

TOWN OF GUILFORD
Historic District Commission
Minutes – 19th August, 2015

A public hearing and regular meeting of the Historic District Commission was held on Wednesday 19th August, 2015 at 7:00p.m. in the Town Hall with Chairman William Thompson presiding.

Present: John Cunningham, Reno Migani, Susanna Smith and William Thompson. Excused: Randall McCartney and Alternate Michael Sulzbach.

PUBLIC HEARING

The meeting was called to order at 7:00p.m. Mr. Migani read the legal call of the meeting.

#717 - Susan Balestracci and Gary W. Parrington, for exterior alterations including reroofing, replacing two (2) picture windows, installing a hot tub, a gas meter and a possible solar installation, all on property located at 22 South Fair Street, Assessor's Map 32, Lot 52 (continued from 7/15/15): Mr. Thompson recused himself because he was an adjacent neighbor. Present were Gary Parrington and Susan Balestracci. Mr. Parrington stated that he had prepared a packet of the materials requested by the Commission (Exhibit #717-1) as follows:- 1) A to scale elevation drawing of the south side showing the window design and a catalogue cut for the proposed windows. Mr. Thompson asked if he would be using vinyl siding and Mr. Parrington replied yes. He also said he wished to point out a vent which was being used instead of the stack which had been for a gas stove inside. 2) A site plan showing the location for the hot tub and its specifications (70"W x 80"L x 38"H, including the cover). Mr. Parrington said the hot tub would be set on ground level not on a platform. Screening material was illustrated in the photographs. Lattice will be 8'W x 5' 7"H. The proposed location is 50ft. further back in the yard. Mr. Cunningham queried the location of the lattice. Mr. Parrington replied between the hot tub and a large, existing tree. 3) Photographs of the views from the public street or way. In addition Mr. Parrington said he wished to withdraw the request for reroofing and the solar panel installation. Mr. Thompson asked if the new windows would have the same lite design as existing. Mr. Parrington replied yes, 6 over 6. Mr. Thompson asked if they would be SDL. Mr. Parrington replied that the dividers would be permanently fixed between the glass. Mr. Thompson noted that the house had been resided before the formation of the historic district and while the proposed materials might not be what the Commission would approve now, this work would tie in with the rest of the house. Mr. Parrington mentioned that the existing gas meter was flush to the house. Mr. Migani queried new lighting. Mr. Parrington replied that there would be none. He said he and his wife had been in favor of the formation of the historic district and that they wished to bring the property up to be a magnificent part of the neighborhood. Mr. Cunningham asked how the location for the hot tub had been chosen. Mr. Parrington replied that it was located so that in the middle of winter he would not have to shovel a lot of snow to get to it but at the same time he did not wish it to be the focal point of the view from inside his house. No-one spoke for or against the application. Later, during the regular meeting, during discussion Mr. Migani said that while the Commission might not have approved the windows now, because the style pre-dated the historic district and matched existing it was appropriate. Mr. Migani made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Smith, to approve the application

with the following stipulations: 1) The applicant withdrew the request to reroof and to install solar panels. 2) No exterior lighting was requested or approved. If, in the future, exterior lighting is required it must be reviewed with and approved by the subcommittee prior to purchase and installation. 3) Subcommittee appointed is Randall McCartney. The motion to approve was carried unanimously with Cunningham, Migani and Smith voting in favor. Mr. Thompson recused himself and did not take part in the discussion or vote on this application because he was an adjacent neighbor.

#718 - 66 High Street Guilford LLC, to construct new Whitfield, Leete and Chittenden condominium buildings at 66 High Street, Assessor's Map 32, Lot 60: Present were project manager Ron Nault, property co-owner Ken Horton and architect Robert Grzywacz. Mr. Nault stated that the project had received full approval from the neighbors and downtown merchants as well as PZC. He said he had listened to the Commission's earlier comments and had received approval from the Commission for the first phase of the marsh walk and mill building rehabilitation. Mr. Nault noted that he was working on finalizing the details for this phase and had now returned to seek approval for the three new buildings.

