a snow load. ZT: Very good. Consistent with the discussion at the February 24 meeting, addressing the concerns of the HDC. DH: Consider AZEK for the bottom trim board of the porch. It could be painted to match the other components, and it will hold up against the water. But the plan is very good. No public comment. AR: Moves to approve the application to replicate the 1910 porch with the exception of the four posts instead of three, the one window on the East side of the porch wall instead of two (window to match those existing on the second floor of the East side), and other details to match those in the 1910 photo of the porch. DH: seconds. Vote: AL, AR, ZT and DH all vote aye. AL to write

the CoA. Applicants' question about erecting a low fence to screen a generator earlier approved deferred to the next meeting at which applicants can provide pictures of the fence in question.

DS rejoins the meeting

B. 8:00 Application #2407 Amendment Public Hearing 17 Woodbury Lane. ZT is recused as an abutter. Continuation of the Public Hearing; BR reads the notice. Deborah Robinson DR (project architect), Thomas Begin, Toa Andor Bennet, Dave Rust join. The HDC earlier issued a CoA approving the conceptual design but deferring final approval of the project until it reviewed the final drawings. The Town (applicant) now presents the final drawing and seeks final approval of the project for the renovation of the so-called Asa Parlin House. DR shares a drawing set. Estimates came in high, necessitating some changes and deferred work. The accessible path has some simple changes. Some plantings are adjusted. A retaining wall has been removed. An alternate #3 could strip down scope to landscape work just closest to the building, with other work to be done at a later date. Stone stairs to be reset; stone walls left and adjusted. Removing 1970s wing and foundation. All clapboard, casing, door, and trim will be removed to be replaced. Keeping wood framing and sheathing. Clapboard to be replaced with the current step height; casing to be replicated. Chimney will be reconstructed with a veneer; McNear also fabricates veneer corners, allowing the corbel to be recreated in lightweight form. Would like to avoid fiberglass doors; believes that plain metal, painted, would be the best match. Bulkhead opening to be rebuilt with stone to match the foundation. Removing the 2nd floor structure to give a tall, peaked ceiling. DS asks that the existing sill be protected from humidity given the changes in the (filled) basement etc. The exterior finish will be stepped out by $\frac{1}{2}$ " plywood, and the old window frames will be moved out to maintain the exterior sill appearance. Marvin Ultimate will be used for windows that are new with added trim to match the old sill. Single glazing with true divided lite should be used. All windows on the front will be restored. DH: will antique glass be used where new lites are needed? DR: if an old piece is broken, similar glass should be used. Fixed upper sash, movable lower sash. Shutters are an alternate – may be deferred if funding is not sufficient. Eastern White Pine used for T&G siding and other trim. Standing seam roof is factory painted aluminum or steel. Certainteed Landmark can be used; HDC wants high-def but not ultra-high def equivalent. DH: Comments? AL: There are many details and can't really follow what has changed from the original CoA. Will yield to those who can. DH: It is the (welcome) level of specificity that has been introduced. AR: Wants to understand how the wedge roof ceiling and posts integrate. DR: Code requires 7'6 which requires the bump up. Post is solid wood. Roof 'band' around it is wood. AR: flush doors carry bad connotations. How about wood doors? Could be MDF, with a Shaker feel. Casing on the doors would be best consistent. DS: would have mentioned the door; happy otherwise. DH: Faux Chimney: a bluestone slab could be an ok termination, or even metal. Railings: We generally prefer something that is not too 'international' – not pipe rail. Square stock is good. On the 'ice cream' window: thinks this will be popular. A bit of sill (~8") would help functionally and aesthetically. Doors: Think this façade should be as simple as possible, and maybe the casing could be eliminated. Differentiate from the old house by making the entire face a surface. Metal roofing: Revere Grey would be nice. Avoid a look like KFC. DR: probably too expensive. DH: Not in our scope, but the slab interior – would be good to have insulation under the slab to make use in April and not freeze. FA: Select Board unanimously voted to

approve the design. Likes it! Also: old beams that are massive are found in the addition, with a history to a building near the rail line. They should be preserved during the demolition phase. The demo drawing should indicate that they are to be preserved for the owner. DH: Motion to approve the drawings of 9 September 2024, with the comments made this evening by the HDC members. AR seconds. AL, AR, DS, DH approve. COA to be amended. DH to write it up.

ZT rejoins.

C 8:45 Application #2427 592 Massachusetts Avenue – re-roof addition. Linda O’Niel joins. Photographs shared. Gutter will also be replaced. AR: if 1:4 slope, EDPM is not needed; shingles will work. Recommends architectural shingle. Should check on the actual pitch! Require shingles if anything more than 3:12. DS: Tend to agree with AR; rolled asphalt would also work. AL: Gutter a K-type replacement? That would be a replacement in-kind not requiring approval. And Architectural shingles could be a categorical approval under HDC Rules and Regs. ZT: no expertise on the roofing choice; and thinks AL is right. DH: agrees with everything! ZT to write the CNA up now that the chair DH has made the decision to issue a CNA. AL: Sec. 3.2.3 of the HDC R&R details the procedure.

D. 9:15 Pre-Application Discussion 25-27 School Street – back building. Alex Mota (AM) (Owner/Applicant) joins. 99% done with the work planned in the main building. Back Building: structural engineers cannot state that it must be condemned, but can say it is unsafe. Wants to know if this suffices for a demolition. Considering adding a new addition to the current one. Discussed with the Planning Department – within 0.5mi of the MBTA station. Three more units would be good so 6 total. Parking is now one car per unit so not too hard to arrange. DH: many people still have two... The question here is if the HDC would agree to a demolition of the small building at 25 School. Members of the HDC visited in 2019, and it was photographed in detail (DH has the source photos). Nothing meets code. AL: The Demolition Guidelines have a provision for demolition if a building is structurally impaired and rehabilitation not practical. A report from an independent licensed structural engineer that supports this structural impairment would be needed. An estimate from professionals for the cost of rehabilitation would also be needed. We would also have to consider what is the architectural significance of the building. AM: David Zeo may have this information already. ZT: Demo Guidelines should be followed. DS: Put a priority on preserving any bits and pieces – major structural beams, characteristic trim, etc. – should demolition be approved. AR: Agree. DH: Exact replication (as seen from the exterior) for what is visible by the HDC requirements is one acceptable path. Or, could make a completely different building. But the replacement for a building which is approved for demolition must be in place as part of a complete package for approval. It would certainly require an architect’s design and detailing to be approved. AR: Good to read the HDC discussion around the Christian Science Building – 267 Central St – as an example of the process we follow. Another is 614 Mass Ave; demolition of several elements and the discussion around them. AM: raises the question of the sign. DH: Recommends looking into CPC funding. Could apply for funds to have the sign rehabilitated. Applications due in December.

E. 9:30 Correct Address on #2401 COA – 544 Massachusetts Ave. BR: Noted that Certificate 2401 did not have the correct address; location of work was not right. A vote is needed for the correction. DH Moves to correct the Project Address on Certificate on 2401. AR seconds. AR, DS, AL, ZT, DH approve.

3. Consent Items

None

1. Adjournment

At 21:56 DH moves to adjourn the meeting, AL seconds. AR takes a roll call vote: DS, AL, ZT, AR, DH all approve.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting.

- All relevant Applications and Documents, in Docushare