

TOWN OF AMHERST
Historic District Commission

March 17, 2022

APPROVED

In attendance: Jamie Ramsay – Chair, Chris Hall – Vice-Chair, Tracie Adams (previous Planning Board Ex-Officio), Tom Quinn - Planning Board Ex-Officio, Tom Grella, Doug Chabinsky (remote), and Bill Rapf (remote).
Staff present Nic Strong – Community Development Director, and Kristan Patenaude – Recording Secretary (remote).

Jamie Ramsay called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m. and introduced Commission and staff members present.

CONCEPTUAL DISCUSSION:

1. CASE #: PZ15438-022422 –Timothy & Ashley Collins (Owners & Applicants); 4 Sunset Road, PIN #: 017-049-000 - Conceptual discussion for the demolition of the existing building and rebuilding new home.

Jamie Ramsay read and opened the case.

Timothy Collins explained that the intention is to tear down the existing structure and replace it with a larger home. The elevation drawings have been submitted to the Commission. He hopes to start construction at the end of July/beginning of August.

In response to a question from Chris Hall, Timothy Collins explained that the total footprint of the proposed structure aboveground is 4,100 s.f., including the garage.

Doug Chabinsky stated that he does not believe there are any other structures in the Historic District that look like this proposed building. He stated that this structure looks more like something built in a development, pointing out that it was not a Colonial, a Cape, an expanded Cape, or a Saltbox which are all regularly found in the village. He asked the applicant to consider the style of the building fitting in with the District, and the massing to fit with the street, noting that it looked as if the building covered the lot from property line to property line. Doug Chabinsky also noted that looking down Sunset Road, he saw ranches built in the 50's and 60's and older homes on the other side of the street. This proposal is a two-story structure. Timothy Collins explained that part of the proposed massing of the building on the lot is to maintain the backyard space. He noted that his architect would be able to speak more to the inspirations for the elevations and design of the proposal. Doug Chabinsky stated that part of the roof juts out and does not keep with styles seen in the District, also noting that the porch is short. He did note that he appreciated the windows being appropriately sized. Timothy Collins stated that he is waiting for a survey from Meridian Land Services to finalize the massing and layout of the structure and give a better sense of scale.

In response to a question from Doug Chabinsky, Timothy Collins stated that there is currently a renter living in the property. No work will be done on the property until approval is received.

Chris Hall explained that proposing to demolish a house in the Historic District is always difficult for the Commission to hear. However, this lot is located on a side street and the house is

TOWN OF AMHERST
Historic District Commission

March 17, 2022

APPROVED

non-contributing. While he might, personally, be okay with entertaining the idea of demolishing the existing house, the Commission has to weigh if the proposal is better or worse for the District. First, the Commission looks at Article 7, Section A - *New construction shall be complementary to the configuration of existing buildings and streetscapes, including in height and width, and shall be governed by these Regulations as appropriately interpreted for new construction.* All of the current houses on Sunset Road are Cape-like and within the 1,000 – 2,100 s.f. range. A 4,100 s.f. structure would stand out in this neighborhood and the Commission will try to help determine how to mitigate it looking so large. Chris Hall thought the style of the house was like a contemporary Colonial and not old.

Timothy Collins thanked the Commission members for the helpful guidance and stated that he believes there is a sliding scale for non-contributing properties, so it is good to know what that scale looks like as they continue to refine their intention.

Chris Hall explained that, because the existing house is not a historic one, there is some leeway as to what can be built in its place, however Article 7 also states that it needs to be congruent with the surrounding area. The applicant's architect will need to take a careful look at the proposed style. Chris Hall thought there was a lot that could be done with the house to keep it looking like others in the Village while also meeting the family's needs.

