

FINAL MINUTES
Regular Meeting of the
Historic District Commission of the Town of Greenwich
Wednesday, November 14, 2018, 7:00pm
Gisborne Room, Town Hall

ATTENDEES PRESENT

COMMISSIONERS: STEPHEN BISHOP – CHAIRMAN, DARIUS TORABY, FI FI SHERIDAN

ALTERNATES: MARIE WILLIAMS, ANNIE MCGINNIS, CYNTHIA SMITH

ABSENT: MARTIN KAGAN, KATHRIN BROWN, ARIS CRIST, SERENA BECHTEL

Mr. Bishop called meeting to order at 7:11pm

1. ADVISORY OPINION TO PLANNING & ZONING
169 Greenwich Avenue
Represented by Granoff Architects

Review proposed changes to existing commercial property

Andreas Stresemann, VP, Granoff Architects opened his presentation by reviewing the outstanding issues left from the October 2018 HDC meeting and how they were addressed.

One of the details that were questioned was in the CAT rendering which regarded the third story window that was not the same as the rendering. The elevation was adjusted to show the appropriate proportions of the window.

The egress windows are now changes to double-hung windows.

The next issue was to demonstrate the extension of the rear that was not shown at the last meeting. The applicant is now adding an extension to the second floor that matches the extension on the ground floor. Instead of repeating the brick, stucco is being used to match the base that currently exists and will be painted white.

Commercial mechanicals would be on the roof of the extension and then as well on the rooftop of the residential units – none of which would be visible from the street.

The parapet wall is also being extended.

Mr. Bishop inquired about the side of the building and what is to happen there?

Mr. Stresemann replied that the brick does wrap around and it is to be kept.

Mr. Toraby asked how would the red brick be treated? So the whole upper floor is to be painted? And the side view?

Stresemann said that the color façade (white) goes for about two feet around and then the red brick continues. The entire building will not be painted.

Motion to accept the application as proposed

Moved by Ms. McGinnis

Seconded by Mr. Toraby

Unanimous vote

Voting in favor: Mr. Bishop, Mr. Toraby, Ms. Sheridan, Ms. Williams, Ms. McGinnis, Ms. Smith

2. **ADVISORY OPINION TO PLANNING & ZONING**
96 and 100 Maple Avenue(96 Maple Avenue has Historic Overlay designation))
Owner: Greenwich Academy
Represented by: Bruce F. Cohen, Esq., Fogarty Cohen Russo & Nemiroff LLC
and Tim Peck, project architect

Review plans for minor exterior work and alterations

Mr. Bruce Cohen representing Greenwich Academy outlined his application stating that HDC review the application as an advisory opinion and offer comment upon a Certificate of Appropriateness request for the school to do renovations at 96 Maple Ave.

Mr. Cohen provided a brief background of the site located at 96 Maple Avenue - the property was purchased by Greenwich Academy with the purpose of converting the building from its current use which was used a multi family building that was approved in 1979 with an Historic Overlay designation (that allowed for that) and read aloud the HDC decision from 1979.

Mr. Cohen emphasized the location of 96 Maple Avenue showing 100 Maple Avenue (also owned by Greenwich Academy) and stated that 100 Maple Avenue (a single residence) would be incorporated into 96 Maple to form one lot.

The purpose of the purchase of 96 Maple Avenue is to move the pre-school facility from the main campus to its own freestanding building (which is in walking distance). This is important as the majority of children attending the pre-school are from faculty of both Brunswick and Greenwich Academy.

96 Maple Avenue is adjacent to a school, a boarding house/Inn, the Women's Club, further down is the Second Congregational Church, and across the street are two medical buildings and a four-unit condominium. The changes over the years show a mixed use but the buildings themselves have remained.

The property (which are two parcels) will be consolidated to allow for the driveway to be used with a single access (and not double access) to be able to add some parking, continue to have 100 Maple Avenue as a single use and do renovations to the historic 96 Maple Avenue building to take care of the deferred maintenance and bring forward the important architectural elements. The front lawn (which was mentioned as being important in 1979) will remain.

