



CITY OF PLAINFIELD
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
 515 WATCHUNG AVENUE, ROOM 202
 PLAINFIELD, NEW JERSEY 07060



Adrian O. Mapp, Mayor

William H. Michelson, Chairman
 Lawrence T. Quirk, Vice Chairman

MEETING MINUTES- PLAINFIELD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
DECEMBER 18, 2018, 7:30 PM. CITY HALL 1ST FLOOR LIBRARY, 515 WATCHUNG AVENUE, PLAINFIELD, NEW JERSEY

Call to Order and Public Notice

Chairman Michelson called the meeting to order at 7:34 P.M. and in conformance with the Open Public Meetings Act read aloud the following: "In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, this is a regularly scheduled meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Plainfield. Adequate notice of this meeting has been given in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, the annual meeting schedule was published in the Courier-News, and copies of the meeting schedule are posted in the offices of the City Clerk and Planning Division. I ask that everyone including Commission members please turn their cell phones to silence or vibrate and not take or send any electronic messages during this meeting."

Roll Call

2018 Historic Preservation Commission Name, Class Designation (Term Ends)	1/23/18	2/27/18	3/27/18	4/24/18	5/22/18	6/26/18	7/24/18	8/28/18	9/25/18	10/23/18	11/27/18	12/18/18
Mario Camino, Class A (12/31/2020)	X	X		X	X	*	X	X		*	X	
John Favazzo, Class A (12/31/2021)	X	X	X	X	X	C			X	C	X	
William T. Garrett, Class B (12/31/2019)	X	X		X		A	X	X	X	A		X
Sandra Gurshman, Class B (12/31/2018)	X	X	X	X	X	N	X	X	X	N	X	X
William H. Michelson, Class B (12/31/2018)	X	X	X	X	X	C		X	X	C	X	X
Lawrence T. Quirk, Class A (12/31/2021)	X	X	X	X	X	E	X	X	X	E	X	X
Gary F. Schneider, Class C (12/31/2019)	X	X		X		L	X	X	X	L	X	X
Reginald Thomas, Class A (12/31/2018)	X		X	X		L	X	X	X	L		
Member 9 VACANT (unexpired term ends 12/31/2020)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	E	n/a	n/a	n/a	E	n/a	
Gail Smith Alexander, Alternate Member 1 (12/31/2020)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	D	X	X	X	D	X	X
James Plummer, Alternate Member 2 (12/31/2020)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	*	n/a	n/a	X	*		X

Also present: HPC Consultant Barton Ross, HPC Secretary Scott Bauman

Presentation of November 27, 2018, Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Gurshman made a motion to approve the November 27, 2018, meeting minutes as submitted. Commissioner Schneider seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by voice vote.

New Business

- Certificate of Appropriateness HPC 2018-15. Applicant: Landmark Developers, LLC
 100-10 North Avenue. Block 314, Lot 1. North Avenue Historic District**

HPC Secretary Bauman informed the Commission that the applicant served notice and the Commission has jurisdiction to hear the proposal. Jay Bohn, Esq. of Schiller, Pittenger & Galvin, P.C., 1771 Front Street, Scotch Plains, introduced himself as representing Landmark Developers, LLC. Jeffrey A. Fleisher, 56 East Main Street, Flemington,

introduced himself as the applicant's architect. Also present was Alex Pavlovsky of Landmark Developers, LLC, 675 Garfield Avenue, Jersey City.

Chairman Michelson informed commissioners that this hearing is for a Certificate of Appropriateness and also a referral from the Zoning Board. The proposal requires variances and site plan approval from the Zoning Board of Adjustment and the Commission can provide its advice on matters referred to the HPC which require approval or action by the Board. The advice of the HPC shall be a recommendation only, which may be approved, disapproved, or amended by the Board.

Mr. Fleisher explained that the proposal consists of partial second and third floor additions, and a new fourth story addition and the conversion of vacant office space to residential apartments resulting in 2,882 square foot first floor retail space, ten (10) one-bedroom and one (1) two-bedroom upper floor apartments. The addition will be in contrast with the building- it will be constructed of Equitone fibre cement panels. The first floor will remain retail; a new elevator will occupy some first floor space. There will be modifications to the retail façade. Ten apartments will have one bedroom, and one apartment will have two bedrooms. The sloping roof of the addition is in contrasting style; the cement panels will have a smooth finish and will be colored grey, orange, and blue. Windows will have aluminum frames. When asked about window alignment by Commissioner Gurshman, Mr. Fleisher said the windows on the addition will not line up with the existing windows in the building.

