

Historic District Commission Meeting  
March 19, 2013

Members present: Gretchen Schuler (presiding), Margery Baston, Chris Hagger, George Ives, Desmond McAuley, Kathie Steinberg, Meaghan Winokur.

Others: Lynne Spencer, Patrick Guthrie, Enrique De Los Reyes, Sue Bryant-Still, Ross Trimby, Bill Morrison. Members of Design Review Committee: Bill Sterling, Marji Ford, Leisha Marcoccio, Kathy Schreiber, Andrew Reck, Susan Keyes and Sarki Sarkisian.

Public Comment for items not on the agenda – There was none.

The minutes for February 21, 2013 were accepted. (7-0-0)

7:45 pm Public Hearing – First Parish Church – 225 Boston Post Road –  
Architectural details (color, materials, trim, glazing, lighting, etc.) of one and one-half story connector addition between 1814-1815 meeting house/church and 1983-84 parish house. Elevation plans and massing have been approved and can be viewed online.

The Design Review Board (which had been established at the last Town Meeting) attended this meeting, representing a joint meeting of the two boards. At this meeting the HDC is expected to issue a certificate. Lynne Spencer (preservation partner of Menders, Torrey & Spencer architectural consultants for the First Parish) gave a brief review of the elevations that had been approved by the HDC. Gretchen explained that at tonight's meeting the HDC would be looking at details; and the HDC's jurisdiction was over what could be seen from the public way. Lynne explained that the connector allows for additional program space and makes use of an existing elevator. Each of the three buildings (First Parish, connecting addition and the Parish House) is at a different level. Working with HDC they were able to address a number of concerns. (One such concern was the view of the historic carriage sheds that will no longer be visible from Cochituate Road once the connector addition is built.) Over a couple of sessions additional glazing was included that will allow for a glimpse of the carriage sheds from Cochituate Road. Lynne pointed out that the main entrance for this connector/addition will be on the east side. Speaking of the materials to be used in this connector/addition, Lynne said that there will be clapboards (the widths will be different from that on the stair tower); there will be an aluminum standing seam, gray roof. Lynne mentioned that the railings were a concern at the last meeting. The current ramp is a tighter and more compact design than seen on the February plans.

Patrick Guthrie, of Menders, Torrey & Spencer, project architect, addressed the “details” for the proposed connector/addition. The roofing will be standing seam metal in a slate gray color, similar in appearance to the existing roofing on the small addition at the back of the Meeting House. There will be a single blade snow rail. With regard to clapboard and trim paint color, there was a question about “What color white?” Patrick explained that everything will be painted the same white color as the Meeting House, which is Sherwin Williams Duration “Superwhite” Eggshell. Next Patrick spoke of lighting on the east elevation, and he said there would be lights on the stair tower. Presently there is one bright spotlight on the building. Illumination needed for the accessible walkway. There will be recessed soffit mounted lights as you come up the stairs. The lights are modestly sized and there is a need to supplement something on the building. Window glazing was the next topic. Speaking of the east elevation, Patrick said they wanted the most transparent glass that was still energy efficient (for glimpses of the carriage sheds from Cochituate Road). He explained there is less apparent tint when the low e-film is placed on the inside glass of double-glazed windows; and the glazing will be E-180. Next Patrick spoke of the handrails on the entry on the east side. At the steps there will be a bronze railing with a dark bronze finish. As you come out of addition there will be a center handrail and one on either side. They will have volute terminations at the base of the stairs and straight lambs tongue at the landing terminations. Railings will be carried by square bronze posts. There will be stone treads on the steps, 1-1/2 inch green slate. For the handicap ramp there will be a 1-1/2 inch pipe with 1-1/2 inch posts, painted bronze. The ramp will have a concrete surface.

Patrick spoke next of the built-in gutters on the east elevation, and of the soffits and fascia. The challenge was in finding the common ground between the Parish House and the Meeting House. The roof runoff will be captured so that it does not just spill onto the yard. Desmond asked if any thought had been given to the use of rain barrels.

Desmond asked about the paint color. Had any thought been given to slightly different shades of “white” for the three structures? A brief discussion led to the conclusion that it had been considered but would not be recommended.

