

TOWN OF AMHERST
Historic District Commission

August 20, 2020

APPROVED

In attendance: Jamie Ramsay - Chair, Chris Hall – Vice Chair, Doug Chabinsky, Tom Grella – Ex-Officio,
Staff present: Nic Strong – Community Development Director, Natasha Kypfer – Town Planner, and Kristan Patenaude – Minute Taker.

Jamie Ramsay called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Natasha Kypfer read the following statement: I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, as extended by Executive Orders 2020-05, 2020-08, 2020-09, and 2020-10, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order.

However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are:

Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means:

We are utilizing Zoom for this electronic meeting.

All members of the Commission have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone #312-626-6799 and password 826 4367 1044, or by clicking on the following website address: <https://zoom.us/j/82643671044> that was included in the public notice of this meeting.

Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting:

We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, including how to access the meeting using Zoom or telephonically. Instructions have also been provided on the website of the Planning Board at: www.amherstnh.gov.

Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access: If anybody has a problem, please call 603-341-5290.

Adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting:

In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and re-scheduled.

Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.

Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states their presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to- Know law.

Roll call attendance: Tom Grella, Doug Chabinsky, Chris Hall, and Jamie Ramsay; all alone and present.

TOWN OF AMHERST
Historic District Commission

August 20, 2020

APPROVED

OLD BUSINESS:

1. **CASE #: PZ12459-032720 – Tara Syverson – 12 Main Street, PIN #: 017-006-000 – Request for approval to demolish existing 2-car garage and replace with a 3-car garage with living space above and a connecting structure to the main house. Tabled from July 16, 2020.**

Jamie Ramsay read the case.

Bill Rapf entered the meeting.

Jamie Ramsay noted that the applicant was supposed to send an email, indicating an interest in continuing this case to the Commission's next meeting, but no email was received.

Chris Hall moved to table this case to September 17, 2020. Tom Grella seconded. Roll call: Doug Chabinsky - aye; Bill Rapf - aye; Tom Grella - aye; Chris Hall - aye; and Jamie Ramsay - aye. Motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

2. **CASE #: PZ12873-071320 – Kristen & Sean Delaney, 2 Cobbler Lane, PIN #: 006-115-001 – Request for approval to install a prefab shed in the backyard.**

Present: Kristen & Sean Delaney

Jamie Ramsay read and opened the case.

Sean Delaney stated that he and his wife moved to this property last year. The request is to install a shed that will not be visible from either roadway in the front, or from the side on Amherst Street. The shed is a 10'x12' shed from either Lowe's or Home Depot. It will be painted to match the house and there will probably be a small foundation with a metal frame installed, so that the floor doesn't rot.

In response to a question from Chris Hall, Sean Delaney explained that the proposed shed would be located on the property at the back left. It will be difficult to even see the shed from the house itself.

Doug Chabinsky moved to accept the application, as submitted. Bill Rapf seconded.

FINDINGS:

1. **House is not listed on the National Registry as a historic property**
2. **House is a 1978 Colonial**

TOWN OF AMHERST
Historic District Commission

August 20, 2020

APPROVED

- 89 3. **Property itself is barely visible from the street, so the shed is not visible at all**
90 **within the public view. This is in compliance with Article II, Section G. It is also**
91 **not within the Commission's purview to regulate requests, if not within the**
92 **public view.**

93 **Roll call: Chris Hall – aye; Doug Chabinsky - aye; Tom Grella – aye; Bill Rapf –**
94 **aye; and Jamie Ramsay - aye. Motion carried unanimously.**
95

96 Jamie Ramsay explained to the applicant how the 30-day appeal process works, in case the His-
97 toric District Commission's decision was contested by an abutter or other interested party.
98

- 99 **3. CASE #: PZ12964-080520 – Clifford & Brenda Baird, 4 Davis Lane, PIN #: 005-**
100 **096-001 – Request for approval to install a 16KW Standby Generator.**
101

102 Present: Clifford Baird
103

104 Jamie Ramsay read and opened the case.
105

106 In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, Clifford Baird explained that, when looking at the
107 house from Davis Lane, the proposed location for the generator is about 10' behind the garage.
108

109 Chris Hall stated that he lives across the street and that the closest abutters would be the Zim-
110 mers. There is a 7' stockade fence between the applicant and the Zimmers
111

