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APPROVED
HDC MEETING
FEBRUARY 7, 2019

Board Members Present: Chair Rodney Rowland, Vice Chair Jeff Hughes, Tom Maher, Kate Murray, Elaine Nollet, Judy Groppa, Irene Bush, and Peter Reed.

Chair Rowland called the meeting of the New Castle HDC to order at 7:00 pm and asked that anyone wishing to speak, must please sign in. Rowland, Hughes, Maher, Murray and Nollet will be voting.

1. Public Hearing continuance for Julia Thomas, 15-17 Atkinson Street, Map 18, Lot 10 for changes to previously approved plans including a balustrade and door.

Chair Rowland advised that all abutters had been notified, the notice published and all fees paid.
Guest: Jennifer Ramsey

Rowland stated a few board members went on a site walk to the applicant's home and the proposed change is not visible from the street, as he had to strain to see it past a tree.

Ms. Ramsey stated they are changing the roofline over the mudroom which connects the garage and the back of the house. The garage was previously approved, as was the mudroom, however, due to some unique angles, they decided to reconfigure the roof and give the homeowner a small roof deck off the master bedroom while adding light on a wall that has no windows.

The package Ms. Ramsey presented contained letters from abutters which are in support of the change. There are three sheets of elevations showing previously approved plans and the amended site plan elevations. The right side elevation as approved has more of a traditional pitched roof over the mudroom and the lower amended right side elevation shows a parapet wall with railing detail. The detail for the railing will match the railing below; it will have the same elements, dimensions, and fabrication.

The next view is from the back of the lot which is what any neighbors behind the home will be looking at, which is mostly of the garage that was approved. However, a gable has been added as well as a door on the top floor where there has been no windows. The door is styled to match the door to the kitchen on the first floor, around the corner of the house. The details of the railing and the Anderson French door were both previously approved.

The last elevation sheet shows the courtyard side or the left side. The top shows the previously approved gable roof structure. Ramsey stated the angle of the mudroom to the garage was making for some challenges with flashing details. The proposed change is much simpler and drops the connection between the garage and house by about 12" so it will give abutters a better view. The last sheet is a spec sheet for the Anderson door which will match others on the exterior of the home.

Kate Murray confirmed that it will be a small deck over the mudroom.

1
2 At 7:06 pm, Chair Rowland asked if there was anyone from the public who wished to comment
3 but no one spoke.

4
5 Vice Chair Hughes moved to approve the application for amendments as submitted; Tom Maher
6 seconded. All approved including the Chair.

7
8 2. Public Hearing for David Severance, 23 Elm Court, Map 13, Lot 10

9
10 Chair Rowland advised that all abutters had been notified, the notice published and all fees paid.

11
12 Guest: David Severance.

13
14 The commission asked if there were any changes to the plans since the last work session.
15 Severance had more information to present concerning the chimney stating that the building will
16 not support the weight of the chimney. He had two samples of brick, both from the Colonial
17 Collection of Old Mill: 1. the Independence and 2. the Boston Mill, as well as color pallets for
18 the faux brick. Severance believes it is the same material used at Strawberry Banke Museum on
19 one of their buildings. Jeff Hughes asked if he was going with the more rustic sample, which is
20 the Boston Mill, and Severance stated that he did like that one better.

21
22 Chair Rowland asked if the plans reflect the chimney change and Severance advised that the
23 plans reflect removal of the chimney on page 4 which designates a box where the existing
24 chimney is and will be removed.

25
26 Severance has chosen Marvin double hung custom windows, and is putting cedar shingles in
27 between each of the windows on the dormer. He is also relocating the second floor windows to
28 align with the first story, again replacing them with Marvin windows with 2 over 2 dividers to
29 match the existing windows. He will clad the bulkhead with shiplap to make it look like an
30 original entrance, but it is located behind the entrance to the house so it cannot really be seen
31 from the street. Chair Rowland advised there are several at Strawberry Banke Museum if he
32 would like a model. Severance will replace any rot with PVC trim.

