

Minutes
Watertown Historical Commission
Thursday,
June 9, 2016
Philip Pane Lower Hearing Room
7:00 p.m.

Historical Commission Members Present: David J. Russo, Marilynne K. Roach, Thomas Melone, Susan Steele

Member(s) Absent: J.B. Jones, Donald S. Berg, Elise Loukas

Staff Present: Susan C. Jenness (adopted 7/14/16)

Russo chaired. The meeting opened at 7:00 p.m. with a description of the public hearing process for the Historical Commission (HC) by Russo.

- 1) **Public Hearing - 44 Bradshaw St.** Single-family cape with detached shed built around 1950. Proposed is a 2 unit town house style dwelling with surface parking. Joseph Flaherty, Applicant/John Russo, Owner

Joseph Flaherty appeared to present the project at 44 Bradshaw St., a Cape Style dwelling made of brick. The garage which is currently on the property was built in 1950 and had been converted to additional living space.

Flaherty said no historical significance was found during his research.

The structure is in a neighborhood that has been zoned for 2 family homes. The proposed plans to build two town house units are considered a by right project in accordance with Zoning.

Melone asked if these buildings that are being proposed will be sold as separate buildings. Flaherty responded yes.

Steele inquired about the material Hardy Board which was listed as a material in the plans. Flaherty described it as being an extremely durable composite which is several grades up from vinyl.

Russo asked if he had considered retaining any of the original structure; Flaherty said that he had but the house is now fairly chopped up inside. He elaborated that while this is a 2 bedroom home, we looked at building upward but this is a 1950's structure and has a typical cape foundation. He explained that the foundation would not sustain the additional weight added to the structure.

Russo asked if Hardy Board could be applied in brick to mirror the current exterior condition. Flaherty explained that while the current exterior is made out of brick, the actual neighborhood is very well mixed in terms of exterior materials.

Roach asked if they had thought about building off the back; Flaherty explained that given the set-backs, adequate space was not available to extend the structure in the rear.

Public Hearing

Gene Ricci of 233 Westminster Ave. spoke of being a native of Watertown and that when he came to Watertown to buy his house, he proceeded down Orchard St. and this was the first house visible when entering the neighborhood. He decided when he saw this house, this is where he wanted to be and that demolishing this building will impact the whole neighborhood for everyone who resides here or travels in this neighborhood.

Maureen Ricci of 233 Westminster Ave. came forward to explain that this house has the most distinct brickwork that makes the existing structure so special. She said she felt awful thinking about this house being torn down.

Carl Karandjeff of 226 Westminster Ave. came forward and said that he has found this house beautiful and described the neighborhood as distinctly brick for several blocks south. He said that tearing down something that is a beautiful house made out of brick to build something that is fairly unattractive is unacceptable. He said that tearing down this house will forever change this neighborhood.

Russo read a letter into the record which was received from Katherine D, Klosowsky-239 Westminster Ave. She appreciated receiving the abutters notice and stated in her letter that she is strongly opposed to the demolition of this home which would destroy this beautiful gateway into the neighborhood. She said that this home was built to express the special character of the neighborhood. The architectural heritage of this neighborhood would be negatively impacted by this demolition.

Public Hearing Closed

Commission Discussion

Roach said that the herringbone of the exterior of 44 Bradshaw St. was an interesting design.

Russo read historical research of the house. The Building Permit was taken out on December 1, 1950 by Andrew Bressi, the owner and the builder was Angelo Chiodo. The structure was built at the cost of \$8,000. On June 1, 1951 a garage was built which was \$500.

Melone reminded the group that the garage had been incorporated as additional living space over time. When Melone travelled up and down the street he observed that the majority of buildings were brick but this house was a rather nice brick.

Russo remarked that the house has a good scale and sits prominently in the location straddling the lot perfectly.

Steele felt that the new proposed structure would overwhelm the lot in comparison to what is there now.

Melone stated that the real issue going on was the zoning issue and that this space is zoned for 2 families.

Russo mentioned that there are proposed design guidelines that have some people upset. He explained further that the guidelines will serve to address what can be built on lots, therefore impacting what you will see when you come home at night to the neighborhood you moved into.

Russo asked the HC if anyone was prepared to make a motion.

Motion: Steele made a motion that the house at 44 Bradshaw St. is Preferably Preserved. Melone seconded the motion.

Vote: A Unanimous Vote was reached that the house is Preferably Preserved.

