

TOWN OF AMHERST  
Historic District Commission

August 19, 2021

**APPROVED**

In attendance: Jamie Ramsay – Chair, Chris Hall – Vice-Chair, Chris Buchanan, Doug Chabinsky, Tom Grella – Board of Selectmen Ex-Officio, Tracie Adams – Planning Board Ex-Officio and Bill Rapf (remote) [7:11pm].  
Staff present Natasha Kypfer – Town Planner, and Kristan Patenaude – Recording Secretary (remote).

Jamie Ramsay called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. and introduced Commission and staff members present.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- 1. CASE #: PZ14594-080321 – Emily Myers & Tyler Torola (Owners & Applicants), 144 Amherst Street, PIN #: 017-002-000 – Request for approval to replace one window in rear of house on attached shed/mudroom with set of exterior French doors.**

Emily Myers and Tyler Torola presented the case.

Tracie Adams asked if the application was accepted as complete. Chris Hall noted that the Commission does not typically undertake this process. Jamie Ramsay stated that he believes anything glaringly apparently wrong with the application would probably have been noted by Town Staff. Chris Hall stated that this is not necessarily true, but he has reviewed the application and believes it is acceptable.

Emily Myers stated that she is proposing to put refurbished French doors on an attached shed/mudroom to the house. There is one current window in that area that does not match with the rest of the windows in the house. The French doors are all-wood, with 15 true divided lights. The doors will be white and will have trim to match. The doors are proposed in the back of the house and so will not be readily visible to abutters.

Tyler Torola stated that the doors will be made to match the existing doors in that part of the house.

In response to a question from Chris Hall, Emily Myers stated that they were able to find a seller on Etsy who will match the hardware for the doors to the oldest hardware in the house.

Tyler Torola stated that the full set of hinges will be used. These will be outswinging doors.

Doug Chabinsky noted that, due to location, the only people who might see these doors would be a couple of abutters. They will not be visible from public roadways or walkways.

There were no further questions or comments from the Commission.

There was no comment from the public either in-person or via Zoom.

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**Doug Chabinsky moved to accept the application as presented. Tom Grella seconded.**

**Discussion:**

**FINDINGS:**

1. This property is listed in the Amherst Historic District as a Non-Contributing property, described as a late 19th century vernacular, greatly altered, 2-story with attached two-car garage.
2. This property is also listed on the National Register of historic homes in Amherst as historic property No. 2.
3. The location of the proposed renovation is 75 yards from the street; however, the renovation is facing the back of the property and not visible from Amherst Street.
4. The proposed renovations to the property have neighbor visibility and possible limited seasonal visibility from Main Street.
5. The proposed renovations to the property do not alter the original structure to the house but do alter one of its later additions.
6. The removal of the existing window is not original equipment and has no historical value to the property.
7. It could be argued that French Doors are not an appropriate architectural style door for a 19th century vernacular house, however, where this is not on the original house structure, not visible from public view and on a later style connected addition - compliance in architectural style has little effect on the integrity of the building.
8. The applicant's proposed renovation is in compliance with many sections of Article VI for use of all wood materials and clever use of reclaimed doors.

**Jamie Ramsay noted that the proposed doors may even offer something more attractive to the property.**

*Bill Rapf joined the meeting remotely at 7:11pm.*

**Voting: 6-0-0; Jamie Ramsay – aye, Chris Hall – aye, Chris Buchanan - aye, Doug Chabinsky - aye, Tom Grella – aye, and Tracie Adams – aye; motion carried unanimously.**

Jamie Ramsay explained to the applicant how the 30-day appeal process works in case the Historic District Commission's decision was contested by an abutter or other interested party.

- 2. CASE #: PZ14599-080421 – Doug & Martha Chabinsky (Owners & Applicants), 89 Boston Post Road, PIN #:017-047-000 – Request for approval to install a whole house generator.**

*Doug Chabinsky recused himself as the applicant of this case.*

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Doug Chabinsky presented the case.

