

**Minutes**  
**Watertown Historical Commission**  
**Thursday, July 8, 2010**  
**Lower Hearing Room**  
**7:00pm**  
*Adopted August 12, 2010*

**Historical Commission Members Present:** Russo, Melone, Jones, Steele, Berg, Roach, Loukas

**Staff Present:** Hayward, Collins

**Public Present:** See attached Sign-In Form

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Russo chaired. The meeting opened at 7:00p.m.

1. **Public Hearing – Demolition Permit for 39 Brigham Street** an existing single-family house to be replaced with a shingle-style single-family house.  
Applicant/owner: David and Andrea Ricci

Melone, an abutter to the applicant, recused himself because of conflict-of interest.

David Ricci, owner, presented that he purchased the property in 2007. He reported that he hired Paul Worthington as the architect for his proposed project. He identified that he is a builder of large restoration projects. He noted that the property was built in 1938. According to Ricci, the foundation is in poor condition and that the structure has been added to, sided with aluminum siding and vinyl windows. He reported that it would not be economically feasible to restore the structure. However, he thought the property, neighborhood and street were great. He proposes a project that would relate to the neighborhood. He indicated that the property abuts the original Brigham home.

Loukas inquired if the owner was aware of the poor foundation at the time of purchase. Ricci affirmed that he was aware of the foundation condition, but not the mold in the attic. In addition, he reported that he had 6” to 8” of water in the basement during the recent storms. Ricci noted that he has talked to abutters about his proposed project and their response has been positive.

Jones noted that the new proposed project is 4’ taller and larger in massing. However, he did not find it problematic. He noted that the original owner and architect of the existing structure was a woman.

Russo informed that pre-1938 land belonged to Brigham where he had a studio, carriage house and house. Russo discovered that the property was subdivided in 1937 as a result of a foreclosure. Infill houses were sited on the subdivided lots. Russo was not sure the architect of the house was the owner identified in the building card.

Ricci noted that the proposed house will be sited at a lower grade than the existing one which results in an elevation height at 34’6” instead of 27’5” of the existing one.

John Cimino, 143 Church Street, was in support of proposal and applicant. He concurred that the property could not be rehabilitated because of its poor original building quality and lack of historic value.

Steele did not find the existing property significant. She thought the proposed property would be an improvement.

Roach thought the proposed project was of quality rarely seen in proposed replacement projects.

Russo noted that the *Brigham Historic District Study Form B* for the property identified it as non-conforming. He felt that the proposed project did not detract from the neighborhood.

**Vote:** Berg moved that 39 Brigham was not preferably preserved. Steele seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

## **2. June Minutes – Approved with additions.**

### **3. Old Business**

#### **a) Watertown Outbuildings/Barn Initiative**

Ongoing.

#### **b) Shick House Property**

Steele reported on the ongoing information, photos and plans gathered to forward to MIT Prof. Joe Ferreira for possible student study projects. She expressed concern that the structure be protected when recycling activities take place at that location. Russo concurred about the need to protect the physical building. Hayward and Russo will speak to Magoon about the HC's concerns for the building.

**Vote:** Jones moved to support the preservation of the Shick House. Melone seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Russo informed that Bill Barry has period photos of the building.

## **4. New Business**

### **a) Removal of Historic Plaques/Signs**

The HC met with Magoon concerning the disappearance of historic plaques in Watertown and the cost to replace them. The discussion was what to replace in the importance of priority. Joyce Kelly, HSW, reported that the signs can be replaced with Novaloid, cast bronze or granite. Hayward suggested that they look at the replaced granite sign at Arsenal Park as an example

Meeting adjourned at 7:53pm.