Jamie Ramsay stated that the proposed genre of house appears to be a contemporary farmhouse. The architect will have to be quite imaginative to make this fit into the District. The proposed massing overpowers the rest of the street. He said he did not know the lot width, but with the side yard setbacks and the need for 30' to make the turn out of the garage, approximately 105' will be taken up in the east/west directions of the lot. The existing house is not historic; it was built in the late 1950's/early 1960's. Jamie Ramsay stated the he would entertain demolition of the existing structure. There is not enough detail in the gable end of the proposed structure. He believes the massing of the garage is not appropriate to the rest of the house.

Timothy Collins stated that he aesthetic the is trying to achieve is not contemporary farmhouse. There are some items on the outside of the structure that still need to be determined.

Jamie Ramsay stated that he would suggest reducing the pitch of the proposed roof, especially on the left-hand side which looks like a silo. He noted that the applicant should take precedent from the existing historic homes in the District for ideas.

Chris Hall stated that the design as presented would look fantastic in a contemporary development, but that the property has to contribute to the Village. He suggested that the more the applicant can point to other examples of styles in the Village and emulate those styles, the better.

Timothy Collins thanked the Commission for their advice and noted that he hopes to be back before the group as quickly as possible.

March 17, 2022

APPROVED

NEW BUSINESS:

2. CASE #: PZ15395-020922 – Lori & Rich Ashooh (Owners & Applicants); 4 Middle Street, PIN #: 017-063-00 – Request for approval to remove and replace (6) windows with new Pella Reserve windows located on the first and third floor.

Jamie Ramsay read and opened the case.

Tracie Adams moved that the application be accepted as complete. Seconded by Jamie Ramsay.

Roll call vote: Jamie Ramsay – aye; Chris Hall – aye; Tracie Adams – aye; Tom Grella – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; and Bill Rapf – aye; 6-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

Tracie Adams moved that this application has no regional impact. Seconded by Jamie Ramsay.

Roll call vote: Jamie Ramsay – aye; Chris Hall – aye; Tracie Adams – aye; Tom Grella – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; and Bill Rapf – aye; 6-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

Nick Colarusso, Vice President Cedar Mill Group, and Nick Domenici, Project Manager Cedar Mill Group, addressed the Commission. Nick Colarusso explained that extensive construction is being done inside this house. This proposal is for replacement of windows in the kitchen and third-floor area, which are as close to historically accurate as possible. The proposed Pella aluminum clad window has a white finish to match the rest of the windows in the home.

Nick Colarusso explained that the original house has its original windows. There are also aluminum storm windows proposed to be removed. The early 2000's remodel of the back section of the house contains different windows.

Chris Hall asked if the Pella Architect series makes an all-wood window. Nick Colarusso stated that Pella only has the option for an all-wood custom window. The proposed are all-wood windows, wrapped in aluminum. There is also a solid spacer bar to give the look of a true divided light, while it is actually a simulated divided light window. The muntin bars can be made as thin as 5/8".

Doug Chabinsky stated that he recently put in several windows of similar sizes made by Pella that were all-wood. He noted that he specified the style and opening dimensions, and the windows were available in four weeks. Nick Colarusso stated that he will look into this option. Doug Chabinsky went on to say that his windows were proper, with thick sills and so on, and to his understanding did not cost any more or take any more time. Nick Colarusso stated that he had been informed that there was a 37-week lead time on the windows he had proposed.

TOWN OF AMHERST
Historic District Commission

March 17, 2022

APPROVED

Chris Hall stated that the Commission recently had reason to investigate all-wood windows and thought that there was an option for the Marvin Ultimate, the Pella Reserve, and the Pella Architectural series. Nick Colarusso stated that there is a lead time with any window. He stated that the Pella Reserve with aluminum cladding being proposed were the most expensive, so if they can get all-wood windows it will be a home run.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, Nick Colarusso stated that egress-sized windows would not fit in the existing openings on the second floor. He is considering adding an egress roof window on the driveway side, back of the house to satisfy the building code. These windows open 90 degrees left-to-right, allowing for immediate egress. This will be approximately 36" from the floor to the sill and meet that requirement. The Town has not yet stated if they will agree to this proposal or not. In speaking with Scott Tenney, he agreed that the regular egress windows have to be 5.7 s.f. but he thought they could be brought to a minimum of 5.5 s.f. and still satisfy the requirements, but the existing windows are only 4.8 s.f. A casement window is also an option but would not fit with the style of this house. Chris Hall stated that he was fine with the skylight proposal because it would be visible to the easterly neighbor only, and seasonal at best.

