

CITY OF HUNTINGTON WOODS  
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
DRAFT MINUTES

**May 4th, 2022**

7:30 p.m.

In Person Meeting – Huntington Woods Commission Room

Commissioner Chris Vogelheim called the Meeting to order at 7:42 p.m

**PRESENT:** Jeff Jenks, Mark Fink, Jeffrey Abt, Chris Vogelheim, Robert Lebow, Steve Behrmann

**ABSENT:** Michael Burshtein

City Staff Present: Zoning Administrator, Hank Berry.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**Jeff Jenks motioned for approval of the minutes as amended. Mark Fink seconded the motion.**

**Ayes: Jeff Jenks, Mark Fink, Jeffrey Abt, Chris Vogelheim, Robert Lebow, Steve Behrmann**

**Nays: None**

**Absent: Burshtein**

**AGENDA ITEMS:**

***Matter of a Review for an addition for the Shore Residence at 26398 Hendrie***

**Ostrowski:** Nothing has changed from the site plan. We still have the setback as previously talked about is still 25 feet from Dundee. We are still in compliance with all setbacks and We are in compliance with I believe all setbacks and size and lot coverage so that is not changed from the meeting of last month. The only thing

that has changed on the North West Elevation is that a proposed replacement of upper side porch railings are to match in material design and detailing of the existing railing located over the front door. This will include all proposed replacement railings which are shown on all elevations. The North East Elevation (facing Dundee) has some changes. The garage has been lowered approximately four feet to address the massing concerns. All upper storage area windows have been removed, including limestone sills. The garage standing seam front and rear garage door and side and rear door man door, awnings with gutters and downspouts have also been deleted. The brick and limestone medallion soldier coursing located above the garage doors has also been deleted. The painted panels and crown with dark brown bronze metal cap detailing has been added above the garage doors and has been installed on all sides. This detailing was just on the side of the garage but it has been brought all the way around to the front and the sides to give the base of the garage a stance and so the upper half can rest on it. The garage doors upper panels are glazed, not solid wood. They will be glass.

The square windows, on the center mass, with mullions and muntin detailing have replaced the round top windows which are adjacent to the central covered porch area. These windows are also wider than the original proposed windows. The windows were the round top windows, they have been squared up and there is a corner that will be all windows. The corridor that we previously talked about will be all natural light. The hip roof over the center section of the proposed addition has also been lowered to address massing concerns. We also dropped another section to further address massing concerns.

The proposed addition's attachment corridor, original brick clad structure has been changed from brick to a subtle rock faced limestone in alternating rows of several stone sizes. These will be between 8 inches and 2 inches. They will be set very tightly with minimal mortar spacing. The stone widths are also of random sizes, the finish of the sills will remain smooth. The design will extend on from the attachment to the main central structure of the addition and continue and act as a plinth to the garage. This material will visually and materially separate the addition from the original structure, but will remain contextual. The double windows inserted into the attachment corridor are double hung with four over four sashes. The covered porch area and upper foyer will remain brick, and will repurpose and

reutilize any and all brick removed from the main floor area where the proposed addition links to the original house. The covered porch entrance door round top, has been replaced with a square top glass insert. The proposed replacement upper side porch railings are to match material, design and detailing of existing railings located above the front door. This will include all new proposed railings or replacements which are shown in all elevations.

The proposed additions kitchen attachment to the original brick clad structure has been changed from brick to the subtle rock faced limestone, also in alternating rows of several stone sizes set very tightly with minimal mortar spacing. This material will visually and materially separate the addition from the original structure. Both the garages and the proposed central additions roofs have been lowered. The double windows inserted into the master bedroom to the right of the kitchen are double hung with four over zero sashes. We have changed these to four over zero sashes in the idea of not trying to match the existing original windows but keep them contextual. We have greatly decreased the amount of soldier coursing and limestone medallions throughout the design but still have some detailing along some of the house. It is set up in a way to honor the original detailing but not copy it.

Ostrowski then showed and explained graphics showing what the house with the addition will look like from different elevations.

Ostrowski brought up the Huntington Woods Historic District Guidelines and Standards. Section II: Policy states:

- New use cannot be met by altering any non-character defining interior spaces
- Attachment of the addition does not obscure, damage or destroy any character defining features.
- The proposed addition is in proper architectural proportion in relation to existing structures.
- The proposed addition does not diminish the historic character resource: design, material, workmanship or location.
- No additional stories are adding to the existing asset thereby maintaining historic appearance.

At this time there is no policy, standard or guideline regarding green space. Green space by definition is usually either maintained or unmaintained public environmental areas which can include natural reserves, wilderness environments and urban parks, not private property.