112 In response to a question from Chris Hall, Clifford Baird stated that the proposed location for the
113 generator is about 20-25' from the fence. This would not be visible from the nearest abutter.
114

115 Chris Hall explained that this type of generator has a test feature that turns it on once a week for
116 about 15 minutes at a time. Otherwise, the generator only turns on in emergencies.
117

118 In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, Nic Strong stated that there is no noise ordinance
119 in Town.
120

121 Gerard Zimmer, 6 Davis Lane, thanked Clifford Baird for explaining the placement of the gener-
122 ator.
123

124 In response to a question from Gerard Zimmer, Chris Hall explained that he has a similar genera-
125 tor, which he can hear if he is outside, but which is still quieter than a regular generator.
126

127 In response to a question from Gerard Zimmer, Clifford Baird stated that he will be getting rid of
128 his portable generator, if this is approved.
129

130 Gerard Zimmer stated that he was satisfied with the explanation and proposal moving forward.
131

132 *Chris Hall abstained as an abutter, but offered his full support to the applicant.*
133

August 20, 2020

APPROVED

FINDINGS:

- 1. House is on the National Registry, #51**
- 2. House is non-contributing, listed as a 1972 modern Colonial.**
- 3. Per Article VI, Section H and G, this application meets the criteria listed under these sections.**

Tom Grella stated that he would like the drawings shown as part of the record.

Doug Chabinsky stated that this particular generator has a volume of 66 decibels at 23' under a normal load. This volume drops exponentially the further away you are from the generator.

Bill Rapf moved to accept the application as submitted. Doug Chabinsky seconded. Roll call: Chris Hall – abstained; Doug Chabinsky – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; Tom Grella - aye; and Jamie Ramsay - aye. 4-0-1; motion carried.

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.

CONCEPTUAL DISCUSSION:

- 4. CASE #: PZ13000-081420 – Christina Ferrari & Timothy Yarnall (Owners & Applicants), 5 School Street, PIN #: 017-080-000 – Conceptual discussion of selective demolition and reconstruction of portions of existing structure.**

Present: Christina Ferrari & Timothy Yarnall; Greg Mattison, General Contractor and Builder; and Bill Fitzpatrick, Designer.

Christina Ferrari explained that she and her husband's intent is to restore the property back to its original beauty and deal with the long-term neglect of the property. The front porch and fence have been being worked on for the last few months.

Greg Mattison explained that a major element of the design proposal is to keep with the flow of the existing home and not alter the feel of the building. The design looks to smooth out the second floor elevation. The rear of the property is at a different elevation from the front, and this makes the flow ergonomically clunky. Due to the layout of the rooms, the owners are also looking for a proper egress on the second floor, to be able to leave the building quickly. The proposed footprint of the building keeps within the existing lines, with the major differences being the second floor elevation and an additional breezeway that will connect the existing garage to the rear of the house.

Bill Fitzpatrick requested that the Commission look at sheet XP1, view 3. This shows a north-western perspective of the house. The first addition to the house was probably made shortly after the original brick building was constructed in 1825. The roofs on these two sections of the house are not matched. There is a small existing kitchen to the back of the east side of the building and a shed roof that runs down to the eastern wall. A second addition to the property was probably

TOWN OF AMHERST
Historic District Commission

August 20, 2020

APPROVED

made between 1900-1920. The third addition, with a 12/12 pitched roof, was probably built between 1950-1970. There appears to be no rhyme or reason between all of these additions. The proposal is to level and straighten out some of this work.

Bill Fitzpatrick explained that one of the paramount items for the owners is to have a modern kitchen. The breezeway is also important to get from the garage into the mudroom and eventually into the kitchen. Sheet P1 shows the proposed plan. He explained that, while the property is listed as a Federal style building, he believes the property is actually a Georgian. He explained that part of the proposal is to fix the windows in the western facade of the house. There are currently three windows stacked upon one another due to an added bathroom on the second floor. The new design will configure it so that there are four over four windows on the west side to restore the building to its original look.

Bill Fitzpatrick stated that the proposal looks to extend the front porch around to one side, giving the property better curb appeal on the Boston Post Road side. By keeping all of the roof pitches the same, the floors will be leveled and the same lines will be carried throughout the house. The windows will be made symmetrical, maintaining the Georgian style, and all of the doors and windows will be stacked. The materials will match the originals and the windows will be true divided lights. The current proposal is for wood clapboard siding with wood trim; however, the applicants may propose more modern materials that will last longer.

