

**WETHERSFIELD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
**PUBLIC HEARING**  
**March 27, 2007**

The Wethersfield Historic District Commission held a Public Hearing on March 27, 2007 in Room F-3 at the Pitkin Community Center, 30 Greenfield Street, Wethersfield, Connecticut.

Members Present:

Susan O'Brien, Chairperson  
Vacek Miglus, Vice Chairperson  
Jennifer Wolf, Clerk  
Robert Garrey  
Gary McLeod  
Eric Hart, Alternate (arrived at 7:43PM)  
John Maycock, Alternate

Members Absent:

Bette Botticello, Alternate

Also Present:

Kristin Stearley, Historic District Coordinator

Commissioner O'Brien, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:30PM, and read the opening comments. Commissioner Wolf, Clerk, read the legal notice as it appeared in The Hartford Courant on March 16, 2007.

**APPLICATION NO. 3473-07.** James and Karen Memmott seeking to remove the existing rear porch and hatchway and construct a one-story addition in their place at 14 Dorchester Road.

James and Karen Memmott of 14 Dorchester Road appeared before the commission. Building plans were provided to the commission.

The applicants explained that they wish to replace a mudroom at the back of the house with a 19' x 24' one-story addition. The addition will have a foundation and windows on two sides. The siding material will match the existing material on the house. The trim and overhangs will match existing as best as possible. The proposed windows are Eagle aluminum clad wood casement windows with simulated divided lights.

An entranceway is proposed for the west side. The proposed door is a French door with one sidelight. It will also be made by Eagle and be made of wood framed aluminum clad.

Commissioner Miglus expressed some concerns about matching trim and overhangs. The applicants stated they are the second owners of a house that is almost 80 years old, and wish to maintain the original look of the house as best as possible.

Commissioner O'Brien indicated that much of the addition will not be visible. Commissioner Wolf disagreed indicating that the addition will be quite visible from Garden Street.

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

**APPLICATION NO. 3474-07.** Kevin and Gail Stewart seeking to replace the existing fence around the pool in back of the property at 411 Main Street.

Kevin Stewart of 411 Main Street appeared before the commission. The applicant provided written materials describing

the fence he wishes to install.

The applicant indicated that he wishes to replace the current cedar fence surrounding a pool with a 3-rail aluminum fence similar to fence surrounding "Mikey's Place". The fence will be placed in the same spot where the current fence is located, and will be the same length. A gate will be located in the front of the house.

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

**APPLICATION NO. 3475-07.** David Peters seeking to amend the approved Certificate of Appropriateness to include a fence at 117 State Street.

David Peters of 117 State Street appeared before the commission. He stated he would like to install a 6' tongue and groove cedar fence. The fence will be placed in front of bushes on one side. The bushes on the left side of the house will be removed.

Commissioner McLeod asked why the fence would be installed in front rather than behind the bushes. Mr. Peters stated the pool would be better blocked from view with the fence in the proposed location.

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

**APPLICATION NO. 3469-07.** Ekret Llukaj seeking to install replacement windows on the 2nd floor and 1st floor porch, new doors for the front and back porches and construct a deck in the rear of 6-8 Middletown Avenue (Tabled from the February 27, 2007 and March 13, 2007 meetings with the Hearing left open - last date to act on is April 24, 2007).

The applicant was not present at the hearing.

**APPLICATION NO. 3471-07.** C-P Investments LLC seeking to renovate the Comstock Ferre building; renovation and adaptive reuse of other building on site and conversion to mixed use retail, office and residential; and Construction of a new 5,400 sf building containing retail, office and residential uses adjacent to Church Street at 249-263 Main Street. (Tabled from the February 27, 2007 and March 13, 2007 meetings with the Hearing left open - last date to act on is April 24, 2007).

Jack Gilmartin of Hewitt Engineering of 470 Kensington Road in Berlin appeared before the commission. He advised the commission that he is a resident of Wethersfield and served on the HDC for seven years. He stated he understood the concerns raised about changing the Comstock property and feels the developers will ensure the property is developed and maintained properly. He indicated the developers have taken into consideration the concerns about massing. As a result, some design changes have been made.

Mr. Gilmartin displayed a sample of the chip sealed pavement, and indicated the same pavement was used at 468 Main Street. A sample of the Cape Cod curbing was also displayed. Walkways in the parking lots will be made of brick.

There will be 307 sf less of asphalt on the Main Street. There will be no more parking in front of Comstock than currently exists. The new parking spaces will exist on the Church Street side. Mr. Gilmartin had pictures to show that cars currently park in front of Comstock contrary to the comments made that cars will park in front once the project is complete. Commissioner O'Brien stated that parking in the front of Comstock is a recent phenomenon.

Mr. Gilmartin stated that an analysis by a structural engineer is being done. The report will be provided to the commission when available.

Craig Laliberte of Craig A. Laliberte Architects of Ivoryton appeared before the commission. He reviewed the changes made to the buildings reflecting comments made by the commission. He reiterated that the Belden House and the main building are not being changed.

