



Schenectady Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes
July 25, 2019

I. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Yager called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Patricia Yager, Chair; Ben Wiles, Vice Chair; Shaun Andriano; Christopher Marney

STAFF: Avi Epstein, Zoning Officer; Jennifer Mills, Secretary

EXCUSED: Dr. Dean Bennett; Frank Gilmore

III. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

IV. ADOPTION OF MEETING MINUTES

Motion by Commissioner Andriano, seconded by Commissioner Wiles, to approve the June 27, 2019 Meeting Minutes as submitted.

Motion carried unanimously.

V. NEW BUSINESS - APPLICATIONS

A. Consideration for approval submitted by Caroline Bardwell to erect a wooden sign on the front of the building. The premises are located at 609 Union Street in the Union Street Corridor Historic District.

Caroline Bardwell presented the application.

Ms. Bardwell explained that she will be renting the first-floor space for her retail shop, which will feature goods by local artisans and Schenectady-themed items. She added that she also plans to use the patio space for small events and performances. Ms. Bardwell stated that she would like to put her sign for the business on the front edge of the pergola. She stated that the proposed sign is wood, with a wood veneer, and the letters will be 8" tall black metal letters. She noted that she had originally considered having a sign that would hang down off of the pergola, but she realized that it would have blocked some of the stained-glass windows on the front of the building.

Commissioner Yager asked Ms. Bardwell if the sign board will wrap around the sides of the pergola. Ms. Bardwell stated that she had planned to have it do so but is willing to do it differently if the Commission thought a different design would be more appropriate. Commissioner Yager stated that she had no objection to the design. The other Commissioners agreed. Commissioner Andriano asked if the sign will extend under the pergola. Ms. Bardwell stated that she thinks it will have to extend under it slightly so that it is fastened securely.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Andriano, seconded by Commissioner Gilmore, to approve the application to attach a wooden sign with 8” tall black letters in Garamond Bold typeface to the front of the pergola with the following condition:

1. The project will be completed within one year.

And with the following findings of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.
2. The Commission believes that the sign will not detract from the historic nature of the property and that the design is both appropriate for and complements the building.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Consideration for approval submitted by Joseph Gallagher to paint the exterior of the house. The premises are located at 24 Union Avenue in the Union Historic District.

Joseph Gallagher presented the application.

Mr. Gallagher explained that his employer, Mohawk Opportunities, has owned the house for over forty years. He stated that at this time it needs to be repainted and they are seeking approval to change the colors slightly.

Commissioner Marney asked if there will be any alterations made to the clapboard. Mr. Gallagher stated that there is some rotted wood at the back of the house, but they plan to replace it in kind. Commissioner Yager commented that traditionally with a stick style house such as this one there would be a different paint color used for each different material. She asked if they had considered using a third color for the fish scale portion of the shingles. Mr. Gallagher stated that they had considered it but had not had time to decide on a third color before submitting the application. He added that they would be happy use a third color as long as it doesn't set back

their time frame for completing the project. After some discussion the applicant and the Commissioners agreed that Mr. Gallagher would choose a third color from the same page of the Benjamin Moore historic colors chart and then submit that color for approval by staff.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Wiles, seconded by Commissioner Gilmore, to approve the application to paint the exterior of the house as submitted with the following conditions:

1. The project will be completed within one year.
2. The body of the building will be Benjamin Moore Nantucket Gray (HC-111) and the trim will be Monterey White (HC-27).
3. The fish scale portion of the siding will be painted a third color, which will be chosen from the same page of the Benjamin Moore historic colors brochure and will be approved by staff prior to the painting being undertaken.

And with the following finding of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Consideration for approval submitted by Ron Gardner on behalf of Green Street Development to install new windows, siding, shutters, railings, doors, canopies, and steps, and to paint the exterior of the building. The premises are located at 308/310 Green Street in the Stockade Historic District.

Ron Gardner presented the application.

Mr. Gardner explained that he had been before the Commission in the fall of 2018, at which time he was granted an approval to replace the roof and stabilize the foundation walls of the building. He stated that at this time he is seeking the necessary approvals to finish the exterior of the building.

After some discussion of the parging of the foundation, the eight over eight divided-light vinyl-clad wood windows that were proposed, the proposed hardiboard siding, and the placement of the windows and shutters, the Commissioners concluded that the application was missing many details and the specific design information necessary for them to make an informed decision about the finished project. They suggested that Mr. Gardner return to the Commission for further

consideration once he is certain of the specific details and has submitted them as outlined in their motion to table.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

David Hogenkamp of The Community Land Bank spoke in favor of the proposal, stating that Mr. Gardner had invested great amounts of time and money in the project and that he hoped that the Commission would help Mr. Gardner move the project along in a timely manner.

