

**APPROVED  
OCTOBER 6, 2022  
HDC MEETING**

Members Present: Chair Rodney Rowland, Vice Chair Irene Bush, Kate Murray, Judy Groppa and Jane Finn.

Absent: Ruth Zikaras and Julia Thomas

The meeting was held in the Macomber Room. Chair Rowland called the meeting of the New Castle Historic District Commission to order at 7:00 pm. Rowland stated there were two hearings and the applications had been published, fees paid and abutters notified; he also asked that anyone who wished to speak should sign in. All members present will be voting.

The Chair asked the Springers if they would allow the second agenda item to go first as it should be a quick hearing and they agreed.

1. Public Hearing for Jeff and Barbara Hughes, 47 Oliver Street, Map 16, Lot 27 for replacement of existing fence with new privacy fence.

Guest: Chris Atwood co-owner of Otter Creek Homes

Chris Atwood stated Otter Creek Homes recently completed a HVAC upgrade at the Hughes' home and added a condenser. The neighbor asked the Hughes to install a privacy fence so the condenser cannot be seen. Atwood stated that Jeff & Barbara Hughes didn't want to change the existing fence but are doing so to accommodate the neighbor.

The Hughes will keep the existing picket style and will swoop the fence down so it is lowered to three feet near the road. Atwood presented two options for a step down or swoop transition, adding that he prefers the swoop transition. The fence will be painted white.

The Chair confirmed that Atwood lowered the condenser, and Atwood stated that the fence could actually be 60" instead of 72" to hide the condenser, so the transition would be 60" to 36".

The Chair asked if the board had any questions and Judy Groppa inquired if the fence would be attached at the ends. Atwood confirmed the fence would be attached to 3" granite posts which were installed by Ambit Engineering when they did a plot plan. There is a 3' picket fence which goes all the way back beside the garage and this fence will attach to the 3' picket fence, which acts as property line.

The Chair asked if there was anyone in the public to speak and there being no one, he closed the public hearing at 7:07 p.m.

1  
2 Atwood confirmed that they were requesting the fence to swoop as in Option A on the  
3 application.  
4

5 M/S/P The Vice Chair, Irene Bush, moved to accept the application for a swoop fence as shown  
6 in option A, with one swoop going from 60" to 36", or if possible from 54" to 36" if 54"  
7 will hide the condenser,. Kate Murray seconded; All commission members in favor,  
8 including the Chair.  
9

10 2. Continued public hearing for Curtis and Elizabeth Springer, 98 Cranfield Street,  
11 Map 17, Lot 19 for 3 small additions, replacement windows and doors, new  
12 dormer and new roof.  
13

14 Guests: Curtis Springer, Betsy Springer, Lucy Gorham, Designer, James Paolini,  
15 Contractor, and Jean Tiffany and Mary Pat Gibson, Abutters  
16

17 The Chair advised the public that Commission members conducted a site walk at the  
18 premises on Monday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> and this was a continuation of a hearing from last  
19 month.  
20

21 Lucy Gorham, the designer, stated the plans were revised from the prior month's hearing  
22 to show the bump out on the front of the house to look more like a sun room area off the  
23 kitchen. The garage elevation remains the same and the bay window on the back of the  
24 house was changed on the revised plan.  
25

26 The Chair asked about the skylight on the garage roof and whether there were grills in the  
27 French doors. Gorham confirmed there will be grills on the French doors. Irene Bush  
28 had Gorham confirm that there would be two skylights, one on the front and one on the  
29 back of the garage. Rowland looked at pictures of the house to check the roofline of the  
30 garage to see if the skylights would be visible from the street. Commission members  
31 spent several minutes reviewing the plans in detail, including the skylights and bay  
32 window on the back.  
33

34 The Chair stated that as discussed at last month's hearing, his concerns are with the front  
35 of the house as it is quite visible from the main street into town. He added that the  
36 additions are atypical and not something you find in the historic district. While one may  
37 find ells on historic homes, you do not see them on the front façade of a cape, causing  
38 imbalance. The Chair was concerned about the kitchen addition as well as the garage,  
39 adding that the applicant was taking a garage and making it less conforming to the  
40 historic district. At the site walk there was discussion about switching the addition to the  
41 back of the house, and again, Commission members and the Springers went back and  
42 forth for some time discussing options, such as shifting additions to the back of the  
43 house. Overall, Commission members did not like the additions.  
44

45 Judy Groppa wanted to make sure she understood the differences between the plans  
46 presented at the September hearing and those presented this evening. Gorham stated the

