

MINUTES
TOWN OF GROTON
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
JUNE 7, 2011 - 7:00 P.M.
GROTON TOWN HALL ANNEX - COMMUNITY ROOM 2

Members Present: Nado, Mitchell, Cole
Alternates Present: None
Staff: Quinn, Galetta

Chairman Nado called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. Cole read the Call of the Hearing.

I. PUBLIC HEARINGS

HDC 11-20 – 20 Academy Lane; Benchmark GPT Mystic, LLC owner/applicant; Courtyard fence. PIN #261918316955

William Cook of Benchmark Assisted Living appeared before the Commission regarding Academy Point at Mystic located at 20 Academy Lane. Academy Point is an assisted living facility that is currently undergoing interior renovations to add an area for residents with Alzheimer's. He is appearing before the Commission to propose a fence enclosure for a secured courtyard area. There will be no direct views from the public way and the area backs up to a cliff. The fence, which will replicate an existing fence that encloses the dumpster area, is grey with white trim. The fencing material will be 6' tall vinyl panels with 2' of lattice at the top. There will be one gate for access and maintenance. The Commission felt the fence was attractive in appearance and would not detract from the building. Typically a fence of this height would be a concern for the Commission; however, the building is 4 stories high so that minimizes the fence height. It is also not seen from the public way.

The following exhibits were presented:

- Plot plan
- Photographs

Chairman Nado asked for comments in favor or against and there were none. The public hearing closed at 7:11 p.m.

HDC 11-21 – 49 West Main Street; GDW, LLC, owner; David & Annette LaPietra, applicants; Hotdog Cart. PIN #261918308883

David and Annette LaPietra of 42 Larchmont Terrace, Mystic presented to the Commission regarding a hot dog cart that they would like to locate at 49 West Main Street. There will be a magnetic sign on the cart with their logo "Happy Dawgs". The cart will also have an umbrella with the same logo. An application with LLHD for approval of the food service has been submitted. They will have their own trash. The cart location is in front of Bank Square Books where it will be stationary for selling food and removed every night. The anticipated selling hours will be weekends from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

The following exhibits were presented:

- Photographs
- Logo graphic
- Cart specifications

Chairman Nado asked for comments in favor or against and there were none. The public hearing closed at 7:17 p.m.

HDC 11-22 – 27 Gravel Street; Michael Sarasin, owner/applicant; Siding. PIN #261918422097

The applicant was not present for the hearing.

The public hearing closed at 7:18 p.m.

HDC 11-23 – 57 Pearl Street; Soogie, LLC, owner; Steven Young, applicant; Windows. PIN #261914432170

Architect Steven Young and Attorney John Fitzgerald appeared before the Commission for Soogie, LLC, owner of 57 Pearl Street, and James & Jonatha Castle. The Castle's are clients of Mr. Fitzgerald and they will take title to the subject property in the near future. He was before the Commission to speak in favor of the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness for this application for replacement windows. Previously, two COA's for replacement windows were received, one in 2008 and one in 2010. The windows that were replaced are similar to those under the current application. It was acknowledged that the Commission favors the restoration of windows. The attorney's client tried to repair the windows but they could not be saved so they were thrown out. It is his understanding that what will be replaced is similar to what was previously there. He stated that his clients have spent a lot of time and money to restore a house that wasn't in very good shape to begin with. Architect Steven Young then presented to the Commission regarding a proposal to mitigate the shadow line that was a concern of theirs at the last meeting. A mock-up was prepared for the Commission to review along with the detail from the window that was approved for replacement in 2010. The physical window was reviewed at a previous meeting. As the applicant understands it, the Commission is not concerned about the window itself. The space in the casing that is causing a shadow line created the concern. Caulking or an applied piece of trim will seal the window and make it water tight. The applicant is willing to use what ever method the Commission prefers. The house was built in the late 1850's. Since the house is near to the road and presents very well to the road, the Commission is concerned with the details because they will show from the public way. Photographs of the existing windows have storms so the sash detail is lost. The applicant stated that the old sashes have been removed from the property and are not available for viewing. The applicant also stated that the windows are the same as the ones approved for replacement in February on the Seahorse Lane façade and that the sashes are less than or equal to, in width, the previous windows. The Commission stated that the windows being proposed are fine but the original problem, which is the windows being removed without Commission approval, cannot be resolved. They are extremely disappointed that a very prominent home in the town has been altered. It was stated that the windows are the eyes of the house and very important to the Commission. The previous actions of the applicant is not the way to proceed in the historic district. At a minimum the

original windows should have been photographed in minute detail for historical accuracy and reference. The Commission appreciates the effort of the applicant to try to mitigate the changes to the original windows. The applicant is aware that the window subject is a sensitive one.

The following exhibits were presented:

- Photographs
- Window mock-ups
- Drawing

Chairman Nado asked for comments in favor or against.

Carl Gehring, 40 New London Road, spoke in favor of the application. He thinks the windows are fine and appropriate to the structure. He stated that the guidelines allow for the homeowner to apply to replace windows that are in disrepair or to get better energy efficiency. They are a custom made window that is appropriate and not incongruous to the house. He felt that the Commission may not be as objective as they should be and that their feelings are more personal in nature with regard to windows.