MOTION TO TABLE

Motion by Commissioner Marney, seconded by Commissioner Andriano, to table the application pending the submittal of the following additional information:

1. Revised elevation drawings showing the proposed design details including the cornice, entry doors and portico, the proposed window sizes and locations as they relate to the original, and specific information regarding the parging of the foundation walls and what the finished product will look like. The Commission would like to see an elevation drawing without the shutters on the front façade of the building.
2. Cut sheets of the proposed window design, which will be either wood or aluminum-clad wood. The Commission recommends two over one divided light windows.
3. Details of the proposed pine or cedar siding.
4. A cut sheet of the chosen fence design. Of the alternatives presented at the meeting the Commission feels that the three-rail square design shown at the top of the submitted sheet is most in keeping with the historic character of the building.

Motion carried unanimously.

D. Consideration for approval submitted by Stephen Bonitatibus to remove asbestos tile on the side of the house and replace with clapboard and paint the exterior of the house. The premises are located at 220 Green Street in the Stockade Historic District.

Stephen Bonitatibus presented the application.

Mr. Bonitatibus explained that he would like to remove the existing tile siding on the side of the house and replace it with pine clapboard so that the building is all one type of siding, and then paint the entire exterior. He pointed out that while he had originally thought that the tile siding contained asbestos, after having a sample tested it was deemed asbestos-free. He distributed a copy of the test report to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Marney asked Mr. Bonitatibus where he would like to use the dark green accent color. Mr. Bonitatibus stated that he was thinking of using it on the wood details over the front windows, or perhaps on some of the dentil details on the front cornice. Commissioner Yager asked if the front doors had ever been varnished natural wood or if they had always been painted. Mr. Bonitatibus stated that as far back as he is aware, they have been painted but he is not certain if they always have been. Commissioner Yager commented that the dark trim on the bottom of the doors draws the eye down and perhaps painting the doors a single color would help all of the details stand out more and not just that piece. The Commissioners indicated that they had no specific preference about the doors. Commissioner Andriano stated that he would prefer to see not such a stark contrast, such as perhaps using two beige tones that are only a few shades apart.

After further discussion of the accent color it was determined that the applicant could move forward with painting the body and trim of the house and will return to the Commission for further approval once he decides where he would like the accent color to be painted.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Marney, seconded by Commissioner Andriano, to approve the application to remove the tile siding on the side of the house and repair it with pine clapboard, to repair the existing clapboard siding, and repaint the exterior of the house as submitted with the following conditions:

1. The project will be completed within one year.
2. The body of the house will be painted Sherwin Williams Downing Sand (SW 2822) and the trim will be painted Sherwin Williams Classical White (SW 2829). This approval does not include the proposed dark hunter green accent color. When the applicant is ready to provide more details as to where he would like to place the accent color he will return to the Commission for further review.

And with the following finding of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.

Motion carried unanimously.

- E. Consideration for approval submitted by Rocky Palma to add four (4) skylights to the attic, remove the incinerator chimney, and add a pre-built wood shed to the rear of the property and a weatherized canopy to the back**

porch. The premises are located at 1113 Union Street in the Union Historic District.

Rocky Palma presented the application.

Mr. Palma briefly reviewed the application and noted that he is not sure what type of design to propose for the canopy over the basement stairs and would welcome any input from the Commission. After some discussion of the difficulty of adding a canopy without interfering with the lines of the significant back porch railings, it was agreed that Mr. Palma could return with a specific design for the canopy when he is ready but at this time it would be removed from the application.

Commissioner Yager asked Mr. Palma if he knew when the incinerator chimney was added. Mr. Palma responded that the house was converted to apartments some time after 1928, and he believes the incinerator dates from the 1940s.

Commissioner Marney stated that he does not believe that the incinerator chimney has become an historical feature in its own right, and therefore he would not object to removing it. The other Commissioners agreed.

Commissioner Yager asked if it would not be possible to simply add more interior lights to the attic. Mr. Palma responded that he would like to add the skylights not just for natural light but also as a way to access the roof when necessary, as it is four stories high and difficult to access via a ladder. Commissioner Yager asked if the glass will be able to be removed from the skylights so that the roof can easily be accessed. Mr. Palma responded that it will be. Commissioner Andriano asked if the installers will be experienced in working with slate roofs and if the skylights will be flashed with copper. Mr. Palma stated that the contractor has extensive experience with historical properties, and they would be using copper flashing.

Commissioner Marney asked if Mr. Palma is proposing putting the new shed next to the existing shed. Mr. Palma stated that he is. Commissioner Marney commented that the shed could easily be removed in the future without having any lasting effect on the house. Commissioner Wiles stated that he didn't think that he could support the use of the type of shed proposed, because the style is highly divergent from that of the house. He stated that it clearly would not have been the intention of the original builders of the house to have that style of shed on the property, and that while he empathizes with the need for storage the proposed shed looks more like one that would be used to store a tractor in a country setting. Commissioner Marney asked Commissioner Wiles if he would approve of a shed of a different design. Commissioner Wiles stated that there are many shed styles available that might more directly reference the style of the house, and he believes that one of those designs would be more appropriate.

