

**APPROVED
JULY 1, 2021
HDC MEETING**

Members Vice Chair Irene Bush, Tom Maher, Kate Murray
Present: Judy Groppa and Ruth Zikaras.

Absent: Chair Rodney Rowland and Elaine Nollet

The meeting was held in the Macomber Room. Tom Maher called the meeting of the New Castle Historic District Commission to order at 7:18 pm. Maher stated there was one work session on the agenda. All members present will be voting.

1. Vote for new Vice Chair - The board took a vote to officially name Irene Bush as Vice Chair to replace Jeff Hughes. Kate Murray asked if the Select Board votes Bush in or whether it was up to the Board. Maher stated the Select Board defers to the Chair.

2. Work session for Weston Family Trust, 158 Portsmouth Avenue, Map 15, Lot 9 for new siding, new windows, new additions, garage demolition and new garage.

Judy Groppa motioned to approve Irene Bush as Vice Chair; Murray seconded; All in favor.

Vice Chair Irene Bush asked people who were planning to speak, to please sign in, adding that Chair Rowland asked that she convey the packet of materials submitted were concise and well put together.

Guests: Arilda Densch of Arilda Design; Patrick Driscoll, contractor.

Ms. Densch presented an old photo from the historical society stating the house still looks exactly the same. Densch went through the packet beginning with page S-1, the site plan, advising that it is a deep lot and the house sits 250' back from the water with a steep embankment. The shaded structures on the plans will be removed which includes the two car garage and 2 one story additions on the back of the house which were put on in the 1900's. Diagonal hatches show the existing structures which will remain. The original house is U shaped and the intent is to make it square and add a one story addition on the back to connect to the new 2 car garage.

2nd page is an overview of the site and plan; again, the hatched areas are the existing areas which will remain. The dashed line shows where the current garage is located; the new garage will be pushed over for convenience. There will be two propane tanks and three condenser pads which will be shielded by evergreen shrubs.

The next three sheets are photos. The house was built in 1820, is a hip roof structure and the front and left side of the house are almost identical and also almost the same dimension. The photos below are of the rear one story additions that will be removed. The front and side of the house have clapboards and shutters with wider windows. The East (or right side) and rear have narrower windows and simpler trim.

Looking down the right hand side you can see the reproduction house on the former Tarbell lot. The photo shows the neighbors and yard, two car garage and the shed.

The next page shows the trim and weathervane which will get re-used. The front and west door trim has an intricate but simple trim around both doors which will get rebuilt. The contractor is hoping to do the trim out of Boral, and if that doesn't work, he will use mahogany. The window trim will also be replicated in Boral or Azek, but Azek doesn't hold paint as well.

Lower left photo is the right or rear side which has less fancy trim around the windows with a 2 1/2" sill. All the sills will match that exactly. The lower right photo shows the existing fascia trim, with heavy molding under the soffit which will also be replicated around the existing house.

Drawings of the new designs show the front and left side of the house which are now covered with clapboards and will be replaced with cedar clapboards. The other sides, the less formal sides, will be replaced with Hardy or cedar shingles.

Groppa asked if the garage and connector will be shingled. Densch stated the front and left side of the house will be clapboard adding that if the Board feels the secondary structures can be shingled, they are fine with that. Densch stated that usually just the front is clapboard and the other 3 sides are shingled but the side is so visible, they thought it should have clapboards.

Densch went over the drawings of garage doors stating they are trying to find diagonal garage doors premade as shown but are still researching that, adding that they will have that information for the public hearing.

There is a very low pitch roof that is being filled in to shed water; wider windows exist on the front and left but the other sides have narrower windows; the narrower windows are also being installed on the connector and the garage.

The steps on the side going into the main house, which are currently wood, will be replaced with granite. The railing will also be done in wood to meet code. Judy Groppa asked if the railing on the steps was only on one side, which was confirmed there is currently a railing on one side and will be redone as simple as it is. It will be constructed of a composite to look like wood.

Densch next showed the rear elevation with a deck railing on a parapet wall as the owners want clear views of the backyard and river. There is lots of glass on the one story additions on the back. They are keeping the traditional muntin look on the windows and the house is becoming a big square.

Next the designs show the right hand side of the house with a dashed line where the building now ends; a hipped roof will be added and the building extended. There are two new windows on the right, one story addition. Tom Maher asked if they were renovating or demolishing the current garage and Densch confirmed they are demolishing the old garage. The back will have simple ballisters and the bottom handrail will be topped with a cap. Egress windows will imitate double hungs but will be casement windows to comply with code.

Judy Groppa asked about one window that does not have divided lights. Densch stated it sits back 12' or more and is not visible from the road but matches what is in the kitchen now, adding that it's difficult to see on paper but actually comes around the corner.

The fascia trim that wraps around the one story will match what is going around the house. The existing chimneys are all staying where they are. The chimneys look like they were redone and are in good condition.

Sheet 11 shows windows and sizes; they match what is currently on the house. The kitchen has casement windows added to the back of the house. The windows are made by Marvin with slim 5/8" muntins. They are aluminum clad, quality windows and historic looking.

Sheet 12 has details of a wooden bracket painted white. Sheets 13 & 14 are product cut sheets showing the doors going to the connector and the Marvin windows with 5/8" muntins. They will be adding historic sills which will be built to match. Sheet 15 has the railing detail.

Maher thanked Densch for the thorough packet stating that the two front doors are simple and a signature iconic element of the house but the connector door is a big departure from that style, adding that the design leaped out at him. Maher asked if there is another way to capture that look as it would be unfortunate if the connector door detracted from the historic element of the house and asked Densch to think about different options for the door. Densch stated that sheet 3 shows the storm door which will be the same style on the connector door but she didn't show the storm doors on the design. The front and side doors will be replaced or repaired.