Chris Hall stated that it was hard to approve the proposal without seeing the windows being proposed. He asked the number of windows proposed to be replaced. Nick Colarusso stated that the proposed six windows to be replaced are in the left and right gable ends of the house, four on the third floor and two on the dining room first-floor. There are no changes proposed currently to the windows on the second-floor or on the front of the house.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay regarding the size of the proposed windows in the dining room, Nick Colarusso explained that they are proposed to be slightly smaller than the other existing windows because the construction is taking space from the dining room to convert it into a kitchen, thus bringing up the windows 6" to become counter height. Chris Hall pointed out that there were already bushes in front of them. Jamie Ramsay suggested that the size difference could be masked by going about an inch on the sill and a little higher with the head casing. Nick Colarusso stated that they could bring the windows right down to the counter, with no backsplash and that he would keep them as large as possible. Jamie Ramsay stated that they should be as large as possible to keep with the windows on the second floor.

Jamie Ramsay suggested that the applicant come back at the next meeting with a submittal on the proposed all-wood windows for this project.

Nick Colarusso asked if the proposed windows can be approved based on precedents around the Village. Chris Hall explained that each decision made by the Commission is on a case-by-case basis. This is a contributing property and is looked at with higher scrutiny. Chris Hall assumed the windows were in a state of disrepair, which Nick Colarusso confirmed.

March 17, 2022

APPROVED

In response to a question from the applicant regarding preemptively approving all-wood windows for this project, Chris Hall suggested that the applicant order all-wood windows if they can because it will likely pass the Commission's vote at a future meeting.

In response to a question from Nick Colarusso, some Commissioners agreed that, if the view of the proposed skylight egress window is limited from the public way and if it preserves the look of the front of the house, it would be acceptable.

Chris Hall moved to table this application to April 21, 2022, at 7pm at Town Hall. Seconded by Tom Grella.

Discussion:

Jamie Ramsay noted that Pella all-wood windows, with muntin bars and a historic sill with custom castings will likely be approvable by the Commission at the next meeting. The risk is to the applicants, if they chose to order the windows prior to approval, although he thought that risk was minimal.

Roll call vote: Jamie Ramsay – aye; Chris Hall – aye; Tracie Adams – aye; Tom Grella – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; and Bill Rapf – aye; 6-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

3. CASE #: PZ15405-021522 – Jeff & Carolyn Davidson (Owners & Applicants); 141 Amherst Street, PIN #: 005-017-000 - Request for approval for the installation of two 18K single-zone Mitsubishi heat pump condenser units on the back/south side of the main home.

Jamie Ramsay read and opened the case.

Tracie Adams moved to accept the application as complete. Seconded by Chris Hall. Roll call vote: Jamie Ramsay – aye; Chris Hall – aye; Tracie Adams – aye; Tom Grella – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; and Bill Rapf – aye; 6-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

Tracie Adams moved that this application has no regional impact. Seconded by Jamie Ramsay.

Roll call vote: Jamie Ramsay – aye; Chris Hall – aye; Tracie Adams – aye; Tom Grella – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; and Bill Rapf – aye; 6-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

Jeff Davidson explained that he is looking to have heat and air conditioning on the main floor of the home. The condenser units are proposed to be located on each side of the back of the house but will not be visible from the public way. If this is approved, the existing window units in the house will be removed. Using only one condenser unit would require a larger unit and a refrigerant line would need to be run as well.