Tim Peck, project architect, continued with his portion of the presentation. He began stating that the two existing curb cuts would be eliminated to allow for one for a circular traffic flow and showed that there would be room at the porte-cochere for drop off and improvement to the building for better access and improvements to some site walls, staircases and other site items. By combining the parcel, it gives up more flexibility and creates more onsite parking and alleviates some of the traffic. As far as the building itself, the greatest percentage of the work is maintenance upgrades and a small bit of physical change. The first floor will be converted into the daycare. The rear of the building has a walkout. The upper two floors will remain residential with access from the rear. The front entrance and the drop off will be for the day care use. Parking would also be in the rear.

From the outside of the building from an aesthetic standpoint: cleaning and repointing of the brick, replacing the existing single pane windows with Marvin historic replacement units, the lower roofs will be replaced and updated with similar materials. The trim, dentals and cornice work will all remain and there are no plans to change those.

Mr. Peck continued saying that the Yankee gutter system's flashing is deteriorating. The building currently has a slate roof. The biggest change is to remove the existing slate roof, reflash and redo the Yankee gutters and replace the roof with an asphalt material.

Mr. Peck further added that two windows would need to be replaced with doors as required by state regulations. Those doors would be similar/in-kind to what is already on the building.

Mr. Peck continued and addressed the rear of the building, stating there is an existing shed on the overhang of the building, and we are proposing to make it the focal point of the entry of the new apartments. The site walls will be cut back to provide more light. The existing shed dormer has damage and it will be replaced with a hip dormer to match the remaining dormers on the building. The third part, which is more of a reconstruction,

is there is an existing stairway of the side porch and is steep and those stairs will be turned towards the rear of the property so as it won't be as steep.

Mr. Peck concluded that a handicap access ramp would be constructed on the front of the building. Lastly, there are not any proposed lighting changes to the outside.

Mr. Bill Kenney (landscape architect) began stating his primary objective was to maintain the landscape character of the property and achieve the programmatic of the school.

Mr. Kenney then provided a list of the existing conditions:
The large rhododendrons are substantial and anchor the left side of the building; the shade trees, the lawn and the low hedge across the front patio.

Mr. Kenney observed that the sugar maples near the street are in decline and new shade trees are being proposed to replace them in that area.

The playground will be screened with dense evergreen trees (green giant arborvitae) and are robust – they will be a similar height to the rhododendron that they are replacing (10-12 feet in height).

The existing parking will have an added handicap space and a ramp will be added to the terrace for access. Presently, there is a low hedge in front of the terrace but that hedge will be pulled forward so as to disguise the handicapped ramp. The view from the street will remain as it is today.

When you get to the northern end of the property where today you have two driveways coming in, one driveway access will remain while the other will be replanted and screened off. We will have parking here. The planting at the street will help to screen that. Lastly, to help screen what had already been approved, we are proposing to have a little evergreen hedge at the street similar to what other neighbors have. It too helps to screen the parking.

Moving to the back of the property, the proposed playground area is set to the side south and west of the area. We will be terracing that area slightly by having it set down a foot or so. There is a significant beech tree here and we are taking great care to see it is protected and retained. A hedge is also being proposed to continue around the side and back of the property. Other traditional plantings will be on the back of the building as well.

Ms. Williams stated her concern about the proposed terraces and their steps. Is that a natural slope? Mr. Kenney responded yes. About where the doors are on the sun porch, the grade from there to the street is relatively flat. That will be maintained. Then it drops off about 18 inches to where it is level and then it drops off three feet. We are working to level off that area.

Ms. Williams continued, saying will be sloping down away . . . And Mr. Kenney interrupted saying it would not be as visible and intrusive.

Ms. Williams then inquired what kinds of materials would be used as she is concerned for the safety and comfort of the young children. Mr. Kenney responded that wood chip materials will be used and is commonly used in playground area. The equipment will be relatively small and most pieces will be up front near the hedge.

Ms. Williams also expressed her concern about sound. Mr. Kenney responded that the proposed hedging and sounds from the street would offset the noise created by the children when they were outside.

Mr. Toraby asked to see the location of the exterior stairs.

