

**WETHERSFIELD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING
DECEMBER 13, 2005**

The Wethersfield Historic District Commission held a Public Hearing on December 13, 2005 in the Town Council Conference Room at the Town Hall, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, Connecticut.

Members Present:

Susan O'Brien, Chairperson
Douglas Ovian, Vice Chairperson
Jennifer Wolf, Clerk
Robert Garrey
Vacek Miglus
Eric Hart, Alternate
Gary McLeod, Alternate

Members Absent:

Also Present:

Robert Cook, Historic District Coordinator

Chairperson O'Brien called the meeting to order at 7:35PM, and read the opening comments. Commissioner Wolf, Clerk, read the Legal Notice as it appeared in the *Hartford Courant* on November 30, 2005. A correction to the Legal Notice was published in the *Hartford Courant* on December 2, 2005 reflecting the correct street address for Application 3361-05 as 6 Railroad Place.

APPLICATION NO. 3358-05. A.H. Hutchinson Landscaping LLC seeking to replace existing fence and add to length at 31 Robbinswood Drive.

Peter Berry of 1177 Silas Deane Highway appeared before the commission representing A.H. Hutchinson Landscaping. Also appearing was Art Hutchinson of 451 Maple Street who was contracted to install the fence.

Mr. Berry indicated the fence was installed in August. It replaced an existing fence that was 75-80 feet in length and run along the rear northwest section of the property. The new fence is approximately 174' in length. The fence is 4' high, white cedar picket, with round cedar posts, and 8' lengths. Pictures of the new fence were provided.

Mr. Berry explained that no permit is required for the installation of a fence. No Certificate of Appropriateness was secured at the time the fence was installed because the homeowner was not aware one was necessary. There was no intention of ignoring the HDC.

When overgrowth was removed, it was evident the fence was in disrepair and needed to be replaced. The fence was extended to give the homeowner privacy, and to protect young grandchildren the homeowner watches. The good side of the fence faces Robbinswood, which is the same way manner the previous fence was installed. Otherwise, the fence would face a garage, which Mr. Hutchinson stated made no sense considering the expense involved in installing the fence.

Commissioner Miglus asked whether a plot plan was available to show where the fence was situated. No plot plan was available. Mr. Hutchinson explained that the fence was installed within and following the property line.

Robert Cook thanked Mr. Berry for his help in having this application brought to the commission. He also clarified that it was not complaints from neighbors that resulted in the demand for an application. Rather, it was the fact that the fence can be seen from a public way. Any brush or shrubbery has to be discounted when making the determination whether the fence can be viewed.

Commissioner O'Brien asked whether there was anyone else wishing to speak in favor or in opposition to this application. There being no one, this portion of the hearing was declared closed.

APPLICATION NO. 3359-05 Howard & Margaret Willard seeking to replace wood shingles on barn with asphalt shingles at 141 Main Street.

Howard Willard of 141 Main Street appeared before the commission.

Mr. Willard explained that there is a barn behind the house. He recently noted that the roof had to be replaced. He thought that he could use the asphalt shingles because they are approved for use by the town. He was advised he had to file an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness because he was changing the roofing material from wood to asphalt.

A drawing of a cross-section of the roof of the barn was provided to show how he insulated the barn. He wanted beams to show from the inside, but still insulate the barn. Mr. Willard explained that the barn was originally built in 1830 or 1840. It was moved from Windsor to Wethersfield in the early 1970's. At the time, Timberline asphalt shingles were put on the rear part of the roof. Since the front of the barn faces the street, wood shingles were installed on that part of the barn. He installed the wood shingles on plywood. Soon afterward the wood shingles began to buckle, and in spite of constant care eventually the shingles deteriorated. He is now unable to provide the constant care needed for a wood shingle roof, and wishes to replace the shingles with asphalt shingles.

Since Mr. Willard wishes to approximate the look of wood shingles, he went to the Building Department and found an approved asphalt shingle that looks similar to wood. The shingle is a 50-year Timberline shingle in Heather. Those shingles are thicker and have a heavier shadow line. He feels this shingle is an appropriate substitute for the wood shingle, and noted that about 80% of the barn already has asphalt shingles. That part of the barn will also be reshingled.

