

Town of Ipswich Architectural Preservation District Commission
Regular Meeting
October 30, 2019
Mary Conley Room - Town Hall

Minutes

Members Present: Nancy Carlisle, Ruth Strachan, Peter Bubriski, John Fiske and Will Thompson

Alternate Members Present: Susan Hill Dolan and Joe Bourneuf

Staff Present: Ethan Parsons

Others Present: Jane Ward, 24 Summer Street, Ipswich, MA
Steve Ward, 24 Summer Street, Ipswich, MA
Jenn Engle, 362 Linebrook Road, Ipswich, MA
Jim Engle, 362 Linebrook Road, Ipswich, MA
Michele McGrath, 329 Linebrook Road, Ipswich, MA
Susan Bailey, 6 Sunset Drive, Ipswich, MA

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 6:58 PM.

CITIZENS QUERIES: None.

24 SUMMER STREET: 24 Summer Street request for modifications of the approved plans for the previously issued Certificate to Alter.

REQUEST for acceptance of plan modifications for previously approved Certificate to Alter for alterations including the style, dimensions and number of windows to be installed on the west and south elevations of a new addition located in the Architectural Preservation District, pursuant to Section 8, Chapter XXII of the Ipswich General Bylaws.

Ms. Carlisle began by explaining the difficult position the APDC was in considering the approved drawings and three window changes applied post approval. Ms. Ward responded that the windows are the same age as the house and that some people of means had similar windows in the past. Ms. Bailey commented that the windows look beautiful inside and out and evoke architectural changes over time. Carlisle disagreed that the windows reflect the period. Mr. Ward added that the window pattern was available over a long period of time into the late 1800's. Carlisle explained that the windows are not appropriate to the architectural style or period of the house. Mr. Ward commented that the type and size could not have been afforded at the time.

Mr. Bubriski explained that the APDC was now in a position to try to fit the windows into the project without a discussion having been had prior to their installation. He added that the approved drawings were beautifully rendered and respectful to the community, and that the change constituted somewhat of a bait and switch. Ms. Hill Dolan inquired as to whether the windows would be visible from the street, which Carlisle affirmed.

Ms. McGrath inquired as to how the APDC can assert its claim of the windows' inappropriateness. Mr. Fiske responded that Massachusetts is collectively proud of its architectural history and so a number of architectural preservation districts had been established. He explained that the APDC is required by law to serve as the responsible party in upholding the bylaw mandates to preserve and protect the buildings and settings appropriately. Fiske added that he has seen no attempt by the owners to show historical appropriateness of the windows. He closed by stating that the APD's were established to benefit Ipswich and the state, not to promote a sense of what people like. McGrath inquired as to the appropriateness of the Summer Street condos, to which Fiske explained that the condo approvals predated the establishment of the APD's.

Ms. Ward stated that when she saw the windows, she forgot about the APDC requirements. Mr. Engle commented that it is interesting that the architect did not review the bylaws and that the project was approved in one sitting. Carlisle responded that the owners had presented wood windows in keeping with those on the front of the house. Mr. Engle asked how the APDC would have ruled with the new windows. Carlisle explained that the windows would have been discouraged and that the characterization of the process was unfair given the post approval change. Mr. Engle responded that in light of the owners conceding fallibility, the windows should be approved. Mr. Parsons responded that the vote would have been no, but that maybe something could have been done on the rear elevation.

McGrath commented that it costs too much for owners to maintain old houses and that a fund should be established to support them. Fiske responded that McGrath was implying that the new windows cost more than those previously approved, which isn't necessarily true. Ms. Strachan commented that being in an APD is not an easy thing. Carlisle inquired as to whether the owners would be willing to consider a design with the windows on the rear elevation. Mr. Thompson added that the third changed window to be installed over the new front door should also be part of the discussion. Hill Dolan asked if the window changes were part of a financial decision, to which Ms. Ward replied, no.

Mr. Ward argued that the characterization of the house as Greek Revival doesn't hold up because it doesn't have the architectural elements, such as pilasters, and that it's more of a handyman house. Carlisle responded that the vernacular architecture is in keeping with a builder rather than an architect, but that the gable end facing the street and offset front door are in keeping with Greek Revival architecture. Mr. Ward argued that one could do anything with this house. Carlisle responded that adding expensive windows that would not have been installed on the house at the time due to cost is inconsistent. Fiske added that without making an argument for neighborhood or historical appropriateness, the APDC can only respond in an unsupportive manner. Ms. Engle claimed that the condos degraded the area now. Carlisle disagreed. Fiske expressed his aversion to applying the worst possible architectural example to provide room for the windows. He added that we should always try to make the neighborhood better rather than worse.

General discussion ensued around relocating the two windows on the east or rear elevations. Ms. Ward suggested a walk through. Thompson responded that he wouldn't feel comfortable

approving anything without seeing drawings. Carlisle stated that the commission members who haven't seen the windows would walk by to consider the street views before the next meeting. Thompson added that some members might be more supportive of windows on the rear. Fiske suggested that the commission had provided a thorough view of opinions and that new drawings should be rendered. Ms. Ward responded that trees would block the windows from view. Thompson requested that all four elevations be rendered. Parsons concluded by suggesting the owners update the drawings, and then the APDC would schedule a follow-up meeting.

MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING: Carlisle requested a motion to adopt the previous meeting minutes. Strachan moved to accept the October 21, 2019 minutes and Bubriski seconded. The vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Documents: Draft minutes of October 21, 2019 meeting

ADJOURNMENT: Thompson moved to adjourn the meeting. Bubriski seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 PM.

Minutes prepared by Will Thompson, Secretary

Minutes adopted: November 18, 2019