GREENWICH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

GREENWICH PRESERVATION NETWORK

To: Ms. Margarita Alban, Chairman, and Planning and Zoning Commission Members
Katie DeLuca, Director Planning and Zoning Dept
Patrick LaRow, Asst. Director Planning and Zoning Dept

From: Greenwich Historical Society- Greenwich Preservation Network

RE: PLPZ202000311- Foundation House 124 Old Mill Road

PRESERVATION AND REPAIR OF HISTORIC SELLECK MILL

Date: MARCH 16, 2021

We thank the Commission for the opportunity to provide additional comments on this application. We thank the owner, Mimi Sternlicht, for talking to me as Chair of the Preservation Network on the issues we raised at the last hearing. It is our understanding from Ms. Sternlicht that she does not wish to provide a façade preservation easement for the Manor House because it would tie the hands of future owners of the property who might wish to develop a new residence more in keeping with today’s standards of living.

The Greenwich Preservation Network members have reviewed the applicant’s letter and photographs of existing conditions of the Selleck Mill, and we have significant concerns regarding Preservation and repair of historic Selleck Mill.

HISTORIC SELLECK MILL – PRESERVATION AND REPAIR

We are particularly concerned about the present condition of Selleck Mill, which is the second oldest mill structure in the State of Connecticut and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The mill building is in dire need of repair and maintenance as can be seen in the photos that Ms. Sternlicht has graciously provided. The tarp on the roof does not meet the intent or the requirement to “preserve] the Mill building as was existing in 1994” as stated in the Declaration of
Restrictions. Subsequent to that Declaration, a tree fell through the roof of the mill, and the owner at that time did not adequately repair or replace the roof. This neglect exposes the structure to deteriorating condition and warrants having the roof repaired as soon as possible.

The attached drawings of the Mill building by Carl Mecky in 2017 show the roof damage which still has not been repaired. Although the damage occurred during a previous ownership, it remains the present owner’s responsibility to correct that condition and make the building safe and protected from elements and further damage. (Please see the attached pictures submitted by Ms. Sternlicht showing present exterior and interior conditions of the Mill.)

We have reviewed the Declaration of Restrictions and Conservation Easements filed on the GLR in 1994 which govern this property. We request that the Commission require the owner to perform immediate appropriate repairs to restore the structure to its condition in 1994, per the Declaration of Restrictions. (See attachment.)

Further, the Preservation Network of the Greenwich Historical Society would like to exercise its authority granted in section II I (d) of the pertinent Declaration of Restrictions to visit the site to update the 2017 inspection report and to make recommendations where appropriate. As noted in the Declaration, the Greenwich Historical Society has the right of annual inspections and reports on the Mill

1 III (d) the Historical Society of the Town of Greenwich, or any successor thereto shall be authorized upon prior notice to the then owner of the Mill to make periodic annual inspections of the Mill to assure that this façade easement is being reasonably maintained to the standards herein. Any violation of this easement or the need for any required maintenance shall be reported to the then owner of the Mill who shall make the required repairs and if same are not instituted within one year, the Town of Greenwich or its designee, shall be given access to the Mill to make the required repairs.
Very truly yours

Diane W. Fox, AICP Chairman Greenwich Preservation Network

cc Greenwich Preservation Network members; Greenwich Historical Society.

Attachments

Pictures of the Interior and Exterior of the Grist Mill today


Sketches by Carl Mecky of existing conditions of exterior of the Mill 2017
here are pictures Mimi Sternlicht sent me on the repair work

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Diane,

While I think we can appreciate that she protected the building with a tarp and put in some patches, her recent repairs do not meet the requirements of the 1992 Restriction that she maintain the building to its appearance in 1992.

It is the exterior that is the focus, and I think it is important to convey to her that we need to see a restoration (not a repair) of the exterior siding and roof to its original appearance. This would be something to recognize her for and could lead to historic signage on the roadside by the preservation network. If Round Hill and others would be willing to fund restoration of the interior (or a feasibility study thereof), that would be another item to perhaps pursue with her.