Commissioner Wolf said she was surprised by the application, and felt that something could be placed between the plywood and the wood shingle to allow for proper ventilation. Mr. Willard that wood shingles will split when placed on an uneven surface. Also, that solution only allows for ventilation from the edges.

Robert Cook suggested that the insulation could be lowered to allow for ventilation. However, Mr. Willard noted that the frame of the barn would not show and that was the purpose of the installing the insulation in the manner it was installed.

Commissioner O'Brien asked whether there was anyone else wishing to speak in favor or in opposition to this application. There being no one, this portion of the hearing was declared closed.

APPLICATION NO. 3360-05 Vincent Carbone seeking to replace side porch at 25 Garden Street.

Commissioner Wolf read a note from the applicant indicating that he was unable to attend the meeting and asked that the application be tabled.

Commissioner O'Brien asked whether there was anyone else wishing to speak in favor or in opposition to this application. There being no one, this portion of the hearing was declared closed.

APPLICATION NO. 3361-05. Cynthia MacAulay seeking to install a 6-foot wood privacy fence along the backyard at 6 Railroad Place.

Cindy and Scott MacAulay of 6 Railroad Place appeared before the commission. Mr. MacAulay explained that they wish to replace the existing wire fence that runs along the back of the property

with a 6' wood stockade or shadowbox fence. Pictures of the existing fence and the proposed fence were provided. Their preference is the shadowbox fence.

Commissioner O'Brien asked whether there was anyone else wishing to speak in favor or in opposition to this application. There being no one, this portion of the hearing was declared closed.

APPLICATION NO. 3362-05. Charles and Judith Melchreit seeking to 1) add shutters to the garage, 2) install a fence along the rear property line, and 3) install new siding, roof, and windows on the outbuilding at 357 Main Street.

Judith and Charles Melchreit of 357 Main Street appeared before the commission.

Mr. Melchreit explained that they wish to add shutters to the east side of the garage facing Main Street. The garage is about 110-120 feet from Main Street. The garage has two double-hung windows. The intent is to match the look of the nearest corner of the main structure of the house where there is a wood louvered shutter that is permanently closed. No shutters have been purchased. Rather they wish to purchase used shutters. The shutters will be rotatable, but will be kept closed.

The second project involves adding a fence along the rear property line. The fence would be approximately 330' from Main Street. Robert Cook stated the fence is barely visible from the public way. Commissioner Garrey stated the fence is visible from Meggat Park. The fence would be a 6' high "good neighbor" fence with 5' vertical planking and 1' lattice work on the top. Pictures of a sample of the fence were provided. A plot plan was also provided to show the location of the fence.

The third project involves rehabilitation of the outbuilding, which is currently unusable due to long-term neglect. There are currently large holes in the roof causing water damage to the interior. The project involves replacing all the rotting structures. The roof will also be replaced with preferable cedar shingles. The new windows would be 2/2. The current siding is approximately 1' wide. Mr. Melchreit explained that they would like to save as much of the current planks as possible and replace others with something similar, or narrower if necessary.

Mr. Cook advised the commission that the outbuilding is at a critical stage in that it needs to be rehabilitated or destroyed.

Commissioner Garrey asked whether all replacements were in-kind, except the windows. Mr. Melchreit agreed.

Commissioner O'Brien asked whether there was anyone else wishing to speak in favor or in opposition to this application. There being no one, this portion of the hearing was declared closed.

Upon motion by Commissioner Wolf, seconded by Commissioner Ovian and a poll of the Commission, it was voted to close the public hearing on all the discussed applications, and to open the public meeting on those applications.

Aye: Hart, Miglus, O'Brien, Ovian, Wolf Abst: Garrey

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APPLICATION NO. 3358-05. A.H. Hutchinson Landscaping LLC seeking to replace existing fence and add to length at 31 Robbinswood Drive.

Upon motion by Commissioner Ovian, seconded by Commissioner Miglus and a poll of the Commission, it was voted to APPROVE the application as submitted.