He explained that the originally proposed 4' picket will now be a 4' stockade fence with 2' lattice top. Rather than a 6' fence between the residential portion of the project and neighboring homes, shrubbery will be used in keeping with the current use of shrubbery in the neighborhood.

Pear trees that will grow to 30' will be used in the back of the property. White pine will be used on the west side. White pines will also be used along the fence. The trees will be planted 8' apart so that plantings can be seen in between. The white pines will grow to a maximum of 8'.

Two types of post lanterns will be used. Along the landscaping 5' lanterns will be used. Other fixtures will be 16' high. Post and landscaping lights are "night sky friendly", which means that light does not flow into neighboring properties and no light is put into the sky.

The barn building remains the same size, but the roof pitch was lowered. It allows the building to look more vertical. The cupola remains, but is smaller. Transom lights in the rear have been removed.

The existing footprint of the barn is 7938 sf. The proposed barn will be 6498 sf. Living space will be 748 sf.

The roof pitch on the west side of Building 4 was greatly reduced. That is the side abutting the nearest neighbor. The body of the main house was widened to make the house read more like a house with a main body and a shortened wing. This also creates a lower profile for the abutting neighbor on the west side.

A streetscape was displayed. The proposed driveway from Church Street will be 24'.

Jeldwen wood 6/6 windows are proposed. Grills will be applied to the front and back of the window. The windows will have a bronze lining in between the glass to create a shadow to give the impression the windows are true divided lights. Wood doors are proposed. Cedar or pine siding and trim will be used, although hardyplank with a 4" reveal is preferred. Samples were shown.

The large commercial windows in the front of the building are 6' x 7', and are also made by Jeldwen.

Commissioner Wolf noted that there are a number of issues concerning the existing barn, which include issues raised by the Fire Marshal and by the environmental report. She asked the applicants whether they intended to have the application tabled so that they could return to the HDC with information addressing those concerns. Mr. Laliberte indicated that the time limit for review of the application was approaching. Tom Cocomo of 24 Norton Lane in Berlin suggested that because of

the time limit, the commission may allow the applicants to return with more details after approval of the project is given.

Attorney Peter Evans, 1 City Place, Hartford stated that a letter allowing an extension beyond the 60 days would be done. Mr. Cocomo stated the applicants want feedback from the commission and from the residents about the project.

Commissioner McLeod asked how plantings would be able to remain in the front of the buildings with the proposed parking. Mr. Gilmartin indicated that it was the intent to keep plants on display in the front of the building during planting season. Even though parking spaces would exist in the area, there is not regulation to say the spaces must actually be used for parking.

Commissioner Hart asked whether consideration had been given to further softening the look of the entrance on Church Street by using more plantings and/or trees. Mr. Gilmartin stated it is an issue they will look at. He also mentioned that they are looking at issues relating to on street parking on Church Street.

A ten-minute break was called to allow the public to view the drawings and pictures displayed.

Commissioner O'Brien asked whether there was anyone wishing to speak in favor or in opposition to the application.

Mitch Knight of 307 Main Street appeared before the commission. He noted that the property is not currently maintained very well. He stated he is very interested in the historical aspects of the property and the district, and hoped the commission would help maintain the historical significance of the property.

Brian Freeman of 59 Church Street appeared before the commission. He mentioned some specific aspects of the project, and restated his request for a nightview of the property. He also asked the applicants to reconsider putting a mixed-used building on Church Street.

Christine Trycek of 466 Brimfield Road appeared before the commission. She is the Vice Chair of the Wethersfield Tourism Commission. She stated the commission voted to support the proposal for mixed-usage at the Comstock site with the provision that the character of the historic district be maintained.

Jean Freeman of 59 Church Street appeared before the commission. She stated she is opposed to the commercial property on Church Street.

Howard Willard of 141 Main Street appeared before the commission. He stated that a residential home on the Church Street side of the property would be more appropriate. He also stated that the HDC should not allow the destruction of the barn.

Maureen Hayes of 29 Hartford Avenue appeared before the commission. She expressed concerns about the scale and mass of the project, and the fact that it does not fit into the historic district.

Robert Smart of 62 Church Street appeared before the commission. He expressed concerns about the limited feedback the developers have obtained from the neighbors. He also indicated that the project of its size is not appropriate for the district.

Leigh Standish of 278 Hartford Avenue appeared before the commission. He raised a procedural question stating that, although he appreciated the applicants' willingness to respond to any questions raised, it would be inappropriate for them to do so without allowing the residents the opportunity to rebut what is said.

Ann Kuckro of 471 Main Street appeared before the commission. She stated that she wished to correct the record to reflect that the date of the fire at the Comstock property was 1834 and not 1832 as she had said at a prior meeting. She was provided with an aerial view showing that the Vicino residence was not on Church Street in 1952, but she still feels the house is an old house. She also commented on the driveway and parking off Church Street. She suggested the HDC not finalize a decision on the application until the project is reviewed by P & Z., even it means denying the application without prejudice

Chester Willard of 54 Center Street appeared before the commission. He stated he has done business with Comstock for 80 years. He described the changes the Comstock business has undergone over the years. For some time the buildings on the property have not been fully utilized. He stated it was time that someone put the buildings to full use.