Mr. Grzywacz said he had submitted a new packet including elevations, floor plan, site plan, renderings, etc. He explained that in general the views of the buildings were limited and the closest (Chittenden) building was 300ft. back and framed by the existing mill building, adjacent houses and extensive plantings. Mr. Grzywacz showed the front elevation, noting that he had listened to the Commission's earlier comments and responded to these. As a result the balustrades on the porches had been simplified and were now square. The balustrade at the front of the building has been removed because it was possible to put the mechanicals at the back of the building. At the most one would just receive a glancing view of this. In the middle of the building the window pattern has been regularized so they line up. Materials will be the same as for the mill building – Hardiplank siding, either architectural slate or asphalt shingles, depending on cost, brick cladding on the foundation – not much of which will be visible. Mr. Grzywacz showed a rendering to illustrate the height of the new buildings versus the mill building. Mr. Thompson asked what the height was. Mr. Grzywacz replied 60ft. to the ridge of the roof. Mr. Thompson queried the rectangle of the unit. Mr. Grzywacz replied approximately 100ft. x 105ft. Mr. Thompson asked about the primary eave height. Mr. Grzywacz replied from floor level 24' 6", from grade at the front of the building add 3ft., and from the walkway add 7ft. Mr. Nault added that with the brick courtyard and walkway one would not be viewing a blank wall. Mr. Grzywacz stated that the exposure on the siding would be 7" up to the main area and then 6" above the cornice line. Mr. Thompson asked if the site plan was finalized. Mr. Grzywacz replied that he had not formally submitted the planting plan. Mr. Cunningham said that on the site plan he would like to see both existing and proposed elevations. Mr. Migani said he had thought the Commission was going to look at the phase I site plan in June and the area around the mill building. Mr. Nault said everything had been submitted to PZC and he thought this had all been referred to the Commission. To be clear Mr. Thompson said that tonight was the first time that documents were being reviewed at a regulatory level by the Commission and that the Commission had not received anything from PZC. Mr. Nault said the planting plan was unchanged as was the hardscape and parking, adding that any changes would be minor in nature. Mr. Migani said he appreciated that the design had been simplified and he noted that the siding exposure had been brought down to 7" which he felt broke down the scale, that the middle of the

façade had been simplified, the widow's walk had been pulled back so it was less visible. Mr. Migani thought the biggest things were the removal of the widow's walk, the scale of the pieces and simplifying the dormer. Mr. Thompson said making the window order simpler, especially next to the mill building was helpful. Mr. Migani said the buildings were less formal which had been overpowering before. He mentioned that he did not see a lighting plan. Mr. Grzywacz replied that primary lighting would be site lighting and there would be non-visible fixtures in the soffits of the entrances and porches.

Mr. Nault submitted his copy of the existing elevations which the Commission reviewed. Mr. Thompson asked if it was 60ft. above natural grade and Mr. Grzywacz replied yes. He added that the property was uneven so he was saying existing grade was 7ft. – this was the garage level. Mr. Cunningham queried trash containers. Mr. Nault replied this was in the basement of the buildings with one area outside. This will be screened with a fence with a dumpster inside. Mr. Thompson asked if the windows would be Anderson 400 Series. Mr. Grzywacz said this was a detail that still had to be worked out. Mr. Nault added that the windows would be along those lines. Mr. Thompson asked if the French doors would be a similar line and was there wood-like trim. Mr. Grzywacz replied yes. Mr. Thompson then asked if the artificial slate option had gone away. Mr. Grzywacz replied that costs had not yet been researched. If it was economically feasible the slate shingle was more desirable.

Before any members of the public spoke Mr. Thompson asked that anyone with a commercial interest in this project should make this known before they made their comments.

IN OPPOSITION:

Amy Goldfarb, 49 South Fair Street, stated that the developer had been a very good neighbor about answering questions. However, she said she would like to review some issues: a) exterior design which Ms. Goldfarb felt should connect to historic needs and fit in; b) mass and height was a really important part of whether these buildings belonged in the neighborhood so that they did not look shockingly large. Buildings should be in scale and not just concealed by trees. Ms. Goldfarb said a 3-D model had been created which was shown to the Commission. The new buildings, as represented in the model, were towering. Referring to the square boxes used to represent the new buildings, Mr. Thompson pointed out that the roof would be at two-thirds of the way up the building. c) Ms. Goldfarb said lighting was another concern; d) Ms. Goldfarb said what attracted people to the neighborhood in the first place was its historic feel and what residents offered to the site was returned to them by sensitive integration. Later in the meeting Ms. Goldfarb spoke again saying that the Commission had to decide if this was appropriate for the historic district. She said she did not find other residents' comments about the economic impact of the development to be compelling and that we were here to decide the historic appropriateness of it. She added that saying something worse could be in its place also did not persuade her. This did not mean that due diligence should not be done. Ms. Goldfarb also said she was disappointed that people had spoken tonight but had not identified their commercial interest in this project as Mr. Thompson had requested.

IN FAVOR:

Brian McGlone, Town of Guilford Economic Development Specialist, said other developers had looked at this site but rejected it. He noted that the site might appear big but that this was relative. Mr. Thompson interjected that scale was one of the Commission's criteria. Mr. McGlone stated that the architect had tried to incorporate typical Guilford architectural elements into the project, adding that he was in favor of it. He felt the project fitted the site and that it met the Town Center South Overlay Zone regulations. Mr. McGlone said condominiums had already been sold which sent a signal that this looked right and felt right. He added that he thought it would be good for Guilford and that the business owners were excited about it.

Peter Cowie, 55 South Fair Street, said he was closest to the property and, therefore, would be the most affected by it and that he was 100% behind it. Before there was a derelict factory but he was thrilled to be living next to it and the developer had been terrific.

Ronald Nault said he had tried hard to work with the neighbors, and tried to create buildings of a scale and shape that did not look like the model presented tonight. He pointed out that of the 60ft. height, 10ft. would be in the ground, and that the roof started part way up the building. Mr. Nault said due to extensive clean up the property would never be used as an industrial property again. He mentioned that the development team were Guilford people and proud of the project. Later in the meeting Mr. Nault pointed out that the project had not required any variances and therefore, he had the right to do what was allowed by the regulations. Mr. Thompson said both PZC and HDC regulations were valid.