Doug Chabinsky stated that the proposal will change the whole mass of the building. He believes this needs some thought. The proposal will literally change the whole feel of the property.

Bill Fitzpatrick explained that he tried to think of how these additions would have looked, if done correctly in 1860/1870, while also fulfilling the owners' wish list.

Jamie Ramsay agreed with Doug Chabinsky. He stated that the original brick part of the building no longer stands proud of the rest of the structure in this proposal. He explained that the proposal has the rear addition with the hip roof ridge sitting below the main brick building; this loses the fabric of the original, oldest part of the building.

Christina Ferrari stated that she is surprised to hear these comments, as the proposed footprint of the property will remain the same, with the rear of the property being raised to be level with the rest. She is confused as to how the proposal diminishes any of the property.

Jamie Ramsay stated that there are three roof elements to the property: the main block, the hip roof, and the gable roof. To mold these three items into one element makes this into a massive structure. He does not think that the additions will read as subsequent additions to the main block of the house, as they originally were.

Bill Fitzpatrick explained that the current design has a step down from the prominent main section of the house into the next most prominent section, and finally down into the third section. With the fascia all being the same height, the floor and ceiling heights will match. If the floor

TOWN OF AMHERST
Historic District Commission

August 20, 2020

APPROVED

heights are kept the same, there is a 36" drop between the second floor and the original bank building. This does not allow for great circular flow in the house.

Christina Ferrari added that there is currently no way out of the back of the house from the second floor; this is not good for life safety. There are seven steps required to get to the second floor from the original bank part.

Jamie Ramsay stated that this change could be dealt with in five risers.

Tim Yarnall stated that the back 2/3 of the property currently grows in prominence from the front 1/3. If one approaches the property on Boston Post Road from Mont Vernon, all that is seen is a gigantic brick wall. That is the current dominant structure from that view. While this proposal looks to grow the property a bit, it will also enhance the character of the back 2/3 of the house.

Doug Chabinsky stated that he has concerns regarding the massing of the proposal. He believes that the additions will now overwhelm the original historic part of the property. He also believes there may be objections from abutters.

Christina Ferrari explained that they have been very open with their neighbors and haven't had any issues so far. She was hoping to have an open house at some point, before the pandemic hit.

In response to a question from Doug Chabinsky, Christina Ferrari stated that there is a bedroom proposed over the kitchen in the gable roof part.

Bill Fitzpatrick stated that the plan uses mostly four bedroom concepts, and one three bedroom concept.

Jamie Ramsay explained that the additions over the years grew separately, and that this should be considered instead of starting a new building from scratch. There are five separate elements on the property that all grew at separate times. The Commission is not looking for consistency that doesn't exist. Inconsistency is part of the original design of this property. The applicant shouldn't look to recreate history, but work with what the property is.

Christina Ferrari explained that the current property has safety issues, is poorly insulated, and is falling down in places. The existing elevation changes were not part of the planned design, but are there because the property was patched together.

Chris Hall explained that the Commission doesn't review applications in terms of a family perspective, but from a historic perspective. The proposal would be a significant change to this property, a prominent historic Amherst house.

Christina Ferrari stated that she and her husband made an investment with this property and are trying to go above and beyond with the work on it.

Doug Chabinsky explained that the main building has significance and that any changes could be made to make it as significant as the original building. If the cornices have staggered heights, it

TOWN OF AMHERST
Historic District Commission

August 20, 2020

APPROVED

might keep the main building independent of the additions. Currently, the proposal shows a unified line along the roofs edges which will cause the property to look like one large house, instead of the original bank building standing proud from the additions.

Jamie Ramsay suggested that the property's width be expanded east to west instead. Christina Ferrari explained that this would add width to the rooms, but not height, as desired.

Tim Yarnall explained that, in the proposal, there is a materials change on the side of the east wall of the brick structure, allowing for siding above where the two windows are located. This will make that area appear to be an addition and add an element that allows the brick structure to stand proud. Bill Fitzpatrick stated that it is common to stack materials in this way.

Jamie Ramsay explained that lining up the cornices doesn't keep with the historic feel of the property. Doug Chabinsky agreed that if the cornices were staggered there wouldn't be a large change in elevation and roof pitch. This is what would have happened as the property grew organically.