Commissioner Mitchell stated that she does not feel the windows are incongruous or inappropriate. Her issue is that the owner never came to HDC to obtain a COA. The first step is not to replace the windows. The first step is to get approval.

Thomas Swim, 41 School Street, spoke regarding the application. He was supervising the project when the windows were replaced. He stated that they made a great attempt to keep the windows the same. The trim around the windows is the same as that on the house which existed at the time. The sashes and dividers are as close as possible. He did not know if any glass area was lost.

The public hearing closed at 7:53 p.m.

Chairman Nado closed the public hearing portion of the meeting at 7:54 p.m.

II. DISCUSSION ON ITEMS OF PUBLIC HEARING

HDC 11-20 – 20 Academy Lane

MOTION: To grant a Certificate of Appropriateness as submitted.

Motion made by Cole, seconded by Mitchell, so voted unanimously. Issued Certificate of Appropriateness # 1802.

HDC 11-21 – 49 West Main Street

MOTION: To grant a Certificate of Appropriateness as submitted.

Motion made by Mitchell, seconded by Cole, so voted unanimously. Issued Certificate of Appropriateness # 1803.

HDC 11-22 – 27 Gravel Street

MOTION: To continue the hearing to the next regularly scheduled public hearing.

Motion made by Mitchell, seconded by Cole, so voted unanimously.

HDC 11-23 – 57 Pearl Street

MOTION: To grant a Certificate of Appropriateness with modifications.

Motion made by Cole, seconded by Mitchell, so voted unanimously. Issued Certificate of Appropriateness # 1804.

III. PRE-APPLICATION HEARINGS

Architect Bob Mercer appeared before the Commission for Karen S. Bronk owner of 245 High Street. The owner would like to make an addition to the family room and master bedroom. She would also like to add a garage to the property. A previous HDC approval was received for an attached bedroom and garage addition. The applicant understands that detached and removed garages are more desirable so they are proposing a plan which tries to accomplish that. They have tried to match the detailing of the windows. Nothing will change on the main structure. The chimney detail will be the same. The roof pitch for the porch and one story addition will be the same as the pitch for the porch in front as well as the front of the house. Materials will be painted clapboard, asphalt shingles and two over two Andersen windows. Although they are not planning to replace any windows, they will need to remove windows to open up the structure. The Commission and the applicant discussed the possible reuse of the windows being removed for the addition. In looking at the massing of the structure the Commission expressed concern that the addition may begin to compete with the main structure. They feel it is important that the addition be kept secondary to the front of the house. The applicant stated that the inside walls are only 6' tall currently so it will be difficult to bring the ridge line down much farther. It is agreed that trim detail is not needed on the back addition. Concerning the detached garage, the Commission has concerns with the dormer because it begins to look like living space with this detail. The 10/12 pitch is a good one. They feel the doors should be like barn doors and look like they swing. The Commission stated that putting the doors on the outside rather than the inside will carry the look better. The garage will have white cedar shakes with rolled in corners.

Todd Brady appeared on behalf of Randall's Wharf, owners of the office building at 31 Water Street. They would like to install a two sided railing to a ramp-type walkway on the building and the stairs on the side of the ramp. His new tenant, who is a chiropractor, is concerned for the safety of her patients and has requested he add the railing. The Commission felt that the property is a simple utilitarian structure and that the railing, which is simple and unadorned, is appropriate.

Chris Curran of Curran Construction appeared before the Commission for Joshua Verraneault, owner of 31 New London Road, regarding the porch on the house which is in disrepair. Ideally, he would like to support the existing porch roof then remove columns and bases and replace the decking. The decking will be replaced like for like. The columns and bases will be replaced with structural fiberglass that will be painted. The porch will keep the same profile as the existing columns and bases. They would

like to replace the lattice panels with a raised panel. The lattice will remain on the sides for air flow. The Commission felt that the removal of lattice will cause dampness to remain which will cause more rot in the long run. Moreover, adding panels in place of the lattice will contribute a heavy look to the porch which is not in keeping with the current look of the structure. In addition to the porch, the applicant discussed removing a window on the backside of the house and replacing it with an egress window. The Fire Marshal advised the homeowner that the third floor is not habitable because there is no egress. The Commission would not be in favor of the removal of the original window to replace it with an egress window. Staff noted that a fire escape would not be required if the house is a single family dwelling.

IV. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS - None

V. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF May 17, 2011

MOTION: To approve the minutes of May 17, 2011

Motion made by Mitchell, seconded by Cole, so voted unanimously.

VI. OLD BUSINESS - None

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Commission and Staff discussed the historic district handbook which contains guidelines as well as regulated activities. Staff will check with the Town Attorney and seek his opinion on whether a change to the guidelines requires a public hearing.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 9:53 p.m. made by Mitchell, seconded by Cole, so voted unanimously.

Elaine Cole, Secretary
Historic District Commission

Prepared by Lynda Galetta, Office Assistant II