

Schenectady Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes July 28, 2022

I. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Yager called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Patricia Yager, Chair; Richard Unger; Shaun Andriano; Joe Fava; Zakhar Berkovich; Matt Smith, Senior Planner; Sylvia Jimison, Development Staff; Chris Marney, Assistant Corporation Counsel.

ABSENT: Dr. Dean Bennett.

III. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Commissioner Berkovich stated that he has a conflict of interest on agenda item (I).

IV. ADOPTION OF MEETING MINUTES

Motion by Commissioner Fava, seconded by Commissioner Andriano, to approve the Minutes of the June 23, 2022 meeting.

Motion carried 4 in favor, 1 abstained (Commissioner Berkovich).

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

Commissioner Yager noted that Gloria Kishton from the Schenectady Heritage Foundation would like to speak on agenda item regarding 125 N. College St.

VI. APPLICATIONS

A. Consideration for approval submitted by Spring Line Design Architecture + Engineering to extend a prior approval for one year. The premises is located at 1212 Union St. in the Union Street Historic District.

Matt Smith explained that the applicant was not present because there were no changes to the approved project and they were simply requesting additional time to start the project.

RESOLUTION

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

1. The project will be completed by September 1, 2023.

2. There are no modifications to the scope of work approved in the initial application.

And with the following finding of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Consideration for approval submitted by Franca DiCrescenzo to paint the property. The premises is located at 22 N. Church St. in the Stockade Historic District.

Franca DiCrescenzo appeared before the commission. She stated that she would like to do some brick repointing, and paint the entire structure in a three-color scheme.

Commissioner Yager stated that one concern she has, is with painting the recessed portion of the front façade a different color than the rest of the body. She stated that she doesn't believe that it is historically accurate. Commissioner Fava stated that he believes that the front façade was two-toned decades ago.

Commissioner Andriano stated that painting the recessed area in the iron ore color would mean that the black shutters would get lost, because the two colors are similarly very dark. He explained that he wouldn't mind a two-toned façade so long as the two colors didn't contrast as much as they do in the applicant's proposal. He stated that the proposal is a very modern approach and not appropriate for the age of the building.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Andriano, seconded by Commissioner Fava to approve the application with the following conditions:

1. The project will be completed within one year.
2. The body of the house will be painted Useful Gray (SW 7050) from the Sherwin Williams paint collection.
3. The shutters and doors will be painted Tricorn Black (SW 6258) from the Sherwin Williams paint collection.
4. The cornice and trimwork around the windows and doors will be painted a form of white to be approved by staff.
5. The proposed use of Iron Ore (SW 7069) from the Sherwin Williams paint collection as an accent color in the recessed area of the front façade is denied due to a high-contrast, two-toned façade being out of character for the age of the building.

And with the following finding of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.
2. The Commissioners cited Preservation Standards #2 and #5 as the guidelines for their decision.

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Consideration for approval submitted by Franca DiCrescenzo to paint the property. The premises is located at 101 Front St. in the Stockade Historic District.

Franca DiCrescenzo appeared before the commission. She stated that she would like to repaint the red portions of the house in Tricorn Black. The medallions and keystones on the window trim are proposed to be painted the same as the body, in Tony Taupe.

Commissioner Andriano asked what color the front door would be painted. Ms. DiCrescenzo stated that she wasn't sure yet what color to paint the door.

Commissioner Unger stated that he doesn't have an issue with any of the colors, but he has an issue with some of the work having been completed prior to the commission's approval.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Andriano, seconded by Commissioner Berkovich to approve the application with the following conditions:

1. The project will be completed within one year.
2. The body of the house and the keystone-like medallions on the trim will be painted Tony Taupe (SW 7038) from the Sherwin Williams paint collection.
3. The window trim, shutters, cornice elements, trim at the bottom of the mansard roof, the trim to the side of the doors, and the trim around the bumpout feature above the doors will be painted Tricorn Black (SW 6258) from the Sherwin Williams paint collection.
4. The stairs and foundation will remain as is.

And with the following finding of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.
2. The Commissioners cited Preservation Standards #2 and #5 as the guidelines for their decision.

Motion carried unanimously.

D. Consideration for approval submitted by Brandon LaFleur to repair and paint the porch roof. The premises is located at 1056 Gillespie St. in the Union Triangle Historic District.

Brandon LaFleur appeared before the commission. He stated that the porch roof is leaking and his contractor recommended using a sealant to fix the leak. He stated that he is before the commission because the sealant is a tan color which is different from the current red color.

Commissioner Andriano stated that if there are leaks, then the applicant should wait for the roof to dry out inside before sealing it because the moisture could cause bubbling. He also explained that he's not sure how he feels about it because it is covering the existing metal roof.

Commissioner Unger stated that he's looking at this application like a painting application and has no issue with the work being proposed.

RESOLUTION

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

1. The project will be completed within one year.

And with the following finding of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.
2. The Commissioners cited Preservation Standards #2, #5 and #6 as the guidelines for their decision.

Motion carried unanimously.

E. Consideration for approval submitted by Melissa Phillips to replace an existing lamp post. The premises is located at 1172 Rugby Rd. in the GE Realty Plot Historic District.

Melissa Phillips appeared before the commission. She stated that she would like to replace the existing lamp post with a bronze Victorian style post.

Commissioner Andriano asked that the light temperature be 3k or less

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Berkovich, seconded by Commissioner Fava to approve the application with the following conditions:

1. The project will be completed within one year.

And with the following finding of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.
2. The Commissioners cited Preservation Standards #2, #5, and #6 as the guideline for their decision.

Motion carried unanimously.

