

APPROVED
New Castle Historic District Commission
May 8, 2014

Public Hearing re: Clarissa Christensen, 87 Piscataqua St., Map 17, Lot 37/38
Work Session re: Stephen & Katie Eldred, 180 Portsmouth Ave., Map 15, Lot 5
Work Session re: Michael & Maria Southworth, 36 Piscataqua St., Map 18, Lot 30

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. He expressed the Board's thanks to Marjorie Smith who worked on this Board for many years and dedicated a great deal of time and energy to it. The Board appreciates her commitment to the HDC. The Chair announced that the voting members for this meeting will be Bush; Cohen; Follansbee; Murray; Nollet and the Chair.

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

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

Chairman Rowland announced this was a public hearing for Clarissa Christensen, 87 Piscataqua Street, Map 17, Lot 37/38. The public hearing has been properly advertised, abutters have been notified and all fees paid.

Attorney Bernie Pelech is here on behalf of Clarissa Christensen and introduced Michelle Shields. They were before this Board last month for a work session and they have recently concluded the site walk. The primary concern last month dealt with the shed dormer over the garage and they have since revised the plans to request a gable type dormer which matches the dormer on the right elevation of the house. They feel it is more appropriate and, hopefully, the Board will agree.

Michelle Shields reviewed the revised plans with the Board, (Attachment A.) She addressed the right elevation and pointed out that they have added a few windows shown on Plan #P-4, the Proposed Right Elevation, (Attachment A.)

The Chair asked for the Board's comments.

Cohen mentioned that she found the house to be very visible from the street and one can see the right elevation from Elm Court.

The Chair asked for clarification on the new windows.

Shields replied the lower window next to the door that is located on the lower level, and the other new window is on the landing.

Cohen asked if any of the front elevation windows are changing.

Shields replied no.

Follansbee referred to the proposed elevation and he feels the applicant has done a great job over the garage. The only recommendation he has is for the two eaves to be on the same plane.

Murray said the window on the right elevation is smaller than the window on the left elevation. She asked Shields if they could add the smaller window on the proposed left elevation because the smaller window is already on the other side.

Shields replied the window on the right elevation is 14 ft. wide and the gable on the left elevation is 12 ft. 6". The dormer on the left end elevation would drop down and that window would end up having been much shorter in order to sit in there and it would end up being square, not rectangular.

The Chair said the window that Shields is using on all the dormers on the left elevation actually would look quite nice.

Follansbee is not concerned about the window, presently, as his concern is about the gable and how it intersects the roof of the garage. If Shields were to mirror the other side, those two eaves would be at the same level.

Attorney Pelech assumes that Follansbee would like to see the eaves come down to meet the eaves of the roof over the garage. Follansbee replied in the affirmative.

Chairman Rowland wondered if that could be done. To do that one would have to make the windows smaller but could you use the same window that you proposed in the dormer to the left. It would match the window sides and the style would match all the windows on the left elevation.

Follansbee likes what the applicant has done with the gables. He has another comment on the right elevation. In a perfect world, he would like to see these eaves brought all the way across to break up this elevation of what has become a very large wall exposure and noted that this is very visible from the street.

Shields likes Follansbee suggestions

Chairman Rowland asked if the Board had further questions.

Cohen asked for clarification regarding Plan B-4 and the removal of the vertical trim piece.

Shields replied they can either include the vertical trim piece or not include it. She prefers to remove the vertical trim and add the two windows.

The Chair spoke on the left elevation and asked if it would be possible in bringing those in line and accommodating a window to match the other four windows in the left elevation.

Shields replied she could do that.

Nollet said when they walked the site it looked very different because the garage comes out 5 feet. She likes the plan the way it is.

Murray said it looks funny sitting up there and that one window looks odd in context with the other four windows.

The Chair agrees with Murray The idea of bringing the window into line with the others is very attractive in terms of uniformity.

Chairman Rowland said in order to bring the gable in line with the roof line, you need to change the windows to match others on dormers.

