

**TOWN OF GROTON
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MARCH 1, 2005 - 7:30 P.M.
GROTON TOWN HALL ANNEX - COMMUNITY ROOM 2**

Members Present: C. Nado, R. Seager, E. Cole, K. Vaughn

Members Absent: R. Keyes

Staff: K. Quinn, T. Cedio

Chairman Nado called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. There was no call of the hearing because the public hearings are continuations.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public hearings reopened at 7:30 p.m.

HDC 05-09 – 25 West Main Street; Jerome Properties LLC, owner; Eric Burns, applicant; for addition to existing vestibule. PIN #261918401845 – continuation

Eric Burns, representing Jerome Properties, LLC, 25 West Main Street, presented photos showing the front view of the vestibule as visible from the Main Street. The vestibule will be across the front of the building for the entire length. The proposal calls for a common walkway for the tenants, each with their own entrance for the two one-bedroom apartments. It is currently 66' from the building, and proposed to make it 30' inches longer and increase the depth of it. The existing window is removed from the plans and other windows are added to the vestibule.

The applicant submitted a letter from the Mystic Fire Marshal with regard to the proposed walkway. The letter states that stairs are the only means of egress for this property and according to code, must be covered.

The following exhibits were presented:

- photos
- plans with elevations
- letter from Fritz Hilbert, Mystic Fire Marshal.

Vaughn explained that the portion of the walkway used to be covered, but is not in the drawing.

Chairman Nado says he has no problem approving the vestibule. However, he would vote against the covered walkway for the 2nd story apartment being 8' wide and 67' long.

Seager stated that he is disturbed by the length of the walkway in the back, and would like to view the impact now that he has seen a rendering of the project.

The Commission clarified that they cannot rule on the use of the property, but if the use warrants this adaptation to access these 2 apartments for the fire marshall's approval, then the applicant will have to return with a more historically based concept.

Seager stated that he has a problem with the protrusion of this size on the entire length of the building.

The Commission was concerned with the visibility of this proposed structure from the street and Steamboat Wharf condominiums.

HDC 05-10 – 25 West Main Street; Jerome Properties LLC, owner; Eric Burns, applicant; for addition of a covered walkway for entrance to 2nd story apartment. PIN #261918401845 – continuation

The applicant requested another continuation, pending comments from the application regarding the vestibule. The Chairman requested the applicant sign up to speak at the pre-application hearings for suggestions to remedy the walkway proposal.

Chairman Nado asked for public comments and there were none.

Public hearings closed at 8:20 p.m.

DISCUSSION ON ITEMS OF PUBLIC HEARING

HDC 05-09 – 25 West Main Street

MOTION: To grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the vestibule, with the stipulation that a window be added into the east side of the building.

Motion made by Seager, seconded by Vaughn, so voted unanimously.

HDC 05-10 – 25 West Main Street.

MOTION: To continue the public hearing for HDC-05-10 to the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Motion made by Seager, seconded by Vaughn, so voted unanimously.

PRE-APPLICATION HEARINGS

Penny Havard, 85 Clift Street, is requesting permission for a privacy fence and to replace the deck skirt with lattice on the south side. She would like to take the deck and the fencing down, to dry out the area and eliminate the carpenter ants in her kitchen. With the removal of the deck and the fence, the step into the kitchen is over 2 feet high. Ms. Havard proposes adding railings and a stoop to enter the house through the french doors.

The applicant is also requesting permission to replace the fence with an appropriate picket fence, which would be a physical barrier but not a visible barrier, and install a small gate to access a shrub garden.

Seager stated that you are applying to take down the deck and the fence tonight. After deciding on the best remedy for this problem, the applicant can reapply and bring some overall dimensions and materials.

Ron Perry, 19 Pearl Street, representing Mr. And Mrs. Saunder, reviewed photos with the Commission. Perry would like to remove the deck as it is in disrepair, and replace with an identical deck. He proposes an enclosed screened-in porch in the back off the kitchen, and enlarging the front dormer. Perry would like to replace the windows with 2 over 2 windows.

Vaughn questioned the stairs to access the apartments on the second story. The center area of the conceptual drawing has a real grand feeling, which is not in keeping with the rest of the house.

The applicant stated that the proposal is to change the trim. Chairman Nado suggested perhaps the applicant can tone down the dental work and the details in the center section.

