

Historic District Commission
Town Hall, Room 126
Final Meeting Minutes, April 14, 2014

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Meeting called to order at 7:30 PM. Attending Kathy Acerbo-Bachmann (KAB), David Honn (DH), Pamela Lynn (PL), Ron Regan (RR), Anita Rogers (AR) and David Shoemaker (DS). Mike Gowing as BofS rep.

7:00 PM **Citizens' Questions:**

Scott Kutil of 43 Windsor Ave. came to report on his progress in developing a database of zoning information in the historic districts. His effort was slowed by the fact that the newer homes on River St. are not in the GIS.

SK found a document explaining zoning rules from the 1990s before the establishment of the historic districts. Village residential did not appear but was referred to earlier as R2.

SK wishes the HDC to propose zoning changes with larger FAR but not too high or too low.

SK noted Janet Adachi's comments at the recent town meeting that there might not be a September TM because, as yet, there are few proposed zoning changes. He reiterated Terra Friedrichs' suggestion to share the specifics with Town Counsel who has wished that there would be specific data on the discrepancy between the current zoning and the actual properties.

DH will be the lead on this proposed project to advocate for zoning appropriate to maintain the historic character of the districts.

7:08 PM **Approved by Consent - March 25, 2014 Minutes.**

7:15 PM **Appl. # 1405: 603 Mass. Ave. Vote on Windows and Chimney**

Matt Morizio brought samples of the window frame and the chimney façade discussed during previous appointments.

AR is fine with the brick chimney sample as long as it matches. She does not feel that the sample releases the application from the flashing - step flashing and a capping of a full course of normal bricks. AR suggests concern about permanence of this solution and that the COA must speak to the need to maintain the appearance. This will be viewed as permanent fix.

Examination of pictures of the original chimney guided the continued conversation about the step pattern and flashing.

KAB found the corner very convincing. She did emphasize the need to replicate the mortar joint pattern of the original chimney.

DS emphasized that this would be a more fragile structure, in particular the corners, and so will need a stable backing. AR asked DH about a solution to avoiding water damage at the top. DH suggested faking a flue and mortar wash and addition of a clay colored chimney pot.

RR is concerned that the mortar will crack out over time. KAB noted that this is the first time accepting such a solution and that a condition should be added that the overall condition be monitored over time to assure that it will continue to provide a historically authentic appearance.

DS and AR wonder about the width of the casing and backband on the window sample as presented, specifically the proportions and suggested that measurements should be taken to achieve a match. AR asked about which window the applicants have selected a single glazed Brosco window.

KAB explained the process as the application must be voted this evening or extended by the applicant.

KAB explained for the future that no demolitions are allowed without a demolition permit.

AR asked about the door which will be retained.

DH moved to approve application #1405.

The existing door on the south facing façade in the wing portion of the building to remain as is (will be a dummy door on the inside.)

There will be three new windows on the west elevation and one new window on the south elevation all double hung 2 over 2 sash. Windows to be single glazed by Brosco all wood with historic sills and casings to match existing windows. The windows should be similar in dimension to each other.

Recommendation: Storms to match existing storms.

Condition on the windows: The HDC liaison will make a field visit to verify the casing dimensions and profiles.

Chimneys – The chimney in the wing building c. 1960 shall be removed in its entirety and not replaced. The chimney on the main house shall be removed in its entirety and replaced with a wood substructure with exterior cement board. This cement board shall be covered with thin frost proof exterior bricks with the following features...replicate the bond pattern of the prior chimney, replicate the joint size and mortar color, step flashing shall be installed, full bricks with corbelling shall be used at the top. It is recommended that a mortar wash be provided at the top to match the former chimney...

Conditions on the chimneys: HDC will review the condition of the chimney in approximately three years to verify that the thin brick veneer and mortar system has maintained a historically authentic appearance. Otherwise the HDC reserves the right to ask the applicant to rebuild the chimney with full bricks.

Finding: The previously existing chimney was allowed to be demolished because it was beyond repair.

Recommendation: It is recommended that a chimney pot or pots of historically appropriate design be installed. If the applicant chooses to do so, it should be approved through an amendment.