1 front addition is the same size as the prior plans but they centered the two windows and  
2 the roof line was changed to a peaked roof vs. a shed style roof. Groppa stated that she  
3 echoed the Chair's concerns and commented that the front of a cape cod house should  
4 look like a cape. It's a traditional house not a new house, and the addition would be  
5 appropriate in the back, but the front should be symmetrical with two windows and a  
6 door. As far as the garage is concerned, Groppa finds it odd that the width of the house is  
7 36' and the addition on the garage will also make another 36' unit, causing the garage to  
8 be as big as the house itself, making it out of proportion. Groppa apologized that she was  
9 unable to go on the site walk, and asked if the Springers could put an addition on the left  
10 side of the house, as visually the side or the back would be better. Curt Springer showed  
11 Groppa on the plan where the left side of the house is non-conforming so an addition on  
12 that side was not possible.

13  
14 Betsy Springer commented they want to make the house functional as they age; the house  
15 was built in 1950 and when their mom was wheelchair bound, they discovered how small  
16 and dysfunctional the house is. Betsy Springer added that the lot is unusual because of  
17 much ledge to the right of the house which precludes building on the back of the existing  
18 breezeway; there is also a dropoff of 10' in the back of the house on the river side. Due  
19 to the positioning of the building on the lot, and the ledge and dropoff, the house is  
20 squeezed between setbacks allowed under zoning. She added that the bump out from the  
21 kitchen is 6' x 12' which is the most conservative addition they can construct. Betsy  
22 Springer stated that New Castle has an eclectic mix of properties, some are old buildings  
23 with additions, and all those structures still manage to contribute to a sense of heritage in  
24 town. She opined that this conservative change to 98 Cranfield Street contributes to the  
25 continuity of a mid-century cape look. Springer stated it will have a 3 bay look to it as it  
26 will have two windows with a center door. She added that she was willing to plant  
27 something tall in front of the bump out to camouflage it and make it barely visible from  
28 the street. Springer showed photos of the house which sits at an angle, so the elevation  
29 where the addition is positioned is further away from street. The house sits farther back  
30 than many historic houses in town which Springer believes softens the change to the  
31 façade.

32  
33 Betsy Springer stated that from the river side, she believes the house is in keeping with  
34 New Castle as the house is not going to change in scale. She believes their requests are a  
35 reasonable accommodation to allow the Springers to update the house so it is functional  
36 as they age.

37  
38 Jane Finn asked if they had considered flipping the kitchen and dining room to place the  
39 kitchen in the back and put the addition in the back of the house. Betsy Springer believes  
40 placing the bump out in the back would impact the view for neighbors as well as impact  
41 the view from the living unit in the garage. Again, she is also concerned about the ledge.  
42 The addition is only 6' out and 12' wide and Curtis Springer said flipping the rooms  
43 won't solve the problem as there are two narrow doors in the kitchen with a table  
44 between and when they would bring their mother home in a wheelchair, the table had to  
45 be moved. If making this room into a dining room, they would run into the same  
46 problems. Betsy Springer stated the mud room is the entry for the garage living unit and

1 the entry into the kitchen, so switching the kitchen and dining room would make the mud  
2 room lead into the dining room which would be odd, and there would also be costs to  
3 switching things up.

4  
5 James Paolini, the contractor stated that on the old capes a substantial beam would have  
6 to be installed down the middle, and you would be coming into a formal dining room to  
7 enter into the kitchen. Irene Bush asked if the ledge could be blasted. Paolini said where  
8 this ledge is located, it would be very difficult to blast because it is an outcrop right next  
9 to the house, and even hammering it would be risky.

10  
11 The Chair asked if it would be possible to put the additions to the back of the garage,  
12 extending where the mudroom is now planned and bring the kitchen out that way. Betsy  
13 Springer stated the amount of space is quite constrained as there is a rock there. They are  
14 able to expand the mudroom by a few feet but there is not adequate room to expand the  
15 kitchen, and it would block the view of the river for the garage unit. The mudroom is 3' -  
16 4' wide now and not very useful except for walking between the garage and the house. It  
17 was built in 1950 when they didn't build a lot of closets, so they would like to expand the  
18 mudroom so it is functional.

19  
20 Irene Bush asked if the addition went to the back of the house and the kitchen was moved  
21 partially into the dining room, would the Springers have room for the dining room in that  
22 addition. Betsy Springer said if the kitchen was moved without changing the dimensions  
23 of the house, the dining room would probably be 8' and wouldn't be functional. Bush  
24 stated it seems you are resistant to bumping out the back of the house and Springer  
25 responded that this is because there is little room in the back yard because of ledge and a  
26 major dropoff. Someone stepping outside of an addition on the back would be stepping  
27 out onto a precipice. Commission members didn't think from their recent site walk, that  
28 the yard was as small as Springer was stating. Bush didn't believe the addition on the  
29 back would encroach that much on the yard. Springer stated that moving the addition to  
30 the back would affect the siteline from the garage unit. Rowland stated he did not see  
31 how one window in the garage would be impacted, possibly the window in the mudroom  
32 but not the garage.