Discussion

Commissioner Ovian stated the fence is not facing the direction that he preferred, but is facing the same direction as the previous fence. Also, when standing in the Keney Center parking lot surrounding fences are seen facing various directions. He noted that the value of the wood fence outweighs the issue of fence direction.

Commissioners Wolf and O'Brien agreed. Commissioner O'Brien noted the new fence was barely distinguishable from the old fence.

Aye: Hart, Miglus, O'Brien, Ovian, Wolf Abst: Garrey

APPLICATION NO. 3359-05 Howard & Margaret Willard seeking to replace wood shingles on barn with asphalt shingles at 141 Main Street.

Upon motion by Commissioner Miglus, seconded by Commissioner Ovian and a poll of the Commission, it was motioned to APPROVE the application as submitted.

Discussion

Commissioner Miglus noted that the wood shingle roof has lasted almost 30 years without requiring replacement. Commissioner Wolf stated that the barn is from the 1830's and is located in a very important location. A lot of effort was placed in keeping the interior intact and accurate to the time period, and the same effort should be placed in maintaining the look of the exterior. The problems with installing and maintaining a wood roof are not insurmountable. She indicated that a wood roof is the appropriate choice for this building, and that she would not vote for an asphalt roof.

Commissioner McLeod stated he agreed in that the barn is very visible from the street. He asked whether wood shingles were approved by the HDC when installed in the 1970's, and if so there is no reason for the commission to now say that asphalt shingles are appropriate. He stated he felt it was very important to maintain the look of Old Wethersfield, especially of the older homes.

Commissioner Miglus agreed that the solution could easily be found to the ventilation problem.

Commissioner Ovian stated he was considering some comments made by the commission in the past regarding wood roofs. In particular comments made about the Wilsey home built in the 1960's. In that case, the builder put wood shingles on the roof merely to make the house look more in keeping with homes in the historic district. When an application was submitted to reroof that house, Commissioner Ovian stated he voiced an opinion that the wood roof should be kept. Since the circumstances surrounding the installation of the wood roof on the Willard property is similar, he felt his opinion about maintaining the wood roof should be the same as it was when he reviewed the Wilsey application.

Commissioner Ovian stated he was influenced by comments made during discussion of the Wilsey application whereby some of the commissioners voiced concerns about the successful installation of wood shingles. Since the homeowner wishes to install asphalt shingles because of problems with maintaining wood shingles, Commissioner Ovian asked whether consideration of that request should not be given, especially considering the product selected by the homeowner. The question becomes whether that product is a good enough substitute for wood shingles. He indicated the commissioner should keep in mind the decision made in the recent Wilsey case when evaluating the Willard's application.

Commissioner Wolf indicated that she felt this application was easily distinguished from the Wilsey case.

Nay: Hart, McLeod, Miglus, Ovian, Wolf Abst: Garrey, O'Brien

The motion failed to pass.

Upon motion by Commissioner Wolf, seconded by Commissioner Hart and a poll of the Commission, it was voted to DENY the application.

Discussion

Commissioner Garrey agreed that this application is different from the Wilsey project simply because the Wilsey property was merely built to replicate a historic building. The Willard's barn is an actual historic building and is very prominent.

Commissioner Ovia indicated that if the current arguments had been made when discussing the Wilsey application, the wood roof may still be on that property. Commissioner Wolf stated that the decision on the Wilsey project is done and has no bearing on the current discussion.

Commissioner Ovia also indicated that some of the proposed solutions to the ventilation problem may or may not work. However, the arguments presented to keep the wood roof outweigh any concerns he may have about those proposals.

Commissioner Miglus reiterated that the reason for the denial of the application was that the proposed shingles do not adequately replicate the existing, especially considering the prominence of the building.

Aye: Hart, McLeod, Miglus, Ovia, Wolf Abst: Garrey, O'Brien

APPLICATION NO. 3360-05 Vincent Carbone seeking to replace side porch at 25 Garden Street.