Mr. Peck identified:

- 1) From the front there is a set of existing stairs that will be rebuilt.
- 2) There is a set of stairs that come up from the underside of the porte-cochere – also existing.
- 3) The patio is there currently and will be rebuilt (can't really be seen from the street)
- 4) Below the porte-cochere is a set of stairs that comes to a side porch and they will be repositioned to go out to the rear (north side) and come to a more gentler slope
- 5) And there are the steps that come out of the center of the building that go under the existing overhang that we are proposing to keep but will be rebuilt.

So the only ones that will be untouched are the ones on the side, the others will be reconstructed.

Mr. Toraby how the children were to arrive on the playground areas. Mr. Peck replied that the children exited from the rear or through one of the classroom doors on the main level into the play yard. The idea is not to have them go up and down several flights of steps to the playground.

Mr. Toraby inquired what the motivation was to change the stairs from the back.

Mr. Peck replied that currently it comes straight out from the building and is not code compliant. Presently it has ten risers and to be compliant, it should be 15-16 risers.

Mr. Toraby responded saying that the new one will have a lot more steps and does not look user friendly especially for younger people. He continued saying that the current one is ominous, as Mr. Peck was suggesting, and the revised one is steeper and has more risers.

Mr. Peck agreed that there were more steps but disagreed with the steepness.

Mr. Toraby said it was longer. Mr. Peck agreed.

Mr. Toraby asked who uses the stairs?

Mr. Peck responded primarily the teachers and was a secondary egress.

Mr. Toraby asked to see on the site plan where do they start and where do they end. Mr. Peck stated that the stairs were modified after the site plan was submitted to the HDC commissioners.

Ms. McGinnis asked if it extends beyond the building?

Mr. Peck responded yes.

Mr. Toraby then asked if there was an enlarged site plan.

Mr. Toraby viewed it and commented, saying it looks like the stairs go right into the parking lot and are steep. 16 unprotected steps with snow and ice are not very safe and are not considerate.

Mr. Peck responded that we are happy to readjust / reconfigure the stairs to have a more manageable pitch.

Ms. Sheridan how many new parking spaces?

Ms. Cronin responded that currently there are eight and there are 11 more being proposed.

Ms. Sheridan then asked if there were to be about 60 children in the day care center?

Ms. King responded saying that the children are primarily from Greenwich Academy's faculty and staff starting from 8-10 weeks and up to age 4. She continued, the hours that the daycare will be open starts at 7:15 or backing up to 7:00 for drop off purposes. The afternoon pick up is staggered as the school wrap up time is staggered. So the pickup is from 3-5:00 o'clock.

Ms. Sheridan then inquired of the months that the center would be in operation.

Ms. King responded that it would be in operation from a week before Labor Day to the first week in June. But she did remind the members that teachers would continue to live in the apartments year-round.

Mr. Peck interjected saying that the house in the rear is a single family and there won't be any change to that house. A faculty member would use it.

Mr. Toraby asked if there was any fencing at the back of the property.

Mr. Peck said yes currently there is as well as along the north property line.

Mr. Toraby asked if additional fencing would be included to secure the property line.

Mr. Peck confirmed that there would be along the playground line. Additionally, there will be a privacy fence at the south portion of the property and picket fences for safety.

Mr. Toraby wondered is that the only area where the children will be outdoors?

Mr. Peck confirmed.

Mr. Toraby said that in the morning when they arrive by car how do they circulate? So the car parks and the parents go through the doors?

Mr. Peck responded yes.

Mr. Toraby asked if there was a fence separating the site from Brunswick.

Mr. Peck pointed out the stonewall.

Mr. Toraby asked about the original terms of the historic overlay from 1979.

Mr. Cohen responded the term were that the house was recognized as historic; there was a recommendation to approve the HO, at the end there was a suggestion that was recommended to the P&Z commission that was adopted by them that the front lawn remain open but that was the only condition as such.

Mr. Toraby asked for confirmation regarding that the architectural features of the building needed to be preserved and maintained?

Mr. Cohen said subject to the language of the decision.

Mr. Toraby stated that the architectural treatment being proposed is attractive and adheres to the intent of the designation. His only comment regarded the exterior stairs' location.