Debra

(Alex Struebe also took pictures of the repairs that show how poorly the patches were done, and I have asked them if he would be willing to share them.)
Attached are the photos of the repair work Mimi Sternlicht has had done... your thoughts esp on the tarp? is this sufficient protection? also the big millstone inside is worth protecting to make sure someone doesn't take it..

the new materials on the outside- will they weather.. over time.. don't know the material.. should we ask?

Interior floor studs? new why?

----- Forwarded Message -----
From: Mimi Sternlicht <mimi@bread-ventures.com>
To: diane fox <dfox0406@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Saturday, February 27, 2021, 2:27:57 PM EST
Subject: Fwd: Photos of 124 grist mill

mimi@bread-ventures.com
203.912.5303

Begin forwarded message:

Good morning Diane!
Here are some photos I took this morning.
As you can see the new tarps protect the roof and prevent future inside water damage..and we have added new boards to the sides as well.
Unfortunately the inside is a wreck..I will continue to patch holes where light/elements are getting in..all in an effort to stabilize structure and prevent further decay.
Thanks for chatting last night!
Warmly
This pro bono assessment preliminarily undertaken for the Greenwich Historical Society and Town of Greenwich by Carl Mecky addresses only existing conditions of the mill structure as of November 6, 2017. Joining the site inspection were Eric Brower, Vice Chairman of the Conservation Commission; Diane Fox, Chairman of the Greenwich Preservation Network; and Debra Mecky, Executive Director of the Greenwich Historical Society.

Wood-framed-and-sided mill structure is sited about 15 feet off the south side of Old Mill Road. Gate access in chain-link fence along roadway is the only entry (other than through a path at the back of the property). No immediate parking access exists in proximity to the mill. State-owned property abuts building on east side.

Current and noticeable lack of building maintenance is readily apparent with trees fallen on north façade and on the roof. The rear (south) shed roof portion of the building has deteriorated with nearly half of this roof fallen-in, leaving the interior open to further weather damage. Roof and floor rafters are missing from this area of the shed roof, although they may be stacked in the piles of wood stored inside. Much façade trim work is deteriorated or missing.

Wood clapboard siding has been sporadically restored or replaced in certain facade areas providing some weather protection. Tall brush continues to grow right up to the façade providing continuing summer time moisture deterioration and preventing air circulation. Window openings have not been boarded up, thus allowing at least some air circulation. Yet much siding is still missing or deteriorated around the building in spite of some previous restoration attempts. Some previously-installed structural cross bracing has been installed. Roof rafters have not been examined for this preliminary assessment but should be checked for cracks, jointures, bearing point deterioration, etc. Bearing stability for the large structure members should also be verified. Roof structure and shingles should be carefully checked for rotting underlayment sleepers. Portions of
cross rafter sleepers may have to be replaced together with rotting wood shingles. A shingle preservative should be applied for weather protection.

Wall bearing sills, in particular, should be closely examined as several are in the last stages of deterioration and should be replaced. Some are already rotted through. These sills have been supporting the exterior stud walls and roof structural loading. Fallen timber is apparent throughout the building with some previous attempts to separate fallen members and stack under existing roof.

The interior staircase is deteriorated and has fallen, barely hanging by one corner of the stringer. As much of the rear shed roof is now missing, and the floor structure under it also gone, stored floor joists should also be investigated for replacement with these existing beams. Many of the floor joists are still in place but require flooring boards.

All basic structure members should be cheeked for stability, including roof rafters. Existing standard shoring and bracing previously installed must be examined for stability. Some bracing may have to be left in place.

Wood members fallen into the lower water raceway should be removed to prevent ponding under the building. Portions of the underground turbine appear to be still in place but submerged. Existing turbine points should be carefully stored. The cast-iron water supply pipe running into the basement turbine area is badly broken. Structural stone foundation walls appear intact and in stable condition, although the retaining wall at the basement level between original mill and shed roof area should be further inspected for water damage.
From: Diane Fox <dfox0406@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Tuesday, March 16, 2021 9:40 AM
To: LaRow, Patrick; DeLuca, Katie
Subject: Picture of old mill from the past

[EXTERNAL]

Please put this into the file and send to commission. This is the old mill taken from google in the past probably around 1994.

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the Town email system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you have verified the sender and know the content is safe.

Sent from my iPhone