

These minutes are subject to possible corrections/revisions at a subsequent Exeter Historic District Commission meeting.

Exeter Historic District Commission

Draft Minutes

Nowak Room, Exeter Town Office Building
February 17, 2011

Introduction: *Members present were Julie Gilman, Wendy Bergeron, Judith Rowan, Fred Kollmorgen, and Chairwoman Pam Gjetum.*

Call Meeting to Order

Chairwoman Pam Gjetum called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Office Building.

New Business: Public Hearings

1. The application of Baystate Financial Services for new signage at 149 Water Street. The subject property is located in the WC-Waterfront Commercial zoning district. Tax Map Parcel #82-7. Case #11-04.

The application was presented by the owner of Baystate Financial Services for a new sign at 149 Water Street. The sign would be made by Cerado Signs, would be made of 3/4 inch plywood at 36 inches by 24 inches, and would be painted teal and white. It would be installed to hang over the front door to match the surrounding signs along the street and would be two-sided. Julie Gilman made a motion to accept the application as presented, Judith Rowan seconded: Vote unanimous.

Additional discussion ensued concerning the appropriate height to hang the sign, at least eight feet high. Fred Kollmorgen moved to approve the application as presented, Julie Gilman seconded: Vote unanimous.

2. Continued Discussion of the application of Geoffrey Andrew von Kuhn for proposed new construction, change in exterior appearance and window replacement at 89 Front Street. The subject property is located in the R-2, Single Family Residential zoning district. Tax Map Parcel #73-301. Case #11-03.

John Taylor, representing Geoffrey Andrew von Kuhn, presented the application. This application is a continuation of a previous application discussed at a previous HDC meeting, two weeks prior. During that meeting, it was agreed to wait on the items involving demolition, landscape, and other design details in order to provide enough time to allow additional information for the HDC. On items involving demolition, the HDC looked toward a response from the Demolition Review Committee (DRC). After a site visit and review meeting, the DRC presented the HDC with a formal letter of their recommendations. The letter included recommendations to remove the privacy wall and up to two bays of the back porch located along the east driveway due to deteriorating conditions. In an effort to retain the historic character of the house, the DRC recommended to retain the connector between the two barns.

Items 3 and 4: The original items three and four involved the demolition of the existing east porch (item three), and rebuilding a porch to mimic the one located in the west (item four). John Taylor explained that after meeting with the DRC, there was a decision to change the

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application to remove only one or two bays of the existing east porch in order to retain the historic character of the building. The privacy wall would be included in this demolition. The HDC began a discussion on what would be removed from the existing east porch. Fred Kollmorgen made a motion to approve item three of the application: the removal of no more than two sections of the existing east porch and existing privacy wall which abuts the north porch, Julie Gilman seconded: Vote unanimous.

Item four was removed from the original application. Fred Kollmorgen moved to disapprove item four, Judith Rowan seconded: Vote unanimous.

Item 8: The Board discussed item eight which involved the addition of quoining in order to repair damage along the board siding. The HDC had requested a response from the Heritage Commission on this item. The Heritage Commission felt the addition of quoining would be an inappropriate element for the austere Italianate architecture of the building. The HDC discussed the item with the applicant and agreed with the Heritage Commission's response. Fred Kollmorgen moved to disapprove item eight, Judith rowan seconded: Vote unanimous.

Item 9: Item 9 included the removal of the existing connector between the two barns to be replaced with a larger, full-size, second story connector, allowing travel between the two structures. The existing connector is a more recent addition to the property and Mr. Taylor expressed his concerns of it being in danger of collapsing. In the letter written to the HDC, the DRC felt the connector to be of important character, defining the appearance of the two barns in its present form.

Mr. Taylor explained that he disagrees with the findings of the DRC and presented pictures to the Board disproving the original state of the connector due to the construction method. He then presented and explained his reasons for the proposed design, stating that the second story connector would be the most appropriate method to connect the two barns.

Amy Bailey, member of the DRC and Heritage Commission, explained that during the site visit, the DRC discovered elements of the connector such as the arch and back wall which appear to be older than the rest of the connector. Although the rest of the construction appears to be of a more recent construction, Ms. Bailey felt that the connector itself is character-defining of the rest of the building and distinguishes this particular property type. Ms. Bailey also explained that the DRC should not be involved in the suggested design of the connector, but rather as a committee to inform the HDC on historically-defining elements of the house.