33
34 Chair Rowland opened the meeting to the public at 7:14 pm. There was no one to speak for or
35 against.

36
37 Kate Murray stated the applicant worked hard with the neighbors and appreciated that he got rid
38 of the 2nd floor porch. Murray thought Mr. Severance did a good job with the plans and that they
39 will make great neighbors.

40
41 Hughes moved for approval of the application as amended, with the Boston Mill faux chimney
42 brick manufactured by Old Mill, specification of shiplap treatment on the bulkhead, and adding
43 shake shingles between the windows on the dormer. Maher seconded. All approved including
44 the Chair.

1 3. Work Session for Randy and Ellen Bryan, 34 Wentworth Road, Map 18, Lot 64 for new
2 garage and other changes.
3

4 Guests: Randy and Ellen Bryan
5

6 Chair Rowland advised he received new communications from the abutters that have been put in
7 the file and circulated to commission members.
8

9 Mr. Bryan said after the last meeting, they realized they were leaving everyone with a lot of
10 confusion. The Bryans reached out to a preservationist to help with the history of the house and
11 also sought advice on how to design it from a historical perspective. They wanted to see what
12 areas they would recommend changes and how to present them to the commission. The
13 preservation company researched and wrote up a history of the house which was constructed
14 approximately 1850. A Greek revival fireplace in one room is from the 1850's and the other
15 fireplace is from the 1920's. There is currently work being done inside the house which exposed
16 the underlayment of walls, and they found beams that may have been from an earlier version of
17 the house, possibly a gabled version. In 1855, the original part of the house, which is the larger
18 section of the T shape, was rebuilt into its current shape. The other part of the T, or the ell, was
19 added in 1920. There have been a number of changes to the house, such as the front door which
20 is now a bumpout, may have once been a portico with two posts which was later framed in,
21 probably in the 1920's rebuild.
22

23 The picture of the house on page 4, circa 1917, has 2 over 2 windows and shutters. There was no
24 west wing at that time, which they believe was added about 1920. The house has a gambrel roof,
25 and a substantial open porch on the south section. In the picture on the bottom of page 4, circa
26 1915-1925, there appears to be a chimney pot which was not in the 1917 picture and the
27 windows still have shutters. They suspect the picture was taken after construction of the west
28 wing due to the chimney pots. The second fireplace appears to be of 1920's design and the
29 wainscoting seems to be older than 1920, so it may have been carried forward from the 1850
30 design.
31

32 In the top picture on page 6, which was taken during renovation of a closet on the western edge
33 of the main house upstairs, are lathes going into a slanted beam, as well as 2 x 4's and wallboard.
34 It is believed this was the old 1855 roofline. At the bottom is a picture of the house in the
35 1950's, showing a large porch on the south side and the window shutters removed.
36

37 On page 7 there is a foundation of an earlier chimney from a 1917 photo that was removed and
38 replaced with a chimney on an outside wall. The house appears to be built on an equal size
39 foundation that pre-dates 1855, as there is a fieldstone foundation and then another foot or so of
40 brick, which is holding all of the sills for the existing house. Much of the front portion of the
41 house as it exists is from the 1855 build. The house has gone from a year round residence to a
42 vacation home and the last remodeling was done about 1920, almost 100 years ago.
43

44 The front door used to be flush with the house, had a portico and was enclosed, probably in
45 1920. As a setting, the house is set back from the road and most people don't remember the
46 house because it's not forefront, they remember the open space and knoll. Mr. Bryan expressed

1 hope this would have some bearing on the commission's view of how the house fits into the
2 character of the neighborhood.

3
4 The 1925 picture came from the Athenaeum and all others were family pictures. Elaine Nollet
5 asked them to share the pictures with the Newcastle Historic Society, which they have done as
6 they met with Adelle and Carol, who were very helpful and provided the Bryans with
7 information on the builder who did the 1920 work on the house.

