HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES
November 8, 2017 Meeting
Town Council Chambers – 6:00 PM HDC meeting

Present:        Kim Balkcom, Chair, Matthew McGeorge, Vice-Chair, Gregory
                Maxwell, Erinn Calise, Kristen Carron and Andrew Barkley (arrived
                at 6:16 pm).

Absent:         Lauren Drury

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

Ms. Balkcom, Chair of the Commission, started the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

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

Historic District Commission Hearings

1. **Viewpoint Sign & Awning representing VIP Nails & Spa**
   555 Main Street; Map 75 AP 3 Lot 84
   Signage - FINAL

Mr. Bart Steele of Viewpoint Sign and Awning represented the VIP Nails & Spa application. He explained the upscale VIP Nails and Spa is almost set to open and would like to install new signage; the sign will have individual letters, not be illuminated from within but from previously installed gooseneck lighting, it will
have a painted finish and meets the size requirements per the Zoning Ordinance. Additionally the sign will be installed on the facade with the letters being 17” and a total of 30 square feet. The color will be a dark gray to complement the building. There will also be correlating vinyl graphics applied to both sides of the freestanding pylon sign.

Mr. McGeorge felt the proposed sign meets the Commission standard and seems like a routine application.

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

Ms. Carron made the following findings of fact:

1) A written application has been submitted by Viewpoint Sign and Awning, representing VIP Nails & Spa.
2) The property in question is located within the East Greenwich Historic District, specifically 555 Main Street.
3) The structure in question is a non-contributing structure; it is representative of a commercial shopping plaza.
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. Carron to approve the application at 555 Main Street for VIP Nails & Spa signage. This is consistent with Commission Standard #5.

Seconded by Mr. McGeorge.

VOTE: 5 – 0.

2. Paul Vespia
30 Reynolds Street; Map 84 AP 2 Lot 155
Demolition of Detached Garage and Construction of New Garage with Portico, Minor Modification to Front Porch – CONCEPTUAL

Mr. Paul Vespia, contractor, and Ms. Laura Bottaro, homeowner, represented the application. Mr. Vespia explained the request is to demolish the existing 1-
car garage/storage shed and construct a new larger 2-car Carriage House style garage with side portico. Additionally the petition also includes removing the asphalt shingles on the front porch of the main house and replace with a standing seam roof to match the proposed Carriage House garage’s shed dormer roof.

Mr. Vespia noted along with the application a structural engineer’s report was submitted indicating the condition of the garage. The report notes the original structure was possibly built in the early 1900s and not much of the original remains. There were at least two later additions added on to it. In reading the Staff Report, Mr. Vespia commented it appears there is no real critical historical significance of the outbuilding. He added the report mentions it is not feasible to build off of the existing structure.

Ms. Balkcom clarified with Legal Counsel the appropriate procedures since it is a conceptual review but involves a demolition. Atty. Teitz said it is simply a conceptual review that involves a demolition request – there is no approval or denial to be granted this evening, the Commission provides comments as to how one feels in general about the project. He noted a demolition requires a public hearing with steps to be followed as mentioned in the Staff Report and regulations. Atty. Teitz added the Commission can provide an unofficial view which is not binding and comments can include why/why not one would vote in a particular way.

Mr. Maxwell queried about the state survey and whether it separates the main building from any outbuildings on a property. Ms. Hitchen noted the state survey refers to the whole property; in this particular case it is noted on the survey there is a detached garage but does not go into any detail.

Mr. McGeorge acknowledged there has been a lot of sensitivity to demolition requests over the past year. If this accessory building were a significant carriage house it would be a different story; having reviewed the application and structural report Mr. McGeorge felt that conceptually speaking he had no concerns with the project. Additionally he did not have any issues regarding the roof material transition on the front porch of the main structure since the roof material is in essence a sacrificial layer and would not affect the structure of the home.
Mr. Vespia explained he is trying to create something more appealing to the house as well as be functional.

Ms. Balkcom questioned the size of the proposed garage. Mr. Vespia said the proposed garage is 26’x26’ while the existing garage is 18’x32’. Ms. Balkcom noted she had no objections to the design but had concerns regarding the massing in relation to the house.

