

Draft Minutes

TOWN OF GUILFORD Historic District Commission Minutes – 15th April, 2020

The Historic District Commission held a virtual public hearing and regular meeting on Wednesday 15th April, 2020 at 7:00p.m. with Chairman Randall McCartney presiding.

Present: John Cunningham, Randall McCartney, Reno Migani, Ann Street and Alternate Michael Mancini. Teresa Buchanan joined the meeting in progress (7:30p.m.). Absent: Alternate Michael Sulzbach.

PUBLIC HEARING

The meeting was called to order at 7:03p.m. Mr. McCartney gave brief guidelines about the meeting and then read the legal call of the meeting. Alternate Mancini was appointed to act.

The Commission agreed to change the order of the agenda to take Application #828 first.

#828 - Kaye Zuckerman, to remove and replace walkway on north side of driveway on property located at 15 South Fair Street, Assessor's Map 32, Lot 70: Peter Wuerth stated that he was representing Dr. Zuckerman. He said his client wished to replace the existing cement walkway to her front steps with used brick from her mother's house. The cement walkway would be removed and crushed stone would be installed with the used brick on top. Ms. Street queried the brick as there were different kinds of brick (walkway and chimney), some of which would not be suitable for a walkway. Mr. Wuerth replied that it was chimney brick which had been used in a walkway at his client's mother's house. He added that it would be set on stone so it would drain and would be held together with a grout with staggered joints. Ms. Street asked if the long side of the brick would be parallel to the long side of the walk. Mr. Wuerth replied yes. He added that work would be done in three phases and this was phase one. Ms. Street noted that bricks were not slip resistant and she felt they would deteriorate over time. Mr. Wuerth replied that they would be sealed with a polymer seal. He said he had advised his client against brick but they were sentimental to her. Mr. Cunningham said brick was kiln dried so it was not really used for walkways but that he had used it before. He liked that the brick would have a crushed stone base. Mr. Cunningham suggested to not install the polymer right away. He felt the brick should be allowed to settle for a few years and any gaps to fill up. He also noted that the polymer would need to be replaced every few years. Mr. Wuerth asked if it would be acceptable to add a raised area for a planter on the east side of the property. Ms. Street felt there could be a gutter issue if it carried down into the little bed causing problems with drainage. Mr. Wuerth replied that the walkway would be pitched and he would have to look at the planter area. Ms. Street was concerned that if there was a solid wall and the drainage field had been raised by the new planter and ringed in, water could not run out on the driveway. Mr. Wuerth said he would check this with the landscaper. No-one spoke for or against the application.

#827 – Matthew Scialabba, to remove/replace windows, doors, lights, gutters and siding on front structure, and replacement and new doors/windows on first floor rear section, all on property located at 87 State Street, Assessor’s Map 47, Lot 30: Reno Migani recused himself and said he was representing Matthew Scialabba. He explained that there was a dental office on the first floor at the front but now the whole building was being turned into a residential use. An existing upstairs apartment will remain but the applicant will be moving downstairs using the front and rear areas. There is a mixture of aluminum and vinyl siding. The intent is to renovate the entire downstairs area and use the rear for the main living space. There is a 1970’s addition in the back parking lot and an existing shared driveway. Mr. Migani showed a simple site plan saying the driveway would be left in place and repaired, and the large parking lot in the rear would be removed. He then showed a floor plan noting that the side door would be used as the primary entrance. Elevations were also shown. Mr. Migani said the aluminum siding on the front would be removed and he thought the siding underneath could be patched and repaired as required. Currently siding is 4” to the weather and he would like to increase this to 8”. This is consistent with other properties on State Street. All the windows will be replaced using the existing openings (Marvin Integrity 2 over 2)). On the south side Mr. Migani said he would keep the easternmost window, would replace the door with a window and remove the pressure-treated stoop. He said he would like to use a darker color of siding at the rear in order to emphasize the front of the house from the street level. Roofing will remain. Front door and its entablature will be replaced. On the front of the house gutters will be replaced in-kind. Mr. Migani noted that he did not have a lighting fixture chosen yet for the front door. At present there was one railing on the front porch and Mr. Migani said he would like to have two railings and to cover the existing concrete steps with bluestone treads.