Upon motion by Commissioner Miglus, seconded by Commissioner Wolf and a poll of the Commission, it was voted to TABLE the application.

Aye: Hart, Miglus, O'Brien, Ovia, Wolf Abst: Garrey

APPLICATION NO. 3361-05. Cynthia MacAulay seeking to install a 6-foot wood privacy fence along the backyard at 6 Railroad Place.

Upon motion by Commissioner Miglus, seconded by Commissioner Hart and a poll of the Commission, it was voted to APPROVE the application with the following stipulation:

- The fence shall be 6' wood shadowbox.

Discussion

Commissioner Miglus stated that the proposed fence is an appropriate style fence for the area and property, and an improvement over the wire fence.

Aye: Hart, McLeod, Miglus, Ovia, Wolf Abst: Garrey, O'Brien

APPLICATION NO. 3362-05. Charles and Judith Melchreit seeking to 1) add shutters to the garage, 2) install a fence along the rear property line, and 3) install new siding, roof, and windows on the outbuilding at 357 Main Street.

Upon motion by Commissioner Miglus, seconded by Commissioner Ovia and a poll of the Commission, it was voted to APPROVE the application as submitted.

Discussion

Commissioner Ovia indicated that all the proposed changes are in keeping with the property. Commissioner Wolf stated the application was very well presented. Commissioners Hart and O'Brien agreed.

Aye: Hart, McLeod, Miglus, Ovia, Wolf Abst: Garrey, O'Brien

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF: [November 22, 2005](#)

Upon motion by Commissioner Ovian, seconded by Commissioner Wolf and a poll of the Commission, it was voted to APPROVE the minutes as presented.

Aye: Hart, Miglus, O'Brien, Ovian, Wolf Abst: Garrey

OTHER BUSINESS

Public comments on general matters of the Historic District

Anne Kuchro of 471 Main Street appeared before the commission. She is the Chair of the Wethersfield Tourism Commission. She presented a copy of a proposed historic sign and asked commissioners whether they wished to make any changes. She stated the commission had already been approved a design, but the state created a sign that would be consistent for all the signs used throughout the state. The sign will be 3' X 4'. She is looking for a consensus from the HDC before presenting changes to the state.

Ms. Kuchro stated she felt the state's design is too wordy. She detailed those aspects of the sign that cannot be changed. Several comments were made including comments about making the picture of Silas Deane more prominent, and changing the framing and size of all the pictures to make the map more prominent.

Commissioner Ovian volunteered to be the HDC's liaison in helping Ms. Kuchro finalize the design of the sign.

Report of the Historic District Coordinator

Robert Cook reported that Wethersfield has been designated a Preserve America community. As such the town is now eligible to apply for grants. Commissioner O'Brien signed a letter of support on behalf of the HDC.

Mr. Cook thanked Commissioner Miglus for his assistance with the handbook. The handbook is now completed.

Mr. Cook reported that Bette Botticello of 35 Deerfield Road has been appointed to the commission as an Alternate.

A copy of the *Connecticut Preservation News* was distributed.

Mr. Cook indicated that he still needs to send a letter to Barbara Clancy regarding removal of the windows she installed without approval. A letter also needs to be sent to Paul Lisella of 32 Hartford Avenue.

Mr. Cook is looking into ordinances in other towns to determine whether an ordinance would be appropriate for Wethersfield.

Mr. Cook reported that the homeowner at 6 Fernwood Street met with Bonnie Therrien to discuss the denial of his application to install replacement windows. One window has been installed, and needs to be removed. A letter will be sent to the homeowner advising that the window must be removed within 60 days.

Commissioner Ovian asked about the status of the work being done on the house on Marsh Street. Brian O'Connor has been monitoring that project. Mr. Cook will follow up with Mr. O'Connor.

CORRESPONDENCE

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion by Commissioner Miglus and seconded by Commissioner Wolf and a poll of the Commission, it was unanimously voted to ADJOURN the meeting at 8:58PM.

Aye: Hart, Miglus, O'Brien, Ovian, Wolf Abst: Garrey

Respectfully Submitted
TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Jennifer Wolf
Clerk