

**Acton Historic District Commission**

**Meeting Minutes - January 8, 2013**

TOWN CLERK, ACTON

Meeting called to order at 7:30PM. Kathy Acerbo-Bachmann, Anita Rogers, David Honn, Pamela Lynn in attendance. Michaela Moran absent.

Mike Gowing also present for this meeting.

Minutes of 11/29/2012; 12/11/12, 12/18/12 meetings approved by consent.

*7:32PM Citizen question from Bonnie Geithner (431 Main St, Acton) – expressed concern that the light from a post lamp (single 60 watt bulb) at the base of the driveway at 433 Main St. prevents her from sleeping. An existing fixture in that same location was replaced with HDC approval (11/5/05) Application and COA # 0524. Pam will help Bonnie locate the paperwork in docushare. Since then Bonnie has not been able to sleep because of the light. Bonnie would like to see if some limits provided by the Outdoor Lighting Bylaw would give her some relief.*

*7:45 PM discussion of 14 Newtown Rd postponed until 9PM.*

Update on outstanding projects begun instead.

Placeholder for warrant article on signage – Commission needs to articulate the specific types of window lettering it would allow in the HDC for the signage bylaw.

Thanks to DH- who has written a letter of HDC support for CPC funds for the West Acton Baptist Church project. Also, David reviewed the Exchange Hall project with Glenn Berger who needs a letter from a registered architect to complete that CPC funded project. David Honn also agreed to write a letter of HDC support for the Morrison Farm project. An archaeological report on the ice house foundation is underway. PL will complete the CNA for 497 Main Street. Also, the abutters will need to be notified for the installation of the enlarged fence at the Town Hall per Dean Charter's application.

The CPC presentation for the loan program is scheduled for Jan 24<sup>th</sup>, the same night as Kathy's daughter's birthday. Kathy asked Pam to make the presentation instead. The program is under review by Town Counsel. Kathy needs to check with Steve Ledoux about that progress since this info will be needed for the Jan 24<sup>th</sup> presentation. Using the CPC funding makes the loan program more complicated than it would be otherwise.

Per the discussion at the HDC retreat, Pam has submitted an application to be a member of the Historical Commission. Because that committee did not have associate memberships in its charter, there has been a delay of several months but it is expected that Pam will be made a full member. (the issue with the charter will be changed at the next town meeting).

*8PM Application # 1301.* Maura Slattery presented her request for the installation of 5 chimney caps for 520-526 Massachusetts Ave. - 3 of the caps will be visible from the street. The application includes a photograph of the selected metal caps. The caps are to be painted black before installation. AR made a motion to approve the caps per the application. The motion passed unanimously . The COA will be issued pending abutter notification.

*8:15 App 0906A – Discussion of Draft COA for WAVE.* The commission reviewed the draft which is in progress, line by line. Mathias Rosenfeld attended the meeting

Findings: DH & KAB recommended adding a reference to the Dept of Interior Standards for replication to the first section so that future property owners would understand the level of effort necessary for an approval.

Conditions: Correction - Drawings to be provided by 531 Mass Ave LLC and WAVE Assoc LLC, not OMR. The stated date of the drawings should reflect the date of the clerks stamp, in advance of the public hearings.

Discussion concerning “single phase of construction”. It is the desire of the HDC that the exterior of the WAVE project be completed in one phase of construction, even if the interiors are not entirely fitted out. Should an issue arise that the project requires phasing the applicant should return to the Commission to discuss an implementation strategy.

Section 1 – project components. KAB suggests that we refer to Dean Charter’s “sidewalk guidelines” for specifics on the trees that will be required on Mass Ave for this project. Anita will call Dean for guidance. If the mature maple can survive the project, the other 3 trees would also be maples. If the maple does not survive, all 4 trees might instead be disease resistant elms, we would defer to Dean’s guidance.

Section 2 - Discussion concerning adding a foundation permit section to the COA - Because the sitework is best completed in the summer / fall it was agreed that the HDC could allow demolition and foundation permits in advance of a completed building permit set of drawings. Those permits would allow the site to be prepped for the relocation of the blue house (Building A) and also to give the opportunity to set aside existing masonry materials that might be used in the landscaping phase.

Section 3- The purpose of the parapet is to conceal the solar panels. The installation of the panels will not be allowed if the parapet does not accomplish this purpose. Clarification of this was necessary for the commission to agree to allow the parapet detail to be moved from section 1 to section 3 of the COA.

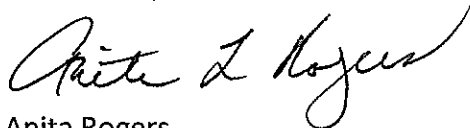
*9PM – Application # 0524 14 Newtown Road, Landre Shoemaker home renovation project.*  
Current COA approved in 2005. The timber frame of the addition is now completed and Tyvek wrapped. Mr. Shoemaker is making the window sashes himself and considering changing to 6 lite barn sash from the original 4 lite sash that were approved. A presentation by Mr. Shoemaker of photographs of area barns shows that the square window pane proportion of the 4 lite sashes is not typical of barns of the period. All members of the HDC - KAB, AR, DH and PL agreed that the change to 6 lite sash was preferable. Whether the windows should function as outswinging or inswinging casements or as awnings was also discussed. DH stated that casements of the period were typically a vertically proportioned sash, not a horizontal window. The Commission was also shown variations on the approved faux barn doors both in their design and their placement. The applicant will make decisions about which windows and doors they prefer and be back in touch with the commission for approval. Changes can be made as an amendment to the original application.

