

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MEETING
MAZZA ROOM
GREENWICH, CT
APRIL 12, 2017

MINUTES

ATTENDEES PRESENT

COMMISSIONERS: STEPHEN BISHOP – CHAIRMAN, ARIS CRIST, DARIUS TORABY,

ALTERNATES: MARTIN KAGAN, ANNIE MCGINNIS,

ABSENT: FI FI SHERIDAN, KATHRIN BROWN, MARIE WILLIAMS, SERENA BECHTEL

Mr. Bishop called meeting to order at 7:06pm.

* * *

1. SENSE OF THE COMMISSION

230 Mason Street

Owner: HB Nitkin Group

Represented by: Victor DeCicco, Senior Property Manager

Review preliminary design for new residential building

[building has historic overlay and is a contributing structure to Greenwich Avenue Historic District on NRHP]

Mr. DeCicco (representing the Nitkin Group) presented preliminary designs for a new residential building showcasing two residential levels over two parking levels.

The end result would see the back-shed of the Armory Building removed but the structure's entire front facade would be kept. The applicant wanted to stay sensitive to the Armory's design and be compatible with the surroundings. The residential units would have a ground floor entry and that a pocket-park would be installed between the new proposal and the Armory.

Material wise, the applicant did not want to match the brick but be sympathetic to the red brick of the Armory. The material would be a terra cotta that gives another texture and feel to the building. The "light" color of the proposed structure does not have a designated material yet.

Mr. Crist inquired about the residential room heights and was informed that they will be 12 feet. Mr. Crist commented that the current design has more of a relationship with the Central Fire Station than the Armory.

Mrs. Nitkin offered that in coming up with the plan, the challenge was how to deal with the parking and to have it make economic sense. Now being able to use two parking entrances gives enough turning radiuses. She further stated that in regards to the proposed structure's relationship to the Armory, an increase in height was required in order to "make it work" and be appealing to individuals living in downtown Greenwich. There are six units being proposed (all with street frontage) with three being penthouses with flat roofs. Additionally, she believes that the proposed design improves the current site that is basically parking.

Mr. Toraby felt the proposal's massing and scale created an attractive bridge between the Armory and the Central Fire Station.

Mr. Crist suggested that the fire separation wall design is a bit visually misleading and could be redesigned.

Motion to support the preliminary design as presented and have subsequent submitted designs reflect a more cohesive relationship between the proposed structure, the fire separation wall and the Armory building

Moved by Mr. Bishop

Seconded by Mr. Crist

Unanimous vote

Voting in favor: Mr. Bishop, Mr. Toraby, Mr. Crist, Mr. Kagan, Ms. McGinnis

2. CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

38 Strickland Road, Cos Cob

Owner: John Kavounas Represented by: John Kavounas

Architect: Paul Hopper, Paul F. Hopper Associates

Review plans for exterior improvements including replacing windows and slate roof, painting exterior stucco and trim, replacing walkway, re-paving driveway, changing exterior lights, adding staircases to side of house and rear deck, adding patio and extending existing deck.

Mr. Kavounas offered a brief description and location of the property being proposed and stressed that he was hoping to bring the building up to a more comfortable living environment while ensuring the preservation of the building's

architectural integrity and appropriateness of the area.

Mr. Kavounas mentioned that a number of the proposed changes are being made for code reasons and flood compliant -- all the utilities that were down in the basement are being addressed and the air conditioning units that protrude will be removed.

Mr. Kavounas further stressed that while there will be no addition to the building, the home will be painted. The slate of the roof will be replaced and with the same present style (a Vermont-weathered green-grey). The door is black and will remain black and the same hardware will be kept on the door as well. Mr. Kavounas stated that they are intending to cut out a garage door area (which had previously been there but had been closed by a previous owner) and will match #40 Strickland road. The same side door will remain but it has a unique door ringer that will remain and an overhang will be constructed with a slate roof to provide an overhang. The trim will be straightened (current one has an angle, almost like a "V" trim) to make it more "Tudor". In addition, some lights will be replaced as well as added on the side. In regards to the side door, stairs are being constructed as well as repairing the retaining wall (it needs to be secured for safety reasons) and stairs provide better access to the parked car(s). SO the lower area is no longer a 'living' area but a designated area for cars.