Kate Murray was concerned about the cover over the connector door because there are no covers on the doors on the front or side of the house. The cover on the connector door makes it look like a main door. Bush stated eliminating the side lights would make for a simpler look, and if the side lights were eliminated

the little roof over the door would be smaller. Densch stated the house has a lot of doors, so the purpose of the cover is to say “go this way”, adding that the cover doesn’t have to be that large and the sidelights can be eliminated. Maher suggested maintaining a simple element from the roadside and Groppa agreed, as she was bothered by the lack of symmetry. The whole house is very symmetrical and having sidelights on just this one door doesn’t fit. Maher recognized that the back of the house has a lot of add-ons.

Groppa complimented Densch on the undertaking on the outside of the house stating so often people design from the inside out, caring about the inside but not paying attention to the outside. Groppa stated Densch paid so much attention to rehabbing all of the elements on the outside.

Densch stated the three sides of the house visible from the road will look pretty much the same. She asked the Board if they thought the trim on the garage should be less elaborate. Densch did not put the bed molding on the connector because it seemed too heavy and wondered if the bed molding should also not be on the garage. Sheet 5 shows heavy rounded molding under the soffit adding that it’s beautiful but a little fancy and Densch was wondering if it shouldn’t go on the garage because it’s a secondary structure. Coming from Rt. 1B you are looking right at the garage. The new garage will remain set back 5’ from the back of the existing house and the connector is 2’ back from that. Densch stated that she thought when it is a secondary structure, it should have a less fancy trim and believes she should simplify the garage and make it cleaner. The current garage is free standing, 24 x 24, and there is nothing historic about it.

Maher noted the skylights are not on the front of house, and advised that the Board has guidelines and it struggles with skylights. He reiterated that they are on the back side of the house but reinforced that the Board is not enthusiastic about skylights on historic homes, adding that if they are not essential and they were eliminated, that would be fine. Maher wanted to reinforce that the applicant be sure the skylights are not visible from the road. Murray stated if the driveway on the right is private, no one will be able to see the skylights.

Murray was pleased the structure is going back to a single family house and is becoming a more conforming lot. Murray stated that one of the things the Board looks at is massing and the garage is set back and the eye goes to the connector with all its detail. She stated it appears more massing than the Board usually likes. Murray also asked about the mahogany for the trim, asking if it weathers well. Pat Driscoll, the contractor, stated that mahogany weathers best of all the woods and that most historic homes will use mahogany, adding that it mills up nicely, doesn’t rot and is resistant to bugs. Driscoll also stated that the connector is 40’ – 50’ set back and the overhang on the door is going to protect against weather. The connector door is the door they are going to use as opposed to the front doors.

Murray brought up the 2nd floor deck stating there are some very inappropriate second floor decks in the historic district. Irene Bush stated you cannot see the deck from the front but it may be seen as you come up the road. It was asked that the railing be made so it doesn't draw attention to the deck. Maher stated the Board has approved 2nd floor decks where they are really not visible from the road. The test here is the house is seen plain as day coming into New Castle and Maher wondered if you can see the roof deck. Densch was asked if there is a way to minimize the railing. The deck and railing may be seen a little from the side and the preference is to minimize the line of sight. Maher understood that the intent is for the homeowners to be able to enjoy the back yard. Densch agreed to take a look at changes to the railing.

The package contained a picture of downspouts and Kate Murray inquired as to what was being done with the gutters and downspouts currently on the house. Densch replied that everywhere there is an eave there will be gutters and downspouts which will match the existing ones. Any that need replacing or any new ones will probably be aluminum but that discussion has not yet been had.

Tom Maher asked how long the new connector is going to be and was informed it is 16 ½' but two feet of it is behind the house. Sixteen feet of the connector will be seen as you come up the road but it is set way in the back. Groppa stated that since the connector is only one story, the railing on the upper deck will be visible coming onto the island. Densch stated that the way the road slopes and comes around, the house is actually what you see and is prominent. Maher stated he would like to walk the site and visualize the proposed plans.

The pictures on page 4 on the right at the top was pointed out as the view Board members are concerned about which will be shielded in summer by trees. The bottom left is the view coming from the bridge but the house looks further back in the picture than it really is.

Densch stated she might be able to build a half wall on the deck to simplify and make it more open on the back. It was also suggested that wire, which has a nautical look but is not seen as much, or glass panels may be more appropriate, both of which would need a top rail, but it was agreed that other options will be explored.

It is exciting to see this house get the attention it deserves, and the investment is positive. Vice Chair Bush advised Densch to bring a materials list for everything when returning for a public hearing

3. Approve minutes from June 3, 2021

Maher motioned to approve the minutes as amended; Kate Murray seconded. All approved.

Maher advised board members that a new alternate is needed for the HDC and if they know of anyone interested in serving as an alternate, to please advise the Chair. Murray thought the board should lean toward younger people who have moved into town. Alison Tanguay, the architect, was mentioned. She of course would have to recuse herself on those projects she is working on. It would also be nice having a builder or an engineer on the board. It was suggested to check with the Chair on how many alternates are needed and obtain his thoughts on Alison Tanguay. The commission should have 5 voting members and 3 alternates. Judy Groppa and Ruth Zikaras are alternates so only one alternate should be needed.

Murray motioned to adjourn; Maher seconded. All approved.

Meeting adjourned at 8:22 pm

Respectfully submitted
Diane L. Cooley, Recording Secretary