F. Consideration for approval submitted by S&B Adirondack Properties to install a new sign. The premises is located at 1327 Union St. in the Union Street Historic District.

Gordon Furlani appeared before the commission. He explained that the new tenant would be replacing the previous sign and that the posts would be kept as wood.

Commissioner Yager stated that the approval is supposed to come before the work and explained that once again, an applicant had performed the work prior to receiving approval from the commission. Mr. Furlani explained that the sign was installed against his recommendation.

Commissioner Unger stated that the previous sign had the address, doctor's name, and business name all as separate elements of the sign, not including the other ornate elements of the finials on the posts. He stated that he would like to see some of those elements incorporated into the new sign.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Unger, seconded by Commissioner Fava to deny the application with the following finding of fact:

1. The proposed sign does not meet Preservation Standards #2, #5, and #6 and is inconsistent with the historic character of the building and surrounding neighborhood.
2. The applicant is directed to return with a new proposal that better approximates the design of the previous sign. Examples of these design elements include: the business address, the business name, and the proprietor be considered as separate elements of the sign, either as separate components, or visually separated, and that there be depth or articulation to sign through carving, routing, or joining of the separate elements.
3. The sign be comprised of wood.

Motion carried unanimously.

G. Consideration for approval submitted by Darrin and Jennifer Jahnel to construct a pergola. The premises is located at 1181 Avon Rd. in the GE Realty Plot Historic District.

Darrin Jahnel appeared before the commission. He explained that he constructed a pergola and fireplace in the backyard but was told by codes that he did not need a permit which is why he did not seek historic commission approval. He stated that he plans on staining the timbers of the pergola to match the house.

Commissioner Unger stated that he can see the photos and that it is visible from the street, but the application is lacking in detail, and isn't sure what the commission would be approving.

Commissioner Andriano stated that the applicant should return with detailed plans of what exactly was constructed, and what plans there are for painting or staining the structure, as if it wasn't constructed at all.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Berkovich, seconded by Commissioner Andriano to table the application as incomplete pending submittal of further detailed information on the construction and future staining plans of the pergola, fireplace, and patio area.

Motion carried unanimously.

H. Consideration for approval submitted by Mary Zawacki to keep the repaired front stairs unpainted. The premises is located at 125 N. College St. in the Stockade Historic District.

Mary Zawacki appeared before the commission. Commissioner Yager read into the record a letter from the Schenectady Heritage Foundation in support of the application.

Ms. Zawacki stated that she originally received staff approval to repair the front stairs, but after the work was completed, she received recommendations from both the contractor and the SHPO that the concrete remain unstained and unpainted to best provide longevity for the repair work.

Commissioner Andriano stated that there are two articles from both SHPO and the Schenectady Heritage Foundation in support of leaving the natural color of the concrete. He believes that a decision in support of leaving the natural concrete would be consistent with their decision to deny a previous application their request to paint their stairs black.

RESOLUTION

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

1. The project will be completed within one year.

And with the following finding of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.
2. The Commissioners cited Preservation Standards #2, #5, and #6 as the guideline for their decision.
3. There were recommendations from both the New York State Historic Preservation Office and the Schenectady Heritage Foundation in favor of leaving the concrete its natural color.

Motion carried unanimously.

I. Consideration for approval submitted by John Samatulski to install new doors, windows, wheelchair ramp, and outdoor deck on the property. The premises is located at 1 N. Church St. in the Stockade Historic District.

John Samatulski appeared before the commission. Commissioner Yager noted that Commissioner Berkovich is recusing himself from hearing this application.

Mr. Samatulski stated that he was also providing a letter of support for the project from the Stockade Association. He explained that he is looking to provide handicap accessibility for the building and looked at a couple of options. He explained that providing a ramp on the front of the building would lead to having to remove some historic features on the interior of the building and would be a very prominent feature. He stated that it makes more sense to install the ramp in the rear of the building where it isn't as visible and where it is more closely located near the handicap parking spaces. He explained that the ramp being proposed would be comprised of Trex composite decking. He stated that he looked at adding lattice but having the bottom of the ramp open would make it easier to clean underneath and would make the ramp less visible.

Commissioner Yager asked if the infilled block around the kitchen door would be parged over. Mr. Samatulski stated that he wasn't sure, but would just like it to match what is existing. Commissioner Unger asked about the landscaping plan. Mr. Samatulski stated that the proposed landscaping is shown on the site plan. He explained that he is proposing an emerald arborvitae along the fence that would create a hedge to further obscure the view of the ramp.

Commissioner Andriano asked the commission how they feel about Trex for the ramp. Commissioner Yager stated that she is ok with it because there didn't used to be wheelchair ramps, and this would be a new addition. Commissioner Andriano stated that this is a case-by-case basis and it is not necessarily a material they would allow in other circumstances.

RESOLUTION

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

1. The project will be completed within one year.
2. The approval is based upon the colors, materials, exterior renovations, and landscaping as presented in the submitted application.

And with the following finding of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.
2. The Commissioners cited Preservation Standards #2, #5, #6, #9, and #10 as the guideline for their decision.
3. The synthetic materials approved for construction of the handicap ramp are due to it being new construction, which was not historically required, and it being located on the rear of the building.

Motion carried 4 in favor, 1 abstained (Commissioner Berkovich).

VII. Miscellaneous

A. Review of the potential nomination of the Elmer Avenue School Building to the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The premises is located at 90 Elmer Ave.

Commissioners Andriano and Unger both stated that they believe the nomination is a good idea and no discussion is needed.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Unger, seconded by Commissioner Fava to support the nomination.

Motion carried unanimously.

VIII. Adjourn

Motion by Commissioner Fava, seconded by Commissioner Unger, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.