Mr. Maxwell recalled the former owner receiving approval to construct an addition to the rear of the main structure which they never built. He asked whether the new owner anticipates adding on to the rear of the home. Ms. Bottaro indicated the rear addition is still under consideration; her main goal is to rebuild the detached garage and then make a decision on the rear addition. She pointed out that she cannot pull an SUV into the existing single car garage due to height restrictions as it was clearly built for a smaller vehicle – the goal with a larger sized garage is get two vehicles in the garage along with an area for storage since there is no shed.

Ms. Carron questioned the 26’x26’ proposed garage included the dimensions of the side portico. Mr. Vespia asserted the proposed size is the building itself, the portico will add another 12’.

Mr. McGeorge noted that from a massing standpoint the design is very sensitive to the house as well as other buildings in the neighborhood; as far as the scale he believed it is appropriate on a conceptual level.

Ms. Hitchen asked if the height has been determined. Mr. Vespia commented a variance for the height will be required (meaning the garage will be taller than 15’).

Mr. McGeorge commented the detailed specifications will be required for final submission. Ms. Hitchen asked if they had an idea what materials were to be used. Mr. Vespia anticipated using composite materials and Azek for the siding and trim work. Mr. McGeorge disagreed using Azek and noted there are other composite alternatives that may be more appropriate. Ultimately, he preferred to see the use of natural wood products in order to technically meet the standards, meaning cedar clapboards and trim would be his recommendation.
Ms. Balkcom said that since a demolition is involved she would not approve any composite materials and would want the new garage to be consistent with the materials on the main house.

Mr. McGeorge reiterated that the proposed design itself, scale, proportion, and siting all keeps with the intent of the character of the neighborhood. Mr. Maxwell agreed with all the comments made thus far also pointing out that the existing garage’s deteriorated condition would make it very difficult to add to. He appreciated the amount of detail that went into the application and structural report noting the submitted rendering is excellent and helps clarify the intent of the project.

Ms. Calise asked for more information regarding modifying the main structure’s front porch. Mr. Vespia explained the shed roof of the proposed garage is to have a metal standing seam roof; he would like to match the metal material on to the front of the main house porch as well. Mr. McGeorge commented that it is not as if the request was to remove a cedar shake or slate roof – it is an asphalt porch roof and the request will not remove any character defining element of the structure by changing the material from asphalt to metal. Additionally, such a project can always be reversed.

Ms. Balkcom asked whether it is typical to have mixed materials on a roof. Mr. McGeorge, Mr. Barkley and Mr. Maxwell all agreed mixing materials was appropriate and tying the masses together (garage and main house) would add intrinsic value.

Ms. Balkcom recalled the former owner received HDC approval to replace the windows in the house; she asked whether the windows in the new garage will be used as those in the house. Mr. Vespia noted there is an assortment of windows in the home; Anderson windows in the rear, plate glass windows in the 80s addition and Pella windows in front. He anticipated using the Anderson 400 Series with a simulated divided light and will have a 2/2 configuration to match the existing windows.

Ms. Balkcom commented there should be no “fake” hardware on the garage doors since the doors will be electric.
Mr. McGeorge suggested removing the corner brackets on the proposed garage since it creates false history and looks busy. Mr. Vespia said the brackets were copied from those on the house but has no problem removing the brackets.

3. Paul & Katherine Vespia  
47 Peirce Street; Map 85 AP 1 Lot 258  
Window Replacement (Blanket approval) – FINAL

Ms. Katherine Vespia and Mr. Paul Vespia, owners of the property, represented the application.

Ms. Balkcom noted Commission Standard #8 applies to this application. It 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. Window manufacturers today offer a wide variety of factory-made windows appropriate for installation in historic buildings. Storm windows of appropriate design are also available and should be installed to be as unobtrusive as possible.

Ms. Balkcom said she noticed that it appeared as if the Applicant tried to restore the windows. Ms. Vespia confirmed the attempt to restore the windows which were taken off site, repaired and reglazed. The windows then came back and were reinstalled. Mr. Vespia commented the restored windows are still not operating to the standard he would like to see them in; it had nothing to do with the company that restored the windows but is more of the windows being functional with regard to the friction sashes. He added the functions of the windows do not work well and has trouble opening most of them after being restored.

