



TOWN OF WINCHESTER
MIDDLESEX COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
TOWN HALL
WINCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01890

Meeting Minutes

Date: September 27, 2021

Virtual meeting via Zoom

Members Present: Jack LeMenager, Chair
Bruce Hickey, Vice Chair
Jon Carlisle
John Clemson
Janet Boswell
Emily Dowling
Michelle McCarthy

Also Present: Brian Szekely, Town Planner
Rachael Edmonston
Adam Glassman
Brian Bell
Andrew Statires
Arthur DiNatale
Mark Donnellan
Ian Gillespie
Susan and Paul Kadilak
Larry Murray
Paul Soughley
Amy and Joe Wrenn
Ken Gordon
Rakel Meir
Sally Dale

A quorum being in attendance, the meeting was called to order at 7:32 pm.

Public Hearings – Demolition Permit Applications

14 Fenwick Road

Chair Jack LeMenager opened the meeting by detailing a recent site visit that he and fellow Commission member Michelle McCarthy had taken to 14 Fenwick Road. Chair LeMenager described the poor condition of the house. He stated that the rear of the house was completely in ruin and had unsupported steel beams that were rigged up incorrectly. Commissioner Michelle McCarthy confirmed that the house was in very bad condition and was nearly demolished.

Ken Gordon, who represented the owners of the property, introduced Paul and Susan Kadilak, the contractors who will be working on the property. Mrs. Kadilak shared photographs of the property's interior to illustrate the poor condition of the house. She noted that the steel beams

used on the first floor were not up to code, were incorrectly sized, not properly secured, and probably could not bear weight. In some instances, the steel beams were not supported at all. Additionally, the horizontal beams in the house were incorrectly supported by welded steel L bracket clips at the posts. She emphasized that the house was dangerous and could not be completed safely.

Commissioner Janet Boswell stated that there was nothing to save; the house could not be preserved. She voiced her appreciation for the owner's efforts to faithfully recreate the historic house.

Commissioner McCarthy asked if the front of the house could be saved even if the rest of the house was demolished. Mr. Kadilak answered that if the rear of the house was demolished, the foundation and earth underneath the house would likely be disturbed and compromise the structural safety of the front of the house. He concluded that unfortunately, demolition was the only available option.

Vice Chair Bruce Hickey reiterated that demolition was the only course of action. Chair LeMenager asked if the replica of the house would have the same setback and footprint as the existing historic structure. He noted that the plans that architect Adam Glassman had originally drawn and presented to the Historical Commission were different from the original house. Mr. Glassman and Mr. Gordon assured the Commission that new drawings had been created and the replica house would be identical to the historical structure and on the same footprint.

MOTION: Pursuant to Section 3.9 of the Chapter 14 By-Law, the Historical Commission moves to lift demolition delay on 14 Fenwick Road prior to the expiration date subject to the conditions set forth in the signed letter agreement between the Applicant and the Commission.

VOTED: 6 in favor, 0 opposed (1 absent).

Chair LeMenager requested that July 26, 2021, the date of the submitted architectural rendering, be included in the letter agreement. Vice Chair Hickey stated that four dates would be included in the letter agreement, to coincide with the Historical Commission's activities regarding the property at 14 Fenwick Road.

44 Clark Street

Mark Donnellan, the owner of 44 Clark Street, requested that the Historical Commission lift the demolition delay that was imposed during the September 13 hearing of the Historical Commission.

Chair LeMenager shared the elevations of the proposed property.

Mr. Donnellan acknowledged the Commission's concern that the proposed construction would impact the look and feel of the surrounding neighborhood. He noted that the height of the house would inevitably increase because the current height of the ceilings in the property were approximately six feet, eleven inches tall and did not align with twenty-first-century expectations

for comfort. He noted that the height of the ceilings would likely increase to approximately eight feet. He assured the Commission that the new house would utilize the existing footprint, with an addition on the rear.