TOWN OF AMHERST
Historic District Commission

March 17, 2022

APPROVED

Tracie Adams stated that she appreciates that the line will match the color of the house and that the units are concealed at the back of the house.

Jamie Ramsay stated that these will be mounted on a ground pad but will be essentially invisible from the public way.

FINDINGS:

- This property is listed in the Amherst Historic District as a non-contributing property described as a 1925 Center Chimney/Midcentury Colonial Revival.
- Although this house is not listed in the National Register, the preservation company we hired to do a complete HDC inventory suggested this house be treated as a historically significant property.
- The location of the proposed renovations are more than 300 feet from Amherst Street.
- The proposed renovations to the property have zero visibility from public access.
- The proposed renovations to the property have no regional impact.
- The applicant's proposed renovations are in compliance with Article VI Section H.

Doug Chabinsky moved to approve the application as presented. Seconded by Tracie Adams.

Roll call vote: Jamie Ramsay – aye; Chris Hall – aye; Tracie Adams – aye; Tom Grella – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; and Bill Rapf – aye; 6-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

4. CASE #: PZ15437-022422 – Katherine & Brendan Farrell (Owners & Applicants); 84 Boston Post Road, PIN #: 017-057-000 – Request for approval to replace existing vinyl windows on second floor, placement of HVAC condenser & removal of chimney.

Jamie Ramsay read and opened the case.

Tracie Adams moved to accept the application as complete. Seconded by Jamie Ramsay.

Roll call vote: Jamie Ramsay – aye; Chris Hall – aye; Tracie Adams – aye; Tom Grella – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; and Bill Rapf – aye; 6-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

Tracie Adams moved that this application has no regional impact. Seconded by Jamie Ramsay.

Roll call vote: Jamie Ramsay – aye; Chris Hall – aye; Tracie Adams – aye; Tom Grella – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; and Bill Rapf – aye; 6-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

TOWN OF AMHERST
Historic District Commission

March 17, 2022

APPROVED

John Condon, contractor, and Brendan Farrell addressed the Commission. John Condon explained that the proposal is to restructure the second-floor plan. This includes replacement windows, a condenser for a split system, and removal of the chimney. There will be three interior heads for the condenser, to be located in the back corner of the house. He is proposing to run line sets up the back of the house, painted to match the house for two of the units; the third will run through the attic space to avoid running towards the front of the house on the exterior. The existing windows in the back ell have vinyl jams and balances, dual-paned glass and are in poor condition. The proposal is to install all-wood Marvin windows. These are inserts, due to egress needing to pull the window frames. These windows will be dropped into the existing frames. The existing windows are 1-over-1's, and the proposed windows will be the same.

Jamie Ramsay noted that it may be possible to cheat more space out of those window frames. Doug Chabinsky agreed that this would likely not change the look of the windows.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, John Condon explained that the chimney is being proposed to be removed because it is located directly in the walking path of the new layout. The chimney is not currently in service. He is unsure if the chimney is original. He does not believe it is structurally important to the house. There are not currently any fireplaces in the house.

In response to a question from Chris Hall, John Condon stated that the condensers will be placed on the Wilkins School side of the property. They are approximately 3' tall.

Tracie Adams stated that she does not see any issues with this proposal, when reviewing Article VI, Sections F, G, and H.

FINDINGS:

- This property is listed in the Amherst Historic District as a contributing property described as an early 1800s Greek Revival Vernacular.
- This property is also listed on the National Register of historic homes in Amherst as historic property No. 137 entitled The Isaac Dodge House.
- The location of the proposed renovations are approximately 70 feet from the street.
- The proposed renovations to the property have no regional impact.
- The proposed renovations to the property are somewhat visible from public access.
- For window replacement the applicant's proposed renovations are in compliance with Article VI section F.
- For the HVAC system the applicants proposed renovations are in compliance with Article VI Section H.

Chris Hall moved to approve the application as presented. Seconded by Tracie Adams.

