

**WETHERSFIELD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING
DECEMBER 9, 2003**

The Wethersfield Historic District Commission held a public meeting on December 9, 2003 at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Conference Room of the Town Hall, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, Connecticut.

Members present:

Douglas Ovian, Vice Chairperson
Jennifer Wolf, Clerk
Vacek Miglus
Billye Logan
John Toomey
Eric Hart
Paul Courchaine

Members absent:

Robert A. Garrey

Also Present:

Robert Cook, Wethersfield Historic District Coordinator

Commissioner Miglus called the hearing to order at 7:30 pm as Vice Chairperson Ovian was detained and Clerk Wolf, read the Legal Notice as it appeared in the Hartford Courant on November 28 , 2003.

Vice Chairman Ovian arrived at this time.

APPLICATION NO. 3156- 03. Todd C. Lomento seeking to install a fence at 55 Hart Street.

Mr. Todd Lomento, 55 Hart Street appeared before the Commission and submitted a photograph which showed the style of cedar stockade fence with flat top rail and capped posts he proposed to erect in the rear of his yard. He explained that although his property was 110' across in the back, he wanted the fence to begin about 8' away from one property line and run across only 80' and then turn 45 degrees away from the yard on either end to veer off into the woods before ending. On the 2 sides of the property he proposed 40'-48' sections that would not connect with the rear section. The end effect would be a visual buffer from the woods and highway to the rear of the property.

Commissioner Logan asked if there was a good side to this type of fence. Mr. Lomento was not sure.

Commissioner Ovian explained that the Commission typically requested that the side of the fence without exposed rails face the neighbors, but if the fence was the same on either side then there was nothing to worry about. Mr. Lomento had no problem with that request.

Mr. Lomento's application contained several different fence styles, as well as plans drawn up by more than one contractor. The Commissioners confirmed the placement of the proposed fencing as well as the style of fence requested and did not feel the need for additional documentation.

There being no one else who wished to speak in favor or against this application, this portion of the hearing was declared closed.

APPLICATION NO. 3157-03. Great New England Design LLC seeking to install porch windows, doors, and skylights at 149 Garden Street.

Mr. John Keilch, contractor appeared before the Commission and explained that the home had an existing porch which

was in need of repair to the screens and roof. Rather than simply making repairs the homeowner would like to replace the screens with sliding windows, as well as add skylights to the roof to bring more light into the house. The aluminum clad windows would be painted boysenberry red like the existing with the same opening size; the skylights would be bronze colored aluminum. The footprint would not change at all.

Commissioner Ovian asked if the double hung window shown in the plans to the left of the door was an existing window. He was told that it would be replaced to match the same 6/1 pattern.

The Commission discussed the fact that only the very side of the porch would be visible.

Mr. Cook wanted to mention that even though the porch would barely be visible, the windows selected were a perfect match to the existing windows. Mr. Keilch said that the intention was to make it match the look of the screened porch.

Commissioner Miglus asked why they had chosen sliders rather than a selection that might provide more ventilation such as casements. He was told that other window types did not provide uninterrupted glass, and children walking by might hit their head on the bottom of a casement window.

There being no one else who wished to speak in favor or against this application, this portion of the hearing was declared closed.

APPLICATION NO. 3158-03. RMA Home Services seeking to install vinyl siding at 323 Garden Street.

Mr. John Stoppelworth, contractor representing the homeowner appeared before the Commission and submitted photographs of the ranch home as it currently exists. He proposed to reside the home with double 4" clapboard-style vinyl, and he showed a sample of the product which he pointed out was embossed to have the look of cedar clapboard.

Commissioner Ovian asked if it was currently painted, and he pointed to the photograph that was taken during the survey in 1975 which looked to him like there was no change to the wood texture at that time.

Mr. Stoppelworth explained that later on when the house had been painted it had been sanded with a circular sander and the circular pattern could be seen if one looked closely. The Commissioners then understood that the home was sided in 7" cedar shingles that had been sanded to resemble clapboards.

Commissioner Miglus explained that one of the things that the Commission looked at when deciding whether to allow a change in siding like this was how well the existing details could be replicated. Along with the vinyl siding he supposed that they would be adding corner boards and in this case the proposed changes were significant from what was currently there. He wondered if the customer had given consideration to the way the look of the house would be changed.

Mr. Stoppelworth said that the homeowner cared very much and desired to get away from the 1960's style of the shakes and change to a more New England colonial look that the narrower clapboards would achieve.