Rear of back building and east elevation: The entire upper level will remain untouched. On the lower level will be large Marvin Integrity windows and vertical board and siding with charred wood finish. There will be planting along the back. The bathroom window will be replaced with a larger one. Mr. Migani showed a rendering of the color scheme with the front being white and the rear a grayish-blue tone – as dark as possible. Ms. Street queried the roof color saying it should not be so light that it looked like it was “flying away”. Ms. Buchanan asked about the siding on the front of the house. Mr. Migani replied that there was probably 4” clapboard under the aluminum. Cost may cause repair in-kind but Mr. Migani said he hoped to remove and replace it and was looking at a composite material – 8”. Ms. Street felt a wide clapboard would work against what this house was trying to be. Mr. Migani asked about the 2 over 2 windows. Mr. Cunningham replied that he liked them. He asked if the front stoop was precast concrete and Mr. Migani replied yes. Mr. Cunningham said it would be very hard to top this with bluestone because of the beveled edges on the concrete. He said one could build it wider and encase it. At the front of the house Mr. Migani said he would remove the brick on either side of the walkway and replace this with grass. Ms. Buchanan asked if the existing front door would remain. Mr. Migani replied no, that it would be replaced with something simple and showed a picture of the proposed style. Mr. McCartney queried skylights. Mr. Migani replied there would be one above the bathroom and a second in a separate location. Ms. Street felt the 2 over 2 windows had more of a Victorian reference and were not as classical as this house. From a visual point of view she felt 6 over 6 or 8 over 6 would be better. Mr. Migani replied

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that he was trying to let in as much light as possible but could discuss this with his client. Ms. Street said when one put in a bigger element one was disrupting the hierarchy of the proportions. Mr. Mancini was in favor of the 2 over 2 windows. No-one spoke for or against the application.

#829 - NeighborWorks New Horizon, to construct four (4) dwelling units on property located at 45 Stone House Lane, Assessor's Map 33, Lot 15:

Architect Karin Patriquin introduced herself and gave a brief history of the project. In 2015 a committee was tasked with looking at needs for affordable housing and in 2018 she was hired to look at the feasibility of this property which was owned by the Town of Guilford. In 2019 there was an RFQ from the Town for a development team. She said she had officially been looking at the property since earlier this year after the Town voted to use the property for affordable housing. Ms. Patriquin showed an aerial view of the property which included old and new views. In the past there were numerous buildings in existence but now only the Guilford Center for Children (GCC) and the Guilford Food Bank were left. It was felt the best access to the property was to share the driveway with GCC. Ms. Patriquin showed photographs of adjacent buildings along with historic fronts and doors of houses in Guilford. She showed a site plan which she said had quite a few restrictions such as designated wetlands with a 100ft. review area and a landfill area which could not be built on. Ms. Patriquin mentioned that the housing units had been moved apart to allow for fire truck access, at the request of the Fire Department. She stated that there were public and private sides to the buildings. The private side would overlook meadows and a gathering area. There may be a solar array to help with utilities.

Documents were shown of site sections showing GCC, drawings of the public side of the buildings with 6 over 6 windows, and the private side of the buildings with balconies and slightly larger windows and a less formal feel. Ms. Patriquin said one of the conditions of obtaining funding was to build to high performance standards and she was pursuing passive construction standards. For example windows would be triple pane. As a result of this mechanicals could be a very small element and not visible. Materials are fiber cement Hardieboard siding and fiberglass triple pane windows with simulated divided lights. Ms. Patriquin said there was a chance, especially with a six over six, that they may have external grids, as opposed to fully simulated divided lights, again for the performance of the window but this was not yet decided. She also mentioned that she was early in the stage of going through all the regulatory approvals so there still was likely to be some massaging of various design elements and also bidding for price and availability but that she would come back to the Commission for any major changes. Roof will be asphalt shingle. Windows will be 6 over 6 and in some areas 2 over 2 casement windows, not true double hung, again for efficiency. Cut sheets for doors were included in the application. Ms. Patriquin showed the floor plan. Referring to the windows Ms. Street asked if they were being calculated as double-hung so that the mid rail would be wider. Ms. Patriquin replied that she was looking to see if there was a possibility to do that. That would be a preference. However, she said not that many triple pane windows were fabricated in the US and the European ones tended to be very expensive so there was not a lot of choice. Referring to the buildings Ms. Patriquin said they were articulated so that they felt like separate volumes and not