Ms. Smith was concerned with the drop off. There is a concern about congestion as one year olds need to be walked in with accompaniment and that there would be car back-up.

Ms. Peck reminded that the drop-off is staggered. Ms. Smith said that if most were faculty, there is less 'staggered'.

Mr. Bishop then opened the discussion to the public.

Ed Bloom spoke:

My wife and I have lived in back of this mansion for 46 years – at 94 Maple. And we also lived at 92 Maple where we currently live (we rent out 94 Maple). I have been involved

in the town and on the P&Z Board of Appeals and the Housing Authority and my wife was on the RTM for 33 years and we believe in the neighborhood and I have to tell you and when your board met in 1979 and allowed the building to be changed into two units, we didn't object. When the sons took over the building, they tried selling it and eventually sold it to Greenwich Academy. But any new owner would have made the repairs and kept it as residential housing. Now a day care is being proposed with 60 children and 18 teachers and an administrator and they are going to park and come in and out and the service trucks will be entering and stopping and then departing. I am extremely concerned about this change and it happening now. You come in on Maple Avenue and then going to 100 Maple, the whole front yard will be taken by a large circular parking area. Can you imagine the traffic going in and out and the 18 teachers and administrators coming in and parking here – it's a goddamn nightmare. To inflict this on the neighborhood is outrageous.

They are going to tear down a 4-story building on Patterson and Maple and make it open space and then they are going to tear down the building next to it and make it parking. They don't have to tear down that second building – they can make it the day care there. There are many residences that Greenwich Academy presently owns on Patterson that can be turned into a day care for their use. Maple Avenue is a residential area and doesn't need this. It is single-family living area and as such the day care doesn't fit nor belong.

Doreen Pearson:

Maple Avenue is residential & I own three residential lots adjacent to this project. This is a residential street and there haven't been any zoning changes in probably over 60 years except to zoning regarding education. The exceptions being the Second Congregational Church, the Stanton Inn – 1940s, the Women's Club 1906. There are more than 30 residential conforming lots on Maple Avenue. We have a nightmare of traffic already and have parking lots scattered all over the neighborhood due to Brunswick and GA excess. Second Congregational is leasing parking to the schools as they have no parking. They are only doing this to increase FAR and get more parking. We are residential. When the house was granted an HO back in 1979, it was for 2 residential units and his office.

I don't see why GA can take as residential lot in a residential area and turn it into a mixed use. It's a commercial use. A daycare center for 60 children and more residential units. When the previous owner received historic overlay it was for two condominiums. There was never any enforcement of it. He had four permitted parking spaces and four in back. The value of the property is in its open space which is found in its parking. The neighborhood would prefer that the house remain completely as residential then have another burden and destroy the historic character of the other houses. It is ruining the property value of our houses.

Why won't GA put the daycare on Patterson?

Every apartment in the house was a zoning violation. There was no building permits. No special permits. There was no zoning enforcement.

Mrs. Snyder had a question about day care and wondering how this is compliant? Mr. Bishop responded that a decision in use is up to P&Z. HDC can only opine on the appropriateness of the changes in regards to the Historic Overlay designation.

Mr. Bloom – the rear of 96 Maple now has a door that goes into the basement and under this proposal, the doorway will be moved to the residential unit to put it in the back of the house and a playground will be put to the back of the house. In the 1930s, the prior owner sold off three lots and left in the back yard a small sloping space and they are going to put 4 doors there as well as the entrances to the 3 units as well as the exit. I wouldn't want children being put in a basement as a basement is a basement. And you get all this activity and architectural changes to the rear of the house. The rear downward slope effects 94 Maple and our house that slopes up, we will get not only the sight of the playing children but also their noise.

Ms. Pearson then read aloud portions of 6-109 regulations and commented that this project does none of what is offered in those regulations.

Emily Cott (sp?):

Greenwich Academy has presented an attractive site. The renovations of the building look very attractive. If new use is permitted, do you have enough handicapped access for numerous adults and children.

Mr. Peck responded yes the main daycare will be accessible and the building department ensures that state codes are followed.