Commissioners commented the building is a corner building and accentuates the North Avenue Historic District. Vice Chairman Quirk commented that the building is an architecturally distinct building in the district and he questioned the proposed setback of the addition; Mr. Fleisher said the addition is set back 4 feet from the parapet. Vice Chairman Quirk commented that the public will see more of the addition on the train station platform; he understands the setback of the addition on the street side but from the non-street sides, the building will look modern. Mr. Fleisher said the addition will improve the building's appearance; Vice Chairman Quirk added that the building could improve if it looked more like the existing building- a lot of people are going to see a very modern building in the historic district. Commissioner Smith Alexander asked if the fibre panels are the same size as the windows; Mr. Fleisher said the windows and panels are the same size.

Vice Chairman Quirk asked if there is any other reason for the sloped roof other than the corner emphasis; Mr. Fleisher said the sloped roof accommodates the two bedroom unit but it could be made a flat roof, all of the external walls of the fourth floor apartment will be made of concrete fibre panel.

Chairman Michelson reviewed the planner's report, detailing the following variance conditions:

- The TODD-NAHD zone permits a floor area ratio (FAR) up to 3.0; the proposed FAR is 3.08.
- The TODD-NAHD zone permits up to 50 units/acre of residential development; the applicant is proposing 119 units/acre.
- The proposal requires relief from lot area, lot depth, rear yard setback, building coverage, and lot coverage requirements.
- The parking requirement is 21 spaces and the applicant is not proposing any on-site parking spaces.
- Relief from the following supplementary zoning requirements:
 - ✓ Eight (8) one-bedroom units do not meet the minimum 750 sf minimum livable floor area requirement. The 944 sf two-bedroom apartment does not meet the 1,000 sf minimum livable floor area requirement.
 - ✓ Shade trees shall be planted at 40 foot intervals along the right-of-way. No shade trees are proposed along Park Avenue.

- ✓ The applicant proposes 1.5'x3.5' (5.25 sf) "floor light illuminated" building signs- not shown on the drawings. Not enough information is provided to determine whether any variance conditions exist or are proposed.
- Relief from the following supplementary zoning requirements:
 - ✓ Each dwelling unit located above the ground floor level shall be provided with a private outdoor patio or balcony area. No outdoor or patio area is proposed.
 - ✓ A minimum of 85% of exterior walls, excluding windows, doors and other openings, shall be faced with brick, stone or cultured stone. Not enough information is provided to determine whether a waiver condition is proposed.
 - ✓ Fifteen percent (15%) of exterior walls, excluding windows, doors, and other openings, shall be constructed of noncombustible materials including exterior stucco and Class PB exterior insulating and finishing system (EIFS). Stucco and EIFS shall only be used for walls, architectural features, and embellishments not subject to physical contact. Not enough information is provided to determine whether a waiver condition is proposed.
 - ✓ Windows and glazing shall be limited to a minimum of 30% and a maximum of 70% of each front yard building elevation. Not enough information is provided to determine whether a waiver condition is proposed.

Mr. Bohn responded to the planner's report in the following manner:

- Regarding floor area ratio, the difference is de minimis and that the lot is small to start off with.
- Parking will be satisfied by securing parking spaces from nearby municipal parking lots.
- There will be no changes to existing signs and no sign for the apartment units.
- The applicant can calculate the elevation areas of windows and exterior walls
- Regarding open space, balconies need railing and the applicant does not want railings on the parapet.
- The applicant will meet the window and glazing requirement.
- No solar panels are proposed.

HPC Consultant Mr. Ross commented that the high-end Hardie Board is better, a good product and that it should be smooth and field painted to make it look more like wood. Commissioner Schneider said the addition looks like a modern building on top of an old building. A discussion ensued about adding and continuing architectural features that would help contrast the styles. The windows will be aluminum frame; when asked to consider wood, the applicant said "yes".

Vice Chairman Quirk said the façade facing the train station is too modern; he prefers replacing it with something else more in keeping with the building- he understands the contrast but this is too much. Vice Chairman Quirk further recommended reducing the number of apartments, pushing back the top floor, and working a little harder to incorporate the new into the old. Vice Chairman Quirk also asked to see a sample of the cement fibre panel.