33  
34 Kate Murray agreed with other Commission members that extending the back of the  
35 house by six feet is doable while putting the addition on the front of house was not  
36 amenable. Betsy Springer stated again that she is not comfortable with moving the  
37 addition to the back of the house because there would not be room to sit out back because  
38 of the precipice. The Chair advised that there is concern with the Springers' proposal and  
39 the Commission was just suggesting alternatives. Rowland asked if there were any other  
40 members who may want to comment. Groppa agreed she cannot support having the  
41 addition in the front, adding that it makes no sense and does not support the style of the  
42 house.

43  
44 Curt Springer stated he has never been on a historic district commission but he has been  
45 on a zoning board and it's actually in the statute that there be substantial justice, or a  
46 more generic term of proportionality. Supreme Court decisions in land use regulation

1 state that it's a requirement to balance the public benefit against the private cost of  
2 deprivation to the owner and Springer was concerned that he was not hearing that tonight.  
3 The Chair stated that is in zoning but it is not in the HDC. Springer stated that  
4 proportionality is inherent in all land use regulations, because of Supreme Court rules,  
5 although he acknowledged it is not in HDC regulations. Curt Springer stated he would  
6 like to hear some sense of consideration of what the public benefit of adhering to this  
7 aesthetic ideal is to the detriment of the Springers' enjoyment of their property  
8

9 Rowland stated the main focus of the HDC is to preserve the historic streetscape and that  
10 Curt Springer himself pointed out there was an incident on Steamboat Lane which  
11 created the HDC. What Commission members are trying to do for justice, is trying to  
12 give the Springers alternatives to consider. However, Betsy Springer stated that these  
13 alternatives don't appeal to them and they've been very careful with these plans, as they  
14 grew up in New Castle. Betsy Springer doesn't think anyone who drives into New Castle  
15 on Rte 1B looks at big additions on little capes. She also believes what people would see  
16 driving by 98 Cranfield Street would complement the scale and flavor of the historic  
17 district. Springer stated she feels the Commission would be more comfortable with a tear  
18 down than a rebuild, adding that the Springers want a house they can live in but the house  
19 is very small and has to be fixed. She believes the plans are a reasonable compromise  
20 and doesn't believe the bump out would be noticeable. There's a tree in the front yard  
21 and one doesn't even see the front door.  
22

23 The Chair opened the meeting to the public and asked if there were any comments or  
24 questions.  
25

26 Mary Pat Gibson and her husband, Jay Gibson, who live at 91 Cranfield Street have  
27 concerns with the Springers' renovation as proposed. Mrs. Gibson stated her concern is  
28 that the Springer home is a classic cape and the request for an addition is completely  
29 understandable. The Gibsons can endorse an addition as long as the house continues to  
30 look like a historic cape, especially as one faces the front of the house. The Springer  
31 house is on the main street that runs into the village. Mrs. Gibson stated that she voiced  
32 her concerns at the last meeting and met with the Springers after the September hearing  
33 and voiced her concerns again, however, the Gibsons don't see any changes in the plans  
34 from last month. There has been no change to the garage and if in fact the addition is for  
35 storage, there is the option of free standing storage that does not interrupt the lines and  
36 character of the cape. If in fact there is a skylight, it will be visible driving by the house  
37 and it doesn't fit into the historic district. Mrs. Gibson doesn't see how this is going to be  
38 a bump out storage nor how landscaping will change the lines of an addition.  
39

40 Curt Springer responded and agreed that the Gibsons and Springers had a good meeting  
41 and took into consideration the Gibsons' suggestions to change the roof of the garage 90  
42 degrees east and west instead of north and south, to continue the lines of the house. Curt  
43 Springer's concern is that they have not applied for an Accessory Dwelling Unit  
44 ("ADU") because they haven't needed one. One purpose of an ADU is that the house  
45 look like a single family house, yet if the roof is turned as suggested, it will look like two  
46 capes sitting one behind the other on one lot. Springer met with the building inspector

1 who agreed and also advised that turning the roof would result in snow and ice sliding  
2 down onto the driveway.