Doug Chabinsky explained that he has many exterior plantings and trees on his property. He is trying to place the whole house generator in an area that does not do much damage to existing plantings. He stated that the generator is proposed to be located approximately 5-6' off the house, near the panel, toward the front of the house. He will extend the gardens in this area to encompass the generator and add plantings to shield it. The intent is to put the gas tanks near the fence, toward the back of the yard. He is willing to put up a fence in this area that mimics the picket fence to mitigate the view. There is not much visibility of the generator area now, but with additional plantings, it will be shielded from the street view. If he cannot tuck the gas tanks far enough behind the bushes, he will add in the fencing to shield the tanks. He added that 91 and 99 Boston Post Road have the exact same generator and are not shielded from the road. 6 Sunset also had the same generator with no shielding and is visible from the road.

In response to a question from Chris Hall, Doug Chabinsky stated that the generator on 91 Boston Post Road will be on the same side as his proposed generator. They were notified of his proposal.

There were no further questions or comments from the Commission.

There was no comment from the public either in-person or via Zoom.

**FINDINGS:**

1. This property is listed in the Amherst Historic District as a Contributing property, described as a Full Cape House circa 1820, 1 1/2 story with attached shed and barn.
2. This property is also listed on the National Register of historic homes in Amherst as historic property No. 47.
3. The location of the proposed renovations is 20-30 yards from the street.
4. The proposed renovations to the property are highly visible from public access however mitigated by shrubbery and fencing.
5. There are many generators in the Village approved for the applicants intended purpose and there is nothing out of the ordinary with this application.
6. The applicant's proposed renovation is in compliance with Article VI Section H - *Outdoor mechanical equipment shall be installed in locations which create the least disturbance to the historical appearance of the building, and which involve the minimum alteration to its structural integrity. Landscape buffers may be used.*

**Chris Hall moved that the application be accepted as presented. Seconded by Tracie Adams.**

**Discussion:**

**In response to a question from Chris Buchanan, Doug Chabinsky stated that the plantings will be evergreen in nature.**

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**Voting: 5-0-0; Jamie Ramsay – aye, Chris Hall – aye, Chris Buchanan - aye, Tom Grella – aye, and Tracie Adams – aye; motion carried unanimously..**

Jamie Ramsay explained to the applicant how the 30-day appeal process works in case the Historic District Commission's decision was contested by an abutter or other interested party.

*Doug Chabinsky retook his seat on the Commission.*

**3. CASE #: PZ14600-080421 – Lawrence & Deborah Gebhardt (Owners & Applicants), 132 Amherst Street, PIN #: 005-094-000 – Request for approval to replace vinyl windows, vinyl siding and aluminum trim coverings.**

Lawrence and Deborah Gebhardt presented the case.

Lawrence Gebhardt explained that he is proposing to redo the kitchen. There was previous approval received for this project from the Commission back in 2004, but the project did not carry forward at that time. The proposal is to replace vinyl windows in this section of the house. These are not historic windows, but were probably added in the 1990's. These do not match the rest of the house. He believes each set of windows are actually two windows molded together. They do not have the divided lights, as seen in the rest of the windows of the house. Some of the casing trim has been removed and covered with aluminum coverings. The windows on the whole house are missing much of the original detail. He has restored some of the windows on the back of the house as part of the original approval. He would like to do this to the whole house, but this proposal is for just the area around the kitchen. In not knowing the original approval would expire, he previously ordered the windows for this project which are currently in the garage. The windows will fit better into the openings, as they are much closer to the original sized windows of the house. He is also planning to remove the vinyl shutters existing on the house and not replace them, as he does not believe they would have been original to the house. He is willing to put on wooden shutters, if needed. The vinyl siding will be replaced with wooden siding of 4" exposure to match the parts that have been renovated already.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, Lawrence Gebhardt noted that the house is currently 75% sided in vinyl and was completely sided that way when he purchased it.

In response to a question from Doug Chabinsky, Lawrence Gebhardt stated that there is actually wooden siding underneath the vinyl siding. If the existing wooden siding was in good condition he would consider keeping it, but it has mostly been rotted and needed to be replaced. The intent is to get rid of all the vinyl. Lawrence Gebhardt stated that he will need to build window trims and sills. The trim on the garage matches that of the house, based on what has been uncovered so far.