Shields said they would need to drop the gable 2 feet. What she is hearing from the Board is their preference is for the eave to be continuous.

The Chair agreed.

The Chair asked if the Board had further comments. There were none. He asked if the public had any comments. There were none.

Cohen moved for the HDC to approve the Clarissa Christensen application for 87 Piscataqua Street contingent upon submission by the applicant and subsequent approval of revised drawings by the HDC Chair based on the following amendments:

Amendment #1. Alternate right elevation, Plan #B-4, to remove the vertical trim and add two windows – one window on the upper level to be same design and style and on the same plane as the three single windows, as well as the window, lower level next to the right of the door, depicted on Plan #P-4, dated 4-30-14.

Amendment #2. On proposed left elevation Plan #P-2, dated 4-15-14, to lower the gable eaves to bring the eaves into alignment with the garage eaves and change the window in the gable dormer to be the same as other windows in the upper level of Plan #P-2.

Nollet seconded the motion. Approved.

The Chair closed the public hearing for Clarissa Christensen.

Work Session re: Stephen and Katie Eldred, 180 Portsmouth Ave., Map 15, Lot 5:

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

Chairman Rowland announced this was a work session for Stephen & Katie Eldred, 180 Portsmouth Avenue, Map 15, Lot 5.

Attorney Pelech, representing the applicants, said they were before the HDC last month and received the Board's comments and suggestions. Jan Gleysteen, Architect, has prepared revised plans and the Board did a site walk yesterday which was very productive and informative.

Jan Gleysteen discussed the revised plans to the Board. On the front façade of the house there was commentary about the round window over the front door and also comments on the curved front portico. They have re-designed those plans. Also, commentary regarding the round top to the rear façade, second floor, master bedroom. Those were the comments from the Board to revise and the goal was to make the house less ornate.

Gleysteen said there are three things that happen when you come across the causeway. As you come into New Castle, on the right hand side is the cemetery and the large Victorian house. Also, there is an existing beach house that is very attractive and that is where your eye is drawn to. There are also many trees that will remain as well as for landscaping.

Following are some of the changes:

Front Façade – take out the round window and put in the three double-hung windows;

Rear - they eliminated the arch

They have three widths of windows. The main window is three panes wide – that makes up approximately 75% of the windows;

They have picture windows in the front of the house (dining room); they have a smaller picture window on the side of the house (over kitchen sink);

Gleysteen emphasized that all the panes are very similar in size in order to keep the uniformity. The goal is to keep all the panes the same, (3 panes wide).

Chairman Rowland asked for the Board's comments.

Follansbee feels the applicant has done everything the Board asked and the plans look much better and more appropriate for the setting. The only question he has is the cottage style windows in the breakfast room and he asked for clarification.

Gleysteen replied the breakfast room is located in the rear elevation and pointed out that the house corner (that special corner) looks out across the cemetery and the Eldred's favorite views of that bay with the clearest water view. The clearest water views the applicant will have is that corner from the breakfast room.

In the shingle style, often times you will have no panes in the lower sash. The applicant has selected a one story gazebo outside the breakfast room. They have the breakfast room/gazebo attached to the house and they want to have the water views from their breakfast room/gazebo. This is an exception from the rest of the house as this has a beautiful view of the bay that is right across from this one story gazebo.

Murray asked if all the windows were the same size. Gleysteen replied yes.

The Chair agrees with Follansbee that the applicant has done everything the Board asked. He pointed out that the site walk was exceedingly helpful in that it made it quite clear to him that the front elevation is going to be very visible, especially as people leave the Island. Certainly, the Portsmouth Avenue location is also going to be very visible.

The Chair has concerns about the front elevation entry-way. There is still a great number of architectural features in a very small area and it is unlike anything else in this particular area of the Island. With the road taking a major bend to the right, to the top of the hill, there is so much grandeur than anything else in that area in that you have the gable, you have the half round pediment, plus the new brackets, plus sidelights, plus a six panel door, plus panels below the side lights. There are multiple architectural features in this concentrated area. One might see one or two but you do not see six. That concerns him.