3  
4 Betsy Springer asked what the rules are regarding a garage, advising that they can put  
5 two garage doors, one on the storage and one on the building, if the goal is to have it look  
6 like a two car garage. The Chair stated the garage would still not be on an even plane.  
7 Springer asked if there are rules that say the garage has to be on an even plane. The  
8 Chair advised that garages are not historic yet the Springers are making their garage less  
9 conforming to the streetscape. The garage would still jut out and it is not Springers'  
10 intention to put landscaping around the garage to conceal the bump out, only to put  
11 landscaping around the kitchen bump out. Shrubs would fit in the space in front of the  
12 kitchen and hide it.

13  
14 Betsy Springer asked about a separate shed for storage and whether it would be allowed  
15 in the front yard on Cranfield Street. The Chair advised that the commission would  
16 have to review it.

17  
18 Curt Springer sees a conflict between two different town boards because the garage is  
19 half non-conforming with zoning. The 15' setback is a little bit to the right of the  
20 separator between the two bays. To extend the whole garage back, would not conform  
21 with zoning, it would need a variance. Springer has a philosophical problem because he  
22 sat on a zoning board and to get a variance one has to prove a hardship. He would have  
23 difficulty saying he has a hardship that they cannot comply with zoning when currently  
24 the garage is in conformance. Rowland stated that if the HDC votes against their  
25 application, they would then have a hardship. Rowland then advised the Springers that  
26 these are all ideas for them to take away and consider.

27  
28 Jean Tiffany, whose home abuts the Springers to the right of the garage, stated she  
29 doesn't think there is a need for the amount of storage, given that the Springers have a  
30 full basement. Tiffany's house was built with the idea to hide the garage from view as  
31 much as possible, and the main entrance of her house would, according to the elevations,  
32 face a blank wall of 12' of their garage addition. She believes their plans greatly devalue  
33 her property and privacy. They are putting a bedroom window facing her porch.  
34 Tiffany doesn't see the need for windows if they have skylights, although skylights are  
35 not supposed to be in the historic district. Her privacy will be hugely impacted and she  
36 will have to put in landscaping to hide the addition, possibly tearing up cobblestone to put  
37 in trees to maintain privacy, which would be a big expense. Tiffany stated her property  
38 also has ledge and the back of her house dropped straight down to River Road when she  
39 purchased it. She built up her yard to have some room in the back. Because of the ledge,  
40 she is unable to plant and may have to put in a trellis for privacy. When you look at the  
41 elevation for the garage addition, it hasn't been changed (from the September plans) and  
42 it is a big blank wall. Tiffany presented a markup at the September meeting of how close  
43 the garage addition will be to her home, stating that if she becomes ill and has to sell the  
44 house, the Springers' addition will affect the value of her house. Their additions do not  
45 look right, they are out of scale and are not in keeping with the historic district. Tiffany  
46 stated she doesn't want to thwart the Springers' need for lovely living space and while

1 they speak about their enjoyment of their property, it will greatly affect her enjoyment of  
2 her own property.

3  
4 Curt Springer believes that when Jean Tiffany looks out her door, she will be looking  
5 beyond the end of anything done to the garage. He also doesn't believe that how a  
6 neighbor's view is affected is in the purview of the historic district. Springer spoke to the  
7 building inspector who confirmed that. Springer said issues about the historic look of a  
8 property is in the Commission's authority but doesn't believe that what an abutter sees is  
9 relevant. The Commission acknowledged he is correct about that.

10  
11 Jean Tiffany added that of course it isn't up to her where windows are placed, but saying  
12 that for good neighborly feelings, it's just respectful of someone else's privacy. Betsy  
13 Springer advised Tiffany that they would be happy to work with her to ensure adequate  
14 privacy. Springer stated they've had some discussion about flipping the garage extension  
15 so the longer side goes across the front of the garage but new construction has to be 15'  
16 from the property line. Betsy Springer also asked about skylights, asking if they are  
17 similar to solar panels in that they need HDC review. Springer stated they are happy to  
18 do what they can to make it look as much as possible like a cape but are asking for these  
19 modifications as opposed to other suggestions of rebuilding, blasting, etc. Adding that  
20 the Applicants are trying to find something that works and are very sensitive to the  
21 heritage issues, historic district and preservation.