Lawrence Gebhardt stated that the one window on the back of the house is not visible from the road. He is planning to put in an insert for this window to match as closely as possible.

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In response to a question from Doug Chabinsky, Lawrence Gebhardt stated that the replacement windows are JELD-WEN, all-wood, simulated divided light. He is trying to keep the aspect ratio of the lights the same as the others in the house.

Jamie Ramsay stated that the house was in pristine condition when he was growing up in Town but went through a period of neglect.

In response to a question from Chris Buchanan, Lawrence Gebhardt stated that the bottom half of the windows, both replacement and existing on the house, do not have divided lights.

In response to a question from Chris Hall, Lawrence Gebhardt stated that he has not been able to find any historic photos of his house to refer to.

There was no public comment at this time either in-person or via Zoom.

Tracie Adams and Bill Rapf noted that they believe this proposal will add to the property.

**FINDINGS:**

1. This property is listed in the Amherst Historic District as a Non-Contributing property described in our Historic District inventory report as a rare example of the Tudor style home circa early 20th century.
2. This property is NOT listed on the National Register of historic homes.
3. The location of the proposed renovation is approx. 30-50 yards from the street.
4. The proposed renovations to the property are highly visible from public access.
5. The proposed renovations were already previously approved by Amherst HDC back in 2004.
6. This application is a fine example of restoring a non-compliant, non-contributing property back to compliance both in style and choice of materials.
7. The applicant's proposed renovation is in compliance with all sections of Article VI for use and removal of all synthetic materials, conformity of architectural style, and retaining unique elements such as moldings and window lights.

**Chris Hall moved to accept the application as presented. Seconded by Jamie Ramsay.**

**Voting: 6-0-0; Jamie Ramsay – aye, Chris Hall – aye, Chris Buchanan - aye, Doug Chabinsky - aye, Tom Grella – aye, and Tracie Adams – aye; motion carried unanimously.**

Jamie Ramsay explained to the applicant how the 30-day appeal process works, in case the Historic District Commission's decision was contested by an abutter or other interested party.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

1. **Additional 5 School Street follow-up with Greg Mattison**

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Greg Mattison explained that, from the last Commission meeting, he is seeking an opinion of the Commission and a course that they can follow, regarding some proposed changes to the project. These changes are requested through the cost estimating and safety concerns from the owners of accessing their garage from Boston Post Road. The challenge is to stay within the building footprint and with the existing, approved elevations. The owners are hoping not to lose focus on the Commission's previous concerns regarding the project. In order to reduce the square footage cost, he has simplified the exterior from the previous design. He has kept the exterior as is and made the interior original kitchen of the bank the new kitchen for the house. The new proposal includes a survey of the lot from Sandford Surveying & Engineering. Regarding the safety concern for the garage, he has reduced the square footage of the back of the building and moved it so that there is a turnaround. The building has the same square footage as proposed, but the intention is to allow for a turnaround before entering Boston Post Road.

In response to a question from Doug Chabinsky, Greg Mattison explained that the back porch will mimic the front area but is still up for discussion. There may just be a portico over steps in the back, so as to not compete with the front porch.

Greg Mattison explained that the first floor will contain a mudroom and the existing kitchen of the original bank. There is a cost reduction in this revised plan.

In response to a question from Chris Hall, Greg Mattison stated that the windows in the main house will be fixed, and the second addition will be raised up, as approved in the original application. The third addition will be eliminated, and the back porch will mirror the front porch.

The Commissioners agreed that this will look better than the original proposal. Doug Chabinsky stated that the separation of the garage reduces the overall massing, is an improvement to the project and will be safer. Jamie Ramsay stated that the hip roof on the garage is enough to make it stand out and compliment the entire property.

Chris Buchanan stated that the proposal seems to comply with Article VII.

In response to a question from Chris Hall, Greg Mattison stated that the garage is moving left of the existing driveway and turning 90 degrees. In response to a question from Chris Hall, Greg Mattison stated the driveway footprint is approximately 3' larger all the way around than the prior design. This will be a zoning item to address as it is nonconforming in its location on the lot which Greg Mattison will deal with once the aesthetics are addressed. Currently the doors on the garage are overhead sliders, which will be replaced with something similar. There are two proposed three-over-three windows for the new garage.

