

APPROVED
Historic District Commission
June 5, 2014

Public Hearing re: Stephen & Katie Eldred, 180 Portsmouth Ave., Map 15, Lot 5
Michael & Maria Southworth, 36 Piscataqua St., Map 18, Lot 30
Kevin & Deb Callahan, 26 Oliver St., Map 16, Lot 41
Clarissa Christiansen, 87 Piscataqua St., Map 17, Lot 37/38

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

Chairman Rowland called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Chair announced that the public hearing for Michael & Maria Southworth, 36 Piscataqua St., Map 18, Lot 30, has been postponed at the applicant's request until the July meeting.

Bush moved for the public hearing regarding Michael & Maria Southworth to be postponed until the July meeting. Murray seconded the motion. Approved.

Public Hearing Re: Stephen & Katie Eldred, 180 Portsmouth Ave., Map 15, Lot 5:

GUESTS: Stephen Eldred, applicant; Donald Cook, Builder; Jan Gleysteen, Architect;
Attorney Bernie Pelech, representing the applicants

The Chair announced this was a public hearing for Stephen & Katie Eldred, 180 Portsmouth Ave., Map 15, Lot 5. The public hearing has been properly advertised, abutters have been notified and all fees paid. The voting members for this evening will be Cohen; Follansbee; Murray; Nollet and the Chair.

Attorney Bernie Pelech said they have had four changes to the plans reflecting the Board's suggestions. After the last meeting, the concerns from the Board were regarding the front elevation concerning the front door. They have come up with a new concept regarding the front entry-way. The other three elevations are the same as previously presented.

Jan Gleysteen, Architect, agreed the other three elevations are the same as previously presented before the Board. The Board felt the front elevation was too ornate and not in character with the neighborhood. Gleysteen presented the revised front elevation and noted the following: they took out the curve, they took out the brackets; they brought in a half shingle wall to wrap around the breakfast room and the door with side lights becomes recessed.

Gleysteen also asked the Board if they could have glass in the upper half of the door. He hopes the Board will approve the revised design of the front elevation. If the Board likes this revised design, he is pleased to announce that the applicant likes it.

Chairman Rowland asked for public comments. There were none. He asked for the Board's comments.

Nollet likes the new design.

Reed is OK with the new rendition. Many of the things the Board suggested a month ago will never be colonial but then he feels they are on the outside boundary of colonial Portsmouth. The applicant has done a very nice job.

Cohen thanked the applicant for doing a wonderful job.

The Chair closed the public portion of this hearing for Stephen & Katie Eldred.

Nollet moved for the HDC to approve the applicant's revised plans, dated May 15, 2014, of the front elevation, as presented this evening. Murray seconded the motion. Approved.

Chairman Rowland closed the public hearing for Stephen & Katie Eldred.

Public Hearing Re: Kevin & Deb Callahan, 26 Oliver St., Map 16, Lot 41:

GUESTS: Scott Pettis, Builder, representing the applicants

Chairman Rowland announced this was a public hearing for Kevin & Deb Callahan, 26 Oliver St., Map 16, Lot 41. The public hearing has been properly advertised, abutters have been notified and all fees paid.

Scott Pettis, Builder, presented two proposals before the Board: 1] changes to the rear deck; and 2] Changes to the fence.

Changes to Deck –

1. the present deck stairs exit to the left and the applicant want the stairs to exit to the right side of the deck adding more deck space and they will fill in with some lattice under the deck;
2. the existing composite decking material will be replaced with new composite decking;
3. the existing plastic railings are a combination of fiberglass baluster/ wood and will be replaced with a new white composite material keeping the baluster look;

Pettis said they will be bringing the deck out 4 feet and it was not visible from the street. He provided photographs of the deck, (Attachment A.)

Changes to the Fence -

1. The present fence is wood, it is rotting and the applicant would like to replace with another wood fence. Along the same boundary line the present fence goes from corner to corner of the house. The new fence would go all around the border of the property and open on both sides, approximately 1 foot inside the boundary line. The fence is also in the back of the house and it can be seen from the road;
2. the present height of the fence is 7-8 ft. tall, the new fence will not exceed 6 ft.;

3. the only change to the fence is going to be square lattice for the top instead of the baluster;
4. the materials shall be all wood;

Cohen said the deck cannot be seen from the road but the fence will be more obvious because it is more extended toward the road.

Pettis agreed and said it will turn the corner on the back property line. He provided the Board with photographs of the proposed fence, (Attachment B) and pointed out that, presently, the back yard has been closed in and with the new fence the backyard will be more open.