Attorney Pelech said they received approval from the Conservation Commission regarding the location of the house, the plantings and the trees to be cut. They will provide the Board a copy of the approval. He will confer with the applicant as to what changes he is agreeable to on the front entry-way. They plan on returning next month for the public hearing.

Stephen Eldred addressed the Board with some concerns. He said they stayed for several weeks in New Castle last summer to get a feel for the town. They loved New Castle and then started with plans for a beautiful traditional home. The reaction they received from the Board was the house was lovely but it was too ornate. The one thing he has left is the entry-way and he hopes they can find something that works.

Cohen appreciates Mr. Eldred's comments and how wonderful that he chose New Castle to live in. She addressed Eldred's concerns and said the only thing that may or may not be helpful is to say that New Castle was settled in the 1600's as a little fishing village. There is a simplicity in the architecture and especially in the historic district that she feels draws people to this town because of its simplicity and because of its humble beginnings. She feels that is what is reflected in the houses and that is why people are drawn to the town. It may not mean that the houses accommodate people as well as they could but she feels that most people want to stay a bit true to that quality and that is how she sees the Historic District Commission's role which is to honor New Castle's roots that way and that is where the simplicity comes in. In her opinion, if there are embellishments, we try to move away from those embellishments because we are trying to stay true to the architectural beginnings of New Castle.

Mr. Eldred understands that and he has no issue with anything that has been changed thus far. He is just trying to hang on to that little bit that he would like to have with the entry-way. He hopes they may have something that works for the Board.

Cohen suggested that Mr. Eldred present a few options before the Board next month that he may feel comfortable with.

Chairman Rowland said because the applicant has to abide with the setbacks and the Shore Land Protection Act, the applicant has had to move the house way up on the lot and that means that the front side of the house is going to be screaming in their face every time they go down the hill. To him, it matters. He agrees with Cohen's comments that this is a humble town with humble beginnings and that is what this Board is trying to maintain.

The Chair closed the work session for Stephen and Katie Eldred. They plan on returning next month for a public hearing.

Work Session re: Michael and Maria Southworth, 36 Piscataqua St., Map 18, Lot 30:

GUESTS: Michael Southworth, applicant; Ray Holmes, Builder

Chairman Rowland announced this was a work session for Michael & Maria Southworth, 36 Piscataqua St., Map 18, Lot 30:

Ray Holmes, Builder, is working with Michael & Maria Southworth regarding their home at 36 Piscataqua St. The applicants are planning to move from Madbury, N.H. to their home on Piscataqua St. The New Castle home was built in the 1750s and is in serious need of repairs to the exterior as well as the interior. Many of the improvements will be done to repair worn out materials and to bring the home up to today's standards of products and convenience, but many of the changes will be made to bring the entire home up to today's building codes.

The home is in the Historic District and all of the exterior changes and many of the interior changes will be performed in a manner to maintain the original look and character of the home.

He said that on February 20, 2014, the New Castle Board of Adjustment approved their request for the following changes to the home listed in Attachment B.

1. Lead paint – Attachment B
2. Asbestos – Attachment B
3. Rear addition of the home – Attachment B
4. Same Rear addition with a second floor room over kitchen – Attachment B
5. New second floor deck to be added – Attachment B
6. Remodeling of main house interior – Attachment B
7. Remodeling of the main house exterior with following adjustments – Attachment B

Siding – Attachment B
Roofing – Attachment B
Trim – Attachment B
Windows – Attachment B
Doors – Attachment B
Deck on second level – Attachment B

In summary, Holmes said they would like to remodel this home so that it is safer, more energy efficient, more attractive, and more comfortable to live in. It will remain a single-family home. The home will have no impact on the lot that it is sited on, and the improved home will be in keeping with the architecture of the neighborhood. They plan to keep the house as it is.