22  
23 Chair Rowland read a letter from abutters John and Lauren Lannon of 35 River Road  
24 who approve of the Springers' plans. The Chair then advised that the Town of New  
25 Castle had done a survey of the island, the point of which was to get a third party  
26 evaluation of all properties on the island to understand their contribution to the history of  
27 New Castle. The second phase of this survey will be to look at buildings in the historic  
28 district and understand their windows and doors, etc. The report from the initial phase of  
29 the survey says of 98 Cranfield Street:

30  
31 *"A well-preserved three-bay Center Entry example with a connected garage is 98*  
32 *Cranfield Street, built in 1950. In addition to many characteristic features, including*  
33 *gabled dormers, original 8/8 wood sash windows, a breezeway connecting to a large,*  
34 *two-bay gable-front garage with semi-circular louvred vent centered in the gable, the*  
35 *house also has a Mid-Century Colonial Revival frontispiece with three-quarter side lights*  
36 *and entablature."*

37  
38 Rowland stated that is another company's opinion of the importance of this house and  
39 supports why he does not agree with the additions the Springers are suggesting to this  
40 house. Betsy Springer stated yes, it's in the cape cod form and of course it looks great as  
41 it was built in the 1950s, not in 1600 or 1700. The reality is that no one historic lived  
42 there, nothing important happened there. There is such an eclectic mix of houses in the  
43 historic district, Ms. Springer doesn't think non-conforming additions make New Castle  
44 feel any less historic. People think all of New Castle is historic and that's because it's so  
45 small and charming, it's an old fashioned town that has been well preserved but that  
46 doesn't mean everything is uniform. The house is going to look great, they will put all

1 new clapboards on, and it is in the spirit of a cape cod form. Springer doesn't believe the  
2 changes will cause anyone to think that the house doesn't fit in.

3  
4 The Chair asked if there were any additional comments from the public and there being  
5 none he closed the public hearing at 8:02 p.m. He then asked the Springers if they  
6 wanted the Commission to vote or if they want to speak with their architect and continue  
7 the public hearing until next month. Betsy Springer asked Rowland what the  
8 Commission would want to see from them and their architect and he responded  
9 something to minimize the Commission's concerns. Springer stated that if the  
10 Commission is looking for the applicants to come back and state they are not going to  
11 make the changes as shown in the plans, they may as well vote.

12  
13 M/S/P Kate Murray moved that the Commission reject the proposal based on the discussions  
14 had regarding the two additions in the front of the house; Irene Bush seconded. All voted  
15 Aye including the Chair.

16  
17 Curtis Springer asked the Commission about the number of days to appeal to the ZBA as  
18 the ZBA is the governing body and was advised 30 days. Murray suggested they  
19 consider speaking with their architect about other options.

20  
21 3. Approve minutes from September 1, 2022

22  
23 M/S/P Irene Bush moved to approve the minutes of September 1, 2022 as amended; Kate  
24 Murray seconded. All approved including the Chair.

25  
26 4. Any New Business (Master Plan update)

27  
28 The Chair received feedback from some Commission members, as he had requested, with  
29 regard to a draft of the Master Plan, and he added their ideas to the Google document  
30 being circulated. The Chair welcomes additional comments from Commission members.  
31 There is a Historic Resources Section of the Master Plan and the Chair read a vision  
32 statement which he drafted for this section which was well received by Commission  
33 members.

34  
35 Everyone on the Master Plan committee has decided the format will be the same for  
36 every section. Each section will address the existing conditions and what they would like  
37 to see happen over the next ten years.

38  
39 Groppa asked the Chair how specific he would like them to be and did he want to talk  
40 about solar panels in relation to how the Commission incorporates them. Rowland stated  
41 the survey pointed out that we will have to continue to deal with solar panels as they  
42 become more desired for energy conservation. The Chair advised they will be revisiting  
43 the guidelines regarding solar panel installation to see if any changes are needed. The  
44 whole concept of the loss of the building on Wild Rose Lane caused people to look at  
45 other areas to preserve history. Rowland asked Commission members to think about  
46 other areas and pointed to Ocean Road, where the coast guard station is located.



1 Rowland discovered while doing some research that the left side of Ocean Road and the  
2 coast guard station is already in the historic district although the HDC has no purview  
3 over it. Commission members spoke of a few houses that were historic and changes had  
4 been made but they were not located in the historic district. Where are those vulnerable  
5 spots that are not in the district and how can the historic district be expanded, which can  
6 only come with a vote of town residents.

7  
8 Groppa stated that if a building is eligible for the national or state register of historic  
9 places, it would seem there would be some protection, even if it was a stand alone house.  
10 The Chair stated that he wanted to use the historic district as the tool it is meant to be but  
11 not to say this street needs protecting only to prevent a large mansion from being built.

12  
13 M/S/P Kate Murray motioned to adjourn the meeting; Irene Bush seconded. All approved.

14  
15 Meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm

16  
17 Respectfully submitted,  
18 Diane L. Cooley, Recording Secretary