

SALEM HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MINUTES
November 18, 2020

A meeting of the Salem Historical Commission was held on Wednesday, November 18, 2020 at 6:00 pm **Zoom Virtual Meeting** Present were; Rebecca English, Vijay Joyce, Milo Martinez, Stacey Norkun, Mark Pattison, Mark Meche, Larry Spang (Chair). Not present: Reed Cutting, Erin Schaeffer.

123 Federal Street – continuation

Lindholm Family Trust submitted a Certificate of Appropriateness for replacing existing fencing with new fence design and gates (after the fact)

Documents & Exhibits

- Application: 10/7/20
- Photographs

Marisa Lindholm was present to discuss the project.

Chair Spang stated that a site visit was made by several Commission members on Saturday 11/14 where the Contractor was present to discuss the fence replaced without Commission approval. Mr. Joyce noted that some areas of the fence cap were splitting while other fence sections weren't level. Ms. Lindholm replied that they were told to stop construction, so the new cedar fence is incomplete and needs stabilizing, leveling and painting. Chair Spang noted that the neighbors (the Hartfelders) wanted their side of the fence to remain natural and not be painted. Ms. Lindholm added that the rear neighbors made the same request.

Mr. Joyce noted the unevenness of the fence and the securing of the fence to a tree on the property, which should be adjusted to not cause more damage to the tree. The driveway gate post is also loose and drilled into the siding of the house which will lead to water damage and the brackets are too small for the size of the gate. Mr. Pattison added that the screws have split the clapboard. Mr. Meche noted that the vehicular gate has rails on the exterior face of the panel when they should be on the interior: the gate should be flipped so the support rails aren't visible from the street. Mr. Joyce agreed. Chair Spang suggested the contractor couldn't drill into the granite at grade to secure the post properly. He also expressed his opinion that the fence design may be inappropriate with the design of the house, and craftsmanship could also be an issue. Ms. Lindholm suggested vandalism as the cause of the loose fence posts.

Mr. Joyce suggested a 3 – 3 ½-inch cap for the 6 ½-foot-high fence would be more appropriate and to straighten the fence and anchor the tall posts. Mr. Pattison suggested using cement to secure the posts. He also expressed his opinion that the two posts with the 16-inch panel between them isn't appropriate and should have been located further left or right and constructed with hidden posts set behind the fence boards. Chair Spang noted his confusion of a "man" or pedestrian gate with no associated walkway. Ms. Lindholm replied that pavers will be installed for their carriage house tenants' vehicle where there is currently asphalt and gravel. The man gate was added to provide their tenant access, but they are not expanding the curb cut. Chair Spang commented that the fence provides screening but pushing back the fence will make vehicles visible from the street.

Mr. Martinez joined the meeting.

Public Comment:

Ron & Mary Hartfelder. Mr. Hartfelder reported that he was home the day the gate fell to the ground – the damage was from the wind and not vandalism.

Joyce Kenney noted that the parking pad should be gravel instead of having any grass or a tree to the right and the pedestrian gate is 2-3" above the sidewalk. Chair Spang reiterated that the area will be repaved.

Paul Sullivan, 35 Flint Street, stated that a fence on his property has a strip of flat stock on top. Chair Spang replied that the size and shape of cap is usually tied to the design of the fence and can vary.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

Ms. Norkun noted her struggle with the fence design as it relates to a Greek Revival home. 373 Essex Street has a Greek Revival fence with larger posts and caps and trim detail and feels more appropriate. If the design moves forward it should be adjusted rather than keeping its primitive style. Chair Spang noted that the 373 Essex Street property has visible panels and not posts to interrupt it creating a more finished look, as well as a thicker cap for its approximate 4 ½-foot-high fence. He also noted that a front yard fence doesn't typically cut off the view into the property, a full screen fence typically is placed at the sides and rear of the property only. He suggested an open lattice design above a lower board fence would also be a better option providing some screening while allowing some visibility through the yard. Ms. Lindholm replied that the tall fence is needed for safety.

Chair Spang stated that to the left of this property is a pocket garden with fence and gate at the rear with a height transition higher towards the rear section of fence. Mr. Martinez stated that the fence at 373 Essex also matches the house façade and trim color and the proposed paint colors at the submit property do not. Ms. Lindholm replied that the proposed paint colors match their window trim. Mr. Martinez stated that the fence color should be tied to larger elements not moving parts such as windows. Ms. English agreed.