Commissioner Ovian said that one might think that a group called the Historic District Commission might be biased to favor that sort of look. The reality he said is that they were responsible for maintaining the look of an evolving Riverfront community over a 400 year period. As a result the goal is not that of a typical Historic Commission trying to recreate a mini-Williamsburg but instead in applications like this one the Commission tends to favor the replication of the look the home was built in. He explained that the applicant is requesting that they take a home from the mid-20th century and create the look of something a bit more traditional and older. He said that as a Commission they tended not to honor those requests that come before them which try to alter the era the home was built in.

Mr. Cook asked if they had any plan for the windows. Mr. Stoppelworth said that the homeowner had replaced the windows already.

Commissioner Ovian asked how long the current homeowner had been there, and he was told that they had bought the house in May.

It was noted that the windows had been replaced without approval and would need to file an application.

Mr. Stoppelworth wanted to make mention that the house to the side of this home had cedar clapboards.

There being no one else who wished to speak in favor or against this application, this portion of the hearing was declared closed.

APPLICATION NO. 3159-03. Brian Levesque seeking to install stairs and deck in the rear at 119 State Street.

Mr. Brian Lévesque and his wife Debra, 119 State Street appeared before the Commission and explained that they had recently installed a sliding glass door on the rear of their home and had built stairs leading up to it. They had intended to place a railing on the stairs but before they got that far had been asked to come in and file an application with the Commission. He brought a sample of the railing with him.

Mr. Cook said that while he was visiting another property he happened to look over the back fence and had seen the stairs being installed and realized that although it could not be seen from Hartford Avenue right now, if the fence or hedge were removed it would be visible.

Commissioner Ovian asked if a porch replacement had taken place on this house. Mr. Levesque explained that they were doing some repairs and had encountered ant problems and had ended up having to replace the whole thing. But it had been a like for like replacement.

Commissioner Miglus asked how big the proposed deck would be. Mr. Lévesque explained that although they had come in with an application for a deck, they weren't ready to build it yet. It had been suggested that they could save themselves the additional application fee if they asked for it on this one. But it would be roughly the width of the slider wall and come out about 18' from the back of the house.

Commissioner Miglus said that the application was for stairs and a deck, and they came in talking about newel posts and the like and his question was driven by how big it would be so they could tell if it could be seen from the street. If it couldn't be seen from the street it would become a non issue, however if it can be seen they will need to know what it would look like. He added that if it was about 10' wide and came off 20' from the back of the house, that there was a good chance it could be seen from the street.

Commissioner Miglus said that the issue was either that they approve a deck without any information on it, or stipulate a deck that they can then come back with plans for when they are ready.

Commissioner Ovian said that unless the applicant was building the deck before the next meeting he would prefer that the applicant speak with Mr. Cook about it and give them time to think it over. He noted that the Commission has no jurisdiction over the slider since it can not be seen from a public way but they probably could see a deck. He added that if they were completely open to ideas and were looking for the Commission to design the deck for them, it could be done, however if they decide that they want to give it some thought, then the Commission wouldn't vote anything more than the stairs and the railing.

Mr. Levesque asked the Commissioners if he needed to get approval to change a small piece of chain link fence that the former homeowner had erected. He was told that it seemed minor enough that they could add it to this application.

There being no one else who wished to speak in favor or against this application, this portion of the hearing was declared closed.

APPLICATION NO. 3160-03. Leo J. Veilleux Jr. seeking to modify driveway in rear of house at 133 Main Street.

Mr. Leo Veilleux and wife Susan , 133 Main Street appeared before the Commission and explained that the modification had already been done to the rear driveway area. His impression had been that as a result of conversations that he had held with Mr. Cook and Michael Turner, Town Engineer that he had approval and that he had been told by Mr. Turner that it would be okay to go ahead.

Mr. Cook said that there had been discussions with Mr. Turner, and Peter Gillespie, Town Planner and others, and that at the time, the modifications proposed were to the backyard of a residency which would not require Commission approval. However the property is now a business and they thought that it should be reviewed by the Commission. He added that Mr. Turner was fine with the environmental concerns and it was good to go as far as the Building Department went.

Commissioner Miglus said that he had walked by to look at it and although there is a hedge screening it from the street, he was tall enough to look over the top. He asked how many spaces there were and if there was any curbing, with the snow present he couldn't tell. He was told that there was space for 6 cars and one along the side and that there was no curbing, just flat black top.

Commissioner Ovian noted that the modifications appeared to be a small expansion to what had already previously been done. He asked how long ago the other part of the driveway had been done. Mr. Veilleux answered that it was done about 3 years ago, when it had been primarily residential.

Commissioner Logan asked if they were planning any type of fencing between the side play area and the parking area, and was told that they had no plans at that time.