Chairman Michelson opened the meeting to the public; Oscar Abolata of 118 North Avenue asked about parking spaces and cited concern for limited parking spaces in the area. Chairman Michelson said there are no spaces on site and the applicant is planning to use the city parking lots. Chairman Michelson closed the public portion of the meeting. After further discussion, Chairman Michelson summarized the Commission's concerns to be addressed by the applicant:

- Provide a sample of Equitone fibre cement panel.
- What is the color of the original building? Will it be repainted? If so, what colors?
- Reconfiguration of street side addition- dealing with elevation roof on corner
- Move windows to align with the windows of the original building

- Consider changing the fourth floor roof line from sloped to flat
- Consider wood frame versus aluminum frame windows
- Rethink the expanse of the modern façade on the train station side- mimic the original building more on the second and third stories
- Reconfigure the fourth floor, lose an apartment, push back the fourth floor facade back like on the street sides.
- Calculate the apartment size and window sizes
- Signs and facades of the stores- look at them.

With no further discussion, Vice Chairman Quirk made a motion to carry the application to January 22, 2019. Commissioner Schneider seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by voice vote.

2. Certificate of Appropriateness HPC 2018-16. Applicant & Property Owner: Caesar Johnson

1275 Denmark Road. Block 930, Lot 21. Netherwood Heights Historic District

HPC Secretary Bauman informed the Commission that the applicant served notice and the Commission has jurisdiction to hear the proposal. David Buckman, AIA of BOL Architecture, 725 Federal Avenue, Kenilworth, introduced himself as the applicant’s architect. Also present was property owner Caesar Johnson, 1275 Denmark Road, Plainfield.

Chairman Michelson informed commissioners that this hearing is for a Certificate of Appropriateness and also a referral from the Zoning Board. The proposal requires variances for the oversized garage from the Zoning Board of Adjustment and the Commission can provide its advice on matters referred to the HPC which require approval or action by the Board. The advice of the HPC shall be a recommendation only, which may be approved, disapproved, or amended by the Board.

Mr. Buckman described the property setting and provided a brief background of the previous owner and the new owner’s intentions to improve the property. Mr. Buckman described the proposed improvements as an addition to the rear of the building, construction of an oversized detached garage, a patio, and of a new driveway leading to the garage. The addition consists of an enlarged kitchen, dinette and sunroom.

Chairman Michelson asked about a detached structure to the left of the residence; Mr. Johnson said the building was used as a playhouse and moved from the downtown to the property. Presently the structure is used as a shed and Mr. Johnson said he intends to keep it.

Chairman Michelson asked about walls with lights on the ends at the driveway entrance along Denmark Road. Mr. Johnson said he installed the lights; Chairman Michelson said he needed a Certificate of Appropriateness for the lights and he should amend his plan accordingly.

Chairman Michelson followed up by asking about the existing garage facing Fernwood Avenue- on the applicant’s drawings the garage doesn’t exist- is the structure being demolished? Mr. Buckman said the applicant intends to demolish the existing garage. Chairman Michelson said the public hearing notice completed by the applicant did not note the demolition of the garage, making the notice defective- the neighbors were not made aware that the applicant wants to demolish a structure. The applicant agreed to re-notice for the next meeting to include the garage demolition.

Vice Chairman Quirk asked about the existing driveway, proposed driveway, and future driveway; Mr. Buckman said the future driveway depiction should be removed. Vice Chairman Quirk asked what the circles on the plan represent; Mr. Buckman said they represent pervious pavers. A discussion ensued over the effectiveness of pervious pavers and the importance of reducing impervious lot coverage.

When asked why the new garage is aligned the way it is on the plan, Mr. Buckman said the new garage is located on center with the addition and kitchen. Mr. Buckman described the house addition and new garage in detail. Chairman Michelson reviewed the planner's report, detailing the following garage variance conditions:

- No accessory structure in a residential zone . . . shall be taller than one story or fifteen feet, whichever is less. The proposed garage is 22'-3" high.
- No accessory structure shall have a ground area greater than 35% of the ground area of the principal structure to which it is accessory. While no specific dimensions are given for the principal structure. While calculations are not provided, it appears that the proposed garage is greater than 35% of the ground area of the principal structure.
- A garage must be a fully enclosed detached accessory structure . . . used primarily for the storage of no more than two (2) motor vehicles owned or used by the occupant of the principal structure. The proposed garage is designed for the storage of three (3) motor vehicles and with an upper floor.
- A one (1) car parking garage, not to exceed 12x25 feet or 300 square feet, for a single-family unit, or a two (2) car garage not to exceed 22x25 feet or 550 square feet, for a two-family dwelling unit, shall be provided for all residential dwellings. The proposed three-car garage is 43.3' wide x 23' deep (986 square feet). The garage is oversized 436 square feet.

