

Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

2025-09-09

7:00 PM

Online, Town Hall, 472 Main St, Acton, MA 01720

Present: David Honn (DH), David Shoemaker (DS), Anita Rogers (AR), Barbara Rhines (BR) (Acton Cultural Resources Coordinator), Zach Taillefer (ZT)

Absent: Fran Arsenault (FA), Art Leavens (AL)

Opening:

DH opened the meeting at 7:03 pm. DH read the “remote meeting notice” due to COVID-19.

1. Regular Business.

- A. Citizen's Concerns – Lisa Adamiak joins. Asks if the HDC will make a site visit. DH/BR will circulate dates and find a good time.
- B. Approval of Meeting Minutes – 12 August and 26 August Minutes. DS moved their adoption, seconded by AR. AR, DH, ZT, DS (for 12 August, absent 26 August) in favor. Approved.

C. Review Project Tracking Spreadsheet / Chair Updates:

Outstanding and Completed COAs/CNAs/Denials

- 434 Main Street #2532 roof CNA (DONE)
- 56 River Street #2529 deck, steps & new entry roof cont. to 9/23/25. Deadline 9/28
- 285 Arlington Street #2530 PH is 9/23/25
- 106 Main St #2526 gate (AR to write DENIAL; deadline is 9/14/205). AR will resend with appropriate access. We hope for a new application.
- Solar Guidelines PH 10/14/2025
- 250 Central Street (Theatre III) working on application for rot repair
- New Historic Districts
- Single Building Historic Districts
- Demolition by Neglect Bylaw
- Historic District Construction Funding Sources
- Tom Begen is discussing heat pumps; the fenced-in area holding the generator may have a request to be larger.

2. New/Special Business or other applicable agenda items

A. 7:15 Application #2531 62 Windsor Avenue gutters (cont.). Applicant not present. DH/BR share photos which show damage to the wood gutters. DH saw relatively few and small areas which had failed. Trim profile on the gable. House is from 1920. K-style gutters seen on the back left-hand side. AR: says owner states that the gutters are too small. The downspouts may be undersized or not sufficient in number. More could be added; extensive discussion on the potential for modifying the water flow from the shed dormer. DH: Repair may be a better solution than to replace with K-style. The HDC would not want to approve a K-style gutter on this house. AR circulated a composite gutter solution that might be appropriate, but a wood replacement gutter would be less expensive. DH recommends that a repair or replacement of gutter that appears to be wood (and may well be wood). BR: Due date is Oct 6. Wish to invite applicant to the next meeting to discuss; a vote would be taken on the 23rd.

B. 7:30 82 River Street discussion/update (COA #2433). DH recuses himself. Application for two-car garage. The project is underway, but not consistent with the design we approved. It was important to the HDC that the fascia was consistent with the existing house, with the garage eave consistent with the existing house eave. The garage should be perceived as having its own roof. The foot wall is too high. Photos sent with comment to architect and owner. Drawings sent in response do not appear to agree with the as-built. The permit for construction was pulled by the owner. The Building Commissioner visited for framing; the structure was apparently not as it must be bringing a hold on work. AR: could be possible to address by removing the roof of the breezeway, but not certain. Sees an error in the framing plan, and this may have induced some improvised solution. AR has been in touch with owner and architect, after our iterations with architect. The HDC bemoans the fact that the building progressed to this point without corrective action. Public Comment: DH joins (as citizen): recalls that matching the eave height was targeted by the HDC. Note on drawing we approved requires the matching eave height. Still present. The build is inconsistent with the drawing. AR: Owner took the permit; a licensed contractor is not a legal requirement. BR: what are the HDC next steps. AR: with no quorum no HDC vote. AR can talk with the Building Commissioner. Expect that some de-construction is needed. DH returns.

C. 7:45 550 Mass. Ave. door & sidelites pre-application discussion. Sarah Ma (SM) and partner join. Front main door is difficult to open, and leaky. Needs some attention. Sidelite is broken. Wood door photo is seen. Looks like it may be the original door or at least one of some age. BR shows the MACRIS record for this house. The house is circa 1850. AR observed that this house probably had a pair of doors, and the current door could be one of the two. It would be of value to find older photographs to explore this observation. Would be good to measure the total door opening (including sidelites) to see if the observation is consistent. DS: The door is not visibly decayed. SM notes it is very difficult to open. Door is 31" wide, 79 1/2 tall. AR: a pair of old doors could be found, perhaps. SM: first impulse was to just replace the door. ZT: has a very similar front door on a house of similar age. A contractor was able to sand a bit the door to make it fit better. DH: A double door would be very convenient for access. DS: If the house moves, a new door won't help a lot. DH: a replacement sidelite could be procured which would be a new solution with better insulation. HDC likes the door! DH: One

attractive approach is to have the door reworked and look at new sidelite assemblies. SM: want to find a solution that is durable. Shows some options for new doors. AR: notes that the glazing is not quite right in these. Simpson or TrueStile can make doors to measure. Indeed the door and sidelights should come from the same source. DS/DH: do take a close look – or ask a carpenter to do this – at the house to be sure that the house is stable in its geometry. SM: Warranties are limited for wood doors. DS: It would be great to be able to remove the storm door, and the fiberglass door may be an approach. AR: An elegant storm door could be found. Flush Glazed or Direct Glazed is the description you want; and please no fake wood grain. DH: front door color can be a place for aesthetic expression. AR: the panel under the side lites looks wrong – thin plywood perhaps. Should try to address in the process of looking at the best solution. SM: Recommendations for lites in the door? AR: can be etched or otherwise prepared to offer privacy. SM: shows photo of trim on the barn door. PVC ok? DH: in contact with the ground we have approved PVC. We prefer wood; PVC painted could be approved. DS: Accoya or Spanish Cedar for the lower part would be a good compromise. Visits to HDC house and office discussed.

D. 8:00 Outreach for new HDC Members – deferred.

E. 8:10 Proposed Concord Road Historic District – deferred.

3. Consent Items

None

1. Adjournment

At 20:45 DH moves to adjourn the meeting, DS seconds, several times. DS, AR, DH, ZT all approve.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting.

- All relevant Applications and Documents, in Docushare