Holmes explained the following photographs: the Front View; the Left Side & Front View; the Street View; the Right Side; the Left Side & Rear View; the Rear View; the Kitchen Low Headroom; and the Room Above Kitchen with low headroom, (Attachment C.)

Holmes emphasized that the front elevation would stay the same, it will have new trim, new clapboards, and the new windows with the Anderson “A” Series, the windows will have true divided lights with dividers; they plan on taking the bottom five windows and use the cottage style. They plan on putting everything back exactly as it is now. The front door is going to remain and be painted and the trim around the front door will remain.

Right Side Elevation - he referred to the two bay windows on the gable end – they are proposing to take the right bay window and change it into a box window.

Left Side Elevation – they are removing an existing small shed located on this elevation and they popped up a small addition and a deck on the second floor.

Back Elevation – the lower section exists right now and they are putting a 9 ft. patio door and windows. On the second floor, to try to keep the roof as low as possible and in keeping with the structure, notice the two eaves which are the bottom of the gable, those are very low as they are about 6 ft. 4”. In back of that building, inside will be about 6 ft. 4” and then sloping up inside. What they did on the right side in order to accommodate the door going out to the deck, they put in a shed dormer.

Chairman Rowland commented on the ridge line of the new addition and asked if it were visible from the street.

Holmes replied it would not be visible from Piscataqua St. but it will be visible if one is coming down Piscataqua St. and you are looking at the garage, and instead of the shed, you will see a ridge which comes at the bottom of the chimney.

Cohen asked if the arches were going away.

Holmes replied the arches will become the kitchen. That is the existing footprint, they are taking the arches away and that is where the outside wall is.

Murray said when you raise this part to make up the kitchen; how far up is this going?

Holmes replied it will go up only one story with a deck and the reason that they want a deck out there is because they do have a view of the river from the second floor and the homeowners are very concerned with getting out if there was ever a fire. The deck has a 6 ft. sliding door from the second floor that comes out onto the deck.

Discussions followed between Holmes and the Board on the plans.

The Chair pointed out that when the applicant returns for a public hearing the Board will need to clearly see the trim detail, the size of trim, the railing dimensions; and he would like to see a window sample even though the front façade is staying exactly the same, they need to show that to the Building Inspector. He would like to see the clapboard pattern, the siding, cedar composite, asphalt architectural shingle roof.

Holmes said in terms of what goes on the building, the Board wants to see a window sample, the trim, siding, cedar composite, a sample of the asphalt architectural single roof, and a door sample.

Bush asked them to remove the second bay window as well.

The Chair asked if Holmes would make this look more traditional than it is now. The way it is proposed you are going to have a bay window and a flat window. That is going in the wrong direction in terms of symmetry.

Mr. Southworth said he would keep both windows.

Holmes suggested they could have one box window and one flat window.

The Chair feels that would be better.

Nollet said the bow window with the boat in the window on that street is like a landmark and people recognize that.

Follansbee has concerns regarding the second floor deck. He said this is an old house and this second floor deck is a contemporary feature. He cannot see a second floor deck on this house.

Nollet said the deck is in the back and it cannot be seen from the street. It is an escape for the applicant.

Holmes said that it is important to the applicant to have a deck.

Chairman Rowland asked if the Board had additional comments.

Holmes would like to recap, he will bring the following: material samples; he will also bring a model and more details. He said they plan on returning next month for a public hearing.

The Chair closed the work session for Michael & Maria Southworth.

Review of the HDC Minutes of April 3, 2014:

Nollet moved for the Board to approve the HDC Minutes of April 3, 2014, as amended. Reed seconded the motion. Approved.

Other Business:

Discussion followed among the Board regarding second floor decks.

Adjournment:

Reed moved for the Board to adjourn the meeting. Nollet seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Anita Colby
Recording Secretary

Attachment A: Alternate Plan for Clarissa Christensen
Attachment B: Revised Proposal re; Michael and Maria Southworth
Attachment C: Photographs of all the Elevations for Southworth
Attachment D: Window Schedules

