

WELLESLEY HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 7, 2013; 6:45 PM
PLANNING BOARD OFFICE, TOWN HALL

Members Present: Jean Berry, Edwina McCarthy, Eric Cohen, David Giangrasso, David Smith
Also Present: Ethan Parsons, Erin Heacock, Lisa Abeles, Nancy Lanzarone, Dennis Fitzgerald

Chair Berry opened the public hearing at 6:45 pm.

20 Cottage Street

Documents:

- Description of Scope and Photographs, Prepared by Abeles & Associates Architects
- Hart & Cooley Model TLC All-Fuel Chimney Cut Sheet
- Sheet A-2, First Floor Plan: Existing/Demo, Prepared by Abeles & Associates Architects, dated April 9, 2013
- Sheet A-3, Exterior Elevations: Existing/Demo, Prepared by Abeles & Associates Architects, dated April 9, 2013
- Sheet A-4, Exterior Elevations: Existing/Demo, Prepared by Abeles & Associates Architects, dated April 9, 2013
- Sheet A-5, Floor Plans: New, Prepared by Abeles & Associates Architects, dated April 9, 2013
- Sheet A-6, Exterior Elevations: New, Prepared by Abeles & Associates Architects, dated April 9, 2013
- Sheet A-7, Exterior Elevations: New, Prepared by Abeles & Associates Architects, dated April 9, 2013

Discussion:

Lisa Abeles, a Historic District Commissioner, recused herself from the Commission to present the proposed project as architect on behalf of the homeowners of 20 Cottage Street, Nancy Lanzarone and Dennis Fitzgerald.

Ms. Abeles indicated that the homeowners would like to expand their home, but keep the same cottage look of the residence. Rather than an addition, the homeowners propose to utilize space currently occupied by the fireplace and chimney as functional space. The homeowners have concerns about the existing firebox and the chimney. The proportions of the firebox are not standard and the homeowners will not use due to their concerns. It is likely that a previous owner constructed the firebox and chimney himself.

Ms. Abeles described that the homeowners will remove the firebox and chimney and reclaim the space occupied by the fireplace and chimney as functional space in the living room and on the second floor. Removing the chimney requires a new connection to the oil burning furnace, and a zero clearance chimney needs to be installed to vent the furnace. A zero clearance chimney is not historically appropriate.

Mr. Cohen asked whether the oil burning furnace could be converted to gas. Ms. Abeles responded that the existing furnace is only two years old and the town has a moratorium on gas work in the street. (After the meeting, Staff confirmed the terms of the street opening moratorium with the Department of Public Works. Following the recent repaving of Cottage Street, a moratorium which

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began in 2010 and will end in 2015 is in place. Permits may still be issued for street openings; however, there is a surcharge and additional milling and repaving requirements of the applicant.)

Ms. Berry asked why not rebuild the chimney from the roof up or construct a facade surround around the vent pipe. Ms. Abeles indicated that those options are expensive, require additional maintenance, and there is just no room for support of a brick and mortar chimney. Ms. Abeles indicated that the builder quoted approximately \$16,000 to rebuild the chimney above the roof line and that the false surrounds are only glued onto the structure leading to maintenance issues from freeze and thaw cycles.

Ms. Berry indicated that the Commission should table the chimney and discuss the rest of the proposed changes.

Ms. Abeles stated that a number of windows will be added, replaced, or removed. Additionally, the deck will be rebuilt and the side stairs will be repaired. On Sheet A-3, a blank wall will have windows added as seen on Sheet A-6. The new window shown on Sheet A-6 will have a fixed transom window. The interior is a high hallway so the window transom is appropriate for the location.

Mr. Giangrasso noted that the mud room window will be reduced. Ms. Abeles indicated that is due to dividing the existing mud room into a mud room and laundry room.

Ms. Abeles noted that the side railing will be replaced in kind, and the deck railing will match the front rail. Mr. Cohen asked whether the deck is new. Ms. Abeles explained that the deck is existing and is in disrepair. A structural engineer reviewed the existing deck and recommended that the existing rubble wall beneath the deck should remain in place. Ms. Abeles reoriented the deck to hide the rubble wall with the deck and to bring it out of the side yard setback. The deck will be expanded by approximately 4 feet to protect the rubble wall. Ms. Abeles agreed to submit deck plan and engineer's recommendations.