Fred Kollmorgen began a conversation concerning the work needed to repair the existing connector and additional options available to the client without sacrificing the program within the space. Mr. Taylor explained that if the Board does not allow the second floor connector, the client would prefer to remove the connector completely. Julie Gilman explained that if the existing connector is removed, a void would be created that would diminish the architectural integrity of the design.

Julie Gilman made a motion to deny the removal of the existing connector of the two barns, Judith Rowan seconded: Vote passed by majority, three to one.

John Taylor stated that in order to allow landscaping construction equipment onto the property, the connector will have to be removed completely and rebuilt after the completion of construction. Mr. Taylor then requested information to appeal the decision made by the HDC. Julie Gilman, Judith Rowan, and Fred Kollmorgen all agreed the application merited a site visit within the next couple of days.

Item 14: The applicant requested the removal of item 14: addition of balusters to the roof porch. Fred Kollmorgen moved to disapprove item 14, Judith Rowan seconded: Vote unanimous.

Item 15: The final item on the application was presented by the landscape architect, [insert name]. [insert name] stated that his intentions for the design would be to help restore the existing landscape. The plant materials have yet to be finalized, but the intention is to use simple plant materials including Japanese maples. For the front yard, the posts that currently frame the driveway entrance would be retained as well as the driveway configuration. The existing asphalt courtyard and cobblestone accent materials would be utilized throughout the project. [insert name] explained that there currently exists a steep slope along the side of the house that has caused erosion and runoff problems. To fix this issue, a low retaining wall would be constructed. The walkway to the front door would be replaced with a bluestone stepping stone walkway to the street with the effort to draw attention to the front of the house. It was determined that at one point, the original granite posts had gates on them at some point. [insert name] stated that the client would like to reinstall those iron gates and leave them open. Two granite posts would be constructed at the front door to match the driveway posts and a low hedge would be planted around the property to allow for a visual barrier. The clients intend to protect the existing oak tree on the property by fencing it off and replace many of the street trees.

As for the landscaping along the back of the house, [insert name] proposed a taller evergreen hedge along the church property edge. A short stone wall would be constructed as a retaining wall with fencing above it to provide privacy along the property line. The top of the fence would be six feet in height and made of wood with stain to match the house.

Julie Gilman requested a response from the Heritage Commission on the terrace along the side of the house. Amy Bailey stated that it would be more historically accurate to not include a retaining wall. Another option would be to plant a well-maintained healthy sod and landscaping to help hold the earth in place. [insert name] explained that the intention of the client is to create a level planting plateau. The Board began a conversation about the landscape plan at length, discussing the retaining wall and other ways to create this landscape element.

[insert name] stated that they came prepared with an alternate plan. The second plan includes the addition of walls to come off the porch and levels into the ground to create a planting bed. The walls would not be as high as the porch and would remain at the existing grade, allowing for a planting barrier to create privacy. Judith Rowan moved to accept revision sheet three of the design, dated January 25, 2011 which has no retaining wall on the east side, but to accept all of the elements as presented on the original proposal, apart from the retaining wall on the east side. Fred Kollmorgen seconded: Vote unanimous.

The Board discussed the landscaping plan at greater detail. Julie Gilman suggested that the planting materials should be finalized before the plan is approved. Fred Kollmorgen moved to approve revision sheet three of the design, dated January 25, 2011 which has no retaining wall on the east side, but to accept all of the elements as presented on the original proposal, apart from the retaining wall on the east side. Judith Rowan seconded: Vote unanimous.

Amy Bailey stated that this was the first project the DRC reviewed that did not include a full demolition and felt the process worked out quite nicely. The Board discussed additionally on how the HDC should act in response to the DRC's reports.

Other Business

1. Approval of Minutes: December 16, 2010 and February 3, 2011.

The approval of meeting minutes for December 16 and February 3 were moved to the following HDC meeting in March.

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Julie Gilman moved to adjourn, Wendy Bergeron Seconded: Vote unanimous.

Chairwoman Pam Gjettum adjourned the meeting at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gillian R. Baresich
Recording Secretary