

**AMENDED
JANUARY 5, 2023
HDC MEETING**

Members Chair Rodney Rowland, Vice Chair Irene Bush, Kate Murray, Judy Groppa
Present: Jane Finn, 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 7:08 pm. Rowland stated there was a Finding of Fact hearing scheduled.

1. Discussion and Finding of Fact for Curtis and Elizabeth Springer, 98 Cranfield Street, Map 17, Lot 19

The Chair stated that he hoped that members of the Commission understood his email instructions, as on the advice of town counsel the Commission needs to tie the decision made on the application in October, 2022 to Findings of Fact. The Findings of Fact are now a State RSA and have been implemented into the Portsmouth zoning code. The commission is using Portsmouth's Findings of Facts. The Chair stated he had no specific way to do this but would start by going through each finding of fact and discuss the application. If you look at the Findings of Fact, they are general as to the area and specific home.

I. The special and defining character of surrounding properties, including architectural details, design, height, scale, mass, width of surrounding structures, street frontages, types of roofs, facades and openings.

Chair Rowland stated that this is more of a general look at the particular area of the district, in this instance Cranfield Street. Much of the houses in the area maintain their original architectural style and continue to demonstrate the evolution of the district through the centuries. All houses pre-dating 1973 are eligible for the National Historic Register according to the Secretary of the Interior. Hence this area of the district is contributing. Contributing is a term used when evaluating a historic structure. A house by itself can be contributing to a streetscape. There are defining characteristics of a particular house that can contribute to the overall history of that area.

The Chair asked if there were others that wanted to speak adding that Kate Murray had emailed her ideas on the house and Findings of Fact to the Chair.

Irene Bush stated that in terms of the neighborhood context, 98 Cranfield Street is in the historic district and on the main road and is surrounded by other historically significant houses. The proposed design is not comparable to other capes in the historic district and therefore does not preserve the special character of the historic streetscape or integrity of the historic district.

1 Kate Murray stated this part of island, the one that everyone drives by, is filled with
2 homes of particular architectural interest. The proposed changes to the house in question
3 would substantially change the character of this area. The house is a traditional cape and
4 the proposed changes would make it unrecognizable as a cape.

5
6 II. The significant historical or architectural value of an existing structure for which a
7 Certificate is sought, including its setting, scale and mass; and the general size of new
8 construction with consideration of such factors as height, width, materials and
9 architectural details.

10
11 The Chair stated that the house at 98 Cranfield Street was identified in the 2021 New
12 Castle Area Form survey done by The Preservation Company and is identified as “A
13 well-preserved three-bay center entry example with a connecting garage is 98 Cranfield
14 Street, built in 1950. In addition to many characteristic features including gabled
15 dormers, original 8 over 8 wood sash windows, a breezeway connecting to a large two
16 gable-front garage with semi-circular louvred vent centered in the gable. The house also
17 has a mid-century Colonial Revival frontispiece with three-quarter side lights and
18 entablature.”

19
20 The Chair stated that it is a classic unaltered example of this form and is fitting for this
21 area of the district when compared to other neighboring structures and styles.

22
23 Vice Chair Irene Bush stated she would have quoted the same from the survey and also
24 that the current massing of 93 Cranfield Street is in keeping with a traditional cape. The
25 Applicant is proposing to bump out ½ of the front of the house and one side of the
26 garage. The proposed massing is not in keeping with a traditional mid-century cape,
27 which should be symmetrical with two windows and a door.

28
29 Kate Murray said 98 Cranfield Street is one of the few examples of a traditional cape on
30 the island. The survey shows the importance of structure and how it compares to
31 remaining areas of the historic district .

32
33 Judy Groppa said the original construction of the house is a revival style and was built at
34 a time when garages were built with and attached to houses. It is significant that an
35 essential Cape Cod house is left by itself and the garage is angled to the side so it is not
36 the prominent piece. The Applicant’s proposal to add 12 more feet onto the garage will
37 significantly change the look of the house. The width of the house is 36’ and the new
38 addition on the garage would make it 36’ also. This will significantly alter the classic
39 Cape Cod.

