

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES
February 13, 2019 Meeting
Town Council Chambers – 6:30 PM HDC meeting

Present: Kristen Carron, Chair; Gregory Maxwell, Erinn Calise, and Lauren Drury.

Absent: Matthew McGeorge, Vice-Chair, Andrew Barkley, and Nicole D'Amato.

Staff: Lea Anthony Hitchen, Assistant Town Planner and Andrew Teitz, Legal Counsel.

Ms. Carron, Chair of the Commission, started the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Ms. Carron read the procedures into the record as follows: Each person addressing the Commission will state his/her name for the record. Although the Commission does not generally swear in applicants or their representatives, all witnesses are responsible for providing the HDC with true, accurate, and complete information. The applicant or the applicant's representative shall present the request before the Commission along with arguments and material in support of the application. HDC members will then have the opportunity to discuss the proposal and ask questions which are pertinent to the application. All other persons wishing to speak in favor of or against the application will then be asked to do so. All speakers are asked to avoid repetitive comments and confine their comments to those which are relevant to the application at hand. Cross examination by the general public may be allowed only if the Commission feels it would be appropriate and useful. All questions from the floor will be directed through the Chair only. After all of the relevant facts have been heard, the Chair will call for a motion. Once the motion has been made and seconded, the HDC only will discuss the motion followed by the Chair's call for a vote. Only active members of the Commission shall vote. The alternate will sit as an active member with full voting rights only when a regular member is unable to serve at any meeting. During the discussion among voting members, no further testimony from the floor will be accepted unless specifically requested by a Board member. Every effort will be made to render a decision this evening. The minutes of this meeting will be on file in the Planning Department within 14 days. Certificates of Appropriateness granted this evening will be available in

the Planning Department within two (2) days of this hearing. The hearing of any HDC application which has not yet started before 10:30 p.m. will not be heard this evening and a special hearing date will be scheduled. This rule, however, may be waived by a majority vote of the Commission. All decisions of the HDC are final and legally binding under the authority of Article XI of the East Greenwich Zoning Ordinance and Article 45, Section 24.1 of the RIGL. All decisions of this Commission may be appealed to the Zoning Board of Review.

Ms. Carron added the HDC considers local standards as well as Federal guidelines when reviewing applications and noted this is a collaborative process between the Board and the applicant. Ms. Carron explained the sequence for review of applications and its helpfulness to understand how the process works before the Board hears the applications. She noted each application is reviewed in of itself; the Commissioners receive the applications prior to the actual meeting in order for each Board member to review the content. The Board members identify properties and character defining features and historical and architecturally significant to the district that are taken into consideration. When applicants come before the Board there is a discussion in order to better understand the project at hand and answer questions that arise. The Board determines the standards that apply; hearing applications in this type of forum allows the Board to discuss alternatives, offer suggestions and provide support for the applicant to hopefully have a successful outcome and possibly save money.

Ms. Carron introduced the Board members and Staff present and read the application items into the record.

Historic District Commission Hearings

- 1. Joe Yammine**
5 Church Street; Map 85 AP 1 Lot 222
Door Replacement – replace all four entry doors on structure;
Partial Demolition - Remove two Chimneys; and Reduce the Size of
Three (3) Windows on the North Elevation – FINAL

Ms. Carron stated Commission Standards 2, 3, 4, 8, and 9 apply to the application. *Standard 2* states if existing materials have deteriorated beyond repair, the new materials shall match the original in composition, design, texture,

and other visual qualities. *Standard 3* states replacement of missing architectural features shall be based on researched knowledge of their original appearance, substantiated by historical photographs, drawings, or other evidence. *Standard 4* states that all proposals for additions and architectural changes shall be appropriate to the original design of the building or to later changes which have historic significance of their own. *Standard 8* states original window sashes can usually be repaired and retained. In the event that a window sash must be replaced the replacement shall match the original in size, operation, materials, configuration, number of lights, muntin width and profile. *Standard 9* states demolition, either partial or total, shall only be acceptable provided it would significantly benefit the Town, would serve the greater interest of the community as a whole, and that there are no alternatives to demolition available. Demolitions shall not result in a significant threat or loss of an historic and/or architectural resource to the Town, State or nation.