Chris Hall raised the concern to his fellow Commissioners, whether there is any necessity for photography or documentation of the items to be demolished on the additions. In response, Jamie Ramsey suggested the applicant reach out to Will Ludt, Chair of the Heritage Commission. Greg Mattison stated he will plan to provide documentation, photographs, and site survey of the portions of the site to be demolished.

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Jamie Ramsay noted that adding to the garage square footage makes sense. Greg Mattison noted that the proposed garage is 24'x24'.

Greg Mattison stated that the Commission seems amenable to the porch size.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, Greg Mattison stated that he is still looking into if there is any issue on this property with the existing leach field. Greg Mattison stated that Natasha Kypfer forwarded DES information on to him, noting the leach field has not yet been located.

Doug Chabinsky stated that he believes this amendment to the original approval can be submitted.

Timothy Yarnall, 5 School Street, property owner, joined the meeting. He explained that the septic was serviced 5-6 years ago, and the assessment was that there is a stone pit. One of the prior owners believes there may be a cistern near the garage in the backyard. This will need to be determined.

Greg Mattison stated he will submit a formal submission.

**2. Minutes: July 15, 2021**

**Doug Chabinsky moved to approve the minutes of July 15, 2021, as presented. Jamie Ramsay seconded.**

**Voting: 4-0-2; Jamie Ramsay – aye, Chris Hall – abstain, Chris Buchanan - abstain, Doug Chabinsky - aye, Tom Grella – aye, and Tracie Adams – aye; motion carried.**

**3. Any other business**

Natasha Kypfer noted that the Commission should discuss appointment of officers, as it was listed on top of the agenda.

**Chris Buchanan moved to nominate Jamie Ramsay as Chair. Seconded by Tracie Adams.**

**Voting: 6-0-1; Jamie Ramsay – abstain, Chris Hall – aye, Chris Buchanan - aye, Doug Chabinsky - aye, Tom Grella – aye, and Tracie Adams – aye; motion carried.**

**Chris Buchanan moved to nominate Chris Hall as Vice Chair. Seconded by Tracie Adams.**

**Voting: 6-0-1; Jamie Ramsay – aye, Chris Hall – abstain, Chris Buchanan - aye, Doug Chabinsky - aye, Tom Grella – aye, and Tracie Adams – aye; motion carried.**

Chris Buchanan stated that the Commission met in the Spring to discuss proposed regulation changes. There were three items listed as priority items at that time, along with some secondary

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items. Natasha Kypfer agreed stating the initial discussion took place in May, and noted that another work session has not been scheduled for this discussion.

Chris Hall stated that there are two projects here; one project is to do administrative cleanup of the regulations. The second thing to consider is the creation of “guideline documents” that explain to owners what can be done and how the Commission would look upon it, not regulations. This would be easy to create and put on the Town website to supplement the regulations. This document could even explain the difference for Contributing versus Non-Contributing properties within the district.

Chris Buchanan agreed that there is a list of items in the current regulations that need to be updated. He suggested this as the scope for another formal work session.

Doug Chabinsky noted that, in filling out the application himself [for tonight’s case on his property], there were small inconsistencies that should be reviewed.

Natasha Kypfer stated that the next meeting is September 16, 2021, and the deadline for submissions is August 26, 2021. Jamie Ramsey suggested utilizing the regular meeting date for the work session, or, if there are applications scheduled, perhaps another date in late September could be utilized. Chris Buchanan suggested either September 23 or 30. The discussion ended with Natasha Kypfer stating either herself, or Deb, would reach out to Jamie after the application deadline to advise if and what applications were submitted for September.

**Chris Hall moved to adjourn at 8:16pm. Doug Chabinsky seconded.**

**Voting: 6-0-0; Jamie Ramsay – aye, Chris Hall – aye, Chris Buchanan - aye, Doug Chabinsky - aye, Tom Grella – aye, and Tracie Adams – aye; motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Kristan Patenaude

Minutes approved: October 21, 2021