



Schenectady Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes
January 27, 2022

I. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Yager called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Patricia Yager, Chair; Christopher Marney, Vice Chair; Dr. Dean Bennett; Shaun Andriano; Richard Unger; Frank Gilmore; Joe Fava; Matt Smith, Senior Planner
ABSENT: None.

III. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

IV. ADOPTION OF MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Bennett offered an amendment to the minutes. He stated that the minutes incorrectly reflected a comment he made regarding the proposed lighting for 10 Front St. The draft minutes stated that he believed more lighting in the neighborhood would improve safety. Commissioner Bennett stated that the comment was actually about the aesthetics of additional lighting and not in regard to safety.

Motion by Commissioner Marney, seconded by Commissioner Andriano, to approve the amended Minutes of the December 23, 2021.

Motion carried unanimously.

V. CALL FOR MEMBERS OF PUBLIC TO SPEAK ON AGENDA ITEMS

None.

VI. APPLICATIONS

A. Consideration for approval submitted by Ron Gardner to modify the approved doors, install a fence and install gutters. The premises is located at 308 Green St. in the Stockade Historic District.

Ron Gardner appeared before the commission. He stated that he was seeking approval for the 8-panel door that was previously installed, the color scheme for the entry stairs, and to install gutters.

Commissioner Unger stated that he wasn't on the commission when the originally approved 6-panel door came before the commission. He explained that the commission shouldn't get in a habit of approving applications that are presented after the work has already been completed, because it sets a precedent that it's easier to ask for forgiveness than permission. He stated that he viewed this application through the lens of whether the proposed 8-panel door would have been originally approved if the application had been submitted prior to installation.

Commissioner Marney stated that there have been multiple instances of the applicant not following the conditions approved by the commission on previous applications and that there are several outstanding items to be addressed. He asked what the applicant will do to bring the property into compliance with the prior approvals.

The front lights were identified as an example of a modification that was made without commission approval. Commissioner Yager stated that the existing lights don't really fit with the style of the house. Commissioner Yager provided the applicant with two pages of exterior lighting from a General Electric 1920's catalog, as well as a page from Lowe's internet site, showing a fixture similar to one of those lights, with integrated LED, like the fixture the applicant's electrician had mounted on the house.

The applicant stated that he would like permission to paint the retaining wall the same color as the foundation. Commissioner Gilmore stated that parging and not painting the wall would be the easiest and cheapest solution.

Commissioner Yager asked the commissioners how they felt about the brown gutters. Commissioner Marney stated he thinks they should be white. Commissioners Bennett and Andriano stated they didn't have a preference. Commissioner Gilmore stated that he believes white would make more sense given the trim color is white.

Commissioner Marney asked Mr. Gardner if he wanted approval to install the lights that had been presented to him, or if Mr. Gardner would like to return at a later date for approval for an alternative light fixture. Mr. Gardner stated that he would like to install the lights that had been presented to him.

Commissioner Yager asked if the commission should address the landscaping. Mr. Smith stated that soft scape such as shrubs and trees are not under the commission's purview, only hardscape, such as walkways and driveways.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Marney, seconded by Commissioner Unger, to approve the application with the following conditions:

1. The project will be completed within one year.
2. The 8-panel wood door is approved as installed.
3. It is the applicant's discretion whether to use none, one, or two horizontal lattice pieces on the porch skirting, with the understanding that both the left and right porches' lattice work shall be matching.
4. The current paint scheme for the porch is approved.
5. The lattice that is currently located in the triangular portion of the stair tread will be replaced with a solid wood panel painted brown.
6. The existing unapproved entryway lighting will be replaced with the Portfolio Wall lantern in black as indicated on the Lowe's informational sheet provided by the commission. The LED light temperature shall be no higher than 3k.
7. The gutters submitted are approved but shall be in the color white and the gutter installation shall be to code.
8. The retaining wall shall be parged and left unpainted.

And with the following finding of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.
2. The Commissioners cited Preservation Standards #2 and #6 as the guidelines for their decision.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Consideration for approval submitted by Harold Hall to replace the roof. The premises is located at 1003 Union St. in the Union Street Historic District.

Harold Hall presented the application. He stated that the current slate roof is beyond repair as the slates are crumbling and it is leaking in several places.

Commissioner Marney asked what the condition of the copper flashing is. Mr. Hall stated that it needs to be removed.

Commissioner Marney stated there is ample evidence that the shingles are beyond repair given the condition shown in the photos and the fact that it appears that tar was used to try and patch up different areas on the roof. He further explained that given the roof is not highly visible from the street, an alternative material to slate would be appropriate. He stated that his concern is that the applicant is proposing the Timberline line of shingles which would be more appropriate for a cedar shake shingle replacement, and that the Slateline line of shingles would be more appropriate. Mr. Hall stated that you can not currently get the Slateline shingles due to COVID. He also explained that you can only choose from 3 of the 48 colors that are usually available: Charcoal, Pewter Grey, and Weathered Wood.

