

Town of Edgartown

Historic District Commission
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~Historic District Commission~ Minutes Thursday, July 20, 2017



Members in attendance: Christopher Scott, Susan Catling, Edith Blake, Carole Berger, Peter Rosbeck (A), Cari Williamson (A). Absent: Robbie Hutchison, Cassie Bradley & Julia Celeste. Staff: Bricque Garber

8 Atwood Circle (29B-57) Public Hearing. DeLuna LLC. Chuck Sullivan/agent. Applicant proposes to lift house, rebuild first floor. Renovate with new windows, siding, trim. Add 2nd floor to existing 1 story additions & addition of front facing dormer. Chuck appeared with the owners of 8 Atwood. Mr. Sullivan described the location as in the flood plain and coastal district. Plan includes enclosing 2nd floor deck on the left side and adding a story to the right side & renovation of garage. These plans have been modified from those that may have been viewed by the abutters during the last two weeks. The changes are considered, by Mr. Sullivan as minor changes. Photos from the MV Museum were displayed as well as the plans. Mr. Sullivan outlined the proposed changes noting that there were additions of differing floor heights and materials likely from the 50's. There is currently a shed dormer on the rear of the house. He showed the existing configuration and the proposed changes. He described the changes needed to increase the building height. There will be an exposed foundation as the building is lifted by approx. 30" from the current elevation to get the bldg. out of the flood plain. He noted the changes in roof height and the reduced length of the dormer from the original proposed plans. The garage is made taller to accommodate a car and more storage. Susan asked about the pergola area and it was described as not enclosed but provides a bit of shade and privacy. There was a question regarding the addition sky of lights in the garage & Chuck said there is currently a sky light in the garage and they want natural light for art/workshop area. Materials to be clapboard in front with natural cedar shingles other exterior walls. Foundation planned to be brick to match the chimney, with soffits and trim to match current existing. Susan discussed and provided an overview of the bylaws for the benefit of the abutters and audience. Inc. sections 1 & 6 guidelines addressing dormers and windows. Susan asked Chuck the thought process on the change of the windows. Noting that they are currently 12x12 and the plan shows

6x1. Chuck said this is to simplify the windows and add more light per the owners wishes. The dormer has been reduced due to commissioner comments to approx. 17 ft. Susan noted that the additions should be subservient to the historic structure and thinks these plans completely change the concept of a historic farmhouse. She wondered if there is not room in the rear for additions that might be subservient to the original farm house. Chuck discussed the current additions and the desire to add 2nd stories to the small additions. He noted that the 2 additions are not "historic". Chuck noted that there is not a lot of room in the rear and additions would be visible from Atwood if the additions were in the rear. The proposed square footage addition is 600 sq. ft. which he described as modest. Susan noted that there are many truly modest houses on the circle. Susan questioned the removal of the chimney and replacement with a new chimney. Chuck noted that the original chimney cannot be saved and reused when the house is lifted and the location breaks up the interior of the house and noted that the chimney could be replicated but not saved. Peter Rosbeck asked about lifting house to get out of the flood plain and asked Chuck to describe the proposed process for lifting. Chuck thinks it would be lifted from the 2nd floor as there is a collection of slabs under the current house, and said that if there are floor joists they are below ground. Susan read from 1949 Gazette article. (attached)

Mr. Scott opened the public Hearing asking if there was anyone in attendance who wanted to speak in favor. Nancy and Steve Donovan of 20 Dunham Rd. said that they were glad to see something being done with the home. Steve likes it to but would like to see 6x6 windows. He said that it seems consistent with the Historical Character of the house.

Mr. Scott asked if there were comments opposed to the project. Mary Gentle of 19 Atwood Circle questioned the finished height of the project. Chuck noted that the finished height will be 6 feet higher than the existing elevation. Current height limit is 26 ft. and the proposed is 30 ft., noting that 3 feet of the new ridge height is to accommodate the flood plain requirement. Currently ridge height is 24 feet. She asked about interrupting the view from the rear. Chuck does not think there is anyone that can currently see over the house. Ms. Gentle is concerned with the serious flooding problem. Chuck described that, once lifted, the flood water would go under the house with flood vents, and noted that the renovation would be beneficial in a serious flood. Steve Gentle noted that this is a 3 story house, and noted that this 3 story house will block view of the original Atwood house. He thinks this change would be a shame as it is a charming old house and is not in agreement and is totally against this proposed plan.

