Historic District Commission
Town Hall, Room 121
Meeting Minutes, 28 Feb 2017

Meeting called to order at 7:32 PM. Attending: Ron Regan (RR), Anita Rogers (AR), David Honn (DH), David Shoemaker (DS), Allison Casazza. Fran Arsenault (FA), Absent: Chingsung Chang (CC, Selectmen Representative).

7:31pm   **Citizen's questions:**
- David and Deb Klatte 56 Windsor Ave. Wish to install AC. Propose to put the compressor in a niche hidden from the street view. Questions on screening. Visible from some neighbor's back yards. DH: notes that the question is the view from the legal way (but anywhere along the legal way. DK: high velocity unit. One external pipe, in the hidden corner. DH: have approved a number of similar installations. Screening can be quite successful, but have had a bad history of installers not following the requirements for keeping the external piping out of view. Paint to match the clapboard if at all visible from the road (but advised anyway!). Application should suggest the screening – an evergreen. Ensure that the installer 1) has done the calculations on the pipe lengths and diameters for quiet and effective function and 2) installs according to the agreed plan; watching is advised. 2): Gutters have been removed due to damage. Previous gutters were tucked. DHS: Look at historical gutters to find if the house had them originally – it may be effective to have no gutters and proper ground drainage. DK: old wood gutters in poor shape and undersized. Snow attachments to the slate roof could be successful. AR: Fiberglass gutters can be successful. An application for any external work should be made; a certificate of non-applicability could make it a very quick process.

7:40   Approval of minutes for February 14.

7:45   9 School Street: Daniel Porrazzo (Owner) Mark Daganich (Mechanical Engineer), Walter Jaffe (Attorney) new building proposal:
(Note: An HDC application has not been submitted so all discussions noted herein are non-binding):
Mark: Proposal prepared by George Dimakarakos of Stamski and McNary (Civil Engineers) is for six condominiums in three two- family buildings.

Gable ends to the street. Looked at buildings in the area and attempted a design that would be compatible. Garages behind and under. Decks facing the MBTA tracks. DH: Spacing between buildings appears to be approximately 10 feet. DH notes that with the exception of not reducing an FAR (.2-.4 for this site) or increasing the height limit (36 feet for this site), the HDC is legally empowered to adjust the zoning code parameters as they see fit; such as adjusting setbacks, increasing density through requiring more building volume, etc. HDC believes a higher density will be best for the street and character of the district. This would be the first non-single family building in the South Acton Historic District in over 100 years! Highly visible site requires the correct architectural response. DH would suggest that the building be volumetrically significant to create a consistent presence along School Street. Historically, this was the commercial area of School Street, not the residential area. In order not to make the parking lot on the eastern side of the property appear even larger, the vehicular driveway to the new building is best located on the western side of the property adjacent to the Public Safety Building. Recommends a loft-like, commercial-like building. Think of the West Concord Mill buildings. HDC notes there are many examples and precedents. An historical mill style would be one possibility, but a more contemporary design could also be acceptable. The applicant was encouraged to visit Cambridge, Somerville and other locations for ideas. A zoning Special Permit for increased density could receive HDC support if the building and the overall impression are merited. WF: query about fences due to juxtaposition with MBTA line; one will be required, but a disguise or layering or planting may help make this necessity more attractive. Height limit is determined by the mean grade to mid-point of the highest gable or the top of parapet on a flat roof. AR: find it is better to get the public involved early. DHS: bring things in early and often to avoid wasted effort and time. AR: HDC would like to avoid looking at too many details early – get the correct architectural concept and massing and follow with the details that are consistent and of high quality. Applicant would like follow-up appointment at the March 14th meeting.

8:37   40B and Historic Districts: Terra Friedrichs says there is a bill to look at the interactions of 40B and Historic Districts. HDC can send a letter of support after looking at the Bill. DH to circulate draft support letter.

8:40   HDC letter for Real Estate Agents; FA circulates draft.

8:50   **Miscellaneous Issues:**
- Add an expected date of completion to Certificates
- Add column to spreadsheet for a followup visit, consistent with the Certificate
- Consider making an occupancy permit dependent on a walkthrough by the HDC; discuss with Frank Ramsbottom.
- RFP: DH looking for time to address issues after discussion with Town Counsel. Need to get this done soon! The funds will time out soon.
- CPC: requires a post-implementation review to ensure that it meets the Secretary of the Interior Standards (SOIS).This requires a review of HDC scope items but also many elements that are beyond the HDC scope which require approval. When it is performed by the HDC members, this is both a significant burden but more importantly beyond the responsibility of the HDC. AR suggests that CPC projects should identify and engage a qualified inspector at the beginning, who can look at drawings and in-process construction, avoiding the need for re-work. Might make queries with other HDCs.
- Future HDC applications involving CPC funds that will require subsequent HDC certification: Need to consider how to obey the dictum in the SOIS to make any externally visible changes in some way dissimilar to the original building while still respecting historical character of the districts.

9:25   Meeting closed.