Chair Spang noted that the side fence does transition to higher height as it moves away from the street.

Additional public comment:

Helen Sides, Architect, asked if this was a replacement in kind. Chair Spang replied that the previous fence was a picket fence at the front and sides of the property.

Mr. Joyce stated he would want the details of what would be changed prior to the Commission approving it, including replacing the fence cap, how it is attached to the house, securing the posts, flipping the vehicular gates, possibly enlarging the fence posts to secure the weight of the fence and moving the fence away further away from the curb.

Mr. Pattison expressed his concern with the applicant removing an appropriate fence to allow for parking and installing an inappropriate fence design. He suggested they improve upon the design. Mr. Joyce noted his desire to fix the current fence unless the Commission wants to adjust the design. Chair Spang replied that the Commission should approve what's appropriate and not just repairing what's incorrect.

Mr. Joyce stated that if the applicant wanted to keep the 6-foot high fence there needs to be more detail. Ms. Lindholm asked if they repair the front and side can they keep what's at the rear, so the front has a more historic look. Mr. Martinez expressed his concern that the Commission should be wary of a precedent-setting compromise and that it is within the Commission's purview to look over the details and request changes.

Chair Spang asked if the front fence could be moved back behind the third window further away from the street to provide more vehicular space and a picket fence be added at the front property line. Mr. Pattison agreed that this could be an appropriate solution. Ms. Lindholm responded that based on the way their house is situated, relocating the fence would encroach on their back yard. She noted that before the front picket fence was removed, people would drive down the driveway then pull onto the grass. Chair Spang responded that relocating the fence further away from the street would lose approximately 10-12 feet of yard space. He also suggested a 5-foot high fence to allow some privacy and reduce the impact on the neighbors. Mr. Meche supported these suggestions, noting that

this economy style fence was installed poorly and while the rear fence could be adjusted, the front section needs significant work that could take less time to replace rather than repair. He also noted that the zoning ordinance limits the width of driveways and curb cuts. Ms. Lindholm stated that they have made some considerations for adjusting the height. Mr. Joyce clarified that the height of the main fence is still 6' tall.

Chair Spang noted that the Commission appeared unable to reach a consensus on the project. He offered to work with the applicant on possible remedies.

VOTE: Mr. Joyce made a motion to continue to the next meeting on December 2nd. Ms. Norkun second the motion. All were in favor and the motion so carried.

125 Derby Street – continuation

Christian Haselgrove submitted a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace fence

Documents & Exhibits

- Application: 10/7/20
- Photographs

Ms. Kelleher reported that the applicant requested a continuance.

VOTE: Mr. Joyce made a motion to continue to the meeting on December 2nd. Ms. English seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion so carried.

13 Cambridge Street

Michael Sherriff submitted a Certificate of Appropriateness for an entry stair handrail.

Documents & Exhibits

- Application: 11/2/20
- Photographs

Helen Sides, Architect, was present to discuss the project.

Ms. Sides stated that the applicants are proposing to match a handrail on Chestnut Street - a simple iron handrail with twisted newel posts. They will install a single handrail at the left side of the door with a top newel post and no connection to the house. The Chestnut Street handrail is 2 ¾", but they may reduce the size of the handrail at 13 Cambridge Street to 2 ¼"

Ms. Norkun asked if the owner had considered a wood railing since it's a smaller scale. Ms. Sides responded that a wood railing would be too bulky and couldn't be secured as simply. No balusters are proposed since the stairs are not 30-inches above grade. Chair Spang asked if the bottom newel post would be set into the granite. Ms. Sides responded that the lowest step is granite, other steps are wood. The top newel post would be set into the wood landing.

Mr. Pattison noted that Greek Revival style typically didn't have curves and asked if there were flat details for the handrail. Ms. Sides responded that the handrail would have a shaped top profile, but she suggested that the lamb's tongue at the end of the Chestnut Street example be eliminated and the newel be bar stock and not twisted. Chair Spang asked if the residential rail needs a turn with an extension or be turned under so as not to snag anything on it. Ms. Sides responded that she could create a ball or lamb's tongue at the ends.

Public Comment: No one in the assembly wished to speak.

