



TOWN OF FAIRFIELD
Town Hall — Fairfield, Conn.

FAIRFIELD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

APPROVED MINUTES including VOTING MOTIONS

Fairfield Historic District Commission

February 18, 2010

The February 18, 2010 meeting of the Fairfield Historic District Commission was called to order by the Chairman Ellen Gould. The meeting took place in the Sullivan Independence Hall Basement Conference Room. Members present were Commissioners Ellen Gould, Timothy Smith, Margaret Browning and Alternate Thomas Dailey. Members absent were Commissioners Henry Backe and Bruce Graham, and Alternates Adam Klyver and Heather Dean.

Mr. Dailey made a motion that the Commission go into Executive Session, seconded by Mr. Smith. The motion was approved and the Commission went into Executive Session at 4:50. Mr. Smith made a motion to end the Executive Session, seconded by Mr. Dailey. The Commission voted 4-0 to end the Executive Session at 5:14.

The resumption of the public meeting was called to order by Chairman Gould at 5:15. The meeting was noticed in the *Fairfield Citizen* issue of February 12, 2010. The members present and absent were the same as above. The Chairman announced that she would recuse herself from Items 2, 3, and 6; and that Commissioner Browning would recuse herself from Item 6.

Item 1: 458 Old Post Road

Louis DiBeradino and David Williams represented the applicants.

Mr. DiBeradino explained that the property owners were seeking to replace all first and second story windows on the Old Post Road facade as well as several windows on both side facades because the existing windows leak, are single-glazed, have operating problems, and are less effective at keeping out noise than the proposed replacements. He proposed two options for replacement: both are double glazed and one has a coating. The clear glass has a rating of .56 and the coated glass has a rating of .38 (the lower number being preferable). Mr. DiBeradino presented samples of each. Mr. Williams then presented a sample to demonstrate the replacement process.

Mr. Smith asked for confirmation that the .38 rated window is coated (it is) and whether it is safety glass (it is not). Miss Browning inquired about the planned screens. There would be no screens on replaced windows. Mr. Dailey asked if the operating problems with the existing windows could be repaired, thus removing the need for their replacement. He also confirmed the applicant's understanding that the three-track screens would be removed if the proposed replacement windows were installed, and also confirmed the applicant's knowledge that the replacement windows could not be screened at a later date without the approval of the Commission.

2. 608 Harbor Road

The Chairman recused herself from this item and the following one and was replaced by Mr. Smith.

Jack Franzen represented the applicant.

Mr. Franzen explained that the 608 Harbor Road application is integrally linked to the one for 207 Main Street, an adjoining property. He presented the application, which included a proposed iron fence and gate to match an existing one. Detailing of the wrought iron would match the existing and the proposed fence would not exceed six feet in height. The proposed steps would have a wrought iron hand rail similar to one proposed for 207 Main Street. The iron work would be painted black.

In the midst of his presentation, Mr. Franzen realized that materials he needed for both Items 2 and 3 were unavailable and would have to be brought from another location so asked that the hearing be suspended while the missing materials could be delivered. Mr. Smith suspended the hearing on Item 2.

Mrs. Gould returned to the meeting room at 5:36 in order to open Item 4; however, the applicant for Item 4 was not present. Mr. Franzen returned at 5:40, at which time Mrs. Gould again turned the chair over to Mr. Smith and left the room. Mr. Smith resumed the hearing on Item 2.

Mr. Franzen explained that the proposed steps would be constructed of three inch blue stone with field stone risers.

3. 207 Main Street

Jack Franzen represented the applicant.

Mr. Franzen explained that the stone steps and wrought iron railing at the rear of the property would be of the same materials as at 608 Harbor Road.

Moving to the front of the property, he described the proposal to remove an old tree stump and related straightening of the sidewalk and re-stacking of the existing stone wall using the same material. He added that the proposed wood fence was being reconsidered by the applicant so no detailed information was offered on it.

Mr. Franzen explained that the columns at the front porch are not original to the house and opined that they were probably mid-20th century replacements. He proposed their replacement with "Tuscan Columns" of the same diameter, and correct to the stylistic order.