In addition, the deck will be extended five feet (and rebuilt) as it needs to be repaired due to current leaks. Furthermore with the deck, the railing on the deck isn't compliant and to code and are dangerous and weak and all this will be remedied. On the north side of the property, stairs will be added that come down from the front of the deck (similar to #40). All of the windows will be replaced and will have wood casing (no sizing will be changed nor the look). Flood vents will be added inside and compliant with FEMA regulations and be on three sides of the home. The trim will be straightened rather than on an angle. The driveway will be replaced completely (and is shared by #38 and #40). It will be repaved.

Mr. Crist inquired if the front door would remain. Mr. Kavounas responded that it would remain but will be painted – the knockers and the kick plate will all be the same.

Mr. Kagan asked if the bottom - underneath the deck – was being changed. Mr. Kavounas answered that a garage door was being added but a door that is currently there now is being replaced and centered and flanked by two large windows.

Mr. Crist asked if there was a reason why you are leaving off the mutton bars on the windows and doors on the east elevation? Mr. Kavounas responded that it was being done 'just for view'.

Mr. Bishop stated that currently there are two half-timbers on front but the ones that will be changed are the ones on the side? Mr. Kavounas said yes, the front half-timbering will remain as is but all the others will be changed to vertical.

Mr. Kagan asked if there was a reason why the front wouldn't be changed to vertical. Mr. Kavounas responded that the option had been explored and it will be coming up for the next application. Mr. Kavounas thought to keep it as it is (on #38) that it would look fine and would keep with the appropriateness of the historic district and this allows that the design wouldn't go overboard with the trim (currently the trim has been substituted and mismatched throughout the years with its maintenance being deferred rather than addressed (as there are presently 3 or 4 types of pieces) and now is the best time to correct the trim mismatch and be consistent).

Mr. Bishop likes the front the way it is. Mr. Toraby agrees and doesn't see the rationale for why it should be changed as it has its own distinctive character.

Mr. Toraby continued by saying that the proposed changes on the waterside (rear) of the building completely divorce it from the rest of the building. The dramatic changes being proposed to the opening and windows (lack of muttons) don't work with the current building. The changes to the lower deck are adequate as they will be in shadow. But the upper portion of the building should remain consistent with the rest of the building. As the east elevation gets an enormous amount of sunlight, not only from the sun's rays but from the reflection of the Mill Pond as well. You may be well-advised to maintain the existing fenestration.

Mr. Toraby ended by stating saying that there is a new chimney and asked about its purpose. Mr. Kavounas said it was to be in the fireplace in the new bedroom design and made of black metal. Mr. Toraby did not think the proposed chimney design belongs on the exterior. Mr. Toraby was told that the design is compliant code wise.

Mr. Bishop asked if it could be refaced. Mr. Kavounas said that it does have to go above the peak of the roofline.

Mr. Toraby asked if it was a wood burning or gas burning fireplace. Mr. Kavounas responded gas. Mr. Toraby went on to state that a gas fireplace does not have to have a chimney - it can have a direct vent and run along the trim line of the floor. Mr. Toraby welcomes the applicant's attempt to improve the building in more ways than one but he wants to keep the half timbering the way it is. He approves that the windows that are being made to be more consistent and should be carried out to the east elevation and the other improvements that are being suggested are reasonable and do not take away from the existing character of the house.

But in regards to the rear elevation, Mr. Toraby feels that the applicant has about 16-18 feet of glass and the removal of the brickwork changes the character of that elevation of the building. Mr. Toraby wants to maintain the existing fenestration all around the building and change the windows and the doors and keep the muttons where they exist and the third floor that doesn't have muttons should. The existing terrace doors need to be concentrated on so you don't lose the character of the building.

Mr. Kavounas said one of the challenges that is being faced is when the addition was built, it was not interiorly sound. Therefore, steel needs to be placed to make it structurally sound. Modifications are required to provide steel support. So steel columns and a beam across the front (which will be bricked) needs to be implemented.

Mr. Toraby said that you should try to stay with wood if possible. Mr. Kavounas said he would like to but the structural engineer hasn't advised him regarding using wood.

Mr. Kavounas asked to refocus on fenestration and said that the east side is where there is pause by the HDC especially regarding the windows. Mr. Kavounas wants more windows than what is currently there now and asked if there could be a compromise.