Chair LeMenager asked if the house would be clapboard. Mr. Donnellan confirmed this and added that the roof would likely be gabled, although he was willing to change the style if the Commission had any objections.

Commissioner Boswell asked what the dimensions of the windows were. Mr. Donnellan answered that they were one-over-one. He also emphasized that the windows in the historical property were not original to the house but had been replaced after the house’s construction.

MOTION: Pursuant to Section 3.9 of the By-Law, the Historical Commission voted to lift the demolition delay on 44 Clark Street prior to the expiration date subject to the conditions set forth in the signed letter agreement between the Applicant and the Commission.

VOTED: 6 in favor, 0 opposed (1 absent).

Commissioner McCarthy asked if the small window above the door on the front elevations could be enlarged. Mr. Donnellan stated that he would have to double-check the plans, but that he could potentially extend the height of the window.

Approve September 13, 2021, meeting minutes

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the September 13, 2021, Historical Commission Meeting.

VOTED: 5 in favor, 0 opposed (1 abstain, 1 absent).

10 Converse Place– Application for CBD Special Permit and Site Plan Review Discussion

Chair LeMenager opened the discussion by reminding the Commission that their purpose was to maintain the historic built environment of the Center Business District (CBD).

Developer Ian Gillespie, of Gillespie and Company, introduced the project, known as 10 Converse Place. Mr. Gillespie announced that he was showing the Commission a presentation that was a synopsis of a filing made to the Planning Board in August regarding the plans for the new 10 Converse Place and the revitalization of the CBD. He noted that he had presented the plans to the previous Planning Board but was now working with a Planning Board with four of five new members.

Mr. Gillespie began his proposal by providing a brief overview of the recent history of the CBD. In 1946 the property hosted a church, the Winchester Laundry building, and an industrial site, all of which had setback issues. In 2002, the Town determined that the zoning in the district was out of date. The Town wanted to add two hundred new units of residential housing and revitalize the retail area while maintaining the aesthetics of the district. In 2015, Winchester Town Meeting

overwhelmingly adopted the new zoning bylaws for the Center Business District. The reviewing authority for any changes in the CBD became the Planning Board, rather than the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Mr. Gillespie explained that 10 Converse Place would include new housing with diverse unit sizing and 15% affordable housing. He described how the project would allow for publicly accessible outdoor space and an entrance to Mill Pond that was open to pedestrians. He also noted that while the building would be five stories tall, the architects had worked hard to reduce the massing of the top floor and had opened up the bottom floor to accommodate retail space and a walkway for pedestrians. The side of 10 Converse Place facing the Mill Pond would accommodate sweeping views down to the waterfront and would be an open space for all visitors.

Mr. Gillespie emphasized that 10 Converse Place would have diverse housing, including studio units that overlooked the pond. He also stated that a bathtub garage would be constructed under the unit and showed the plans for the landscaping. He noted that the original landscaping in the area was in “Olmstead territory” and had been designed by Herbert Kellaway. Kellaway had worked as an architect with the Olmstead firm until 1906, before establishing his own practice, which designed the landscaping plans for the Mill Pond area in the 1910s and 1920s.

Chair LeMenager asked if the new building would be shorter than the existing structure on the property, the so-called Laundry Building. Mr. Gillespie answered the existing building was approximately sixty-two feet, and that 10 Converse Place would be approximately 59 feet. He noted that 10 Converse Place would also be recessed further back from the pond than the current building to allow better visual access to the pond. He added that the building would complement the Town Hall and was not very large in context with the surrounding buildings. He also added that 10 Converse Place was all-electric and very sustainable.

Chair LeMenager requested that the Town Planner, Brian Szekely, provide guidance to the Historical Commission on how to proceed. Mr. Szekely noted that according to the Historical Resources map, the existing structure was considered non-historic. Mr. Szekely said that the Historical Commission’s duty was to decide if the proposed project impacted any historic resource or landscape. Mr. Gillespie noted that he did not need the Commission to hold a vote that night, as the project team was accepting comments until October 28. Chair LeMenager stated that he would prefer to defer the vote until the Historical Commission’s October meeting.