The Commissioners and the applicant discussed the color of the skylights (bronze) and their positioning on the roof. It was determined that they would be placed two

on the Wendell Avenue side of the roof and two on the opposite side, on either side of and equidistant from the center gable. Mr. Palma stated that they would be placed high enough so that they would line up with the top of the attic knee wall.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Marney, seconded by Commissioner Wiles, to approve the application to add four skylights to the attic and remove the incinerator chimney as submitted with the following conditions:

1. The project will be completed within one year.
2. The four skylights will be added as two on the Wendell Avenue side and two on the opposite side of the roof, equidistant from the center gable, and will be trimmed with copper flashing.
3. The woodshed and basement entrance canopy are not a part of this approval. The Commissioners suggested that the applicant submit further design details of the proposed basement entrance canopy, and a different shed style that is more in keeping with the main house, prior to any further consideration by the Commission.

And with the following findings of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.
2. Because there are two existing skylights on the building the Commission believes that the addition of four more will not add a new material or design element to the roof. In addition, the style of the new skylights is almost flush with the roof and due to the height of the roof they will not be very visible from the street.
3. The Commission concluded that the incinerator chimney had no historical significance in its own right, as it was most likely added sometime in the 1940s and the brick is of a different style than that of the main house and chimneys.

Motion carried unanimously.

- F. Consideration for approval submitted by Rocky Palma to add four (4) skylights to the attic. The premises are located at 1064 Gillespie Street in the Union Triangle Historic District.**

Rocky Palma presented the application.

Mr. Palma explained that there are two apartments on the second floor of the building that each have third floor space, as well as a third-floor laundry room, all of which only have natural light from the two small windows at the front and rear of the third floor. He stated that for this reason he would like to add four skylights to the roof to allow natural light into the third floor. Commissioner Andriano asked if there was any way that adequate lighting could be established with interior lights. Mr. Palma stated that there are adequate interior lights, but he believes that the addition of natural light would significantly add to the tenants' comfort. Commissioner Wiles stated that the skylights would be much less visible if placed on the other side of the roof, which is close to the neighboring house and more difficult to see from the right of way. Commissioner Andriano agreed. Commissioner Marney stated that the last application was for skylights where two already existed, but these would be adding a new feature. Commissioner Yager stated that she understands the need for natural light and does not believe that the skylights will be very visible from the street if placed on the left-facing side of the building. The other Commissioners agreed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Marney, seconded by Commissioner Wiles, to approve the application to add four skylights to the attic as submitted with the following conditions:

1. The project will be completed within one year.
2. The skylights will be added to the left-facing side of the building and not the right-facing side, as was proposed in the application.

And with the following findings of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.
2. Because of the house's proximity to the neighboring house on the left-facing side the Commission believes that adding the skylights to this side of the attic will be significantly less obtrusive than if they were to be placed as originally proposed.

Motion carried unanimously.

- G. Consideration for approval submitted by Haley Priebe to restore and replace windows, doors, roofing, trim, and masonry, to add shutters, and to repaint the exterior of the building. The premises are located at 35 North Ferry Street in the Stockade Historic District.**

Haley Priebe and Beth Mosall, architect for the project, presented the application.

Ms. Priebe explained that her proposal is based on historic photos that she has found of the buildings. She passed copies of the photos around for the Commissioners to examine and briefly reviewed her proposal. She stated that she believes most of the wood windows can be restored, and that while she does not like the existing aluminum storefront windows in the front of the building (which were added much later and are not original) she is proposing trimming them in wood until she can afford to replace them. Ms. Priebe stated that she plans to remove the existing paint from the brick body of the building so that it will be its original color. Commissioner Andriano suggested that the flashing used should be closer to the brick color than the proposed tan, as it will seem less obtrusive. Ms. Mosall stated that as soon as the brick is uncovered, they will look for something in the same tone.

Ms. Priebe noted that she proposes to remove the flat rubber roof from the covered alley, which currently causes water to run straight in to the shed. She discussed the back patio area, and the installation of a new door at the rear of the building where there is currently a window. She explained that by searching local restoration sources she has found almost all of the original style shutters that she needs and showed the Commissioners one that she brought to the meeting for their inspection.

Commissioner Yager commended Ms. Priebe for the most thorough application she had ever seen during her service on the Commission. The other Commissioners agreed and thanked her for her efforts.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Marney, seconded by Commissioner Andriano, to approve the application to restore and replace windows, doors, roofing, trim, and masonry, to add shutters, and to repaint the exterior of the building as submitted with the following condition:

1. The project will be completed within one year.

And with the following finding of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.

Motion carried unanimously.

VI. MISCELLANEOUS

None.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Andriano, seconded by Commissioner Wiles, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.