Roll call vote: Jamie Ramsay – aye; Chris Hall – aye; Tracie Adams – aye; Tom Grella – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; and Bill Rapf – aye; 6-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

March 17, 2022

APPROVED

5. CASE #: PZ15442-022822 – Scott & Kimberly Gowell, Gowell Family Living Trust of 2017 (Applicants & Owners); 10 Beaver Brook Circle, PIN #: 018-025-000 – Request for approval to install a 20KW whole house standby generator and supporting propane fuel tanks.

Jamie Ramsay read and opened the case.

Tracie Adams moved to accept the application as complete. Seconded by Chris Hall. Roll call vote: Jamie Ramsay – aye; Chris Hall – aye; Tracie Adams – aye; Tom Grella – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; and Bill Rapf – aye; 6-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

Tracie Adams moved that this application has no regional impact. Seconded by Chris Hall.

Roll call vote: Jamie Ramsay – aye; Chris Hall – aye; Tracie Adams – aye; Tom Grella – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; and Bill Rapf – aye; 6-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

Scott and Kimberly Gowell addressed the Commission. Scott Gowell explained that the power service currently comes into the north side of the garage. The proposal is to place a prefab pad with the generator on it. Propane tanks will be located on the same side of the garage, further set back. He noted that it was a juggling act to fit everything in with the required distance of the tanks from windows and so on.

In response to a question from Tracie Adams regarding how far the generator is from the nearest neighbor, Scott Gowell stated that the generator is approximately 80' to the closest neighbor.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay regarding screening of the project, Scott Gowell explained that he plans to plant boxwoods in front of the generator to screen it from the street. The propane tanks will be against the house and possibly screened using a screen the same color as the house.

Doug Chabinsky agreed that the proposed location is a good one and that a couple of boxwoods will likely act as a good screen.

FINDINGS:

- This property is listed in the Amherst Historic District as a Non-contributing property described as a 1967 Center Entry 2-story building.
- The location of the proposed renovations are approximately 50 feet from the street with seasonal visibility to public access.
- The nearest neighbor for noise concerns is approximately 300 feet through woodlands and no neighbor was present to provide input for or against the application.
- The proposed renovations to the property have no regional impact.

TOWN OF AMHERST
Historic District Commission

March 17, 2022

APPROVED

- The proposed renovations to the property have limited visibility from public access even less with proposed plantings/screening.
- The applicant's proposed renovations are in compliance with Article VI Section H.

Doug Chabinsky moved to approve the application as presented. Seconded by Chris Hall.

Roll call vote: Jamie Ramsay – aye; Chris Hall – aye; Tracie Adams – aye; Tom Grella – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; and Bill Rapf – aye; 6-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS:

1. Minutes: December 16, 2021, and January 20, 2022

Chris Hall moved to untable and approve the minutes of December 16, 2021, as submitted. Seconded by Tracie Adams.

Roll call vote: Jamie Ramsay – aye; Chris Hall – aye; Tracie Adams – aye; Tom Grella – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; and Bill Rapf – aye; 6-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

Chris Hall moved to approve the minutes of January 20, 2022, as submitted. Seconded by Tracie Adams.

Roll call vote: Jamie Ramsay – aye; Chris Hall – aye; Tracie Adams – aye; Tom Grella – aye; Doug Chabinsky – abstain; and Bill Rapf – aye; 5-0-1; motion carried.

2. Continued Discussion on HDC process

It was noted that this item will be tabled until Chris Buchanan is available to discuss it further.

Nic Strong explained that there was an opportunity to apply for CLG grant funding with a deadline date in between Commission meetings. She submitted a brief application for funding for design guidelines on behalf of the Commission. If this is approved, she will bring the full application before the Commission for discussion. The Commission thanked Nic Strong.

Bill Rapf noted that this may be his final Commission meeting, due to failing health. The Commission thanked him for his time on the Commission and wished him well.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristan Patenaude

Minutes approved: April 21, 2022