Mr. Bishop then asked if the applicant would like to respond.

Ms. King stated that she wished to continue to work with the neighbors.

Mr. Cohen said that he met with neighbors and understands the impact and as such has proposed the appropriate fencing. Mr. Cohen further pointed out from the 1979 decision, "that arriving at its decision, the Commission has taken into consideration the fact that this building is not surrounded by one family housing but by a school, a boarding house (Stanton House Inn) and a Club." We are here tonight to discuss the historic nature of the building and the school wants to take care of the building and restore it by a local institution.

Ms. Pearson stated that we have never violated any zoning laws but we have never been protected from others violating zoning violations. We are well aware what a day care center is and does. I don't think we should be sandwiched between two large day care centers.

Mr. Bloom said that your mandate says that there must be 60% open space. I don't think that they meet the 60 % regulation.

Mr. Bishop thanked the audience for their comments and closed the meeting to public comment.

Historic District Commission members concentrated their comments to various concerns and commentary that included: the rear stairway that should be redesigned; possibility of incorporating a landing so stairway does not come into parking spaces; as there is a sharp turn near porte-cochere that needs to be identified and resolved.

The change of the surround to the existing structure gives a completely different type of a character - the playground is a part of that surround - the character of the site should not be so drastically altered. Usually, one does not have a playground in the front and parking.

The melding of 100 Maple Avenue into 96 Maple Avenue would cause a change to the existing site. It now has a larger space that causes a substantial change to what it already is.

The site is forced; there is not a good flow; the site does not lend itself to change: the drop off area does not provide enough space.

The landscape is onerous to the Historic Overlay.

What is going to be the implication of the original HO on the proposed merged parcel?

Mr. Bishop ended the discussion and called for a motion:

Motion to approve the proposed modifications to the fenestration and the improvements to the porches and staircases around the building with the exception of the stairs now being changed to flow east west as opposed to its current orientation of north south on the north side of the building and that they should provide samples of their materials for HDC review prior to final approval and suggest that the slate roof be restored

Moved by Mr. Toraby

Seconded by Ms. McGinnis

Voting in favor: Ms. Smith, Mr. Toraby, Mr. Bishop, Ms. Williams, Ms. Sheridan, Ms. McGinnis

Unanimous

Motion declaring that the proposed landscaping and the proposed parking are not compatible with the intended use of the originally approved HO for the two-unit residence

Moved by Ms. Sheridan

Seconded by Mr. Toraby

Voting in favor: Ms. Smith, Mr. Toraby, Mr. Bishop, Ms. Williams, Ms. Sheridan, Ms. McGinnis

Unanimous

Motion to request that if the Planning & Zoning Commission grant a change in use for 96 Maple Avenue from residential to mixed or other use, the Historic District Commission would like to render an opinion on the landscaping in regard to said change of use as well as comment upon the treatment of 100 Maple Avenue (building and grounds) while receiving clarification from Planning & Zoning for their determination of whether Historic Overlay status would be extended to 100 Maple Avenue or if the original boundaries will remain within 96 Maple Avenue.

Moved by Mr. Bishop

Seconded by Mr. Toraby

Voting in favor: Ms. Smith, Mr. Toraby, Mr. Bishop, Ms. Williams, Ms. Sheridan, Ms. McGinnis

Unanimous

DEMOLITIONS

6R Eggelsten Lane
Old Greenwich, CT

206 Stanwich road
Greenwich, CT

33 Morgan Avenue
Greenwich, CT

215 Valley road
Cos Cob, CT

73 Orchard Place
Greenwich, CT

MINUTES

Motion to approve October 17, 2018 minutes

Moved by Ms. McGinnis

Seconded by Mr. Toraby

Unanimous vote

Voting in favor: Mr. Bishop, Mr. Toraby, Ms. Williams, Ms. McGinnis, Ms. Smith

Motion to end the meeting at 10:35p.m.

Moved by Ms. McGinnis

Seconded by Mr. Bishop

Unanimous vote

Voting in favor: Mr. Bishop, Mr. Toraby, Ms. Sheridan, Ms. Williams, Ms. McGinnis,
Ms. Smith