

**Exeter Historic District Commission**

Exeter Public Library                      4 Chestnut Street, Exeter  
November 17, 2011

**Members present:** *Nicole Martineau, Ron Schutz, Fred Kollmorgen, Wendy Bergeron, Planning Board rep. Peter Cameron, Selectman rep. Julie Gilman and Pam Gjettum, Chairwoman*

**Call meeting to Order**

Chairman Pam Gjettum called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm in the lower meeting room at Exeter Public Library.

**New Business: Public Hearing**

**The application of TMS Architects (on behalf of Phillips Exeter Academy) for the proposed construction of a three-story addition and exterior alterations to the existing building located at 17 Spring Street (student dormitory and faculty residence know as “Williams House”). The subject property is located in the R-2, single Family Residential zoning district. Tax Map Parcel #72-204. Case #11-25**

Prior to the presentation, members Nicole Martineau and Wendy Bergeron recused themselves from participating and voting on the application.

Before beginning the presentation copies of updated architectural plans and supporting documents were distributed to the members to replace the materials members had received in their meeting packet. Representing the Academy, Ms. Anita Bailey began by giving a brief history of the Williams House and provided photos of the property at various periods of time. They feel the house was built in 1820 and currently the 6,300 +/- sq. ft. dwelling is a dormitory and faculty residence for students. In 1852 the Academy rented the home as the first dwelling for its students and has continued this use for 159 years. Renovations were last done in the 1990's and they wish to continue with the renovations.

Mr. John Merkle of TMS Architects in Portsmouth displayed photos from the 1930's and a current photo to visually orient the members to the proposed exterior renovations. Referencing the Description of Work handout, Mr. Merkle felt it prudent to review each of the proposed renovations outlined.

1. Demolition of existing exterior egress stairs and fire escapes.  
Remove egress stairways from the side of the three level dwelling
2. Construct a three-story addition on the northwest side of building to include an egress stairway. The intent is to construct the new addition with existing materials on remainder of the house.
3. Site changes at the side and front of building to provide for accessibility and improve site drainage. Included are:

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- 1:20 sloped sidewalk for handicap accessibility
  - Replace 2 sets of steps in granite In rear of building as well
  - Block retaining walls at north side of building to match existing wall: will be granite veneer
  - Place granite curbing on Spring St.
4. All existing windows to be replaced. Windows currently in place are not original.
  5. Front exterior wood door will be removed and replaced with a door in kind.
  6. An existing front door on the porch will be removed.
  7. In the rear of building, an existing window at the lower level will be replaced with an egress door: doors to be insulated fiberglass (with the exception of the main front door).
  8. North chimney removal; chimney mass inside the building but will reconstruct the chimney. None of the interior fireplaces are active.
  9. Northwest chimney (on end of building); remove and replaced with a brick veneer and painted to look like what is presently there.
  10. Exterior finish replacements with a PVC material to match. Existing clapboards are not wood but of fiber cement; new addition clapboards will be the same. Balustrade, screen porch hand rail, corner boards, water table, door trim, window trim and sills will be PVC but of a solid stock material that is millable.  
Mr. Merkle, when queried, provided the architectural definition of a water table: a molding/board that runs along the bottom/base of a building designed to throw off rain.
  11. The fluted columns will be removed and replaced with fiberglass columns to match existing columns.  
Continuing the presentation, Mr. Merkle added the dwelling is presently heated by steam making it very humid and moist. That will be replaced with its own heating plant. Grading will be done in the rear to improve drainage and get the water away from the building. All three fire escapes will be gone from exterior and stairs will be located in the interior of the proposed addition. The new construction will require some changes in the roof lines but will be more compatible with the rest of building.
- Throughout the presentation, Mr. Merkle referred to historic photos and elevation drawings prepared by his firm; copies of the plans were given to the members prior to the meeting. In deciding how to proceed, Ms. Gilman made the motion to accept the entire application: seconded by Mr. Kollmorgen. Before voting, Mr. Cameron asked for clarification on what the group was voting on. It was determined the vote was to be on the submitted plans/drawings and the eleven (11) listed items for action on the Description of Work handout dated Nov. 17, 2011. That being satisfactory for Mr. Cameron, the vote was unanimous to accept the application.

It was further decided to review each of the items separately and then vote on approval. In

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discussing demolition, (item 1) Mr. Kollmorgen raised the issue that after a building permit is applied for the Planning Department would refer the application to the Heritage Commission for review and action. With Mr. Merkle being Chairman of the Heritage Commission, he deferred to Ms. Gilman who is also a member of the Heritage Commission. After discussion, Ms. Gilman, stated she felt comfortable proceeding without a Heritage Commission review. What was being demolished has no historical value.