Mr. Franzen also submitted a statement from a cognizant town official to the effect that rebuilding the stacked wall that is partially on the town right of way is acceptable so long as there are no footings being dug. Mr. Franzen stated that the wall has no footings and is merely being re-stacked.

Miss Browning asked about the porch base and Mr. Franzen explained that deteriorated lattice would be replaced with a like material and that the existing wrought iron railing would remain. The treads would be repaired or replaced with like material.

Mr. Dailey received confirmation from Mr. Franzen that the replacement columns would be made of wood, and that the town's Tree Warden had expressed no objection to the removal of the stump.

5. 1000 Harbor Road

Ellen Gould resumed the chair at 5:54. The representative of the Item 4 applicant had not then arrived so the Commission moved on to Item 5.

Wendy Lindquist of Lindquist Landscape Design represented the applicant with respect to landscape design issues at 1000 Harbor Road. She presented all the proposed landscaping aspects of the application, including a new garden fence, a wall higher than an existing one, moving large stones on the Harbor Road side of the property, a wall to be made of old blue stone curbing, finishing a wall at the corner of the house, a driveway with steel edging and native stone, and hoops for climbers.

Jack Franzen represented the applicant with respect to architectural issues at 1000 Harbor Road.

Mr. Franzen presented the proposed re-shaping of the front door stoop with a flair shape, wrought iron hand rail, and blue stone steps.

He also described the proposed changes to the porch, noting replacement of latticework but retention of the existing roof structure below which three aches would face Harbor Road. The porch deck and steps would be wood with brick porch supports. Mr. Franzen said the porch may be made of steel made to look like wood, citing possible building code requirements for a porch at this location. He also described a new door to provide access to the house from the porch, stating that the proposed door would be in the same place as the original front door of the house.

Mr. Franzen then described the proposed demolition and rebuilding of the garage wing and the height of the eave line of the proposed addition. He further described the air conditioning equipment being placed below grade and thus not being visible, as well as the replacement of one odd-sized window.

Mr. Smith commented that it was a good proposal.

Miss Browning inquired about the introduction of curved design on the porch decoration observing that it seemed unrelated to the house. Mr. Franzen cited local examples of curved latticework but also stated that this unique structure calls for its own design and that the proposed work is not an attempt to match any other. He stated that metal was proposed instead of wood because of the location of the house in a hurricane zone but said that the columns could be cased in wood.

Mr. Dailey asked if the metal material proposed for the porch was actually a building code requirement, to which Mr. Franzen responded that engineering tests would be done before construction but that he believed intuitively that the results would require metal materials at this location. Mr. Dailey also expressed concern about the removal of a garage section of the facade, pointing out that a house with no garage would be incongruous in the Southport Historic District, there being only a very few such examples and all in the center of the village on small lots, quite distinct from the lot and building size at 1000 Harbor Road. Mr. Dailey further expressed concern that an unfortunate precedent might be set by removal of what has for decades read from the street as a garage wing to one facade of the house. Mr. Franzen cited several houses in the Southport Historic District that do not have garages and also gave information as to the number of outbuildings compared to the number of houses in the documentation for the creation of the district in 1966.

The Chairman asked about the ridge line of the proposed addition. Jeremy Frost replied that it would be lower than the neighbors' garage roof line.

4. 89 Westway Road

Rob Marks of Ferris and Partners represented the applicant.

Mr. Marks gave a presentation comparing 89 Westway Road to other houses of similar style and period in the Southport Historic District, concentrating on porticos and fenestration patterns.

He explained that the applicant was not proposing removal of a chimney or of historic windows. He then described the proposal as viewed from each side of the house. There were no changes proposed for the north elevation. On the west, the second floor would be restored to prior fenestration by moving a window from the first floor, removing non-historic windows, and aligning doors to where the original windows would have been. On the south, the proposed mud room would appear similar to porticos on others similar houses in the district. On the east, window additions were proposed for the mud room and kitchen, removal of a small second story window and alignment of another.