Kathryn Mitchell, 36 High Street, said she was very much in favor of the project. She appreciated what had gone into it and thought that the site was awful before this. Mrs. Mitchell added that the developers had been very transparent, that they were Guilford people, and that everyone collectively was trying to make this work. Mrs. Mitchell said she wanted a residential use on the property and that she thought the developers had tried very hard. She felt it would be good economically for the Town, that it would help affect taxes, that it was a beautiful project and we were fortunate to have it.

Claire White, 44 South Fair Street, stated that she had lived in her home since 1914, that the development was wonderful and that it was good to have residences.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Linda Von Blon, 53 Norton Avenue, asked if the property had been very difficult to clean up. Mr. Nault replied that it had been cleaned to residential standards.

Anita Holland-Moritz, 40 High Street, asked about the septic system. Mr. Thompson replied that it was a designed system but that this was not within the Commission's purview. Mr. Nault added that it was a DEEP regulated system and briefly explained how it worked.

In conclusion, Mr. Cunningham asked for a copy of the final elevations and the finished landscape plan, as well as a site map of existing conditions.

Later, during the regular meeting, during discussion Mr. Migani said he had no additional comments to make. Mr. Cunningham felt this was the best version of the new buildings that the Commission had seen – it had been simplified and the windows had been lined up. Mr. Thompson pointed out that multi-family development was different to commercial. All the pieces have come together. Although the neighborhood was diminutive this was a big site. He felt by making the scale of the windows more uniform and detailing more in the pattern of the mill building, this was more thoughtful. There was also the issue of flood elevations and the cars would not be seen. Mr. Migani pointed out that everyone had worked hard on this project. Mr. Thompson mentioned that the Commission had talked about breaking it up more but that this could become too much after a while. Mr. Migani made a motion, seconded by Mr. Cunningham, to approve the application as submitted with the following stipulations: 1) A site plan with existing conditions and a final landscape plan must be submitted to the Commission before construction begins. 2) The following must be reviewed with and approved by the subcommittee prior to purchase and installation: a) all exterior lighting; b) final material selections. 3) Subcommittee appointed is Reno Migani and William Thompson. The motion to approve was carried unanimously with Cunningham, Migani and Thompson voting in favor. Mrs. Smith recused herself and did not take part in the discussion or vote on this application due to conflict of interest.

The public hearing was closed at 8:10p.m. and was followed immediately by the regular meeting.

REGULAR MEETING

Public Forum: 1) Certificate of Appropriateness #582-13 – Informational Tourism Kiosk and Associated Landscape (32 Church Street, Map 39, Lot 38: Russell Campaigne stated that he would like to discuss some changes to this project. Earlier an email was sent to Commission members, which was never received, regarding changing the multimedia unit from being on the building to being a free-standing unit. Mr. Campaigne submitted a catalogue cut for this item which would be located in the shadow under a tree on the south side. The unit would have a painted enamel frame in gray, 46” on diagonal, 72”H, 12”D, 36”W, and one-sided. Mr. Thompson asked if it would be distracting to the road. Mr. Campaigne replied that he did not think so as it faced north. Regarding signage, originally there was going to be a sign saying “Information” but Mr. Campaigne said his client now really wished to add a web address. He thought this could be located on the side facing the Community Center (north). Lettering could be either capitalized or all lowercase. He was recommending a capital letter followed by lower case lettering. Also the address could be with or without “CT”. Mr. Thompson felt whether or not “CT” was included was up to the client. Mr. Campaigne said there were going to be three display cases (1” deep in silver), one on the north side and two on the west side. However, the client would like these moved to the front (east) side so they could be referenced from the window. Mr. Migani made a motion to approve these changes for a free-standing media unit, the web address and display panels on the front of the building. Any further changes to the signage must be reviewed by the subcommittee prior to purchase and installation. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Cunningham made a motion to accept the Minutes of 15th July, 2015. Mrs. Smith seconded the motion and it was carried with 3 votes in favor. Mr. Migani abstained since he was not present at the July meeting.

Correspondence: National Alliance of Preservation Commissions’ newsletter “The Alliance Review” for May/June 2015.

Public Relations: Mr. Migani agreed to look into the plaques for the awards.

Annual Report 2014-2015: Mr. Cunningham made a motion to approve the draft Annual Report. Mrs. Smith seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

Commission Openings: Tabled to the September meeting.

Approval of Bills: Mr. Migani made a motion to approve the following bills: Shore Publishing, legal notices for June 17 (\$38.46); July 15 (\$33.42), August 19 (\$36.63); Katharine Stewart, secretarial services. Mrs. Smith seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

Unfinished Certificates of Appropriateness: No report.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45p.m.

The next meeting of the Historic District Commission will be held on Wednesday 21st October, 2015 at 7:00p.m. in the Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Katharine Stewart
Recording Secretary