Commissioner Yager stated that the Weathered Wood seems to be best match the color of the slate roof.

Commissioner Gilmore asked if the existing drip edge is copper. The applicant stated that it is going to come off and the shingles will extend to the edge of the roof where they should be. Commissioner Andriano stated that bringing the shingles to the edge is today's standard, not the standards when this house was built.

Commissioner Gilmore asked how the applicant will address the curved roofing on the one dormer. He suggested using EPDM. The applicant stated he would use rolled roofing.

Commissioner Andriano stated that he doesn't want to give up on the drip edge. Commissioner Gilmore stated houses in Europe have copper roofing that is 600 years old. Mr. Hall stated that he would look at the condition of the copper and keep it.

Commissioner Andriano what the plan is with the step flashing around the dormers. The applicant stated that he would use copper flashing.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Marney, seconded by Commissioner Gilmore to approve as submitted the application to replace the roof, with the following conditions:

1. The project will be completed within one year.
2. The shingle will be GAF Timberline HDZ in Weathered Wood, approved due to the unavailability of the Slateline shingle caused by COVID.
3. The rounded dormer will be covered in rolled roofing to best match the Weathered Wood color.
4. The applicant will preserve the existing copper snow slide.
5. The new shingles will be installed to meet the snow slide at the same point as the existing slate shingles.
6. All of the flashing will be replaced with copper.
7. If it is determined that the copper snow slide is beyond preservation, the applicant will return to the commission with evidence prior to starting the work.
8. It is noted from the photos that the chimneys appear to be in disrepair, and the commission suggests that the applicant have a mason look at the chimneys.

And with the following finding of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.

2. The Commissioners cited Preservation Standard #6 as the guideline for their decision.

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Consideration submitted by Gordon Furlani to make repairs to the pinnacles. The premises is located at 806 Union St. in the Union Street Historic District.

Gordon Furlani and Paul Bonacquisti appeared before the commission.

Mr. Furlani explained that the stones on the turrets are deteriorating and present a falling hazard. He stated that there are currently temporary reinforcements in place to secure the turrets. He is proposing to wrap the pinnacles in the same material as the main roof.

Mr. Bonacquisti explained that they believed they came up with a relatively more affordable solution of a little over \$1 million to cap the pinnacles, as opposed to completely rebuilding the pinnacles, which would cost approximately \$3.5 million.

Commissioner Yager stated that she did some research on practical sandstone restoration on various structures, and she found multiple properties that utilized a similar approach of capping pinnacles with copper material.

Commissioner Bennett stated that the copper pinnacles look good in the rendering and that they respect the rest of the building. He stated that it is sad to see the stone pinnacles be covered up because they are special, but he understands the dilemma.

Commissioner Yager stated that she was pleased to see that the applicant plans on saving the finials on top of the pinnacles.

Mr. Bonacquisti stated that the thought in saving the finials and covering the pinnacles in copper is so they can be fully restored at some future date should the money become available to do so.

Commissioner Marney asked if the diocese looked into potential grant funding for the project. Mr. Bonacquisti stated that the diocese did look into it for the front stair rehabilitation project, but that it's very difficult for non-profits to access the funding and grants.

Commissioner Marney stated that the commission is really being asked to make a financial decision and would like to see additional information that those financial avenues were exhausted in terms of potential funding and grants.

Commissioner Yager asked the commission how they felt about the church covering up one of the pinnacles with copper, that had previously been restored. Commissioner Bennett stated that it makes sense so that the design is consistent.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Marney, seconded by Commissioner Bennett to approve as submitted the application with the following conditions:

1. The project will be completed within one year.
2. The approval is for Option B as presented in the Bonacquisti Brothers Construction submittal letter.
3. The existing finials will be permanently stored with the church and retained.

And with the following finding of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.
2. The Commissioners cited Preservation Standard #2 as the guideline for their decision.

Motion carried unanimously.

VII. MISCELLANEOUS

A. Review of the potential nomination of the Wedgeway Building to the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The premises is located at 271-277 State St.

Ray Gillen was in attendance and spoke in favor of the nomination, saying that the nomination is critical in any redevelopment plans for that building.

Commissioner Yager stated that the report was very well done, and other commissioners agreed.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Marney, seconded by Commissioner Unger to provide the commission's overwhelming support for the nomination of the Wedgeway Building to the State and National Historic Registers.

And with the following finding of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Marney, seconded by Commissioner Gilmore, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:41 p.m.