### Section III: Guidelines were brought up.

#### A. Location

- Proposed addition is located at the rear of the building

#### B. Size, Shape and Proportion

- The proposed addition is smaller in size than the historic building
- The height of the proposed addition does not exceed the height of the historic structure
- The proposed pitches of the new roof(s) duplicate the pitches of the historic building
- The proposed facade proportions are similar to the historic building. The existing ratio of the main mass of the existing structure is 1:.8. The ratio of the proposed mass is 1:.9
- The proposed addition is set back more than 24 inches from the existing wall plane

#### C. Materials

- The proposed addition has paid attention to all details on historic building
- The proposed addition with the least possible loss of historic material (negligible) - we are only losing 300 brick and most of that is non-original.
- The proposed addition's window to height ratios respect the historic building and meets all other requirements.
- The proposed addition has a single width door.
- The corner lot requirements as laid per HWHDC Guidelines has been satisfied (Dundee rd. is a front).
- All mechanical and utility attachments are located in the back of the proposed addition

### Secretary of Interior 10 Standards for Certificate of Appropriateness

1. Property remains a residence.
2. Historical character is maintained.

3. No false sense of historical development.
4. The integrity of all previous documented historic changes and alterations are being made - there was no documented change found.
5. All distinctive materials/historic features and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship are being preserved - some non-original add-on materials are causing damage to the asset.
6. All historical features that require repair and/or replacement are being addressed.
7. No physical treatment/abatement are required.
8. All archaeological resources will be protected and preserved as necessary
9. All materials from site will be adequately repurposed and if any disturbances occur, mitigation will take place.
10. All new construction is designed such that will allow, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the property and its environment would be unimpaired.

**Berry:** There are two variances that are needed for this project because Hendrie is a front and there is a proposed deck on the project. They will need a variance for an accessory structure in a front yard and also for a setback variance. That's any motion that you make would be subject to the ZBA.

**Jenks:** I think this is a nice presentation. I think it gives you the expansion that you want without taking away historical elements. The thing I am concerned about with the multiple elevations, what are you doing about water retention? Are you doing a rain garden or a french drain so that you don't create flooding on adjacent properties? Are you doing anything on grading at least to retain the water?

**Ostrowski:** There is a pond in the backyard with the waterfall. We will be proposing to put in a sump which will also act as a feed into that pond which is a recirculating pump. All of the gutter, we have retaining walls being built. We are holding almost all of the water on the property itself.

**Fink:** If I were an architect, I would say this is a really nice plan. I am not an architect, I am a lawyer. As a lawyer, I am a by the book, do the research kind of guy and by research I mean, identify the controlling rules and principles. I think

possibly the most important thing I learned in law school is to identify and distinguish material facts from immaterial facts. This proposal would clearly increase the property value, and living 5 houses away I would say wow, that's great it's going to increase the value of my property too. That's not material to the decision that we have to make here. I apply the rules and the facts. The rules of the secretary of interior's standards, our own HWHDC guidelines. On corner lots, the elevations facing both streets should be treated as fronts. Other rules or guidelines to go by are the preservation briefs that are provided by the national park service which is part of the department of the interior. They're prepared to provide information on preserving, rehabilitating and restoring historic buildings in compliance with the secretary standards. I looked at brief #14, which deals with additions and "generally speaking, preservation of historic buildings inherently implies minimal change to primary or public elevations." Now since we have 3 primary elevations, public elevations - the one on Dundee is one of those. "Additions should be as inconspicuous as possible from the public view" and "one that overpowers the historic form and changes the scale will usually compromise the historic character as well." If you look at the North East Elevation, I don't think that you can possibly say that this propulsion does not diminish the historic character of the structure, when it is certainly not a minimal change to the public elevation. Furthermore, it creates the impression of a main entrance and it creates a de facto main entrance where there is no entrance at all in the historic structure, and is contrary to the historic character of the building. It is anything but inconspicuous. It would become the focal point of the view from the street on Hendrie. It overpowers the historic form of the view from Hendrie. I see this as an attempt to squeeze 10 gallons into a 5 gallon pail. There is no way that you can say that this proposal does not diminish the historic character of the existing structure and the property, the environment which is part of the historic character.

**Abt:** I don't have any questions or comments.

**Lebow:** No need to reiterate what Mark said, I agree with him 100%. In addition to everything that Mark has stated, on drawing A4.2, as the house exists this bank of windows, and this bank of windows are three windows in each bank, not two. Inserting two windows in each bank is creating a false sense of history. Also on

this drawing, you indicate that there are wood trim panels below the windows and on the attic roof - how do you substantiate that?

**Ostrowski:** We photographed it. We went there, and lifted the panel up and there's wood underneath it, and underneath there up above, we can see that it is rotted.

**Lebow:** Can we see those images of wood panels?

**Ostrowski:** Those are wood panels underneath the aluminum siding. In addition to that, the entire entrances of the house are all wood panels.