8
9 Addressing the proposal and the changes the Bryans want to make to the house, Mr. Bryan began
10 with the Ambit plan which shows details of the placement of the wall and fence, and the garage.
11 The blue line is the proposed line for the retaining wall which is meant to hold dirt that will fill
12 the property, some of which is needed for engineering purposes and some for aesthetic purposes.
13 The wall and fence is intended to start at the south corner of the Mason house and come along
14 the Mason yard until it intersects with the north corner of the Feder property, then it will turn and
15 go along the Feder property. The stone wall will be 18" of mostly flat stone. Chair Rowland
16 asked about the existing stone wall which runs between the Feder property and the Bryans'
17 house. Mr. Bryan stated he believes it was part of the 1850-1855 house where they built up the
18 front yard to add area to get into the house and they added a 2 – 2 1/2' rock wall between their
19 property and the Feder's.

20
21 Bryan is intending to bring fill around the house in a U shape, as the knoll drops off in a deep
22 hole by the shed and then rises at the corner with the Mason property. They want to bring the
23 yard up and gently slope down close to the Mason's tree, which will make the yard more
24 accessible. On the other side of the house, the fill by the garage is needed to raise the ground
25 level about 2 feet to where the garage floor needs to be. The parking space adjacent to the
26 garage also will require fairly level ground which will slope down to the wall toward the Feder
27 property line. There is a real need here for the wall from an engineering standpoint and they will
28 be sure to maintain the incline below the town requirement of a maximum 3 to 1 slope.

29
30 We would like to build a fence along the Mason property line. By town ordinance, the
31 maximum height is 72". Tom Maher asked how close the wall will be to the Mason house and
32 Mr. Bryan stated "As close as possible to keep animals from coming back and forth; we want
33 privacy." They intend to put it right up to the corner of the Mason house. The Mason house has
34 a bulkhead that comes up to the corner of the property and the Masons are concerned the Bryans
35 will obstruct the bulkhead and obstruct their use of their property.

36
37 Maher stated the boundary line with Mason is a complicating factor and he would not be
38 enormously pleased that a fence would be built within an inch of the house even if their house is
39 right on the boundary line. Mr. Bryan stated the Masons have a temporary fence to keep their
40 dog on their property and it goes right to the corner, adding that they see this fence as necessary
41 to maintain some privacy. Rowland wanted to confirm that the fence will be on the retaining
42 wall. Mr. Bryan stated yes, the fence would be on the wall and had photographs of sample walls
43 with fences. Hughes asked from the ground level to the top of the wall by the Feder property,
44 how high will the wall and fence be. Mr. Bryan stated the current old rock wall is ground level
45 on their side and is 2 – 2 1/2 feet high on the Feder's side, although it tapers down behind their
46 shed, and the corner is 2 1/2 feet. The Bryans have eliminated the fence on top of the wall on the

1 Feder side. From the Feder's perspective it will be 2 – 2 ½ feet plus another 18", so all together
2 it will be 3 ½' to 4' and it will be behind the Feder's shed and not visible from the street.

3
4 Mr. Bryan had a picture looking from the street up to the Mason house and another looking from
5 the Mason house toward the Bryan property, stating that at the walk through, it was considered
6 an area not visible from the street. But Chair Rowland stated he walked the property again and
7 was surprised how much of the house is visible from the street, adding that most of it is visible.

8
9 Mrs. Bryan had a transparency of the perspective from Wentworth Road and what the garage
10 would look like from the driveway with shrubbery. She also had a photo with an overlay
11 showing the fill and the proposed topography. Maher asked if they would need to blast to put in
12 the driveway but there is no ledge there. Mr. Bryan indicated on the plan where a ridge cuts the
13 property and how the water drains on each side, adding that the driveway will be porous. He
14 asked if drainage is something that is under HDC purview and Kate Murray replied that it is a
15 state matter that you cannot have your water flow to your neighbor's property and was concerned
16 that may be an issue here.