VOTE: Mr. Joyce made a motion to approve a new entry stair handrail with simple bar stock newel posts similar to 30 Chestnut Street. Ms. English seconded the motion. All were in favor (Ms. Norkun abstained) and the motion so carried.

337 Essex Street

Maureen McCarthy submitted a Certificate of Appropriateness for fiberglass gutters

Documents & Exhibits

- Application: 10/28/20
- Photographs

Helen Sides, Architect, and Maureen McCarthy were present to discuss the project.

Ms. Sides presented the application to gutters on the property with new fiberglass gutters. Molds of the existing gutters would be made to match the existing profile except that the new fiberglass gutters would have more capacity than a wood gutter. Ms. McCarthy has been working with a contractor who will remove a section of the side gutter to replicate.

Chair Spang asked for confirmation that profile will match existing and new gutters will be painted to match the existing trim. Ms. Sides confirmed and noted that the fiberglass gutter can be produced to match the profile of the bow window gutter. Ms. Kelleher noted that the Commission has approved fiberglass at 9 Cambridge Street and 266 Lafayette Street. Mr. Meche reported that he has fiberglass gutters on his house, and they have worked very well. Mr. Joyce asked if there are seams. Ms. Sides responded that gutters may come as a single piece, but the curved sections of gutters may be multiple pieces. Seams are secured with gel epoxy, so the joints aren't visible. This work is done in the field with TrimWell.

Ms. English noted that the gutters and soffits on this building are very elaborate so you can't tell where the trim ends and the gutters begin. Ms. Sides agreed and noted that the existing gutters could be copper.

Ms. McCarthy stated that they will do a test case on the driveway side of the house and would remove the gutter to determine what's behind the gutter. She noted that the other buildings they own don't have gutters and these buildings don't have the rot that this house does. She did replace a side gutter with wood that's not visible from the street. She is assuming that this section of the house has a gutter (which is difficult to see from below) but if it's different they may request an amendment, so they don't replace the gutter. She asked for the Commission's feelings on whether the building should have gutters. The gutters are rotting because the trees hang over the house have caused a lot of damage. Ms. Sides noted that the City has a Tree Warden and a Tree Commission. Mr. Martinez agreed noting the Warden and Commission have jurisdiction over trees within 20-feet of the public way. There is also an on-line resource for tree complaints. Chair Spang noted that while some houses did not have gutters, these buildings had overhangs that allowed rain to spill into gardens that are not paved area. Mr. Meche and Mr. Joyce both agreed that this building likely always had gutters and this detail completes the profile of the roof edge.

Public Comment: No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Ms. Kelleher asked if the downspouts will remain. Ms. Sides responded yes.

Mr. Martinez asked about the scope of the gutter replacement. Ms. Sides responded that at this stage only the gutters that need to be replaced are scheduled for replacement, but they have not yet determined how to address connection details between two different materials - copper and fiberglass.

Ms. McCarthy noted that gutters on the rear of the building are aluminum and are not visible from the street. Ms. Sides noted that the rear of the building has a lower roof line.

Chair Spang requested photo documentation of the removal and installation of new fiberglass.

VOTE: Mr. Joyce made a motion to approve replacement fiberglass gutter at the top hip roof. Mr. Meche seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion so carried.

33 Flint Street

Paul and Angela Sullivan/Leeanne Crowley submitted a Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior egress stair

Documents & Exhibits

- Application: 11/2/20
- Photographs
- Elevation drawings

Paul Sullivan and Leeanne Crowley were present to discuss the project.

Mr. Sullivan presented the application noting that the egress stair is visible between two houses on Essex Street but due to its location so far from street it is only minimally visible. The spiral staircase is the second egress out of the one of the units in the building (the main entry door to this unit is located at the front of the house) but it is difficult to navigate the stair since it is only 20-inches wide and it is starting to rot where it meets the ledge board at the top. Therefore, they want to remove the spiral staircase and add a new exterior stair. He presented elevation drawings to show how the stair will exit the upper level porch. This is minimally visible from the end of a neighbor's driveway along Essex Street.

Mr. Martinez asked why a landing is planned that will break up the run of stairs. Mr. Sullivan responded that the plan is to have three steps down to a landing to Leeanne's exit, then a run, then a turn at the bottom to avoid electrical boxes. The stair also needs to avoid the head of the first-floor door. The stairs won't be attached to the building; only the deck will be attached. Chair Spang noted that clearance is needed in front the electric meters. Ms. Crowley also noted that the stair needs to be designed to avoid blocking her window.