At this point the Design Review Committee was invited to comment or ask questions.

Andrew: It’s good that the main entrance is on the east side. Why is window treatment different on the east and west side? (Patrick explained that there is a balcony right across at the window heads on the east side, thus blind transoms are on east side while glazed transoms are on west side.) On the entrance on the west

elevation, it is broken up and could something more interesting be done? (Patrick explained that they had tried to stay out of the courtyard space; and the façade was not intended to broadcast itself.) Andrew's next question was on the stair tower window, which he found nicely proportioned, but he was wondering if it could be a single window like the windows in the Meeting House rather than a thick vertical muntin creating two long windows. (Patrick said there is a steel beam which is a factor.) There was also a question about the banks of windows on the west side. (Gretchen explained that the HDC had suggested that the windows to be clustered for greater transparency.) Desmond commented that even with this increased transparency the carriage sheds would only be visible from Cochituate Road in the summer from about 1 to 4 pm if at all.

Marjorie: The only part of the design that Marjorie found "jarring" is the stair tower window on its east elevation. If the window were dropped down a bit, it could look better. (Patrick explained that if the stair tower window were dropped a couple of feet the handrail would be seen through the window, which was less aesthetically pleasing in his opinion.)

Bill had questions about the venting which Patrick answered.

Gretchen then asked members of the HDC if they had further questions.

Desmond had some specific questions, one of which was about the mortared joints on the stairs. (Patrick answered to Desmond's satisfaction.)

Gretchen asked about the framing of the skylights? (Patrick answered that the skylights will be dropped in as a curb-less with skirt which will match the roof.)

Gretchen also pointed out that there had been no discussion about the garden and walkway. (The response was that this had been discussed at the First Parish – but it was still discussion only.) She noted that in discussions they may want to address the fabric of the walkway as the asphalt detracts from the setting. Gretchen asked if any thought had been given to archeology. Perhaps there was a privy back there somewhere? There was also proximity to a spring or brook across the street, so perhaps evidence of pre-history would be discovered. Gretchen pointed out that they could ask the CPA for a small grant, under \$5,000, for a monitor to look while the digging is being done. (Lynne did not disagree with Gretchen, but she stated that she would prefer to test pits to have a monitor on site during the digging.) Gretchen pointed out that this would have to be expedited, because the ground-breaking is starting in May.

Chris had many questions about the proposed lighting and a lengthy discussion of this issue ensued. (Patrick responded that the design is for a low level of ambient

lighting. Lighting that washes down the building will also provide security and safe passage for those entering and exiting the building. There will be an astronomical timer.) It was pointed out that the floodlights on the side of the Parish House building are not under the HDC jurisdiction. There appeared to be a consensus that the timer be adjusted to turn off exterior lighting at about 10 pm.

Margery pointed out that adequate and proper lighting for such a significant and prominent building is something the HDC should favor.

There was a motion by George Ives that the HDC accept the architectural details (color to match Meeting House, and to be Sherwin Williams Duration “Superwhite Eggshell”; the roof to be a standing seam metal in a “slate gray” finish, similar to existing roofing on rear of Meeting House; the windows will be Marvin Ultimate double hung with an e-180 glazing; the railing will be bronze with a dark bronze finish with volute terminations and square bronze posts; the handicap ramp railing will be 1-1/2 inch and painted to match the bronze rail.) This motion was seconded by Desmond. The vote was 6-1-0 with Chris Hagger voting in the negative because of his concerns with the proposed lighting plan.

#### Other.

Gretchen brought up the subject of driveways in the HD. Driveways are considered “structures” and are under the purview of HDC. It had been brought to her attention that the DPW may be considering paving the parking area near the Freight House and the Depot and that the Historical Society is thinking of paving its driveway. (Margery pointed out that these areas would also be affected by the Aquifer Protection District legislation that limits the amount of non-permeable surfaces.) Gretchen will contact Don Ouellette (copy Fred Turkington) about the requirement of HDC review should the DPW contemplate paving of these areas. She has already heard from Bob Mainer about the WHS.

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Margery Baston