17
18 Mr. Bryan explained the fence will be a federal design with solid panels; wood panels will be
19 across the top and the bottom, the posts will be square with square caps on top. The fence will
20 max out at about 4 1/2' and will be no higher than 72". The proposed fence style is similar to the
21 fence style on the north side where the Masons have a federal style fence with a trellis on top.
22 The Bryans intend to try and match the fence, without the trellis. Chair Rowland stated he was
23 glad the fence had been cut back.

24
25 Peter Reed asked about fill and when going from one corner of the property to the other, how
26 much would the level go down and was advised it will be about 3-4 feet difference in height.
27 The Chair said one area of concern is how the fence and wall interacts with the Mason property,
28 adding that he's not sure how a historic house will look with a fence tapping into it. Mr. Bryan
29 stated their own self serving perspective is that they would like the privacy afforded by a fence
30 from the close proximity of the Mason house.

31
32 Reed asked if they planned on taking the tree out. The tree is on the Mason property and when
33 building the rock wall, the Bryans will make sure there is suitable circumference around the tree
34 roots so as not to damage the tree.

35
36 Mr. Bryan moved on to the changes to the house design. Page 3 shows the south view elevation
37 of the house with the garage on the right, the main house, west wing, and porch; Wentworth
38 Road is to the right. The garage is the add-on and the remainder of the house is existing. They
39 would like a Craftsman style garage door, carriage style with glass across the top panel, a four
40 panel door would minimize the windows. The renovation inside the house took square footage
41 away due to rebuilding a staircase to code and the need for more closets and a bathroom, all of
42 which took 200-240 SF away and to it make up, they will build a room over the garage which
43 will add 200-210 SF. It's a single bay garage with a gambrel roof with a dual window hip roof
44 gable to mirror the one on the other side and balance the house. The garage is set back from the
45 ell of the house, about 10-12' back from the front of the main house. Looking at the property
46 line, the front face of the garage is about where the corner of the Feder property is.

1
2 Going to the west elevation – the porch is on the far side of the house and out of view, so it is not
3 a major design element. It has a hip roof to coincide with the architecture of the house and there
4 will be wooden screen panels and a door on the porch where they will enter the house, replacing
5 an entry door that was located on the end of the house.
6

7 The North elevation is the view from the Mason house to Bryan’s yard. Hughes asked what
8 happens to the basement windows and bulkhead door on the north elevation when they fill in the
9 yard. Mrs. Bryan indicated it is presently 1 ½’ to 2’ clearance from the ground level to the
10 windows. The fill will be sloped away from the house but they may have to put a window well
11 to hold the dirt back. The windows and bulkhead will stay as it is the only way into the
12 basement.
13

14 Jeff Hughes asked about the drainage around the garage. The area around the garage will take
15 quite a bit of fill but they are not sure yet how the fill will be done on the back of the house.
16 From an engineering standpoint, the area behind the garage is an area where a lot more dirt is
17 needed. The more dirt, the less rain that will be passed along as runoff but that is a discussion
18 for planning board approval. Chair Rowland advised that he worries about any approval coming
19 from the HDC prior to getting Planning Board approval because the Planning Board may make
20 all sorts of changes to the stone wall and fence.
21

22 Mr. Bryan returned to the east elevation advising that the triple window on the upper floor of the
23 garage has been changed to a dual window and a single window. The depth of the garage has
24 been reduced from 24’ to 23’ to minimize the mass. There is also a shed structure on the right
25 hand side of the garage which will be a 6’ shed instead of 5’ in depth. The shed is part of the
26 garage and they need this extension because they would like to place both cars into the 1 car
27 garage when they go away for long periods. The single window in the living room on the east
28 side will change to a dual window.
29

30 Chair Rowland stated that he appreciated what the preservation company did because this
31 commission’s responsibility is to preserve the historic integrity of the district and the
32 preservationist brought attention to the character of the house, authenticating that the gambrel
33 roof and the dormers have always existed. One of the things the Chair finds most defining is the
34 Cape Cod, perched on a hill, and he was very troubled that the addition is really close to the
35 neighbors and greatly impacts the streetscape view. It’s a question of mass and the re-defining
36 of the character of the house. Jeff Hughes agreed, stating the original 1917 gambrel is
37 picturesque as a gambrel-cape cod style summer cottage. This house has gone through several
38 iterations and has lost that character. Hughes is struggling with the applicant’s proposal stating
39 “It doesn’t feel right”.
40

