

Draft Minutes

TOWN OF GUILFORD  
Historic District Commission  
Special Meeting Minutes – 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2019

A special meeting of the Historic District Commission was held on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2019 at 5:15p.m. in the Guilford Community Center with Chairman Randall McCartney presiding.

Present: Teresa Buchanan, John Cunningham, Randall McCartney, Ann Street and Alternate Michael Mancini. Also present special permit applicant Michelle Laudano. Excused: Reno Migani and Alternate Michael Sulzbach.

The meeting was called to order at 5:17p.m.

**Public Forum:** There were no members of the public present.

**18 Graves Avenue, Assessor's Map 40, Lot 18 – informal review of special permit application to convert existing vacant industrial building to a dwelling with two residential units:** Mr. McCartney said today's meeting was an informal review in response to an email which he had received from Zoning Enforcement Officer Erin Mannix (ZEO). Ms. Mannix said several neighbors on Graves Avenue had made a written request that applicant Michelle Laudano meet with the Historic District Commission for suggestions on how to make the rear building improvements more harmonious with the historic character of the neighborhood. Although this property abuts the historic district but is not within the district, Ms. Laudano was willing to meet with the Commission even though it had no jurisdiction. Mr. McCartney noted that under the Certified Local Government program (CLG) the Commission could give informal advice on buildings.

Ms. Street stated that CLG was developed under the National Preservation Act and it created situations where preservation could be administered locally. She briefly reviewed the National Register Districts in Guilford and what area they covered. Ms. Street said there was a difference between CLG and Historic District Commission (HDC) reviews. In an HDC review the Commission discussed applications among its members and agreed whether or not to approve them. Under CLG a report could be created that was more detailed. This document would be intended to convey all of the discussion that took place and to explain it all which was not done by HDC.

Ms. Laudano stated that there were no changes to the footprint of the building. She said she would like to address aesthetics by removing very old asphalt shingles on the exterior and exposing the original siding on the building. Ms. Laudano said she had taken an original photograph of the building and then superimposed her vision on top. The driveway is 35ft. long and the side next to the driveway will be grass. There will be a two-car garage in tandem. The second apartment will be upstairs in what is currently a storage building. On the ground floor the portion to the right will be the first apartment. There will be a common area in the rear. The building is 60ft. deep. New windows and doors will be installed.

The Commission discussed the following:-

- Ms. Street asked if the egress would be legal because it did not go directly to the outside. Ms. Laudano replied that it had been suggested by the ZEO.
- Mr. Cunningham asked how tall the existing garage doors were. Ms. Laudano replied 12ft. high, noting that one door was 12ft. wide and the other 10ft. wide.
- Ms. Laudano added that she was hoping to put a pergola somewhere, and add a balcony and window boxes. The pergola would have to be free-standing and PZC was not in favor of a balcony.
- Ms. Buchanan asked if smaller garage doors had been considered. Ms. Laudano replied that they had always been that large. Mr. Cunningham pointed out that they were taller than a normal garage door, and that in terms of scale they looked like half the size of the building.
- Ms. Buchanan said since a change of use was being applied for she felt the building should look more industrial.
- Ms. Street stated that she liked the industrial character of the building and felt it should be more barn/carriage house/industrial rather than trying to make it into a cottage. The opening on the second floor could have something that looked as though it might slide across but with windows to let in light.
- Mr. McCartney mentioned the carriage house with an apartment behind 200 Whitfield Street.
- Ms. Street recommended celebrating the fact this was an original barn. Ms. Laudano pointed out that the garage was not a barn. Ms. Street said to celebrate what it once was relative to the front house, to preserve the context.
- Mr. Cunningham expressed concern about the turning space, etc., for backing out of the garage and recommended a site plan. Ms. Laudano replied that she had waived the requirement for a professional site plan.
- Mr. Cunningham added that a light plan done by a professional should be created for the Town's records.
- Mr. Cunningham suggested locating the septic system under the driveway so there would be more flexibility with the green spaces. He said again that he was concerned with how the site would work once all the buildings were occupied and that this would need to be thought out because the site was tight.
- Ms. Buchanan said she personally thought the bottom of the building looked like a garage but the top looked residential and she felt the whole building should tie in together as one so it all looked like a garage. If not then it should all be made to look residential with the garage door size reduced so they looked more residential.
- Ms. Street said she personally would like to keep the industrial barn-like language. She felt the oversized doors could be painted in a darker color like the siding so they did not overwhelm the building – a more tone on tone palette. The opening on the second floor could be developed so it opened with a railing inside the barn doors. Ms. Street said one would not want to open these doors and see white so there should be a dark window sash.

- Ms. Laudano said the building was on 4ft. of cinder block and asked if a façade would be required. Mr. McCartney said no.
- Ms. Street felt it would be worth the effort and expense to center the access door at ground level. Mr. McCartney asked if Ms. Laudano would be opposed to this but she replied no.
- Ms. Street felt the lower portion to the north could look more like a cottage and be re-sided with clapboard or shingle referencing the main house.

In conclusion the Commission agreed to write a letter based on the above-mentioned discussion and also stating that it supported the Change In Use request and the historical importance of the Sears Catalogue house which was the main structure on the property.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Katharine Stewart  
Recording Secretary