Vice Chairman Quirk asked if the partial diamond pane windows can be expanded across the sunroom; Mr. Buckman said he could but he wanted the addition to stand out from the original building. Mr. Johnson said he would prefer a full window. Vice Chairman Quirk said he is sensitive to the addition but the last few windows should have the diamond panes.

The garage will be 8 feet lower than the house, and would be 23 feet high. The elevation and downhill location drops the height appearance of the garage. Commissioner Smith Alexander asked if the second floor of the garage will be heated; Mr. Johnson said there will be a gas heater in the building, and no one will be living in the building.

Chairman Michelson opened the meeting to the public; no one from the public commented on the application. Chairman Michelson closed the public portion of the meeting. After further discussion, Chairman Michelson summarized the Commission's concerns to be addressed by the applicant:

- Applicant needs to re-notice to include demolition of existing garage and after the fact gate posts in front yard
- Applicant needs to determine whether any bulk variances are required, specifically lot coverage- come up with ways to reduce coverage, remove parts of driveway not being used, eliminate pavement.
- Not liking the pervious paver blocks- if enough pavement can be eliminated there will be no need for the pavers
- The driveway coming in from Fernwood Avenue does not have a uniform width- realign and cut so it is uniform.
- The addition should have the diamond pane windows in continuance with the windows on the house.
- The patio will be flat/slightly terraced 25'x22'
- Prepare a small write up on the garage demolition for the next hearing (garage condition, presence of architectural elements, etc.).

Commissioner Gurshman made a motion to carry the application to January 22, 2019. Commissioner Schneider seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by voice vote.

3. **Informational Meeting: 821 2nd Place. Block 830, Lot 14. Crescent Area Historic District**

Greg Marcelin and Tricia Demosthene introduced themselves as new owners of 821 2nd Place, previously a bank-owned property. Mr. Marcelin explained to the Commission the improvements he wants to perform including

repair stucco, tear out front porch and build a new front porch, install a new shingle roof, replace front porch columns.

Vice Chairman Quirk applauds the owner's effort and asked him to remove the satellite dishes attached to the side of the building. A discussion ensued over the front porch condition, its repair/replacement- a Certificate of Appropriateness will be required for porch replacement. A discussion ensued over rail height for front porches on historic buildings and whether they need to comply with modern building codes, porch flooring, and steps. New porch decking shall run front to back, not lengthwise boards perpendicular to the street. The owners have not yet researched the history of the building at the library. The detached garage will be repaired and painted. The front doors will be painted, not replaced. Two (2) basement wood frame windows will be replaced like-for like, and two (2) window panes on the first floor are being repaired. The gutters are being retained.

Chairman Michelson noted that the structure went from a two family to a five family to a four family. The owners plan to live in the building and rent out the three apartments. The building was foreclosed and vacant for over two years and could lose its non-conformity. The Commission decided that the owners can go ahead with the roof, stucco, and window repairs without a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Unfinished Business

1. \$22,500 Certified Local Government Grant

Chairman Michelson announced that the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Historic Preservation Office has awarded the city a Certified Local Government Grant to undertake an update to the Historic Preservation Element of the municipal master plan. Planning Division staff and state representatives will soon have a kick-off meeting. Chairman Michelson will keep commissioners posted.

Discussion

1. 2019 Meeting Schedule

Recording Secretary Bauman asked commissioners to review the 2019 proposed meeting dates and contact him with any conflicts.

2. Reorganization of Planning Division

Recording Secretary Bauman informed commissioners that the Planning Division is being reorganized in 2019, he may not be the recording secretary in 2019, and Planning Director William Nierstedt may be attending meetings in his place.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Commissioner Gurshman made a motion for adjournment, seconded by Chairman Michelson; all voted in favor, none opposed. The meeting adjourned at 10:17 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Bauman

Scott Bauman, PP, AICP

Recording Secretary

Prepared January 15, 2019

Approved by the Historic Preservation Commission: January 22, 2019