41 Mr. Bryan stated that from their perspective the 1920 addition (the ell addition) is a much more
42 significant change to the structure and view of the house than what is being proposed. Looking
43 at the streetscape of the house, they tried to find a place on the property for an attached garage
44 which was most obscured and allowed them to put in a driveway and get cars in and out.
45

1 Tom Maher stated that sadly the configuration of the Bryans' house is such that their plan puts
2 the garage on the front of the house, and that's what the board members are wrestling with, that
3 the applicant is forever changing the front of the house. He added that what Mr. Hughes was
4 alluding to was that the 1917 or 1920 picture with the flag seems iconic, but it is that image that
5 is going to change forever if this board were to allow a garage on the front of the house. The
6 Chair agreed stating the garage will completely obliterate the character defining image. Mrs.
7 Bryan asked board members where they would put the garage to which board members stated the
8 garage should be placed on the back of the house. The Bryans stated there is not enough room
9 behind the house to drive a car back there and turn to get out; it's a safety issue and more fill
10 would be needed. Tom Maher said he just cannot approve putting a garage on the front of a
11 historic house and the board must stick to their mandate and authority, stating if we approve a
12 garage on the front of this house, every precedent will be broken and we cannot direct anyone
13 going forward. Maher suggested the Bryans put the garage on the knoll side of the house rather
14 than to disrupt the façade of the original house. There was much discussion as to exactly where
15 the Bryans should put the garage. Mr. Bryan stated that the knoll is the defining feature of this
16 property and believes the house complements the knoll. However, Mr. Maher advised that the
17 board is not a protector of the knoll, their job is as protectors of the historic houses.

18
19 Mr. Maher pointed on the plan to where the garage might be placed, by the newer ell, not
20 obstructing the porch. Chair Rowland stated placing the garage in the back would not redefine
21 the house in total but simply add a garage and retain the iconic part of the house. The Bryans
22 were advised to consult an architect and come up with something that will keep the integrity of
23 the house.

24
25 Jeff Hughes said their plan takes the character of the house and totally destroys it, adding that the
26 plan doesn't have symmetry; from a streetscape standpoint, he didn't see it improving the
27 property. Mr. Maher said the Bryans' challenge is where the house is located on the lot and
28 could commiserate with wanting to add a garage but he could not support the placement of the
29 garage on the front of the house as it is counterintuitive to the board's job.

30
31 Mr. Bryan stated no one has ever used the front door but the Chair pointed out it's part of the
32 defining characteristic of the house and how it looks from the street. Kate Murray advised that
33 it is the board's purview to look at the streetscape and she is concerned about putting a wall or a
34 fence virtually on someone's house. Jeff Hughes stated he believes property owners have rights
35 to do what they want with their property but he could not get his head around this one. Maher
36 said the preservationist has given a full picture of various eras and modifications done. The main
37 house is the characteristic the board is focused on preserving and it's worthy of doing this the
38 right way.

39
40 4. Board members did not receive minutes for the January 3, 2019 meeting so will postpone
41 until the March meeting.

42
43 5. Any New Business - CLG grant application progress

44
45 Chair Rowland sent the CLG application to the commission.

46

1 Irene Bush asked if there was any more news on the Massachusetts historic house. The town
2 clerk received paperwork for the subdivision of the house next door, the black & white colonial.
3 The Tarbell house has already been approved for subdivision and one of the lots has been sold to
4 the people looking at the historic house.
5
6 Maher motioned to adjourn; Murray seconded; all approved. Adjourned 8:36 pm
7
8 Respectfully submitted,
9 Diane L. Cooley, Secretary
10 *