Mr. Joe Yammine, property owner, represented the application.

Beginning with the request to replace all four entry doors Mr. Maxwell inquired if the opening on the first floor, west elevation is in the process of being converted from a window to a door thereby having a total of five doors. Ms. Hitchen noted it appears from the inside there is framing in place to be a door. Mr. Yammine confirmed that specific opening is and will remain a window.

Mr. Maxwell asserted there are four doors to be replaced, one on each elevation. He noted the original doors to the structure appear to no longer be part of the building. Mr. Yammine said all four doors are mismatched and not original; he would like to have conformity with the doors since a couple doors are metal while the other two are wood. All four doors are in extreme horrible condition and deterioration.

The north side door appears to be an older door but Mr. Maxwell commented that it is most likely not original.

Mr. Maxwell asserted the proposed door, being a nine lite 2-panel wood door, is a very generic colonial style door. He noted this is a unique situation considering the Commission has no evidence as to what the original style door looked like. Atty. Teitz pointed out there is an older early 20th century picture of the home in

the staff report (Figure 10 on page 8). The photo shows a half lite over 3 horizontal panels.

Atty. Teitz recommended the Commission decide on a period of significance for the structure because it does not seem realistic to bring the building back to the 18th century. He added it was in the early 20th century when the building was moved and there is a record of what it looked like so what it looked like after it was moved is the significance the HDC should aim for.

Mr. Maxwell pointed out Figure 10 of the staff report shows evidence of a door after it was moved. He preferred to have the new doors closely match the door in that picture, having 1 lite and 3 lower horizontal panels. When asked if finding a similar door is possible, Mr. Maxwell said any door can be customized. Mr. Yammine said he would not pay for a customized door that could cost in upwards of \$2,000.

Mr. Maxwell said he would definitely like to see if there are other options that more closely match Figure 10; at a minimum he said he would consider a simple half lite with 1 panel below. He volunteered to referee the door in order to see what other options are available.

Atty. Teitz asked if all four doors need to be alike. Ms. Carron was of the opinion the doors did not all have to match but she would like to see the Church Street and Main Street doors match. Mr. Maxwell pointed out the west side door also has visibility from the street so he thought all the doors should be the same.

Moving on to the request for two chimneys being removed, Ms. Calise questioned if either chimney was connected to a fireplace. Mr. Yammine said no the chimneys were for exhaust purposes. Ms. Drury said it was ashame the chimneys were removed without prior approval. Mr. Yammine confirmed the chimneys from the roof up are going to be rebuilt which is the reason for the brick still on the roof.

Mr. Maxwell said he had no objections to the chimneys being removed considering there was no internal fireplace. He added that he was happy to hear the chimneys will be rebuilt from the roof up.

With regard to the reduction of three windows on the north elevation Mr. Yammine said the windows will be 36"x36" in size to accommodate a kitchen layout. Mr. Maxwell commented windows are a classic common problem with kitchen renovations. He was concerned there being too much modification on the north elevation. Mr. Yammine said the windows will be in the same opening (same width) but just shorter.

When asked if the exterior window trim still exists Mr. Yammine asserted all the trim has been removed. Ms. Hitchen suggested "ghosting" the windows. Ms. Drury opined she would be willing to approve the window reduction but "ghosting" would have to be a condition so the north elevation remains symmetrical.

Mr. Maxwell explained the term "ghosting," meaning the pattern of the original window openings had to remain the same, keeping the trim/frame around the original window. He was of the opinion the request is benign since the north elevation is not visible from the street.