Ms. Vespia noted Mr. Rob Cagnetta of Heritage Restoration came to the property to discuss possible restoration options yet he was of the opinion there would be no sure way of completely removing the lead. Additionally she mentioned having to install an interior and exterior storm window with regard to air flow and condensation. She was of the opinion that storm windows detract from the overall historic appearance and having storm windows over windows one does not get a true sense of the window dimensions and profile.
Mr. Maxwell commented that he prefers to see the wavy glass in the historic windows.

Mr. Vespia pointed out several windows had been replaced in the 80s/90s, those being a casement in what was the kitchen area, one window in a bathroom and another window in the stairwell.

Ms. Calise questioned the number of windows that were attempted to be restored. Mr. Vespia said he attempted to restore 17 or 18 windows. Ms. Vespia added that the restored windows still function the same as those that were not restored and there is already a considerable amount of paint chipping and cracked glass after the restoration.

Mr. Maxwell asked if the Applicant looked into lining the jamb’s with sheet metal to even out the friction and roughness. Mr. Vespia said the existing sashes are thinner than the typical window and would not be conducive in order to improve the functionality.

Ms. Carron commented if the Applicant had come before the Commission without having done any restorative work she would have denied the application but the Applicant has made a good case for replacing the windows given the work already done. The fact that money was spent to restore 18 windows and they are still failing goes a long way in her opinion. She believed that if the restoration was successful the homeowner would have restored the remaining windows. Given the Applicant attempted to restore the windows Ms. Carron was more apt to allow replacement.

Mr. McGeorge agreed that a good case has been made for replacement as he was originally struggling with the replacement request. He also agreed that storm windows tend to detract from the overall aesthetic appearance of the home.

Ms. Calise thought this is a hard decision to make considering the original windows are still in the house and located in a significant structure. Mr. Vespia acknowledged he plans to save all of the original windows which he will keep in the rear loft with the anticipation a future owner would want to restore them or technology improves with window restoration.
Ms. Balkcom inquired if the Vespia’s plan to remain in the house. Ms. Vespia anticipated staying in the house for a couple of years.

Mr. Maxwell asked if there is any chance to conserve enough sashes to do a really good restoration on the front of the house (Peirce Street) and replace the remaining windows on the sides. Mr. Vespia’s concerns with that suggestion is he prefers to have consistency, does not prefer to have storms on the front windows and pointed out the house is on a corner lot with one whole side facing Revolution Street.

Mr. Maxwell inquired about the existing casement window facing Revolution Street and the anticipated look of the new window. Mr. Vespia anticipated installing a fixed panel window which will have divided lights and will match the side entry vestibule noting the vestibule windows will remain and not be replaced. He believed a fixed picture window will look better than if a double hung was installed.

Mr. Maxwell stated he would like to see what the fixed window will look like prior to approving it. Mr. Vespia noted he can prepare a rendering. The Commissioners agreed to have the picture window refereed.

Ms. Balkcom mentioned there are some windows which are 6/6 while others are 8/8; she questioned if the replacement windows will match the existing configurations. Mr. Vespia confirmed he will maintain the configuration for every window; he did not want all to be 6/6 or 8/8. Mr. Maxwell asserted it is critically important to maintain the same configuration.

Mr. Barkley noted the casement window is obviously not original and ventured to guess the framing inside would indicate if there ever was a window in that location of the house. He asked if there was an opportunity to put in a window that matched the other windows on the second floor. Mr. Vespia indicated the only issue with that suggestion is he just finished the interior restoration work and that would require him to undo all the inside work.

Ms. Balkcom agreed with Ms. Carron’s prior comments in that the Applicant attempted to restore the windows which are not inexpensive and the fact the restored windows are still not functioning well makes her side with approving the replacement windows. Ms. Balkcom said she has been inside the subject
house and has seen firsthand that proper general maintenance was never given to the windows.

Mr. McGeorge commented that Standard #8 says that if windows must be replaced they must match the size, configuration, etc. He has been convinced the windows must be replaced and will match the existing size and configuration therefore he will be voting in favor of the application.

Mr. Maxwell inquired as to whether any of the existing windows will be remain. Mr. Vespia indicated the following windows will not be replaced, those being the two windows in the rear shed, two windows in the gable end attic, the side entry vestibule windows and the front door side light windows will remain.

Mr. McGeorge and Mr. Maxwell volunteered to referee the fixed picture window.