one gigantic rectangle. Some of the roof lines were rotated so there was some variation. Height measured from the first floor is 27' 8" – 31'6".

A rendering was shown and Ms. Patriquin said she was proposing trees for privacy from GCC. Ms. Street asked what the distance was from GCC to the corner of the building. Ms. Patriquin estimated 15 feet. She reviewed the public views on the property and mentioned that the grade had not yet been looked at so there could be changes to the foundation. Also, there was no landscape plan yet. Ms. Patriquin reviewed cut sheets noting that siding would have a 4" – 6" exposure, insulated doors and railings would have a matte finish. Lighting on the buildings was undecided. Parking lot lights will be on poles kept as low as possible, and in a warm color.

Mr. Migani stated that the project had come a long way since the initial presentation and he thanked Ms. Patriquin for the amount of detail that she had provided. He said the application was a unique opportunity for the district, because it was not often that the Commission had new construction. Throughout the Commission's history its charge was not to create and maintain a snapshot in time but to review and observe architecture and the built environment and how that complemented and did not compete with the existing context. This was an interesting site with a new barn structure and the proposed housing nestled in with some 18th and 19th century homes. Mr. Migani felt it would be key to look at lighting - the site lighting and the fixtures, lumens, candles, cut offs, and also fencing. He said it was a nice dark nestled area and security concerns would have to be dealt with, but it would be basically a light hotspot in a quiet portion of the district. He added that it was impressive that the applicant was going with a passive house and that there were such high quality materials.

Ms. Street expressed concern that the architectural features of the buildings which would bring the Commission to approve the project were the ones that were most vulnerable when it came to meeting a budget. She added that Ms. Patriquin had said she would not be in a final design phase for seven months and if funding was not obtained in the first round she would have to go back for a second round so 18 months could go by. Ms. Street asked at what point did the Commission feel it had a design that was final enough to approve and be relatively confident that it would not be changed. Ms. Patriquin replied that perhaps the Commission could list what it still needed beyond the level of detail already provided tonight. She added that it was key to have a Certificate of Appropriateness when competing in the first round of funding. The Commission had a lengthy discussion on how best to proceed on either approving or continuing this application. Mr. Migani pointed out that since a formal application had been filed the Commission would have to rule on it by June 18, 2020. He suggested that the application could be approved with the stipulation that any changes come back for review. Ms. Buchanan asked if a list of changes that would need to be reviewed could be provided. Ms. Street objected saying anything not included on a list would fall through the cracks. She again said she was concerned that by the time the project went through all the rest of the required approvals it would not look like tonight's proposal, plus there were still items which Ms. Patriquin had said were not finalized. She added that if the Commission was part of the conversation at the time changes were being made, it would be much more likely to be able to have some serious input into

what the changes were. Another concern was that costs could drive changes which the Commission could not overrule because of budgetary restrictions.

Mr. McCartney asked if anyone wished to speak for or against the application.