Motion: Steele made a motion that the HC not impose a delay on the demolition of 44 Bradshaw St. Melone seconded the motion.

Melone said he appreciated this developer who had considered ways in which to hold onto the original structure. Russo, Melone and Roach agreed that the proposed plans would set better into the surroundings than many other plans that had been proposed.

Vote: A 3 to 1 vote was reached to not impose a delay on the demolition of 44 Bradshaw St.

- 2) **Public Hearing - 200 Westminster Ave.** Two-family colonial with an attached garage built around 1942. Proposed is a 2 unit town house style dwelling. Raphael Bibbo, Applicant/ Roger Kane

Raphael Bibbo appeared as the liaison to the developer and the surrounding community to present the project at 200 Westminster Ave.

He said that the house was a box brick colonial built in around 1942 which was added onto at a later date then converted into a 2 family in 1960.

Bibbo reported that he had walked the neighborhood and studied the implications of the proposed project through conversing with interested neighbors, some of whom were present at the meeting.

Bibbo revealed that while the house was built as a non-conforming building, there will be a correction to the lot line which will enable straightening out the parking spots and driveway in accordance with current zoning.

He said his biggest goal was to alleviate all the concerns any of the neighbors might have about this proposed project, and offered to stay after the meeting to work with anyone who had questions for him.

Public Hearing

Joyce Kelly of the Historical Society of Watertown explained that she believes the demolition of this house will affect the aesthetics of the neighborhood. She asked the HC to note the results of the last hearing which will be a huge change. She explained that while this is a zoning issue, the aesthetics of the neighborhood are changing and she wanted the HC to consider that within the making of their decisions.

Chuck Ferreira from 186 Westminister Ave. said that he does not begrudge the developers in Watertown making a living. He referred to this house as being in rough shape but as having a great style. He said he is seeing a lot of very generic looking buildings popping up and that many of these older houses, even if a little beaten up, still have a lot of character. He said that he hoped the developer had considered developing around the existing structure.

Robert Lentini-192 Westminister Ave. said he has lived here for 40 years and this house has been in constant disrepair. He commented that while this house is brick, anything built here would be better than what is there now. He approved of the demolition.

Public Hearing Closed

Commission Discussion

Russo read from his historical data on the house at 200 Westminister Ave. that a building permit was allowed on April 6, 1948 to Addolorato Scioli who was recorded as the owner and the builder. In June of 1959 the single family home was converted into a two family.

Melone said that he thought Scioli was the owner up until the very recent purchase. He mentioned that while the house is brick, it is not of finer brick work like the home on on Bradshaw. This house is a very simple one.

Roach said that she thought this house was not in the same great shape that 44 Bradshaw St. was from the last hearing.

Steele mentioned that she looked forward to the day when we have guidelines in place so that we have tools to work with for what is going up in its' place.

Motion- Russo made a motion that the house at 200 Westminster Ave. is Not Preferably Preserved. Melone seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached that the house at 200 Westminster Ave. is not Preferably Preserved.

3) Minutes – May 12, 2016

Minutes were adopted with minor updates.

4) Old Business

- a. **HC March 7, 2016 Site Visit with Mark Comeiro, Veteran Services Officer – Follow up discussion-** Russo updated the HC that Steve Magoon, Director of Community Development and Planning thinks it makes sense to address this issue as a complete project for when the town has found a location solution. He continued the discussion to the following month when more information would be available.
- b. **917 Belmont Street – Upkeep and Maintenance discussion based on language of Landmark Ordinance-** Russo read from an email that Steve Magoon reported that the town attorney has prepared the documents to be recorded which are being finalized for execution. Beacon is preparing some estimates which will include materials which will be helpful as some materials are anticipated to be donated by Home Depot.
- c. **REVIEW of 2016 - Preservation Awards Night - May 19, 2016 7:00 PM - Commanders Mansion-** The Awards Night was overall a very impressive evening with a high rate of turnout, great presentations by the winners, and a lot of enthusiasm and optimism for the following year.

Roach was disappointed that the reporters appeared to have left the room by the time Kay Westcott was making her presentation on the creation of history in everyday life and how important it is for us all just to show up.

Steele suggested that next year it would be nice to recognize a project that restores a building instead of knocking one down.

- d. **Neighborhood Photography project – David Russo-** Melone reported that he had made progress on the Whiting Project Photos.

Meeting Adjourned