Miss Browning asked about the addition of window head detail to which Mr. Marks replied that the detail was added at the time of the porch addition.

6. 1220 Hillside Road

Commissioners Gould and Browning are recused from this application with the result that a quorum was lacking so the application was not heard.

Commission Discussion and Decision

Item 2: 608 Harbor Road

Mr. Dailey made a motion to approve a and b, as presented, seconded by Miss Browning. It was approved 3-0; Smith, Browning and Dailey voting in favor.

Mr. Dailey made a motion to deny c and d, without prejudice, seconded by Miss Browning. It was approved 3-0; Smith, Browning and Dailey voting in favor.

Item 3: 207 Main Street

Mr. Dailey made a motion to approve a, b, c, d, and f, as presented; and to deny e without prejudice, seconded by Miss Browning.

It was approved 3-0; Smith, Browning and Dailey voting in favor.

Item 5: 1000 Harbor Road

Mr. Dailey made a motion to approve a, b, c, d, e, i, j, k, and l, as presented, seconded by Mr. Smith. It was approved 4-0; Gould, Smith, Browning and Dailey voting in favor.

Mr. Dailey made a motion to approve f, with the stipulations that a mock-up of the design and material be approved by the Commission before construction, and confirmation that use of metal was a building code requirement. The motion failed for want of a second.

Miss Browning made a motion to deny f without prejudice, seconded by Mr. Dailey. Miss Browning observed that the porch proposal was moving in the right direction but expressed reservations about the current proposal's use of metal and overall design. Mr. Smith complimented the proposal. **The motion was approved 3-1, Gould, Browning and Dailey voting in favor; Smith against.**

Miss Browning made a motion to approve g and h, as presented, seconded by Mr. Smith. Mr. Dailey expressed concern about the Commission's approving a change to the present appearance of the house, which includes a garage wing. He stated that his concern went to the exterior only, that interior alterations were outside the Commission's authority, and that parking was not the issue. Rather, he felt that it would be incongruous in the Southport Historic District for a house and lot the size of 1000 Harbor

Road to have a garage wing removed and not replaced with a like appearance, and expressed concern about the possible precedent the Commission might be setting. Mrs. Gould voiced support for the application and expressed her views that each property is unique and that the appearance of the replacement structure would be an improvement. **The motion was approved 3-1; Gould, Smith and Browning voting in favor; Dailey against.**

Item 4: 89 Westway Road

Mr. Dailey made a motion to approve the application as presented, seconded by Mr. Smith. It was approved 4-0; Gould, Smith, Browning and Dailey voting in favor.

Item 1: 458 Old Post Road

Mr. Dailey made a motion to deny without prejudice, seconded by Mr. Smith. Mr. Smith raised the issue of divided light windows and the Chairman explained that the windows as proposed employed a technology recommended by the Connecticut Trust for replacement windows. Mr. Dailey expressed strong reservations about replacement of historic windows unless the applicant could categorically demonstrate that the existing windows were inoperable and could not be repaired, citing the Commission's guidelines that favor repair of historic materials rather than replacement, when possible. Mr. Dailey also pointed out that this house is one of the most important in the Old Post Road Historic District and that every effort should be made to preserve its historic materials. The Commission discussed one possibility that wooden storm windows of the old fashioned type could be made with double-glazed clear glass to replace the current three track windows, thus effecting many, if not all, of the applicants' objectives without sacrificing the historic windows, themselves. Even in this possible scenario, strong reservations were expressed with regard to tinted window material.

The motion was approved 4-0; Gould, Smith, Browning and Dailey voting in favor.

Other Business

The minutes of the January 14, and January 21, 2010 meetings were not included in folders so were not voted upon.

The Chairman reported on a repair at 635 Old Post Road, a violation at the corner of Old Post and South Benson, a six-month extension request for a Certificate of Appropriateness at 2860 Bronson Road (to which there was no objection), and described handouts on parliamentary procedure and proposed handbook revisions to be discussed at the next work session.

Mr. Smith made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Dailey. It was approved unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 8:03.