IN FAVOR: Robert Charney, 122 White Birch Drive, Guilford, CT 06437, stated that he wished to compliment Ms. Patriquin on the thoroughness of her presentation. He said he served on the Guilford Design Review Committee but had never attended a Historic District Commission meeting before and was impressed by it. He said it was his understanding with regard to review of the rear of the buildings that the Town had actually voted to transfer the property to the developer for \$1 so that it was in fact no longer town property. Andrew Martelli, NeighborWorks New Horizons (NWNH), said he was currently working with the Town for a subdivision application for the property where three specific lots would be created. Geotechnical work needs to be done, then the final surveying of the site but that work has not started yet. Once that work started and the actual subdivision was approved and recorded, then the property would be transferred to NWNH. Mr. Charney suggested the Commission should review the details of the roof edges and overhangs. He felt the thickness of the edge added to the character of the building. Mr. Charney said he had also been concerned about the height of these buildings, particularly when viewed in what was now a very nice gap when you were going down Old Whitfield and Whitfield Street at the split, where the sidewalk was at the triangle. These buildings, not being really any higher than existing, suggested that that open view would be maintained in general. Mr. Charney said he had expressed concern at a town meeting that too many buildings were being put on the property. However, it appeared that the number of units had been diminished a little bit so the building scale had come down a little bit and the footprints were broken up into the various masses so he applauded the direction the project was going in. Mr. Charney felt the muted colors worked best – one saw grays and browns and tans, and little bit of white and little bit of red. In conclusion with regard to the Commission’s concern about changes to the project driven by budgetary concerns, he felt it was the responsibility of the pre-construction advisors to constantly advise the owner and the architect about where costs were going so that theoretically in three months, there should not be any surprises. He thought the purview of the remaining regulatory agencies would probably have much less to do with the building form, the building look and their position on the site.

OPPOSED: No-one spoke in opposition.

The public hearing was closed at 9:00p.m. and was followed immediately by the virtual regular meeting.

REGULAR MEETING

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Cunningham made a motion to accept the Minutes of 19th February, 2020. Ms. Street seconded the motion and it was carried with 5 votes in favor. Mr. Migani abstained since he was not present at the February meeting.

Deliberation of Public Hearing Items:**#828 - Kave Zuckerman, to remove and replace walkway on north side of driveway on property located at 15 South Fair Street, Assessor's Map 32, Lot 70:**

Mr. Cunningham made a motion, seconded by Ms. Street, to approve this application as submitted. Subcommittee appointed is John Cunningham. The motion to approve was carried with Cunningham, Migani, Street and Mancini voting in favor. Ms. Buchanan did not vote on this application as she was not present for this portion of the public hearing.

#827 – Matthew Scialabba, to remove/replace windows, doors, lights, gutters and siding on front structure, and replacement and new doors/windows on first floor rear section, all on property located at 87 State Street, Assessor's Map 47, Lot 30:

Mr. Cunningham liked the separation between the front and rear buildings and said he was not concerned about the color changes. However, he said precast concrete step units were very difficult to veneer, and he liked the 2 over 2 window detail rather than 6 over 6. Ms. Street felt a nice job had been done with a difficult building. She thought the proportions of the siding and grills on the windows were key to the design of the front building and that the windows should be more than 2 over 2 and the siding reveal should not be over 6". Windows and clapboard should be a smaller scale. Ms. Buchanan agreed that the size of the clapboard should be 4" or 5" to be more in proportion and she was not as concerned about the windows. She agreed with Mr. Cunningham about the concrete landing at the front. Mr. Cunningham felt 8" was a bit much and recommended 5"-6". Ms. Buchanan thought the existing front handrail seemed rather large for the front door and was concerned that the second handrail addition would be the same size. By a majority vote it was agreed that the clapboard reveal should be 4" – 6" and the windows should be 6 over 6. Ms. Street made a motion, seconded by Mr. Cunningham, to approve the application as submitted with the following stipulations: 1) The clapboard reveal on the front of the building is to be no more than 4"-6". 2) windows are to be 6 over 6. 3) The front porch stoop is to remain plain concrete without a bluestone veneer. 4) The following items must be reviewed with and approved by the subcommittee prior to purchase and installation: a) skylights. b) final design of railings on front porch stoop. c) exterior light fixtures on front door. 4) Subcommittee appointed is Teresa Buchanan. The motion to approve was carried unanimously with Buchanan, Cunningham, Street and Mancini voting in favor. Mr. Migani recused himself and did not take part in the discussion or vote on this application.