Mr. Bishop said that as the house's back is quite visible from the road and water, it becomes more important compared to the backs of some other historic properties. Mr. Bishop expressed his concern that he wanted the windows to match. Mr. Kavounas asked if having two windows up top with dividers the way the existing ones are but they would be 6 over 6 and not 8 over 8 and then further having the windows on either side to be the same divided windows.

Mr. Toraby stated that he felt that the applicant was completely changing the character of the rear elevation. He felt it would be best to maintain the existing fenestration of the rear, the applicant could make the center opening a terrace door, or change the other two into terrace doors, or enlarge the third door. So some changes can be employed.

Mr. Hopper stepped in and stated that the rear elevation is quirky and is not a part of the original fabric of the building. It was a later addition approved by HDC and followed the Department of the Interior's Standards that called for a separation of the old from the new. And the proposal does not try and 'trick' but to keep the house viable for today's living standards.

Motion to have the applicant resubmit design that has elimination of the chimney; have all windows specified with plans as well as new rear elevation design resubmitted to Mr. Bishop; maintain the half-timbering on the three exterior sides; solar lights to be removed from railing. Final approval to receive Certificate of Appropriateness will be based upon the approval by HDC members of new rear elevation design.

Moved by Mr. Crist

Seconded by Mr. Toraby

Voting in favor: Mr. Bishop, Mr. Toraby, Mr. Crist, Ms. McGinnis, Mr. Kagan

[alternates were asked to participate in vote]

3. CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

40 Strickland Road, Cos Cob

Owner: John Kavounas

Represented by: John Kavounas

Architect: Paul Hopper, Paul F. Hopper Associates

Review plans for exterior improvements including replacing windows and slate roof, painting exterior stucco and trim, replacing walkway, re-paving driveway, changing exterior lights, adding staircases to side of house and rear deck, adding patio and extending existing deck, adding some square footage, and adding and replacing garage doors.

Mr. Kavounas began with the proposed changes for #40 Strickland road. He identified the lights on the proposed posts. Mr. Toraby felt the light on the posts might be objectionable and should be placed on the building.

Mr. Kavounas stated that the other major change is to extend the deck out, similar to #38 – the additional square footage would mean continuing the roofline and it would overhang the existing deck – not go beyond the existing footprint. The second floor is extending 16 feet and the first floor is extending 8 feet (half the deck is being converted to living space).

Mr. Kavounas also said that stairs are being added to the side door (similar to #38) and come up to the retaining wall. The west elevation will see an addition of a powder room.

Mr. Kagan asked if the same design implementation of what is being done to the proposed fireplace on #38 also be done here and Mr. Kavounas agreed (that a direct vent replace the current proposed chimney).

Mr. Kavounas said currently there is no trim but he wants to add some trim.

Mr. Bishop asked if the applicant would be adding half timbering? Mr. Kavounas responded that currently there is very little. Mr. Bishop feels that the addition would be too busy and should not be added and that the house looks fine as is.

Mr. Kavounas said that if they were not adding any half timbering he wants to have a continuation of a horizontal piece to complete the triangle (the north side) and on the south elevation to keep the one piece going across and on east side.

Mr. Crist inquired about the gutter materials.

Mr. Kavounas responded saying that they would be a half round copper gutter.

Mr. Crist asked if the applicant will be using true stucco and Mr. Kavounas confirmed.

Mr. Kavounas described the trim as being in various states of disrepair.

Mr. Kavounas would still like to add corbels as they would enhance the home and be placed at the overhang and just below the triangle.

Additionally, the roof will be redone in the Vermont green-gray slate (as #38).

Mr. Bishop asked about the garage doors and Mr. Kavounas replied that they are to be replaced with the same materials and be divided into panels and have a window on the topside –four up and four across.

Mr. Bishop asked to discuss the rear elevation.

Mr. Toraby said that the proposed design was a completely new elevation. Mr. Kavounas said that the proposed design is consistent to #38.

Mr. Kagan inquired if the doors were French doors and Mr. Kavounas responded yes as it provides a clean look.

Several HDC members suggested that similar to #38, that a new rear elevation be resubmitted.

