

APPROVED
New Castle Historic District Commission
February 6, 2014

Public Hearing re: Jennifer Gray, 83-85 Piscataqua St., Map 17, Lot 37 & 38

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Irene Bush; Peter Follansbee; Kate Murray; Elaine Nollet;
Peter Reed; Rodney Rowland; Marjorie Smith

BOARD MEMBER ABSENT: Patty Cohen

Chairman Smith called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Public Hearing Re: Jennifer Gray, 83 Piscataqua St., Map 17, Lot 37:

GUESTS: Jennifer Gray, applicant; Attorney Bernie Pelech, representing the applicant
John McCormack, Project Manager; Jim Gray, Designer.

Chairman Smith announced this was a public hearing for Jennifer Gray, 83 Piscataqua St.,
Map 17, Lot 37. The applicant proposes to remove existing structures and replace them with a
single family cape at 83 Piscataqua St.. Map 17, Lot 37.

Jennifer Gray, applicant, gave a history of the property. Currently, there are two summer
“camps” on the property that were built in the 1970s. They are not winterized and both are
mold-ridden, making them uninhabitable. She pointed out that they do not reflect the character
or architectural landscape of historic New Castle and referred to the photographs of the current
structures, (Attachment A.)

Proposed Changes:

She proposed to remove the existing structures and replace them with a single-family, traditional
Cape that fits well within the neighboring properties and character of the New Castle
community. The home will be a modest 3-bedroom, 2 1/2 bathroom home with an attached
garage.

Structure:

The proposed structure is a traditional Cape, chosen for its simple and clean design as well as its
prominence in the neighborhood and throughout New Castle.

Scale:

The proposed footprint will be 1,749 SF which is smaller than the current footprint of 2018 SF
and similar or smaller than neighboring properties. The height of the proposed house is 28 feet,
which is the typical height of Capes and a median height of homes in the neighborhood. It has
about 2,300 SF of living space.

The applicant came before the HDC in January for a work session that resulted in several requested/suggested changes to make the design of the home “simpler” in appearance for better coherence with neighboring properties. The requested changes they incorporated are:

Windows:

- a. Changing from 6 or 8 over 1 windows to a consistent 4 over 1 window design
- b. Removing the side-light window beside the front door
- c. Removing the transom windows above the first floor windows

Deck columns:

- a. Removing the larger, shingle-based, deck columns and replacing them with simpler, square, deck columns

Dormer styles:

- a. Eliminating the arch in the dormer over the garage and replacing it with a straight collar tie ceiling

Architectural Flairs

- a. In a subsequent conversation with Peter Follansbee after the January HDC meeting, she learned that the committee would like to see a version of the house without the architectural flairs. Although they prefer the house with the flairs because they feel they add character and eye appeal to the house, they have included a front elevation depicting the house without the flairs in the spirit of cooperation. She presented both options to the Board.

Chairman Smith asked for the Board’s comments.

Follansbee said the applicant has made big strides in simplifying the proposed home. He pointed out that he likes the option of the front elevation without the flairs and having the clapboards come all the way down. The absence of the transom lights is very helpful and he feels they have made good improvements with the upstairs. Overall, he likes the revised plan. Follansbee asked if the exterior flue was for a gas stove.

Gray replied it would be for a wood stove.

Follansbee asked if it were possible to bring that within the exterior wall and not have that as an attachment.

Jim Gray is unsure if that could be done by code. He would have to check the codes to see if that is possible.

Murray asked what it is attached to on the inside.

Jennifer Gray replied it is attached to the family room.

Rowland assumes that the fireplace/stove is in the room above the garage and it cannot vent through the roof. In his opinion, it looks somewhat awkward to have a chimney suspended by a bracket, halfway up the side of the house.

Rowland questioned the dormer with the porch and asked if it was two doors flanked by two windows? The applicant replied yes.

Rowland agrees with Follansbee and appreciates the work that went into making this a simpler home along with the other houses in the neighborhood.

Bush agrees with Follansbee and Rowland.

Murray likes the option of the front elevation without the flairs.

Reed questioned the garage doors if they were wood or were they designed to look like wood.

Attorney Pelech replied they were designed to look like wood.

Nollet likes the changes that the applicant made.

Chairman Smith asked for public comments.

Sarah Flause, 46 Piscataqua St., questioned the footprint size and prefers the garage not to be in front of the house.

The Chair replied this was the only viable choice for the property, given the restrictions of setbacks.

Sarah Flause feels that it is not in keeping with the integrity of the neighborhood.

Jeff Flause, 46 Piscataqua St., said the design of the home did not look like a cape. In his opinion, the design looks like a big modern puffed-up house.

The Chair asked for other public comments. There were none. She asked for the Board's comments. There were none.

Murray moved for the Board to allow the demolition of the present structures. Nollet seconded the motion. Approved.

Bush has concerns regarding the dormers being shingled as opposed to being clapboard.

Rowland expressed his concerns regarding the chimney flue and said there was nothing like this anywhere. He pointed out that if the applicant were to bring it down to grade, it would look much better.

Rowland is not oblivious to the garage issue and he understands what Flause is saying about this matter. He understands there do not seem to be any other options.

Reed inquired about the width of the property and location of driveway and parking.

Gray replied they have a shared driveway.

Chairman Smith asked if the Board had further comments.

Follansbee agrees with Rowland regarding the garage and pointed out that the Board might be establishing a precedent and it is a valid concern.

The Chair feels that approving this garage doesn't set a precedent, since each situation is unique as regards to lot size, setbacks and location and is evaluated on individual factors.

Bush moved for the Board to approve the applicant's drawings, dated 2-6-14; to approve the front elevation drawing without the flairs; also the right elevation dated 2-6-14 with one change that the flue stack depicted on the left hand side of the front elevation be brought down to grade. Nollet seconded the motion. Approved.

Review of the HDC Minutes of January 2, 2014:

Bush moved for the HDC to approve the minutes of January 2, 2014, as amended. Reed seconded the motion. Approved.

Adjournment:

Nollet moved to adjourn the meeting. Bush seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Anita Colby
Recording Secretary

Attachment A: Photograph of Existing Structures