Ms. Hitchen confirmed the referees to approve the doors would be Mr. Maxwell and Ms. Drury. She asked if the chimney stack will be made from existing brick or a faux brick. Mr. Yammine said he will be using the existing brick.

Atty. Teitz advised replacing the chimneys is a requirement; if the chimneys are not replaced then a certificate of occupancy will not be issued.

Ms. Hitchen recommended the Applicant submit all further modifications on one application, noting HDC approval will be required for new railings and decks as well as any modifications to the front façade of 155 Main Street.

No public comments.

With no further comments Ms. Carron asked for a motion.

Mr. Maxwell made the following findings of fact:

- 1) A written application has been submitted by Joe Yammine.
- 2) The property in question is located within the East Greenwich Historic District, specifically 5 Church Street.

- 3) The property in question is a contributing structure; it is representative of a c.1771 Georgian Colonial structure.
- 4) The building does contribute to the historic and architectural significance of the district.
- 5) The work proposed by the applicant would not affect the character defining elements of the existing building.

Motion by Mr. Maxwell to approve the application at 5 Church Street for the following: removal of two chimneys to be rebuilt from the roof up with existing brick and the reduction of three windows on the north elevation with the stipulation of “ghosting” the original windows. The request to replace all four entry doors will be refereed by Mr. Maxwell and Ms. Drury. This is consistent with Commission standards 2, 3, 4, 8, and 9.

Seconded by Ms. Carron.

VOTE: 4 – 0.

2. The Eye Doctor, LLC
16 Main Street; Map 85 AP 1 Lot 51
Signage – FINAL

Ms. Carron stated signage is a type of new construction and thus must comply with Commission Standard *Number 5* which states that such work must be compatible with its surroundings in size, scale, materials and siting, as well as with the general character of the historic district.

Amy and Peter Falk, owners of The Eye Doctor, represented the application. They explained the new sign will be installed on the top brick section of the building facing Main Street where the previous tenant’s sign was located. When asked about lighting the sign Ms. Falk said there is already existing lighting which will be used.

Mr. Maxwell and Ms. Carron noted they had no objections to the application.

Ms. Hitchen asked if signage will be added to the rear of the building. Ms. Falk said no additional signage will be added.

The Commission asked about the discrepancy regarding the size of the lettering, being 13 ½” or 14” in height. Mr. Falk said the lettering will be 13 ½”; the sales representative rounded up.

No public comments.

With no further comments Ms. Carron asked for a motion.

Ms. Drury made the following findings of fact:

- 1) A written application has been submitted by The Eye Doctor (Amy and Peter Falk).
- 2) The property in question is located within the East Greenwich Historic District, specifically 16 Main Street.
- 3) The property in question is a contributing structure; it is representative of a mid-Twentieth century commercial building.
- 4) The building does contribute to the historic and architectural significance of the district.
- 5) The work proposed by the applicant would not affect the character defining elements of the existing building.

Motion by Ms. Drury to approve the signage application at 16 Main Street. This is consistent with Commission standard #5.

Seconded by Ms. Calise.

VOTE: 4 – 0.

- 3. Howard J. Clift III**
66 Mawney Street; Map 74 AP 2 Lot 179
Minor Modifications/Alterations (install front door portico); Siding (replace shingle siding with stone veneer & Hardi clapboard); and Replace One (1) Window - FINAL
(Submission based upon Zoning Violation)

Ms. Carron stated Commission Standards 4, 7, and 8 apply to the application. *Standard 4* states that all proposals for additions and architectural changes shall be appropriate to the original design of the building or to later changes which

have historic significance of their own. *Standard 7* states exterior siding must be appropriate for the building to which it is applied. Vinyl and other modern composition sidings which may damage historic buildings are not appropriate and shall not be approved. *Standard 8* states original window sashes can usually be repaired and retained. In the event that a window sash must be replaced the replacement shall match the original in size, operation, materials, configuration, number of lights, muntin width and profile.