Bill Fitzpatrick stated that the best design would have 10' ceilings, but he can try to design around 8-9' ceilings on the second floor, in order to bring the roof level down.

Jamie Ramsay mentioned that the building code states that the second floor ceiling height can be 7'6" or even 7'. Bill Fitzpatrick stated that he would hate to do that to the owners.

Doug Chabinsky suggested that the applicant look at lowering the right hand side of the edge line. He would also be okay with the breezeway being made taller, in order to make the structure not look as massive.

Bill Fitzpatrick stated that the house looks like one that is 5,000 square feet. The unfortunate result of lowering the ceiling heights is that there will be lower head heights for the windows, and that they will no longer be symmetrical. In the original additions to this property, there was no thought to aligning the roof heights, windows, etc.

Chris Hall stated that the misalignment over the years is part of the beauty of Amherst.

Tim Yarnall stated that the proposal looks to go from five windows to four on the second floor of the original brick house. This would be one of the jewels of a Federal style property.

Doug Chabinsky stated that this property has grown organically over time and that this design does not necessarily work historically. Minor changes in the roof line might make the property look appropriate, without sacrificing what the owner wants. He explained that breaking up the roof lines might make the proposal appear less overpowering. He also stated that he appreciates the massive undertaking on behalf of the owner to restore this property, but the Commission needs to look at a balance to keep this historically accurate.

Jamie Ramsay suggested playing with the second floor wall heights in the middle section of the house. This will offer a lot of latitude.

TOWN OF AMHERST
Historic District Commission

August 20, 2020

APPROVED

Doug Chabinsky stated that, if the ceiling heights are important, there may need to be one step down into the addition, in order to keep the heights the same. If more head room is needed, there is the possibility to look at similar floor heights while playing with the ceiling heights.

Jamie Ramsay explained that the Commission doesn't vet on internal design items. Chris Hall pointed the applicant towards Section D14, Article 10 C1 in the regulations. If the applicant comes back with a design that meets those regulations and some details on the additional square footage being proposed, that would help the Commission.

Doug Chabinsky stated that the applicant can have a discussion about more modern materials at a future meeting.

Jamie Ramsay stated that the muntins should be as narrow as possible. A 5/8" putty glaze would be as close to the original as possible, but this will only come in simulated divided light. He stated that he has concerns about the proposal to have mixed materials on one face of the building.

In response to a question from Chris Hall, Greg Mattison stated that the rear kitchen area is dilapidated and not salvageable. There is no significant historical value to that area, and thus they are proposing to demolish it and reconstruct it in the same footprint.

Chris Hall stated that the Commission would like to do a site inspection of the property and review any historic background records prior to demolition.

OTHER BUSINESS:

5. Minutes: July 16, 2020

Doug Chabinsky moved to approve the minutes from July 16, 2020, as distributed. Chris Hall seconded.

Roll call: Chris Hall – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; Tom Grella – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; and Jamie Ramsay - abstain. 4-0-1; motion carried.

6. Any other business

Jeanne and Ed Reilly joined the meeting.

They recently moved into a condo at the Country Mansions and would like to install some replacement windows.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, Jeanne Reilly explained that the initial renovation was slated to start the first week in September. Their condo is adjacent to the old mansion building and cannot be seen from the road.

TOWN OF AMHERST
Historic District Commission

August 20, 2020

APPROVED

In response to a question from Chris Hall, Ed Reilly stated that there are currently five banks of three windows. There is one center window with two flankers on each floor. These windows are two over two, construction grade, probably installed in the 1970-80's.

In response to a question from Jeanne Reilly, Doug Chabinsky stated that vinyl windows are not usually allowed, per the Commission's regulations.

Ed Reilly stated that the Commission approved a replacement garage door about 20 years ago on the property that switched from wood to vinyl. Jamie Ramsay explained that this was about ten years ago and due to the fact that it's very difficult to get a wooden garage door anymore. Doug Chabinsky agreed that if original materials can't be found, an exception can be made. However, wood windows can still be purchased and are preferred.

The Commission encouraged the Reilly's to come back for further discussion at a future meeting.

**Jamie Ramsay moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:53pm. Tom Grella seconded.
Roll call: Doug Chabinsky – aye; Chris Buchanan – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; Chris Hall – aye. Motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,
Kristan Patenaude

Minutes approved: September 17, 2020