Chair LeMenager asked if Mr. Gillespie’s team had requested a Demolition Permit for the existing Mill Pond building. Mr. Gillespie answered that they had not. Chair LeMenager noted that while the current building was unattractive, it was historical, and therefore Mr. Gillespie’s team would have to attend a Historical Commission hearing to determine whether a demolition permit would be immediately granted. Mr. Gillespie thanked him for the information.

Commissioner McCarthy requested to see the slide which showed the heights of the existing and proposed buildings and asked if the new building would be sixty feet tall. Mr. Gillespie answered yes, and Mr. Szekely noted that the proposed building would be sixty feet, eight inches. Commissioner Emily Dowling commented that if the building was only four stories, then it

would be approximately forty-eight feet. Mr. Gillespie replied it would be closer to fifty feet, in that instance. Mr. Szekely reiterated that the current structure was sixty feet; Commissioner Dowling agreed but noted that the existing structure took up more space. She said that she wanted more open space. Mr. Gillespie agreed, and stated that the proposed building would be created to allow more open space. The upper floors would be cantilevered, and the bottom floor would be set back to provide better views of the Mill Pond.

Commissioner Clemson stated that he wished for the building to be set forward on the frontage like the rest of the buildings on the street. Mr. Gillespie answered that while the first floor was set back ten feet to allow for a pedestrian walkway, the upper floors were in line with the property lines, just as the surrounding buildings were. Mr. Szekely reiterated that the first floor was set back to allow for an open sidewalk and retail space.

Vice Chair Hickey asked if the Planning Board wanted the Historical Commission's recommendations. Mr. Szekely answered yes, that the Planning Board expected the Historical Commission's input by October 28. He restated that the Historical Commission's purpose was to determine whether or not the project impacted any historical resources. Vice Chair Hickey reiterated that the Commission would likely hold off on a vote until the October meeting. Mr. Szekely stated that the process was very similar to the Zoning Board of Appeals Site Plan Review or Special Permit hearings that the Historical Commission held every month. Vice Chair Hickey noted that the Commission would likely want to analyze the plans further before taking any action.

Chair LeMenager stated that he liked the plans and that he disliked the existing building. He asked Mr. Gillespie what materials the architects intended on using for the construction. Mr. Gillespie stated that it would likely be constructed in red brick. He urged the Commission to look up the architect, David Hacin's, work, such as the Whitney Hotel on Beacon Hill. He stated that Mr. Hacin liked to include elegant stonework and expensive, good-quality windows in his designs.

Vice Chair Hickey asked how long he estimated that the construction process would take. Mr. Gillespie explained that the permitting process had begun in January 2020, a formal application was made in August, and now the project was waiting on the Planning Board's approval. He noted that in order to gain approval, the project would need three votes out of five, and hoped that the vote would be held before March 2022. He stated that creating the construction drawings was typically a six-month process and that the actual construction would likely take eighteen months. After that time, the interior work would be done.

Chair LeMenager asked the Historical Commission if they would prefer to meet on October 18 or October 25. The Commission agreed upon October 25 as the date of their next meeting and would vote on the project at that time.

Mr. Gillespie thanked the Commission for their time and added that the COVID-19 pandemic had impacted the project and had regrettably prevented the project managers from reaching out to the community regarding the proposal.

22 Ardley Road

Brian Szekely explained that the owners of 22 Ardley Road, Amy and Joe Wrenn, were seeking relief under Section 4.5 of the Winchester Zoning Bylaw, which concerned Reduced Frontage, Lot Width, Lot Area and/or Side and Rear Yard Setback Lots and concluded: “that the Historical Commission shall submit to the Board a written evaluation of the significance of the existing historic resource, an opinion of the appropriateness of the proposed lot layout and setbacks requested, and an evaluation or recommendation of the features that should be included in a preservation plan.” Mr. Szekely stated that the owners were looking for a list of conditions from the Historical Commission to preserve the property.