Chairman Rowland asked for public comments. There were none. He asked for the Board's comments. There were none. He closed the public portion of the hearing.

Cohen moved for the Board to approve the applicant's plans, as presented June 5, 2014, on the plan that depicts the photo of the proposed fence to be cedar; and the material for the deck made with new composite.

Nollet seconded the motion. Approved.

The Chair closed the public hearing for Kevin & Deb Callahan.

Public Hearing re: Clarissa Christiansen, 87 Piscataqua St., Map 17, Lot 37/38:

GUESTS: Clarissa Christiansen, applicant; Michelle Shields, Architect; Attorney Bernie Pelech, representing the applicant.

Chairman Rowland announced this was a public hearing for Clarissa Christiansen, 87 Piscataqua St., Map 17, Lot 37/38. The Chair said this proposal was approved last month with numerous contingencies, one of those was a concern with the applicant and they have new plans for the Board to review. On seeing those, there were concerns, both with the applicant and with the Board, so it was in agreement that we would reopen this public hearing to discuss the proposed changes.

Attorney Pelech is here on behalf of Clarissa Christiansen. Their Architect, Michelle Shields, is on route. After last month's meeting, Michelle sat down with the applicant and went over what had been tentatively approved, subject to the Chair's review. The biggest problem from the applicant's standpoint was the effect the pitched gabled end had on the interior structure. As a result, Shields talked with Chairman Rowland and tried to come up with some middle ground.

What is before the Board this evening is to go back to what was originally proposed at last month's meeting because it does work for the applicant and the interior does work whereas with the newer more pitched gable and the dropping of the eaves, they ran into problems that were probably such that the applicant was not satisfied with the outcome.

Clarissa Christiansen said, from an architectural point of view, she felt that it was not attractive and if someone was building on to their house they would not have built something so impractical that you cannot even use the interior space. The window is smaller than the existing windows, it is just not a good plan and she wishes she could say everything that Michelle would say to the Board but she would like it to be practical and it is not the way it was suggested. She would appreciate it if the Board would consider going back to the original plan which allows her to have more room to live in the space.

Cohen asked for clarification regarding the plan that was submitted at the last meeting.

Murray said what was submitted at the last meeting was Plan P-2.

Bush said Plan A-2 the Board approved and Plan P-2 is what the applicant would like the Board to approve.

The Chair said that it was Follansbee's original hope to bring the roof line down as there is a tremendous amount of volume to it.

Follansbee said it is clearly lower but we are adding so much volume to the existing structure that I think anything we can do to minimize, particularly the front view looking back, he feels would be helpful.

Nollet agrees to use the original plan if the original plan is going to allow the applicant to use their home, she agrees with the applicant.

Chairman Rowland replied the Board's concern is about the outside look.

Nollet replied it is not that drastic. It is the interior and the home's livability that is really important.

The Chair asked for the Board's concern on how the house looks.

Follansbee said he likes what Shields has done to break up this large surface by stepping it forward. It was a smart thing to do and this configuration is more in keeping with the original house.

Michelle Shields presented her explanation regarding the applicant's concern, (Attachment C.) She is looking for a solution that is more similar to the existing architecture. The first thing she did was exactly what is on the approved plan. Her initial reaction is that it did not work, it appeared bloated, squishy, etc. She then moved on to the proposed plan that had a higher gable. She suggested the Board look at the approved plan compared to the proposed plan.

In the interim, Shields has had a chance to evaluate what it was that made it awkward. If the Board can look at the approved plan and compare it to the proposed plan, the reason why the approved plan did not work is because the ridge height is lower than the ridge of the doghouse dormer and they had to lower the window. The height of the clapboards above the windows and below the windows was off.

Shields presented the problems to the Board on why the approved plan A-2 does not work well and the applicant does not have enough room, (Attachment C.) She also pointed out that the original proposed plan was more barn-like. The new proposed addition looks like it was here from the beginning. The proposed gable is 2 ft. taller.

Chairman Rowland asked for public comments. There were none. He asked for the Board's comments. There were none. He closed the public portion of the hearing.

The Chair said the first motion should be to withdraw the Board's approval from last month.

Nollet moved for the HDC to withdraw the original approval for the applicant at the May meeting. Cohen seconded the motion.

Deliberations followed by the Board.

Nollet said when an Architect tells you that the approved plan does not work because of room and the livability; one should go with what the Architect recommends. Historically, when one drives down the road, the house is going to look the same.