Ms. Abeles continued to explain the window replacements. On Sheet A-2, a window in the kitchen would be removed and replaced with a door for direct access from the kitchen to the deck. Window E over the counter will be a casement window as it's difficult to lift a double hung window over a counter. The one over one window at the back of the house will have muntins added if the window needs to be replaced.

Ms. McCarthy asked about the double windows on Sheet A-3. She noted that those windows have two panes of glass across while all other windows have three panes of glass.

Ms. Abeles explained that it is intended to maintain the portion of glass in the windows.

Ms. Abeles continued to explain that on Sheet A-7, Window D is proposed on a blank wall and the Juliet balcony on the second floor will be removed. The French doors to the deck from the living room will be removed and replaced with a single door. Finally, a small window next to the Juliet balcony will be removed as it's been sheet rocked over from the interior.

Ms. Berry stated that the proposed project is an improvement for the residence. Ms. Berry stated that a single transom window rather than the double transom window may be preferable. Ms. Abeles agreed and suggested a single window, about two-thirds of the length of the double

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window with five lights centered over the double window below. The other Commissioners agreed and determined that Ms. Abeles would make a suitable choice.

Ms. Abeles stated that other windows may need to be replaced as the residence is chilly. Any other windows that are replaced will be of similar design and quality.

Ms. Abeles noted that Windows F and G would require a stud pocket which isn't depicted on the plan. The Commission agreed.

Ms. Berry returned to the discussion of the chimney.

Ms. Abeles provided other pictures of zero clearance chimneys on the block. She stated that the chimney would be painted black so that it fades away. A tie line is needed to stabilize the chimney. It also needs to be tall due to the oil furnace. It's about 8 feet tall. Ms. Abeles stated she would work with the HVAC contractor to see if it could be any shorter.

Ms. McCarthy asked about the removal of the picket fence. Ms. Lanzarone stated that on the driveway side, it will be replaced, but on the other side of the home it will not be replaced due to the pipe where oil for the furnace is loaded into the tank from the exterior. Replacing the fence there would create a barrier.

Mr. Giangrasso asked why the homeowner does not convert to natural gas to allow greater options for the chimney. Ms. Abeles explained that there is a street opening moratorium due to the recent repaving of Cottage Street. To request a street opening permit, requires an additional fee.

Ms. Berry asked if a chimney from the roof line up would be added. Ms. Abeles stated that there is no support for the chimney within the house. There is no attic, only rafters, and a brick and mortar chimney requires significant load support.

Mr. Giangrasso asked if there are any trees that block the view of the chimney. Ms. Abeles stated that there is a flowering tree.

Ms. Abeles stated again that the existing chimney is not safe. The homeowners weighed the pros and cons and determined that maintain the cottage feel of the home by utilizing underutilized space interior to the home is better than an addition which would alter the cottage appearance. As a result, the underutilized space is occupied by an unused chimney and fireplace which will be removed.

Ms. Berry stated that it is a fine line. The Commission must consider the function of the chimney.

Mr. Giangrasso stated that the residence would look weird without a chimney.

Mr. Cohen stated that the Commission is not advocating for a veneer chimney as previously discussed.

Mr. Giangrasso asked if the pipe within the home could be relocated so that it exits the roof in a less obvious location. Ms. Abeles stated that it goes straight up through the basement and is shown on Sheet A-5 as going through the closet. Any relocation would likely use up space and would have to be discussed with the homeowners. Ms. Lanzarone indicated that relocating the pipe to any

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other location would not make the home usable as the current plan does. If that is the case, she would prefer to go with a full scale addition.

Ms. Berry stated that she prefers the look for the chimney termination in Photo 7. It's all business and utilitarian and as a result, your eye may gloss over the appearance of the chimney pipe. Ms. Abeles stated that the chimney in Photo 7 is for an oil burning furnace on Leighton Road according to the contractor.

Mr. Cohen asked whether there is any opportunity to bend the pipe along the rafters to allow it to exit the roof at a less conspicuous location. Ms. Abeles stated that she will investigate that option with her contractor. It would likely require a soffit, but may achieve a look the Commission prefers.

Ms. Berry stated that the rest of the project could be approved. Ms. Berry moved to approve the project with the exception of the chimney with the following conditions: addition of stud pockets for windows F and G and consideration of a single, five light transom for window B subject to the architect's final determination. Mr. Giangrosso seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Ms. McCarthy moved to continue the discussion of 20 Cottage Street to the May 21, 2013 meeting. Mr. Cohen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

The Commission adjourned at approximately 8:30 pm.

Erin L. Heacock
Planner

Minutes Approved: May 28, 2013