Mrs. Wrenn explained that she had applied for a demolition permit three years ago in 2018, and the Historical Commission had voted to impose a delay on issuance of the permit, which has since expired. The property in question, 22 Ardley Road, was a Cape Cod Style house built in 1935. The Wrenn's had purchased the house in 2014, a purchase that included an additional adjacent lot on which they had intended to build a second house. Mrs. Wrenn noted that in 2018 she sought the opinion of her neighbors regarding what to do with the property but had received mixed responses. She also stated that the project has been hindered by the trees on the property and a twenty-five- or thirty-five-foot slope in the back of the property. She noted that she was coming before the Historical Commission to get a better idea of how to move forward and explained that the project had been in limbo for approximately six years. She stated that the waiver in section 4.5.2 of the Zoning Bylaw provided the last option to potentially preserve the existing property, which otherwise would be demolished to allow for the construction of the two new houses.

Mr. Szekely stated that the project would likely require a Site Plan Review. Mrs. Wrenn concurred and added that they would likely also have to seek relief for the frontage and height of the property to make the changes that they wished to make.

Mrs. Wrenn showed the elevations with the Historical Commission and explained her plan to create a driveway that would go along the paper road by the house and meet the driveway behind the existing house. She also explained that one neighbor had requested that the house not be placed too far back on the lot, while the rear abutter asked that the house not be visible from their property.

Mr. Szekely asked if any changes would be made to the existing house. Mrs. Wrenn answered yes and stated that she wanted to add two or three bedrooms to the second floor, a garage, and shed dormers on the front of the house. She noted that she would not demolish the shed on the property, which had been designed by architect Jerome Bailey Foster. The cupola would also be preserved.

Mrs. Wrenn showed the elevations for the new house that she planned to construct on the additional lot. In response to Chair LeMenager's question regarding the orientation of the new property, Mrs. Wrenn said that the back of the house would face the cemetery and have a walk-out basement and a drive-in garage.

Commissioner McCarthy stated that she would like to see a comparison of the old house and the new plans. She also asked if the proposed new house's front door would face the street, and whether 22 Ardley Road was the last property on the street. Mrs. Wrenn answered that it was. Commissioner McCarthy also asked for clarification as to what action the Historical Commission was expected to take regarding the project.

Mr. Szekely clarified that the Commission had to determine whether the renovations to the property were appropriate, and whether the new house would impact the historic built environment of the neighborhood. Chair LeMenager added that the Commission had to consider the frontage issues and decide whether to grant a waiver under 4.5.2 of the Bylaw. If not, Mrs. Wrenn could tear the property down and rebuild it along the footprint of the original house. He noted that the Commission was merely providing feedback to Mrs. Wrenn and would not take any action on the proposal at this time.

Commissioner Dowling announced her support for the proposal. Commissioner McCarthy agreed and stated that she liked the proposed addition. Commissioner Clemson noted that while the original house would be preserved for zoning relief, he believed that the changes to the property were immense and that he had some concerns about the alterations.

Chair LeMenager asked Commissioner Clemson if he believed that the Commission should negotiate with the Wrenns. Commissioner Clemson answered yes, the Historical Commission should have more input in the changes made to the original house.

Commissioner Jon Carlisle noted that while Commissioner Clemson raised good points, he believed that Mrs. Wrenn's alternative to demolition was sufficient. Vice Chair Hickey agreed and noted that he would rather see the house modified than demolished.

Commissioner Boswell expressed concern over the plans to develop the second lot. She noted that changes to the topography might be outside of their control, should they allow the construction to go forward. She also noted that she was concerned with the changes to the existing house and wanted to wait to see what the other town boards said before making a decision.