#829 - NeighborWorks New Horizon, to construct four (4) dwelling units on property located at 45 Stone House Lane, Assessor's Map 33, Lot 15:

During discussion Ms. Buchanan said she thought the project had come a long way. The first iteration had felt much more commercial and this felt much more residential with the residential details that had been added to it. She wondered about there being only one front entrance to the buildings and felt this was unusual on large buildings and that it might look strange. Ms. Street pointed out that there were French doors on the rear patios which would be a second means of egress. Mr. Migani noted that one saw the buildings obliquely, not with a strong frontal visual. Ms. Street suggested the Commission should probably discuss the whole issue of visibility and the visibility of the rear side and whether the Commission was going to

claim jurisdiction on those facades. She felt the Commission should either approve the whole design or not approve the whole design rather than ruling on segments of it, that the Commission should review the entire envelope of the building. Mr. McCartney agreed, adding that he wanted to echo earlier comments that he thought the current design was a huge improvement in the scope and scale and size, and that it worked well for the site. He then said there was an application on the table and the question was did the Commission have enough information tonight to make a decision on the application and did it feel comfortable going forward understanding that both the client and the Zoning Enforcement officer understood that if there were any changes that they would have to come back to the Commission. Ms. Street mentioned needing details on grade resolution on the garden side. Depending on how the ground fell away there could be a fairly high foundation on that side. She thanked Ms. Patriquin for trying to make a building at grade that fitted in with buildings in a historic district saying that it was quite a good effort. The hardest part of making handicap accessible buildings was to not make them look like they were squashed down into the dirt and Ms. Street felt this proposal was really good. Regarding purview Mr. McCartney said looking from the parking lot into the back from between building C and B, you would see the back side of the building as it dropped off grade but one would not necessarily see the backside of C and D so part of it was viewable and you could make the argument for reviewing the whole. Ms. Street noted that there might be visibility from the second floor of the train station. Mr. Migani agreed with viewing the buildings in their totality. He thought a lot of things could be down to a landscape plan and that he did not see any major requirements or changes on the building's forms or general structure or aesthetic and that issues could be addressed with a landscape plan. Ms. Street said she would like to see more trim details and elevation detail for the garden side.

Going forward Ms. Street said the Commission could write a letter of support for the project articulating what it liked about the buildings but saying approval was tabled pending submission of final details on various issues. She felt that once the Commission granted approval it sort of removed itself from further discussions. Mr. Migani was in favor of keeping the project moving forward and not making the final decision at this time. He thought the Commission would be better served absorbing as much information as possible to make a holistic informed decision. He felt this was only going to help the applicant move forward. The letter should say that once the Commission made a final decision if there were any other changes they needed to come in front of the Commission for review. Mr. Migani made a motion to continue the application and ask the applicant to provide the following information:-

- Large scale details of the roof rakes, eave profiles, and any other trim details.
- All final building elevations including the "garden side" of the buildings.
- Detailed site plan including plantings, grading, fencing, hardscaped pathways and parking areas, and site lighting (building, pathways and parking lot).
- Solar panel installation location and details.

Ms. Street seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously with Buchanan, Cunningham, Migani, Street and Mancini voting in favor.

Chairman’s Report: Mr. McCartney said he had sent Commission members proposed changes to the Certificate of Appropriateness application form and new solar guidelines which he had drafted. He said if there were no objections he would move forward and have these documents posted on the Town’s web site. No objections were raised.

Approval of Bills: Ms. Buchanan made a motion to approve the following bills: Shore Publishing, legal notices for \$32 (2/19/20) & \$41 (3/17/20); National Alliance of Preservation Commissions, membership renewal \$100; W. B. Mason, rubber address stamp, \$23.03; Katharine Stewart, secretarial services. Ms. Street seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

Due to the late hour the rest of the agenda was tabled.

Mr. Mancini made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:50p.m. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

The next meeting of the Historic District Commission will be held on Wednesday 20th May, 2020 at 7:00p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Katharine Stewart
Recording Secretary