Ms. Ozlem Camli a Main Street neighbor as well as on Garden Street stepped forward to say that she thought that they were improving the existing building and the surrounding area around it and she was in favor of the project.

Mr. Howard Willard 141 Main Street stepped forward to say that he was the next door neighbor and he had no problem with the proposal.

There being no one else who wished to speak in favor or against this application, this portion of the hearing was declared closed.

There being no other business to come before the Commission, the public hearing was declared closed.

**WETHERSFIELD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
PUBLIC MEETING
DECEMBER 9, 2003**

APPLICATION NO. 3156- 03. Todd C. Lomento seeking to install a fence at 55 Hart Street.

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

INFORMAL DISCUSSION

The Commissioners agreed that considering that fence was facing a wooded area and a highway it was most appropriate that the good side should face the homeowner and since they were unaware of whether or not the fence was the same on either side it would be best to let the homeowner use their best judgment as to which way they faced it.

Commissioner Miglus thought that the fence was entirely appropriate for the District and would be set back from the property lines and sight views of any public way so as to make minimal impact on the District.

Aye: Miglus, Logan, Wolf, Hart, Toomey

Abst: Ovian, Courchaine

APPLICATION NO. 3157-03. Great New England Design LLC seeking to install porch windows, doors, and skylights at 149 Garden Street.

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

Commissioner Logan felt that the proposals were very appropriate.

Aye: Logan, Miglus, Wolf, Hart, Courchaine

Abst: Ovian, Toomey

APPLICATION NO. 3158-03. RMA Home Services seeking to install vinyl siding at 323 Garden Street.

Upon motion by Commissioner Wolf, seconded by Commissioner Logan and a poll of the Commission it was voted to TABLE the subject application to give the homeowners the opportunity to come forward with a more appropriate application.

Aye: Logan, Miglus, Wolf, Courchaine, Toomey

Abst: Ovian

APPLICATION NO. 3159-03. Brian Levesque seeking to install stairs and deck in the rear at 119 State Street.

Upon motion by Commissioner Miglus, seconded by Commissioner Logan and a poll of the Commission it was voted to TABLE the subject application in order to allow the applicant time to think through their plans.

Aye: Logan, Miglus, Wolf, Hart, Toomey

Abst: Ovian

APPLICATION NO. 3160-03. Leo J. Veilleux Jr. seeking to modify driveway in rear of house at 133 Main Street.

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

Commissioner Miglus said that although the applicant had doubled their parking lot size it was not visible from the street due to screening by the location of the existing buildings and it would have minimal impact on the District.

Aye: Logan, Miglus, Wolf, Hart, Courchaine

Abst: Ovian

APPROVAL OF [MINUTES OF: November 11, 2003](#)

Upon Motion by Commissioner Logan, seconded by Commissioner Wolf, and a poll of the Commission, it was voted that the above minutes BE APPROVED as submitted.

Aye: Logan, Wolf, Ovian, Miglus, Hart

Abst: Toomey, Courchaine

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Cook brought in the plans for the renovation of the Stillman Building project and the Commissioners were given the opportunity to look informally over the plans. He said that they would be reviewing the plans in January. The Commissioners discussed the plans and were interested in seeing any pictures that might be available of the building when it was first built to see what the windows looked like. Although the new plans showed only 1/1 arrangements for

the enormous windows, there were questions that that might not have been the original style.

NOMINATION OF CHAIRPERSON OF THE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Upon motion by Commissioner Ovian, seconded by Commissioner Toomey and a poll of the Commission it was unanimously voted to ELECT Billye Logan as Chairperson of the Wethersfield Historic District Commission.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Ann Kuckro told the Commission that the Town Council had approved an increase in the contingency to matching the increase of \$1000.00 granted by the Connecticut Trust which would allow the complete data system with 3 engines. The primary property engine which would have the forms that the State is doing, the second one would be for pictures (up to 10 images per), so that people would be able to look up their own house and see all the old photographs. The third will be an index showing all the decisions made by the Commission of the last 40 or so years. Mr. Cook suggested that a computer should be available in the room during meetings in order to pull up photos and access information.

Ms. Kuckro also showed 2 prototype house signs that had been made up. One sign had vinyl lettering mounted on an aluminum board, and framed with an anodized aluminum picture frame. The 2nd sign had the same lettering but was mounted on a plastic board with an aluminum frame that was paintable. Both signs utilized a dovetail-type of mounting system. The signs had been created to be potential fundraisers. However, at \$90.00 apiece it seemed unlikely that many homeowners would purchase one. In addition they needed to be purchased in lots of 100 signs. The Commissioners discussed other possible alternatives and thought that other options should be explored.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Jennifer Wolf
Clerk