Cynthia Thomas, the applicant and owner, responded that they will be permanent residents and will live in the house all year. She said that her husband is an artist and wants to paint in the garage so needs the skylights. She said that they will not

expand to the rear and are keeping within the current footprint. She said the house is difficult to live in, as it is not up to code including plumbing and electrical and ceiling heights. She said they have no choice but to make changes and sees these changes as not significant. Mr. Gentle asked, "if the house does not fit you, why did you buy the house." Ms. Thomas said it is not livable as it is and they have no choice.

Mr. Scott noted for the abutters, that the applicant will be having a 2 step process as this project will have to be approved by ZBA as well as HDC. He explained that given the age of the historic homes we often see applications that deal with renovations and it is known that these homes do not meet current building code and are not required to be updated for the purpose of meeting current building codes. Further, Mr. Scott said that we are here to preserve historic form and character and the HDC wants to see a final project that is an echo of the historic home. Bricque noted that this project will be required to go to both the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Conservation Commission.

Stacy Wallace, abutter, was a late arrival said that her retaining wall abuts the property. She said the new additions and the chimney will definitely have an impact on her. She wants the neighborhood to move forward with a mutually agreeable way but sees problems with this plan.

Mr. Scott closed the public hearing and asked for comments from Commissioners. Carole Berger said that she does not see any reference, consideration or respect for the historic house. Carole noted that our primary job is to maintain the character of the house even with the changes. She noted a rule of thumb that someone, from the past, would come by and recognize the house, which is definitely not the case here. Noting that she does not see any respect given to the original house.

Cari Williamson is a new addition to the HDC she noted that the original character is dissipated, and wondered if some compromise can be made.

Chris Scott said that often times the applicant will ask to be postponed to modify designs, rather than requesting a final vote of a board that has concerns. In this case a continuation may be advisable.

Susan Catling, deferred to Peter regarding construction modifications, but noted that the character of a significant historic farm house is not considered here. Peter Rosbeck said that simple things like chimneys reflect the original house and chimneys, can be replicated and retained for aesthetic purposes. He asked about stepping back the addition to separate them from the historic house. Peter is puzzled by the desire to change the historic 12x12 style as these are fairly big openings. He noted the historic character and look of 12x12 windows and shutters. He noted that there are changes may preserve the character of the house and HDC

exterior elements can respect the history of what is there now. He noted that natural light is great but skylights are not historic and thinks that there may be a better way to add light to garage. Mr. Rosbeck noted that modest additions may help to retain character. Edith Blake said that she does not think this should be done, noting it is a charming house that should remain as is.

Chris Scott suggested continuation to work on the plans and referenced the front dormer & additions. Susan Catling sees the overall character is lost with the dormer and the additions and the proposed plans have many elements contribute to the loss of the historical character.

Chairman Scott noted that these additions may represent modest square footage but do create considerable mass. Chuck Sullivan discussed going to the conservation commission, and would like to see this application continued to the next meeting rather than postponed. It was agreed that there would be another site visit if the plans are changed before the next meeting. There was discussion regarding the continuation and it was moved to continue to Aug. 3rd, with a site visit and “poles” to illustrate the heights of the proposed additions on both sides of the house. Chris Scott described the process of continuation, to the abutters. Motion to continue, Carole Berger. 2nd, Cari Williamson. Approved to continue.

New/Old Business:

Lighting: 44 Main St. The commissioners viewed photographs of the green spotlights mounted on the side of the Bookstore. These lights were not approved. Motion to send violation letter to the owners of the property, Carole Berger. 2nd, Cari Williamson. Motion approved. Letter will be sent.

Minutes: 6.7.17 Approved with correction to first item to include Chris at appointee of the board.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:06.

Respectfully submitted:

Bricque Garber

Approved: _____ September 7, 2017
Christopher Scott, Chairman

**(Minutes not voted on August 3 or August 17 as the meetings were cancelled)*