40
41 Jane Finn stated she drove around the island to find any other cape or colonial that had
42 bumped out half of the house or half of the garage and couldn’t find any, even though she
43 is aware there are inconsistencies in the historic houses, adding that she couldn’t find any
44 examples of someone bumping out either of those.

1 III. The extent to which a proposed project's exterior design, scale, arrangement,
2 texture, detailing and materials complement or enhance the existing structure and are
3 compatible with surrounding properties and the Commission's adopted Design
4 Guidelines.
5

6 Chair Rowland stated that this application impacts two of the identified characteristic
7 features, being the sash windows on the front of the main house and the garage. The
8 proposed changes impact those areas in an atypical manner that has not been introduced
9 into the historic district since its creation. Rowland noted "since it's creation" because
10 there are anomalies in the district. The historic district was created late and many
11 changes were made to houses in the district before there was any guidance, but it has
12 been consistent since creation of the historic district . Neither the proposed bay window
13 nor the extended garage bay are typical features and they move the house away from the
14 typical uniformity and balance seen on a classic Cape Cod.
15

16 The HDC ordinance section 9.3 states the purpose of this land use body (Section 9.3.1)
17 item 1 as "To preserve and protect the buildings and the historic architectural landscape
18 of the historic district" and, item 3 as "Maintain continuity of scale and architectural style
19 of constructed, reconstructed and renovated buildings within the district." The proposed
20 additions/alterations to this structure do not serve this purpose.
21

22 Irene Bush added that the proposed additions do not enhance the exterior design or scale
23 and do not represent conservation and enhancement of property values.
24

25 Kate Murray stated this house is particularly unique in that it is a traditional cape which is
26 easily seen from the road. The proposed changes would substantially change the look of
27 the house so that it would no longer look like a cape at all. Also the massing of the
28 proposed addition to the garage would overwhelm the cape character of the house.
29

30 The Chair stated that he believes there is some agreement there as to why the
31 Commission voted the way it did. The last finding of fact is not relevant, which none of
32 the commission members had comments on, but he added it into the record as to refer to
33 it in the future.
34

35 IV. Encouraging innovative use of technologies, materials and practices provided
36 these are compatible with the character of surrounding properties.
37

38 No comments.
39

40 Chair Rowland stated those are the areas, and the task of the Commission tonight is to get
41 these Findings of Fact down in the minutes so the ZBA has them and can discuss at their
42 meeting this month.
43

44 The Chair asked if there was anyone in the public who wished to speak, adding that the
45 Commission is not voting, but is simply re-defining its decision. There was no public
46 comment.

1
2 The Chair then asked the Commission if there were other comments. There being none,
3 he stated that the conversation would be closed and the Commission would get the
4 information to the ZBA.

5
6 2. Approve Minutes from October 6, 2022
7

8 There was some clarification as to the front and back of 98 Cranfield Street as the
9 Applicants refer to the side facing the river as the front, rather than the side facing
10 Cranfield Street as the front.

11
12 M/S/P Kate Murray moved to approved the amended minutes of October 6, 2022; Irene Bush
13 seconded; All in favor.

14
15 3. Any New Business
16

17 The Chair stated that he missed the Master Plan meeting because he worked Candlelight
18 Stroll but he has done much entry into the HDC section of the plan. He has not received
19 any feedback from the Master Plan Committee for or against what he added so assumes it
20 is right on track. He will attend this month's meeting and the Committee's goal is to
21 have the proposed Master Plan done by the end of the year.

22
23 The attorney for the Springers asked the Commission when the Findings of Fact would be
24 available. The Secretary advised she will work on them and have them available as
25 quickly as possible.

26
27 4. Adjournment
28

29 M/S/P Irene Bush moved to adjourn; Kate Murray seconded. All approved.

30
31 Adjourned 7:28 pm

32
33 Diane L. Cooley, Recording Secretary
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