Billye Logan of 318 Hartford Avenue appeared before the commission. She stated that a mixed-use building on Church Street is inappropriate and encouraged the commission to deny the application.

Kathleen Ahern of 15 Hartford Avenue appeared before the commission. She stated she was discouraged that the designs presented did not take into consideration comments made by residents.

The following letters were read into the record.

Andrew Adil, Mayor of Wethersfield, wrote a letter dated March 27, 2007 in support of the project.

Kimberly Baptiste wrote a letter dated March 27, 2007 in favor of the project. She wrote on behalf of John Miller Associates, Preservation Planning Consultant for the Historic Wethersfield Master Plan.

The Old Wethersfield Shopkeepers Association sent a letter dated March 22, 2007 in favor of the project.

Jay C. Amoroso of 30 Main Street wrote a letter dated March 27, 2007 in favor of the project.

A letter dated March 27, 2007 from the Wethersfield Economic Development and Improvement Commission was sent in favor of the project. All members of the commission signed the letter.

Patricia Rust of 16 Meggat Park wrote a letter dated March 27, 2007 in opposition to the project.

Paul Courchaine wrote an email dated March 27, 2007 in favor of the project.

Karen Candee wrote an email dated March 12, 2007 in opposition to the project.

James Felice of 23 Center Street wrote a letter dated March 10, 2007 in opposition to the project.

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

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

Aye: Garrey, McLeod, Miglus, O'Brien, Wolf

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**APPLICATION NO. 3473-07.** James and Karen Memmott seeking to remove the existing rear porch and hatchway and construct a one-story addition in their place at 14 Dorchester Road.

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

- The addition siding shall match the existing structure in stucco.
- Windows shall be aluminum clad wood casement simulated divided light with muntins as shown in drawing.
- Trim and overhang shall match that of the main body of the house.

**Discussion**

Commissioner Miglus noted that the addition will be an asset to Main Street, with minimal impact on the district. Commissioners Wolf and O'Brien agreed.

Aye: Garrey, McLeod, Miglus, O'Brien, Wolf

**APPLICATION NO. 3474-07.** Kevin and Gail Stewart seeking to replace the existing fence around the pool in back of the property at 411 Main Street.

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

**Discussion**

Commissioner Garrey stated the proposed fence has been used successfully in other parts of the district.

Aye: Garrey, McLeod, Miglus, O'Brien, Wolf

**APPLICATION NO. 3475-07.** David Peters seeking to amend the approved Certificate of Appropriateness to include a fence at 117 State Street.

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

### **Discussion**

Commissioner Miglus indicated that the cedar fence will work well with the house, and will effectively shield the back of the house. Commissioner Wolf stated the main purpose of the fence was to shield the pool, which it will not do.

Aye: Garrey, McLeod, Miglus Nay: Wolf Abst: O'Brien

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

### **Discussion**

Commissioner Miglus noted that the applicants provided quite a bit of information, and he would like to postpone a decision until he has had an opportunity to absorb the information. He noted that many of the issues raised by the commission have been addressed, albeit not always in the manner the commission had requested. He also stated he would like all details, such as all the information on the windows and trim, before making a decision.

Commissioner Miglus noted that the interaction with the developers on the Comstock project has been more pleasant than some experiences he has had with other developers. Commissioner Wolf agreed stating that the developers have been much more receptive to comments from the public.

Commissioner O'Brien stated that town residents want an opportunity to be heard, and to have their opinions considered. They have been very clear about wanting the HDC to take its time in making a decision.

The commissioners felt the environmental reports will be very helpful, especially in detailing why the barns are not presently viable. The commissioners also indicated that they look forward to input from P & Z.

Commissioner McLeod asked whether the commission could ask the applicants to present a to-scale model. Commissioners agreed that a model would be helpful. A simple model would suffice.

Aye: Garrey, McLeod, Miglus, O'Brien, Wolf

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF:** March 13, 2007

Phil Lohman's last name was reported incorrectly in the minutes.

Upon motion by Commissioner Miglus [the minutes of the March 13, 2007](#) meeting were approved with the correction.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **Public comments on general matters of the Historic District**

None.

**Report of the Historic District Coordinator**

None.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

A letter from Anna and Terry Brown of 38 Church Street was read into the record. The letter was pertaining to the Comstock project, and contained suggestions for making the project more appropriate.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Upon motion by Commissioner Garrey and seconded by Commissioner Miglus and a poll of the Commission, it was unanimously voted to ADJOURN the meeting at 10:30PM.

Aye: Garrey, McLeod, Miglus, O'Brien, Wolf

Respectfully Submitted

TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD  
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Jennifer Wolf  
Clerk