Chair LeMenager asked for a side-by-side, before and after comparison of the house and the proposed plans. Mrs. Wrenn agreed and emphasized that the plans submitted were rough drafts that she was willing to change to accommodate the Commission's requests. She also asked what the next steps were to move the project along.

Mr. Szekely stated that since the Historical Commission was willing to work with Mrs. Wrenn, the only other step she could take before the waiver was issued was to go before the Planning Board or else speak its Chair, Diab Jerius. Mrs. Wrenn noted her understanding and thanked the Commission for their time.

53 Wildwood Street

Following the Commission's Aug. 13 finding of historical significance and the imposition of a 12-month delay in the issuance of a demolition permit for 53 Wildwood Street, owner Andrew

Statires returned to continue the discussion. He started by explaining that he owned and lived in 21 Dartmouth Street, directly behind 53 Wildwood. Chair LeMenager asked Mr. Statires whether he intended to cede part of the property at 53 Wildwood to 21 Dartmouth. Mr. Statires answered yes, he intended to push the fence of his property at 21 Dartmouth back approximately thirty-five feet into the back of the property at 53 Wildwood to expand the lot.

Chair LeMenager noted that in the September 13, 2021, Historical Commission hearing Commissioner Boswell had asked whether Mr. Statires had considered moving the house forward on the lot. Mr. Statires answered that he had reached out to several contractors in town to see if it was possible but had yet to hear back from any of them. He stated that he wasn't sure if it would be possible, as the house was very old and had a basement, although he would continue to research the possibility.

Chair LeMenager responded that other historic houses in Winchester had been moved, one on Sheffield West had been moved twenty-five feet to the right on its original lot to create two lots. Mr. Statires noted that the driveway was also on the lot and could make the move difficult. Commissioner McCarthy answered that the lot could be filled in and that she knew of several builders who specialized in moving historic houses. She told Mr. Statires that she would put him in touch with them. Mr. Statires thanked Commissioner McCarthy and emphasized that he had to consider the best financial option for himself and his family.

Chair LeMenager asked Mr. Statires if he intended to completely recreate the original house, should it be demolished. Mr. Statires responded that his original plan was to demolish the house, shift the lot back approximately thirty-five or forty feet, and then replicate the original Queen Anne's style house that was built on the property in the 1890s. He stated that he was considering how long he would have to wait to continue his project, depending on whether or not he demolished the house or moved it.

Commissioner McCarthy asked Mr. Statires if he had spoken with the Town Planner, Mr. Szekely, yet. Mr. Statires answered that he had not but that he intended to meet with Mr. Szekely that week to discuss his plans for the property.

Chair LeMenager stated that Mr. Statires could request to be added to the Historical Commission's agenda whenever it suited him; the next meeting will be on October 25, 2021. Commissioner McCarthy assured Mr. Statires that she was already in contact with the builders regarding the possibility of moving the property.

Symmes Corner Local Historic District (LHD) Update

Mr. Szekely stated that the Symmes Corner Local Historic District Study Committee would meet in two weeks. He noted that the Study Committee was still working to get enough homeowners in support of the LHD and had decided that it was better to have a smaller, cohesive district than a larger one with gaps in it.

Chair LeMenager stated that it would be helpful if there was more of a groundswell effort from residents to promote the LHD. He said that the Study Committee was encouraging enthusiastic homeowners to hold small informal gatherings to try and convince their neighbors of the virtue

of the LHD. He noted that Jennifer Adams and Candace Van Aken, two homeowners in the Symmes Corner District, were attempting to hold a small meeting with their neighbors to promote the LHD.

Commissioner Clemson noted that the Massachusetts Historical Commission was interested in seeing why the LHD had the specific borders that it had. He emphasized that the borders of the LHD should be cohesive and defensible.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m. Next meeting: October 25, via Zoom.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rachael Edmonston, Recording Secretary

Jack LeMenager Date