Seager suggested it is a bit ornate and an issue of scale. He feels the Commission should not be advising applicants about architectural adaptations to make a structure more in line with the district.

Seager is trying to eliminate the "California bungalow" style look of the structure.

Cole is concerned about the porch in the proposal, and the close proximity to the parking area.

The Commission suggested extending the plans and photos to show the full side, and the rear view, then submit the plans with dimensions, elevations and materials.

Chairman Nado requested a brochure for the windows, which would show if the trim and the grill is included.

Rob Warn, 19 New London Road, is proposing renovations to reflect the character of the district. He would like to replace the bay window with double-hung 6 over 6 windows. The applicant is proposing raising the pitch of the roof to match the pitch of the roof off the front, and take that and tie that into the back of the house and extend it out an additional 10 feet.

Seager questioned the amount of steps in the area of the union of the house when it comes to the rear façade. The roof protrudes over the wall. Before the shed was added, the building was symmetrical. Seager suggested putting a corner board on the back.

Seager stated that a picture which shows good detail would make it easier to vote. He also suggested cornices on the front of the building, and more detailed drawings, as these are not architectural drawings.

Claire Matthews, 9 Water Street, representing the Mystic Art Center, formerly the Mystic Art Association, now needs to change the sign to represent the name change.

Chris Pacheco, 334 High Street, displayed photos showing the front of the home, and would like to remove the front porch, as it is falling down. When the porch was attached, the clapboards and the shingles were interchanged. Pacheco suggested replacing round posts with square posts/columns down to the natural deck.

Vaughn questioned what would be used as infill between the brick. The Commission requested more details and build up of the pilasts. The horizontal beam is missing from the drawing as presented. The Commission also requested details for the railing.

Eric Burns, 25 West Main Street, asked the Commission for recommendations to facilitate this application. Seager stated it is not just what is covered. It is also what it is – a long walkway sticking out of the building. Desmairis questioned turning it into a building, with a gabled roof with windows, rather than a flat roof. Chairman Nado mentioned the obstruction of the view of the roofline.

Seager stated that it might not be possible to incorporate the two one bedroom apartments in this building.

Vaughn left at 10:00 p.m.

Rod Desmairis, 18-22 West Main Street, has been researching other historic areas and the treatment of different rooflines.

Desmarais stated that two new people brought onto the architectural team. The applicant will return in 2-4 weeks with their renderings to address the concerns expressed during all the pre-application hearings thus far.

Nado asked the next hearing to have line drawings to show all 4 sides of the building, and how much this projects out. Seager questioned the additional architects, as a means to persuade the commission to approve the design. You still need to address the massive height and the need to eliminate the decks or porches on the back of the building. Nado stated the previously approved plan showed 4 porches.

CORRESPONDENCE

A letter written by John D. Porter, 20 Bank Street, expressing concern regarding the proposal for 18-22 West Main Street. Porter stated that the proposed 4 story structure would dominate the

downtown area, and is not appropriate for this Historic area. He is also concerned about the porches/balconies proposed for the residential units being visible from public roads. Porter also submitted 10 signatures from local residents who share his concerns regarding this development.

MINUTES

MOTION: To approve the minutes of February 15, 2005

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

OLD BUSINESS – None.

NEW BUSINESS

Michael Sarasin, 27 Gravel Street, does not think the applicant has been listening to the board. He is concerned about warming between the board and the applicant. When the applicant was here for a public hearing, there was a substantial number of people present opposed to the proposal.

Bill Bertsche, 131 High Street, stated that financial need cannot be considered in regard to the height and size of the building to be approved. The public is concerned that the four stories would not fit in our town, and the applicant is not accepting that 4 stories will not be approved. Don't succumb to the pressure, as this does not conform to the Historic District. This does not have to violate the Zoning Regulations.

Rod Desmarais denied that the applicant is not listening. The height of the building is a zoning issue, and the Town has the ability to waive the height requirement. Desmarais stated that nothing which was said regarding this application will act as a deterrent to keep coming back to refine the proposal, and he has prepared a list of objectives.

Seager stated that his approval will not be granted on a new application with a deck per unit, and there can be no sense of being residences from the back. He stated that the building height is and will always be an issue.

Nado questioned the use of porches rather than decks.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 10:37 p.m. made by Seager, seconded by Cole, so voted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Cole, Secretary