**Lebow:** I would like to see images that indicate that those are wood trim panels, as indicated on the drawings. As I see it, this is inserting material that doesn't exist and that imparts a false sense of history. On drawing a5.1, in order to achieve this annex, you are removing a small portion of wall. As that is seen as a front of the house, one of the three, that is in violation of the standards. You have indicated that there are luminaires on the original property, and that again imparts a false sense of history. On drawing a4.2, this entire addition from the annex to the edge of the garage - this is where spatial relationships come into play and as was mentioned earlier, green space. Currently, from Hendrie and Dundee, you can see clear through to the next street. It is a very important and very strong spatial relationship to the environment to the site. Those are to be preserved. By inserting this block of building, that is being destroyed. You will no longer have a sight line from one street to the next. That is closing off the open space, the public space, the public view.

**Shore's:** When we bought the house there was a hot tub with a lattice fence and weed vines growing all over it - you could not see from one street to the next.

**Lebow:** When you bought the house, did you know that the house was a contributing resource in a historic district? So that is a violation of spatial standards. That is being destroyed - what exists. The metal roof that exists, we have not seen any evidence that that is or was a standing seam roof. It's a flat metal roof, and replacing that metal roof with a standing seam roof is in violation of standard 2. In violation of standard 5, you are changing distinctive materials,

features, and construction techniques. Back to those wooden panels, if they are in fact how you represent them, they should be restored which your drawing wants to do but we don't know that they're there so I would like to see proof that they really are there. In drawing a5.1, I am wondering what is happening here?

**Ostrowski:** There is a stairway there.

**Lebow:** That's all I have for now.

**Behrmann:** I think it's fantastic, I like the changes and the addition of limestone to differentiate the structures. I think it is fantastic the way it is. Something's about the architecture that I don't like but I don't think it's pertinent to the historic district.

Vogelheim: Additions are not prohibited by historic, by any of the department of interior standards. By default, there is some judgment involved when you put an addition on. By default, there's green space changes, and it changes the massing of the home. When you look at the connector, in terms of how you sensitively attach to a historic resource without radically disrupting that - you have to. You've done the minimal effort to touch it, you've picked on points where the original historic construction is not there. All of those conventions in terms of scale, I think are very well done. We talk about the new structure not being overwhelming - you stepped it in on both sides so we get a lot of relief, especially when you look at the peninsula. I think all of the things you're proposing are respectful of the historical structure and do not over power it. Standing seam roof versus flat roof is probably one of the biggest things being picked on but when I look at the overall character of this house and what is the defining feature, what is the most prominent - those little piece of roof to me, are not the most defining characteristic of this house, they're a subtle detail. I don't think that whether it's standing seam or flat - to me, if there's not documentation, it does not change the perception of the historic character of this house. I do not feel that it is a defining historic feature of what's there. The massing, the symmetry, the arched openings, the brick detailing, the overhangs, the roof, railings, all that is part of the historic features of the home. I can list a whole myriad of these standards that I think are fine.



*The meeting was then opened to public participation.*

**Sean Craig, 26573 Dundee:** I live directly southwest of the applicant's home. I want to reiterate my support for this addition and for the Shore's for their addition so that they can age in their home. I do think that the conduct of the commission has been a little out of touch with reality. If you look around this room, there are old men. People of the front of the woods, who are going to be able to afford these homes and who are going to be able to maintain these homes are the professionals, the doctors, the lawyers, the business owners and the reputation of this commission is such that they don't want to deal with you. They want to move to Birmingham, they want to move to Bloomfield Hills. I would think carefully about the fact that you're denying people the ability to live in these homes. Mr. Fink, you mentioned that they're trying to build a mini mansion, the 2500 square foot home in 1920 was a mini mansion. Those are the people who are going to want to live in these homes, you need to let them maintain them and live in them. Thank you.

**Claire Greco, 26586 Dundee:** Directly across from the garage side of the applicant's home. I guess I came with questions more so than a statement. I just want to know if any of you think that there's going to be a loss of historical significance to the house? This is a permanent change. Right now, there are two more prominent roof lines added to the house, we're adding an established entrance on the Dundee side, and a larger garage because it's being made taller. I just wanted to know if you think that this is going to change the historical significance of the house.

*Public Participation was then closed as there were no more participants.*

**Peter Ostrowski:** This is not a three sided house, there is very clearly a prominent side, and the opposing side has backyard vegetation and is used as a fence line. Secondly, of great concern to me, was this terminology that has been bantered about haphazardly - green space. I have done an inordinate amount of research through the literature and in all the literature. Green space in no regard, ever is considered private space. There is not one definition where the term green space is used and it addresses private space.