*9:30 PM Discussion returned to WAVE draft COA.*

Mathias Rosenfeld will annotate the clerk-stamped elevation drawings that are on file in the building department. to indicate names for each of the buildings (4 total) of this project for clarity and consistency with the COA. The “blue house” will be Building A. The middle building will be Building B. The “barn” will be Building C. The flat roofed building to the rear will be Building D.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:10PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anita Rogers", written in a cursive style.

Anita Rogers

Copies to Town Clerk, HDC, Building Department

Applicant (or owner) Office of Michael Rosenfeld, Architects

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Location of Work 525-541 Massachusetts Ave District: Center    West X    South   

### Description of Proposed work:

**Certificate 906A** was granted on June 26, 2009 for the development of parcel F2A-103 and F2A-104 (525-531) Massachusetts Avenue in West Acton. The design of the project, known as the second phase of the WAVE project included the relocation and renovation within the site of the 3 specified existing buildings.

This amendment to Certificate 906A includes an extensive redesign of this project and supersedes prior approvals. The implementation of this amended project includes **demolition** of the two structures at **531 Massachusetts Ave.** known as **parcel F2A-103**, a **brown two-story wood house** and a **white two-story wood barn** both constructed c. 1855. The **blue house** located at **525 Massachusetts Ave.** known as **parcel F2A-104** will be **moved and relocated** to **531 Massachusetts Ave** known as **parcel F2A-103**. The two demolished structures will be replaced by **new commercial structures** located at **525-531 Massachusetts Avenue**. The renovated blue house will be relocated to the western end of the site, adjacent to 537 Massachusetts Avenue. A structure reminiscent of the white barn will be constructed at the eastern end of the site. Between these 2 buildings will be a new 2 story structure that serves as the connector to a flat roofed commercial building to the rear. The rear building's parapet conceals solar panels on its roof. Fieldstone and granite preserved from the previous buildings foundations will be used in the project.

### Findings, conditions, requirements, recommendations:

#### Findings:

1. It is with great hesitation that the HDC considers the demolition of any of the buildings that are part of Acton's Historic District as they are already too few in number. Independent engineering reports evaluating a building's condition are now required at the earliest project initiation and this amendment is not to be considered a precedent for demolitions which will continue to be considered only as a last resort when all structural remedies are found to be infeasible. Careful engineering studies subsequent to the approval of Certificate 906A have indicated that neither the white barn nor the brown house are structurally sound and therefore could be candidates for replication only, not relocation. Although in this instance the HDC has not required the replication of these buildings the HDC will continue to assume that renovation (and/or replication, if appropriate) will be required for all buildings in the HDC which fall into disrepair either through accident or neglect.
2. The vacant status of these buildings has also contributed to their demise. Because the code requires that the buildings be continuously occupied to be grandfathered in the code, exceptions to the code are not available for this project during a renovation of these buildings.
3. Both the original WAVE project approved by Certificate 906A and this amended project must meet the FAR requirements of the site. This parcel was re-zoned by a 2/3 majority vote at Town Meeting in April 1994 to allow commercial development. Any approval is contingent on a finding by the

Town of Acton Planning Dept that this project meets all required site restrictions, including the required FAR.

4. The current number of parking spaces provided by the project meets the minimum as required by zoning and cannot be reduced.

#### **On Condition:**

The attached architectural drawings from OMR and dated... represent the amended proposal reviewed and approved on ....., 2013 by the HDC.

It is required that the project be built as drawn in a single construction phase with all the building exteriors finished as approved. It should be assumed that no substitutions of specified materials will be allowed for any reason.

The HDC will require continued minimum bi-weekly review of the project during the design phases that will continue after this conditional approval to ensure that all subsequent design continues to reflect the intentions of the Commission with regard to this site.

1- A list of product selections approved by the HDC at the time of this approval are:

1. 3-tab shingles for all the sloping roofs
2. Min (4) 2.5"-3" caliper trees at edge of parking area for screening under-planted with inkberry

2- A list of remaining items TBD items which will need to be presented to and approved by the HDC BEFORE APPROVAL will be granted for this project:

1. Windows and window casing materials including the glass type:
2. Masonry foundation / wall material at parking level:
3. Exterior doors:

3- A list of remaining items TBD items which will need to be presented to and approved by the HDC BEFORE a BUILDING PERMIT will be granted for this project:

1. Detail of parapet at flat roofed rear building (including its ability to screen the solar installation behind it)
2. Details of elements of the middle building, including its connections to the rear building and the front porch structure including the post details.
3. Details of cupola at barn building.
4. Review for approval the muntin pattern on windows on the blue building.
5. Exterior hardware
6. Required (if any) HVAC and mechanical penetrations visible from the street
7. Lighting plan for fixtures visible from street
8. All eave details at locations visible from the street.
9. All gutter and downspout profile and locations.
10. Details related to the angled wall of the back.

4- A list of remaining items TBD that must also be reviewed and approved by the HDC BEFORE INSTALLATION, though not before a building permit is issued:

1. Awning material/text/color on sides of middle building -- This will be tenant driven and TBD if tenants want it
2. Tenant signage

#### **Requirements:**

It is required that, as specified, the list of as yet unresolved details will be detailed by the architects to meet the requirements of, and obtain the approval of the HDC.

Application received \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Public Hearing (n/a)

Certificate approved by \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

for Historic District Commission

Copies to: Applicant, Building Commissioner, Town Clerk, HDC File