Seconded by DS

Discussion: KAB suggests there were two additional concerns.

DH adds a condition that the applicant will provide a brick sample board and several old bricks for color matching purposes by the HDC liaison.

Flashing to be lead covered copper.

Motion approved unanimously.

8:00 PM App. #1409: 563 Mass. Ave. (Acton Pharmacy) –
Ventilation System and Pre-Existing Violations

Saad Dinno, the applicant, was accompanied by his brother and the contractor.

The existing system includes air, humidity, cooling and heating. The proposed system includes a unit 14' long whereas the current unit is 4' long. The current system is taller than the proposed system. A portion of the current system can be seen from Mass. Ave. The proposed system will not be as visible. The current height is approximately 6' and the proposed unit would be about 3' high.

DH asked about supply and return ducts. The ducts will be under the system and not visible.

DS asked about the color of the unit whether there is choice. It is galvanized sheet metal and is paintable.

AR asked whether it might be possible to add a screening mechanism
MG added that it can be painted to match another existing element.

KAB adds shorter is better. As it is a commercial building, she is okay with the proposed unit. She is not sure screening would be better. Keeping it as simple and innocuous is the goal. SD indicated willingness to paint the unit an acceptable color.

DS agrees screening is not likely to be better.

KAB added there could be a condition to reconsider painting after installation.

DH noted that the sky is often gray. Gray roofs tend to blend in, so he is recommending pale gray.

RR wishes to avoid shiny metallic, prefers flat color.

KAB shifted to the issue of existing violations. Neon signs are not allowed in the districts. The applicant indicated that the neon sign is already down. Window lettering is also not allowed currently but will be proposed at a fall TM. KAB suggested that he consider how he might wish to use window lettering in the future.

KAB asked about his conversation with Dean Charter about the trees that were taken down. The trees were taken down because the walkway had become uneven and unsafe. Saad Dinno indicates that pharmacy associations suggest keeping the fronts of pharmacies open to view. Dean Charter has suggested several types of possible trees. DS has researched sources of trees.

DS asked about the need to remove paving.

KAB proposes that the choice of trees be left up to Dean Charter but that the replacement of trees be required. Abutter notifications will need to be sent out.

AR moved application # 1409 accepting Acton Pharmacy's request to replace the existing 51/2 existing HAVC maximum 14' long and 3' tall. The unit will be positioned on the roof running front to back.

Condition: Once installed a member of the HDC will evaluate whether the unit requires painting to blend in to the sky to be less visible.

Tree replacement: The HDC moves to require replacement of the former tree on the pharmacy property and the HDC recommends that the Acton tree warden select the replacement tree.

Seconded by DH.

DH suggests the preferred placement of the tree be toward the one story, west end of the building.

The motion was accepted unanimously pending abutters notification.

8:45 PM Appl. #1410: 430 Main Street: Vent

Scott Stuart wishes to vent out the soffit, painted to the same color. The house is an 1860s Greek Revival.

KAB asks whether a COA or CNA? AR indicates it is visible and so an application is needed to issue a COA.

DS asked whether the external unit could be rectangular rather than circular to be consistent and less conspicuous.

SS asked about the removal of a tree that suffered significant damage in storm.

9:00 PM Appl. 1408: 53 Windsor Ave. – Vent

Discussion two years ago indicated that a CNA would be appropriate if the vent did not show. No action was taken. The applicants have returned with the original plan as they believe this is the best approach for their needs.

AR does not feel strongly about the proposal. The key is that the vent should be painted to match the existing color. Should approve it but ask them to push it into the corner as far as possible.

AR moved that HDC approve the installation of a dryer vent on the building elevation per the application. The vent should be square similar to the dryer wall vent and mounted on a panel set into the clapboards equal to either two or three clapboards depending on the dimensions of the vent. The vent should not be plastic but should be a steel dryer wall vent similar to the flush mount metal dryer wall vent at dryerwallvent.com. Panel and vent hood must be painted to match the clapboards.

Seconded by DH.

Motion accepted unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

**Pamela Lynn
Secretary**