Mr. Howard J. Clift III, property owner, represented the application. He apologized for not realizing some of the modifications he made required HDC approval.

Mr. Clift commented that in addition to all the alterations he already made he would like to install a portico above the front door and replace the wood shingles with Hardiboard.

Mr. Maxwell asked if there was a specific reason to change the siding. Mr. Clift felt the shingles were in poor condition.

Ms. Carron inquired as to how long Mr. Clift has owned the property and whether he was aware it was located in the historic district. Mr. Clift advised the Commission he has own the home since October 2018; he was aware the house is located in the historic district but in comparison to other homes he did not think the subject house was of any significance. Ms. Calise pointed out the house is over 50 years old making it historic by definition.

Mr. Maxwell queried as to what other modifications have been performed other than the veneer stone siding to the lower half of the house. Mr. Clift affirmed that he also replaced the bay window on the front which was leaking and not in good shape.

Ms. Carron acknowledged a window replacement is definitely a project that falls under the HDC purview. Ms. Calise commented that alteration is not something she would have approved. Ms. Drury explained the original picture window is a defining feature of a raised ranch; to replace it for three smaller windows effects the appearance of the house. Mr. Clift advised that he did not change the size of the window opening.

Ms. Carron expressed concern with the proposed portico in relation to the house; she was of the opinion the raised ranch is a simple style home; to add a large decorative feature does not look good.

Mr. Maxwell cited the portico being out of proportion to the house entry.

Ms. Carron asked the purpose and the reason for adding a portico (ie. shelter from the weather, “dress up” the house). Mr. Clift told the Commission the portico was definitely for shelter but all changes were made to enhance the appearance of the house (for aesthetics and functionality).

Mr. Maxwell specified that Hardi is not a material the Commission generally approves. He would prefer to see real wood siding considering there is already wood shingle siding. Mr. Maxwell noted that there is an existing traditional material on the house and he will not approve a synthetic product although he was not opposed to changing the texture from shingles to wood clapboard.

Ms. Carron inquired to the condition of the existing shingle siding. Mr. Clift indicated the siding is currently in poor condition.

Mr. Maxwell explained that Hardi is not a tapered product and definitely has a different look to it; it mimics wood siding but it is not wood siding. Mr. Clift again pointed out the shingles are not in the best condition; he thought Hardi would be more durable but he was not totally opposed to installing a wood product.

Ms. Drury disclosed the Commission most likely would not have approved the stone veneer siding but she in particular will not vote in favor of it being removed. She also noted the bay window replacement is really unfortunate but will most likely allow the new windows to remain. Mr. Maxwell mentioned the picture window was definitely a character defining element of the raised ranch home.

Ms. Carron asked if the Applicant will be residing in the home. Mr. Clift said he was thinking about it. She inquired if the shutters will be reinstalled. Mr. Clift said he was not sure about the shutters. Ms. Hitchen said she was informed by the Applicant’s mother the shutters would not be reinstalled.

Ms. Deborah Clift showed the Commission members before and after images (on her cell phone) of other raised ranches which is where she got the inspiration. She explained the proposed portico is simply just a picture now to see if the Commission would approve it. Ms. Carron asserted the home images were not of the same style as the subject raised ranch – she asked if it was the Applicant’s intent to change the roof line. Ms. Clift said no, it is simply to add a portico. She planned to use mahogany wood above the door and use either a mahogany or cedar column.

Ms. Drury stated she felt uncomfortable approving a portico because there was not a solid plan – no provided dimensions, materials, shapes, etc.; she suggested the portico portion of the application be continued.

Ms. Clift communicated that the existing house looks terrible; if the Commission does not want Hardiboard installed she will use cedar and mahogany products. She informed the Commission that she will not use cedar shakes since the intent is to change the look of the house. Mr. Maxwell said he was not opposed to the use of wood clapboard.