That being, Ms. Gilman moved to approve the demolition of exterior egress stairs and fire escapes. Mr. Kollmorgen seconded. Vote: unanimous.

Discussion of the three-story addition on the northwest side of building with the accompanying changes noted. Using the prepared drawings Mr. Merkle addressed questions and provided clarification for the members.

With the clarifications, Mr. Schutz made the motion for approval: Mr. Kollmorgen seconded. Vote: unanimous.

Item 3, site changes to provide for accessibility and improved site drainage: Mr. Merkle provided more detail with a photo of existing conditions and detailing the proposed improvements.

Discussion focused on the back of building with an existing retaining wall and the addition of a lower retaining wall below the existing higher wall in effort to address water drainage. The question of plantings being used between the two levels was raised. It was decided that could be looked at by the parties at a later time; was not part of the application.

Mr. Kollmorgen moved to approve; seconded by Mr. Cameron. Vote: unanimous.

Mr. Merkle felt in looking at various photos all the windows have been replaced over a period of time with no original windows remaining. The composite window replacements proposed are double glazed units with muntins to look like putty beads from outside, same light configuration as present windows, a 5" wide casing and the sills to be replaced so as to be as close to original. Ms. Gilman made the motion to approve; seconded by Mr. Kollmorgen. Vote: unanimous.

The main entrance door on Spring St. will be replaced with a wood in-kind door of the same design. Referring to the door schedule included in the packet, the remaining doors to be replaced will be fiberglass. Thru experience the Academy has found this type of door to be the most durable on a dormitory. Discussion followed on the use of wood doors on the front of the building as opposed to fiberglass. The representative from the Academy felt that was acceptable. Mr. Schutz made the motion to modify the exterior door replacement item to read: all the exterior doors (3) in the front are to be wood and the proposed doors in the rear be of fiberglass. Mr. Kollmorgen seconded. Vote: unanimous.

A motion to approve the item of the elimination of one exterior door (on the porch) was made by Mr. Kollmorgen. Mr. Cameron seconded. Vote: unanimous.

Conversion of an existing window to an egress door was necessitated by the removal of the fire escapes as approved in item 1.

Mr. Schutz made the motion to accept; seconded by Ms. Gilman. Vote: unanimous.

Using the plan, Mr. Merkle noted the north chimney to be removed as listed in item 8. It was not

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part of the original building and at present not in good condition.

Mr. Schutz made the motion to approve: seconded by Mr. Kollmorgen. Vote: unanimous.

The northwest chimney to be replaced (item 9) would be of cement board with veneer brick to match existing structure.

Ms. Gilman moved to approve: seconded by Mr. Kollmorgen. Vote: unanimous.

A motion to approve the list of exterior finish replacements (item 10) was made by Mr. Schutz with the stipulation they be of a milled PVC material. Mr. Kollmorgen seconded and vote carried.

Further discussion of the replacement of the fluted columns (item 11) determined six (6) columns in all will be replaced and will be of fiberglass to match existing (columns).

Mr. Kollmorgen made the motion for approval; seconded by Mr. Cameron. Mr. Schutz asked to modify the motion by adding the word “structural”; Mr. Cameron suggested the number of columns be added. Final motion voted upon was: 6 columns to be replaced with structural fiberglass materials to match existing columns. Vote: unanimous.

**The application of 81 High Street, LLC for proposed new construction was postponed until the December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011 meeting. Tax Map Parcel #71-97. Case #11-26.**

**Other Business:**

- Approval of draft minutes for **July 21** meeting.  
Ms. Gillman moved to approve: seconded by Ms. Bergeron. Motion carried.  
Mr. Cameron and Ms. Martineau abstaining
- Approval of draft minutes for **August 18** meeting.  
Mr. Schutz asked for a correction when the word *muntins* was referenced incorrectly: it should read 6x6 *light* configuration in a section of the minutes.  
Mr. Kollmorgen moved to accept with change noted: Mr. Schutz seconded.  
Motion carried with Ms. Martineau and Mr. Cameron abstaining.
- Approval of draft minutes for **October 12** joint meeting with Heritage Commission  
Ms. Bergeron moved to approve: seconded by Mr. Cameron. Motion carried.
- Approval for draft minutes of **October 20** meeting.  
Ms. Martineau moved to approve: Mr. Kollmorgen seconded. Motion carried with Ms. Bergeron and Ms. Gilman abstaining.

Ms. Gilman asked, when time on a future agenda permitted, she and Ms. Martineau were willing to give a workshop on plans and elevations. There was agreement that such a workshop would be beneficial and welcomed.

Being no other business, Mr. Schutz made a motion to adjourn: seconded by Ms. Bergeron. Vote: unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Ginny Raub  
Recording Secretary