**Mike Ostrowski:** I do want to say that I appreciate your understanding, the fact that these additions are allowed in the historic district and I appreciate that you have understood what we have gone through. We feel that we have not only addressed, answered and passed every guideline that has been written by the HWHDC, as well as the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. This is a beautiful addition to a beautiful house. It is not robbing anybody of anything that doesn't belong to them in the first place. This is a private property, these are people who are willing to invest in this city. I guarantee that we are losing people from the historic district - I know of one person who has moved out of the historic district. I also know of someone who was going to buy in the historic district and refused. My point is that these are not easy things to do. You have to be sensitive, you have to be committed, and you have to do everything in your power and your education to put this together to make it work - not only for the clients to be able to live there, but to make it accessible and attractive to the city. I live in this city, and I take great pride in all of the work that I have done in the city. I've done at least 24-30 homes of renovations and additions throughout the area, and I am more than proud to be a part of it. I am proud of this, and the Shore's are proud of this, and it deserves to be built, and in the historic district and what it's supposed to be. Thank you.

**Behrmann:** I think I've said all that I need to say and no additional comments.

**Lebow:** No comments.

**Abt:** I think that Robert did point out two things that I wondered about a little bit. One is the attachments of those lights on the side of the original house. I think if there were things like that that were not on the original house, I would be inclined to include them. With regard to the panels, my recommendation would be that when you remove them, if you find some evidence that gives you an indication of how to treat them, you'll follow it. A more general statement, in response to one of our neighbors about historic preservation - I want to go outside of the context of the house per se because it is an issue that I take seriously. I should explain that by the way that I write in the field of museum history, and it's hard to talk about museum history without talking about museum architecture. It is not easy to talk about museum architecture without talking about the history of additions to

museums, which often by definition are historic structures. It's a big gray area. My own personal feelings on matters like this is to not let perfection become the enemy of the good. I think the Shore's have put together a reasonable proposal. In my view, I don't think it significantly diminishes the historical value of the house.

**Fink:** I would like to clarify that I have no problem at all with the plans for the renovation of the existing structure. I think that's great. Going from there, having done that many projects within the city - obviously you have a good reputation, and my impression from this is that you do really nice work. Nobody is questioning the quality of your work. The question is whether it's appropriate in this case.

**Jenks:** When the historic district was created, I was partially responsible for that and there was tremendous anxiety with the people that owned the homes there. I like the changes that have been made. I like the transition, I like the lowering of the levels so that you respect the original house. I want people to be able to stay in our community. My concern probably does not fit into anything historical, but it does fit into water rights and property retention for the water on the property. I think this is a corrective action. I like and will support this addition, as long as you agree not to leave the city.

**Vogelheim:** I am in support of this. It is appropriate, it was sensitive and thoughtful. Hank, I have one question - if the aluminum is peeled back and there is historic material discovered, if it is part of the motion, can you work through that with them?

**Berry:** If it is part of the motion, then yes. Same would be with the lights on the original structure, otherwise you're approving the plan if it is not a part of the motion.

**Vogelheim:** I don't have anything else to say, I just appreciate the thoughtfulness and the effort. I think we are at the magic moment if someone would entertain a motion

**Steve Behrmann motioned for a certificate of appropriateness for the Shore's residence at 26398 Hendrie subject to the removal of the sconces attached to the side porch on the Western elevation and to administratively work through the panels on the porches to determine their authenticity or what might be underneath them, and also subject to the ZBA approval for the two variances required. The motion was seconded by Jeff Jenks.**

**Ayes: Jeff Jenks, Jeffrey Abt, Chris Vogelheim, Steve Behrmann**

**Nays: Mark Fink, Robert Lebow**

**Absent: Burshtein**

**The motion carried.**

### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

**Lebow:** I contacted Amy Arnold from the state historic preservation organization about the type of votes that we should be taking. Public act 169 requires that we either vote for a certificate of appropriateness, a certificate to proceed, or a denial. If it is anything outside of that, like a motion to table, that motion to table must come from the applicants, and no one else. This is how we need to act, how we need to respond to votes in the future. If we don't, we are in violation of the Public Act 169.

**Berry:** With all due respect to Robert's due diligence, I don't think Amy Arnold is completely informed with the situation and it's not been accurately described. Also, the Ostrowski's and the Shore's did ask for the table at the last meeting. They did voluntarily rescind the 60-day rule, and they did also provide a written document that was signed, as required by public act 169 in order for the table to go forward. Therefore, it would be my contention and also the contention of the city attorney, that everything was done in order with that particular decision.

**The meeting was opened again for public participation. Seeing none, public participation was then closed.**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**Moved by Mark Fink and seconded by Jeffrey Abt to adjourn the meeting of the Historic District Commission**

**Ayes: Jeff Jenks, Mark Fink, Jeffrey Abt, Chris Vogelheim, Robert Lebow, Steve Behrmann**

**Nays: None**

**Absent: Burshtein**

**The Motion Carried, meeting adjourned at 9:23 pm.**

Submitted

Amy Berry - Recorder