With no further questions or comments from the Commission, Ms. Balkcom asked for a motion.

Mr. Maxwell made the following findings of fact:

1) A written application has been submitted by Paul & Katherine Vespia.
2) The property in question is located within the East Greenwich Historic District, specifically 47 Peirce Street.
3) The structure in question is a contributing structure; it is representative of a c.1830 early Greek Revival 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 Mr. Maxwell to approve the application at 47 Peirce Street for window replacement with the exception of the casement which shall be refereed. This is consistent with Commission Standard #8.

Seconded by Mr. McGeorge.

VOTE: 6 – 0.
4. **Flawless Face, LLC**  
**175 Main Street; Map 85 AP 1 Lot 219**  
**Signage – FINAL**

Ms. Balkcom stated signage is a type of new construction and thus the application must comply with Commission Standard Number 5. It states that such work must be compatible with the surrounding buildings in size, scale, materials and siting, as well as with the general character of the historic district.

Ms. Katie LaPlante represented the Flawless Face LLS application. Ms. LaPlante confirmed there is only one projecting sign being installed and it will be put on a bracket that is already in place. She noted the sign will be 33”x33” and will have a white colored background with dark lettering.

Mr. McGeorge and Mr. Maxwell had no objections to the petition as the request was very straightforward.

With no further questions or comments from the Commission, Ms. Balkcom asked for a motion.

Ms. Calise made the following findings of fact:

1) A written application has been submitted by Flawless Face, LLC, represented by Ms. Katie LaPlante.
2) The property in question is located within the East Greenwich Historic District, specifically 175 Main Street.
3) The structure in question is a contributing structure; it is representative of a c.1893 late Victorian mixed use 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. Calise to approve the application at 175 Main Street for signage. This is consistent with Commission Standard #5.

Seconded by Ms. Carron.
VOTE: 6 – 0.

5. **Andrew & Jody Stone**  
16 Somerset Street; Map 75 AP 3 Lot 7  
Replacement of Front Door (Submission based upon Zoning Violation) – FINAL  
(Continuation from the September 13, 2017 and October 11, 2017 meetings)

Atty. Teitz and the Commission acknowledged an email was received from the property owner, Andrew Stone, to Ms. Hitchen late this afternoon at 5:02 PM regarding 16 Somerset Street; Map 75 AP 3 Lot 7 indicating he believes there is not an argument that will convince the HDC that the installed front door meets the standards and will not be in attendance at the HDC meeting. Additionally the email notes the homeowner respects the conclusion the HDC has reached and do not want to belabor any time on discussing the matter further.

Motion by Mr. McGeorge to permanently table the application due to it being a repetitive application and the property owner has not brought anything new to the table - the finding is there has been no change at all. Additionally, the Commission recommends legal counsel brings the front door issue to municipal court. Seconded by Ms. Calise.

Atty. Teitz asserted that in the meantime he will be looking into taking action in municipal court for the door. He recalled back in September the homeowner was supposed to provide additional information and possibly bring an architect to discuss the door. He pointed out the Commission has gone out of their way to allow time for the homeowner to provide the requested information.

VOTE: 6 – 0.

Ms. Hitchen questioned the timeframe involved. Atty. Teitz said he will have a discussion with staff and town administration as to how to proceed.
9 Union Street; Map 75 AP 3 Lot 88  
New Construction - CONCEPTUAL

Mr. McGeorge recused himself from the application.

Mr. Gerry Zarrella Jr. and Mr. George Bennett, architect, represented the application.

Mr. Zarrella explained he has been working on this project for quite some time and has made some modifications to the proposal since the last time he appeared before the Commission. He has since acquired some land from 34 Liberty Street in order to make the parcel slightly larger and reminded the Commission he received HDC approval to demolish the two existing deteriorated garages on the property. He originally wanted to construct seven units but has since reduced the number to two units. Mr. Zarrella explained he has met with practically all town staff and took into consideration their comments as well as HDC comments to prepare a project that will require the least path of resistance. Mr. Zarrella’s project team, the same team that created Piazza Zarrella and Vine Street project includes himself, Harry Miller of Alpha Associates, Will Gates as the landscape architect, his attorney Sandy Resnick and George Bennett, architect.