Motion to have the applicant resubmit design that has elimination of the chimney; have all windows specified with plans as well as new rear elevation design resubmitted to Mr. Bishop; half-timbering will be removed; implement the continuation of the main horizontal piece to complete exterior triangles on north, south and east exteriors; approval of corner pieces to be added.

Moved by Mr. Bishop

Seconded by Ms. McGinnis

Voting in favor: Mr. Bishop, Mr. Toraby, Mr. Crist, Ms. McGinnis, Mr. Kagan
[alternates were asked to participate in vote]

4. ADVISORY OPINION TO PLANNING AND ZONING

63 Church Street

Owner: Fisk Management LLC

Represented by: Neil J. Alexander, Esq., Cuddy & Fedder LLP

Architect: Richard F. Hein Architects & Assoc. PC

Review plans to convert existing 3-bedroom house in the front with a 1 -story connector to the office building in the rear into a multifamily structure with one 2-bedroom unit in the front, a covered walkway in the middle, and four 1-bedroom units in the former office space at the back of the property

Mr. Alexander presented. He stated that while the property had applied for Historic Overlay in 2005, it never happened. The property had appeared in 2014 to receive approval of plans that were submitted to Planning & Zoning. The property has in front a 3-bedroom house with a breezeway that connects to an office in the rear.

Mr. Alexander described the proposal with the front 3-bedroom structure is being proposed to become a two bedroom and in the rear, the big office building will become four 1-bedroom units. Mr. Alexander added that as there are a variety of architectural styles along Church Street with many intermingling architectural detailing, it is difficult to really attribute one named style to the building. Because of this, Mr. Alexander is proposing to 'cleaning' up the building to give it a better aesthetic.

The application is following what was approved in 2014. The footprint of the structure only changes as the porch becomes narrower and the massing is to the rear.

Mr. Hein, the architect, stated that the proposal is for a two-story structure with an attic and the proposed design decreases a small amount of mass in the front structure and the rear building proposal is a reduction in height but an increase in bulk.

Mr. Kagan inquired about parking.

Mr. Alexander said that variances were granted for parking.

Mr. Hein described that an open portico is being introduced to link the two structures. This change diminishes the mass of the building.

Mr. Bishop guided the Commission to determine the aesthetic value of the application -- does HDC approve the proposed façade changes.

Mr. Kagan asked for confirmation that demolition will occur to the two structures.

Mr. Alexander confirmed that demolition will occur down to the floor plains of the two structures.

Mr. Toraby stated that the design is attractive.

Mr. Kagan asked if the applicant would be returning.

Mr. Bishop confirmed.

Mr. Alexander stated that he hoped to get approval from HDC of the design concept to then be able to attend other regulatory agencies to receive the appropriate approvals. But he knows that a return visit to discuss detailing with HDC will be required.

Mr. Bishop acknowledged that this application is not a final one.

Mr. Toraby feels that the proposed design works.

Mr. Crist feels that the application is on the right track.

Mr. Bishop feels the details will be very crucial and he also agrees that the design is on the right path.

Motion to approve submitted design subject to applicant reappearing before the Historic District Commission to discuss architectural detailing (that include but not limited to gutters, windows, material samples and possible fencing) in keeping with the historical context of the neighborhood

Moved by Mr. Bishop

Seconded by Mr. Crist

Unanimous vote

Voting in favor: Mr. Bishop, Mr. Toraby, Mr. Crist, Mr. Kagan, Ms. McGinnis

[Ms. McGinnis departed the meeting]

MINUTES

Motion to approve minutes from February 8, 2017 meeting

Moved by Mr. Crist

Seconded by Mr. Kagan

Unanimous vote

Voting in favor: Mr. Bishop, Mr. Toraby, Mr. Crist, Mr. Kagan

DEMOLITIONS

11 Shore Acre Drive

Old Greenwich, CT

18 Grigg Street

Greenwich, CT

20 Ann Street

Old Greenwich, CT

4 Waterfall Lane
Cos Cob, CT

[note: any Greenwich resident may place a stay on a noticed demolition]. Action will be taken on placing a stay on 18 Grigg Street.

Motion to end the meeting
Moved by Mr. Kagan
Seconded by Mr. Crist

Mr. Bishop closed the meeting at 10:05 pm