Cohen is having a hard time with the proposed rendering. She feels that on the proposed rendering, she is not comfortable with the approved and the proposed renderings. It was a good call to bring it back.

Follansbee does not like the proposed rendering and he is more comfortable with the plan the Board approved. It is important to keep in mind that there is a great deal of difference looking at it in 2 D than looking at it in 3 D as there is so much space between these dormers and that gable. He feels that Plan A-1 is more in keeping with the architecture. He agrees that Plan A-1 is not perfect but it is the best one.

Bush likes the height of Plan P-2 but she likes the way the roof comes down on Plan P-1. She does not feel it is possible to have both plans.

Murray asked for clarification on the garage being pushed back.

Cohen replied the garage is pushed back on both plans.

Murray said Plan A-2 looks squished; Plan P-1 seems a little disproportionate; she is not comfortable with both plans.

Chairman Rowland agrees with the Board as it is confusing. He likes the approved plan as the roof line is contiguous but in doing so, the window is crushed up.

Nollet said it is very difficult.

Cohen said the renderings are very nice and she is happy with them and there is depth and clarity to them.

Reed is very sympathetic with the applicants as he has lived in a very old house for 30 years. He hopes the Board can make it livable for them. He has no way of judging in looking at the renderings to figure out if one rendering is more livable than the other. He would be in favor of the new proposed rendering as opposed to the approved rendering.

The Chair reminded the Board that the motion is to retract the Board's approval from last month.

Discussion followed among the Board.

Nollet said it is dangerous when the Board plays architect as it is not our role because historically, as we look at this, they are not changing anything in the historic element.

Chairman Rowland reminded the Board that our rule is that the HDC has to be an architect in design.

Cohen is not happy with either plan. She can respect the idea of it being stepped back and reducing the massing of it if that is the reason for it. She is more comfortable with the plan that shows the two dog house dormers off the garage. The garage is flush and the roof line is the same. The garage with the dog house dormer is not stepped back.

Chairman Rowland reminded the board that a motion to withdraw the original approval from the May meeting was on the table, and called for the vote. Cohen seconded the motion.

The Chair opposed.

Follansbee opposed.

The remainder of the Board approved to withdraw the original approval from the May HDC meeting. Approved.

Deliberations followed on which plan the Board would approve.

The Chair said Plan P-1 and P-2 are the proposed new Plans for the Board to approve.

Cohen did not like either of the approved or the proposed plans. She prefers the Plan with the shed and the doghouse dormer over the other two options.

Reed agrees with Cohen's preference regarding the shed dormer and the doghouse.

Follansbee said they would have never built a barn with a shed dormer on it. That is obviously an add-on. We already have a shed dormer on the back. Do we want a shed dormer on both sides of the house? He does not think so, in his opinion.

Cohen asked the Chair if a dog house would be a preferred rendition over the shed and over the proposed, as well?

The Chair replied over the shed. Not over the proposed. He voted to leave things the way they were.

Follansbee agrees with Chairman Rowland. His first choice would be Plan A-1; his second choice would be the two dog house dormers.

Cohen said Plan D is the dog house dormers.

Bush feels that Plan D is simpler.

Nollet likes Plan D.

Nollet moved for the Historic District Commission to approve Plan D – Dog House Dormer Drawing, dated 3-15-14, for the applicant. Cohen seconded the motion.

Follansbee votes against Plan D.

Cohen votes for Plan D.

Nollet votes for Plan D.

Murray votes for Plan D.

Chairman Rowland votes against Plan D.

3 votes for Plan D; 2 votes against Plan D.

Approved.

Chairman Rowland closed the public hearing for Clarissa Christensen

Review of HDC Minutes of May 8, 2014:

Nollet moved for the Board to approve the HDC minutes of May 8, 2014, as amended.

Murray seconded the motion. Approved.

Other Business:

Discussion among the Board followed on setting a precedence.

New Business:

The Chair announced this was Peter Follansbee's last meeting as an HDC Board member as he has decided to take some time off for personal reasons. Chairman Rowland thanked Follansbee for all his time and effort that he has provided to the HDC.

Due to Follansbee leaving, Irene Bush will now become a regular voting member of the HDC.

Adjournment:

Murray moved to adjourn the meeting. Nollet seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Anita Colby
Recording Secretary

Attachment A: Photographs and plan of the proposed deck for Kevin & Deb Callahan
Attachment B: Photographs and plan of the proposed fence for Kevin & Deb Callahan
Attachment C: Revised Renderings & Elevations for Clarissa Christensen's renovation per the HDC recommendations at the May 8th meeting.