Ms. Drury indicated if the application as submitted is final she would disapprove the portico just because not enough information has been submitted. The other Commission members unanimously agreed that more details were needed for the portico.

The specific issue Mr. Maxwell had with the portico element is with the scale, it is too big and tall for the house – the house is overwhelmed by the portico. He requested to see a side/profile rendering of the portico. Additionally he specified the portico reduced in scale.

No public comments.

With no further comments Ms. Carron asked for a motion.

Ms. Calise made the following findings of fact:

- 1) A written application has been submitted by Howard J. Clift III.
- 2) The property in question is located within the East Greenwich Historic District, specifically 66 Mawney Street.

- 3) The property in question is a noncontributing structure; it is representative of a c.1966 mid-Twentieth century raised ranch.
- 4) The building does not contribute to the historic and architectural significance of the district.
- 5) The work proposed by the applicant would modify the character defining elements of the existing building.

Motion by Ms. Calise to approve the already installed stone veneer siding and converted picture window to three double hung windows on the front façade. Additionally the Applicant is allowed to replace the existing wood shingles with either wood shingles or wood clapboard, NOT Hardiboard. The proposed portico has been continued for additional information. This is consistent with Commission standards #4, 7, and 8.

Seconded by Ms. Drury.

Ms. Carron pointed out the work already performed on the house has effected the character defining elements but given the low contribution and low historic value of the house to the neighborhood the Commission is granting approval to the changes that have already been made.

VOTE: 4 – 0.

Mr. Clift asked for permission to add walkways and landscaping. Atty. Teitz informed the Applicant projects that require approval and those that are exempt.

Historic District Commission Business – After Hearings

1. Minutes: Review and approval of the December 12, 2018 and January 9, 2019 meeting minutes.

Motion by Ms. Carron to approve the December 12, 2018 and January 9, 2019 minutes as written. Seconded by Ms. Calise. Approved 4 -0.

2. Approval of Historic Tax Credit Application – Alexander and Jill Millard, 206 Division Street, being Map 84 AP 2 Lot 239.

Ms. Hitchen explained the application, noted the submission is complete. Ms. Carron signed off on the application.

3. Approval of Historic Tax Credit Application – Ronald and Susan Clement, 59 Rector Street, being Map 85 AP 1 Lot 285.

Ms. Hitchen explained the application, noted the submission is complete. Ms. Carron signed off on the application.

4. Commissioner Comments/Other:

Ms. Hitchen commented there is an Ethics and Open Meeting Act workshop set for March 28th at 7 pm to be held at NEIT. The workshop is essentially mandatory for all E.G. board and commission members. Atty. Teitz added that is a Commission member cannot attend to submit in writing your unavailability.

Motion by Ms. Carron to add 15 Castle Street on the agenda for Discussion Purposes Only. Seconded by Ms. Calise. VOTE: 4 – 0.

Ms. Hitchen said she was recently contacted by the owner as well as the architect for 15 Castle Street regarding windows that were approved by the HDC, being a dark bronze finish. She was informed the windows that were approved by the HDC the manufacturer will no longer make. The owner and architect inquired if they could use a white finish instead or pursue a different company that could make the same product.

Ms. Hitchen commented the HDC does not have purview of color. The Commission also voiced their inability to review color but advised the applicant to research another company that could install the same window as was approved by the HDC.

Motion by Ms. Carron to add 32 Exchange Street on the agenda for Discussion Purposes Only. Seconded by Ms. Calise. VOTE: 4 – 0.

The Commission discussed the proposed development at 32 Exchange Street and the recent Planning Board approval via a Comprehensive Permit application. The Commission acknowledged the opposition to the project.

Motion to adjourn by Ms. Carron. Seconded by Mr. Maxwell. Approved 4 – 0.

Adjourn at 7:10pm.

For additional information, please contact the Planning Department.
Respectfully submitted by:

Lea Anthony Hitchen, Assistant Town Planner