Mr. Joyce asked for materials. Mr. Sullivan responded that post will be pressure treated and wrapped in cedar or poplar.

The Commission discussed extending top deck straight across to stairs which would allow for the removal of the small two step run.

Ms. Norkun expressed concern if the newel posts are too small. Chair Spang noted that drawing shows existing railing to remain.

Mr. Sullivan stated that decking would be composite. Chair Spang and Mr. Pattison expressed concern about exposed ends of composite decking and noted the need for an end cap to cover hollow ends of boards.

The Commission agreed that railings and posts should match existing on building and painted to match existing color.

Chair Spang and Mr. Meche stated that an architect should review code requirements for egress stairs.

Public Comment: No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

VOTE: Mr. Joyce made a motion to approve as designed with handrails and posts to match existing and decking to have trim to cover edge of boards if decking not solid. This approval is pending review and approval by Building Inspector. If changes are required, applicant to return to Commission with revised drawings. Ms. Norkun seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion so carried.

165 Essex Street

Request to amend Certificate of Appropriateness for installation of minisplit HVAC system.

Linda Goldstein was present to discuss the project.

Ms. Goldstein noted that the condenser cannot be placed under the exterior stair and would therefore need to be screened. She proposes a lattice style fencing similar to condenser screen on Botts Court.

Mr. Meche asked if the access doors on the screen will be hinged from the edge and not the middle. He noted that the drawing shows a single panel at approximately 57" long. Mr. Pattison expressed concern that the door may be too long to function properly.

Public Comment: No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

VOTE: Mr. Martinez made a motion to amend the Certificate of Appropriateness to allow the condenser to be moved and screened with a square lattice as drawn to match Botts Court example. Mr. Pattison seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion so carried.

Other Business

Ms. Kelleher reported that the Commission may be asked to appoint a member representative to participate in efforts of the Friends of the Salem Common. Allan Hanscom noted that the Friends of the Salem Common is similar to Boston's Friends of the Public Commons.

Chair Spang reported that the Mayor has announced a bonding plan for restoration work at several of the City's historic parks, including the Barracks building and Hangar at Winter Island. Ms. Kelleher stated that the request will be on the City Council agenda on 11/19/20. The Commission agreed to submit a letter of support for the Signature Parks Initiative and asked Ms. Kelleher to draft a letter and circulate to Commission for approval.

Mr. Martinez noted that the Appleton Street carriage house was withdrawn from the ZBA and may no longer need input from the SHC. Ms. Kelleher stated that the applicant will need to re-apply to the ZBA.

Chair Spang reported that construction on the house at 78 Columbus Avenue has begun. He expressed concern that they are reusing wood that's been weathering for the past two years.

Chair Spang reported that the owners of 78 Bay View Avenue have revised their plans to stay within the existing building envelope. Ms. Kelleher reported that they will retain two floors, keep the porch 5 feet wide, create a slightly taller ridge line and will only make changes to the rear. The owners also listened to the Commission's comments and will be saving as much of the building as possible. Chair Spang noted there is a disconnect with the Building Inspector on what constitutes a renovation project when a structure will be taken down to the foundation. Ms. Kelleher reported that the Planning Department is hoping to submit a demolition delay ordinance that would include a definition of demolition based on a specific percentage of a building to be demolished. The hope is that it would go before the City Council in spring 2021. Also want to extend the demo delay from 6 months to 12 months.

The Commission debated the best age to use for the regulations. Ms. Kelleher noted that it is currently 50 years or older. Mr. Pattison suggested 100 years or before 1899. Others suggested a tiered system of review based on age or designation. The Commission agreed that it would be good to collect success stories to give to the City Council, including the renovation of the building on Curtis Street.

Ms. Kelleher reported that the City will be hiring a consultant to update the Commission's Design Guidelines. She will provide more information as the project moves forward.

Meeting Minutes

VOTE: Mr. Joyce made a motion to approve the minutes of June 3, 2020; July 15, 2020 and September 2, 2020. Mr. Pattison seconded the motion. All were in favor (Mr. Meche abstained) and the motion so carried.

VOTE: Mr. Joyce made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Pattison seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion so carried.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Patti Kelleher
Community Development Planner