Mr. George Bennett, owner of Blount Bennett Architects, located in East Providence explained the proposal includes razing the existing garages and constructing a 2-unit duplex, each to have 3 bedrooms on the property. He acknowledged the project will require zoning relief in terms of setbacks and density which they will obtain after HDC conceptual approval. The intent is to create a residential appearance (side by side connection) so the scale and mass is within a historic context. Mr. Bennett noted each unit will have a garage as well as adequate driveway space for an additional vehicle. One of the units will be setback further from the other and each unit will have backyard space.

Mr. Maxwell inquired about the roof pitch and overall height of the proposed structure. Mr. Bennett said the roof pitch is 8/12 while the overall height is 32’.
Ms. Balkcom realized it must have been a challenge to get this structure onto this unique space but her initial reaction to the proposal is there appears to be a lot of garage in the front as if it were of a Californian style. Mr. Bennett said the garage doors were set back on purpose in order to not have the garage doors on the street. Ms. Carron noted that looking at the structure head on it appears to be a single family house and the garage doors are designed discreetly which she appreciated.

Ms. Balkcom commented the side of the structure (facing east) could benefit from more windows. She is a big fan of windows and the use of natural light. Ms. Calise agreed. Mr. Bennett noted there is a window located in a stairway as well as a window in the first floor powder room; upstairs is a closet he could rearrange in order to accommodate an additional window. He acknowledged the plan could be modified to increase the number of windows on the side.

Ms. Balkcom inquired as to the type of materials to be used. Mr. Bennett said the team has not zeroed in on materials but has had discussion with town staff and understands Azek is not popular and he is also not a fan of Azek. His feeling at this juncture is to use primed clapboard or double dipped cedar shingle similar to what was used at the Piazza Zarrella project along with the trim being a primed cedar or redwood product. Mr. Bennett insinuated there are other products such as Boral siding and trim and questioned whether that would be an amenable alternative to natural products.

Ms. Balkcom asserted she would prefer to see natural wood clapboards and trim used for the project. Mr. Barkley commented that this project falls into the strange category of being new construction after a demolition has taken place and advocated that there are new products that allow the siding to be brought to the ground such as Boral which he thought was a better product than a fiber cement such as Hardi.

Ms. Carron pointed out the location makes it ideal to use original authentic materials since it is very close to Main Street and surrounding structures have natural products. Ms. Calise agreed the project should maintain the same tone and quality materials of surrounding buildings. Mr. Maxwell added the guidelines speak to the use of natural materials.
Speaking conceptually, Mr. Barkley liked the submitted rendering and can understand the proposed mass and scale but will definitely want to see additional details as the project progresses.

Mr. Maxwell understood the subject parcel being in a transition zone but felt the mass was rather large compared to the Feast restaurant located immediately to the east and the smaller homes to the west. He suggested clapboard being used on the lower half of the building while using shingles on the upper stories of the structure to provide a shift in material which might help with the massing.

Overall Mr. Maxwell complimented the proposal, liked the stepped roof which breaks down the overall scale and is totally appropriate for the neighborhood.

Mr. Bennett said he could definitely break up the building by using two siding products which will particular help on the sides of the structure.

Mr. Bennett said he anticipated using Anderson windows with a divided lite. Mr. Barkley suggested using a window with fewer lites as opposed to a 6/6 configuration.

The Commission looked forward to reviewing the final plan after it received the necessary zoning variances.

**Historic District Commission Business**

1. **MINUTES**: Action on the minutes of the October 11, 2017 meeting.

Approval of minutes was continued to the following meeting.

2. **Historic Tax Credit Approval for Len & Susan Curado, 441 Cedar Avenue being Map 73 AP 9 Lot 81.**

Ms. Balkcom reviewed and signed off on the 441 Cedar Avenue application.

3. **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Ms. Carron motioned to add 62 South Pierce Road (Coggeshall project) that was discussed on the November 1st Planning Board meeting to the agenda for discussion purposes only. Seconded by Ms. Calise. Approved 6 – 0.
Ms. Carron summarized the discussion that took place at the November 1st Planning Board meeting noting she and Mr. Maxwell explained the review process the HDC follows for demolition requests and the type of issues that are taken into consideration for a demolition.

Motion to adjourn by Ms. Carron. Seconded by Ms. Calise. Adjourn at 7:45 p.m.

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

Lea Anthony Hitchen, Assistant Town Planner