

**Historic District Commission  
Town Hall, Room 126  
Final Meeting Minutes, June 10, 2014**

**Meeting called to order at 7:30 PM. Attending Kathy Acerbo-Bachmann (KAB), David Honn (DH), Pamela Lynn (PL), Ron Regan (RR) and Anita Rogers (AR. Mike Gowing as BofS rep.**

**Absent: David Shoemaker (DS).**

**7:30 PM      Citizens' Questions and Questions**

**KAB asked for direction on the pending COA for roofing at 71 School St.**

**AR insisted on correcting the existing violation by adding the requested muntins as described in Application 0115 before the roofing is begun.**

**7:31 PM      Postponed approving Minutes for 5/29/14**

**HDC will next meet on June 19<sup>th</sup>.**

**7:36 PM      540 Massachusetts Avenue – Citizens' Question on Developing Rear of Property**

**Bruce Ringwall, and John and Eddie Flannery appeared.**

**A private way has been accepted by the Planning Board adjacent to 540 Mass. Ave. The Flannery family owns 544 Mass. Ave. A small piece from 542 Mass. Ave. has been carved off and added to 540. The entire 540 Mass. Ave parcel is in the West Acton Historic District.**

**BR used a large drawing and photos to present the various views of the 540 Mass. Ave. parcel from the public way.**

**BR asked if this is a project that cannot be seen and so would qualify for a CNA. KAB asked for clarification of the lot lines. KAB then**

**explained that if it cannot be seen at all, the project would qualify for a CNA.**

**KAB indicated that the proposed structures appear to be likely to be minimally visible. AR and KAB would like to know how tall these would be.**

**After drawing sight lines, DH tentatively concluded that only the fronts of the buildings would likely be under the HDC's purview again on the height of the buildings.**  
**depending**

**The front facades are planned to be essentially identical.**

**The HDC is in agreement that only the front facades and roof would fall under the HDC's jurisdiction.**

**The remaining time was devoted to specific aspects of the proposed facades. Asphalt shingles are permissible. Vinyl windows are not.**

**AR indicated that the garage doors and the roofs are most likely the visible elements. AR emphasized the benefit of reducing details. Simplicity should be the goal. For instance she would not support returns unless they look historical.**

**Wood windows with the casing and sills would be ideal. The garage doors as rendered are modern. She would prefer no shutters rather than shutters around two adjoining windows.**

**KAB suggested making the facades slightly different as would be characteristic of historical homes. The goal would be to have them have**

**a little bit of individuality. She suggested considering some of the garage doors previously used on River Street as models.**  
**Architectural shingles have been accepted before in the district.**  
**KAB also is concerned about the size of the proposed dormers.**

**DH asked about how many parking places are intended in the front**

**of the buildings. He suggested looking to Windsor Ave for examples of garage doors on the carriage house like buildings. An overhang would**

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**de-emphasize the doors. Would a shed roof be better allowing more area for fenestration and a different look on the two facades?**

**KAB suggested that they plan to return on July 8<sup>th</sup>. HDC will visit in advance to determine whether there should be a public hearing.**

**7:37 PM      Application 1413: Public Hearing 504 Main Street – Addition to Acton Women’s Club**

**AR recused herself and left the room.**

**KAB read the public notice in The Beacon.**

**Tom Peterman represented the applicants.**

**Carolyn Kilpatrick, Maureen McHugh, and Maureen Lewis attended as applicants.**

**The architect provided drawings. This is the second phase of the project to make the property handicapped accessible. Where the addition can go is very limited. The proposed addition is tucked away with matching elements to what exists, visible from the street but set back. The foot**

**hand  
the  
trim are  
Muntins  
the plan will**

**The plan includes the addition of a wheel chair lift and an accessible unisex toilet. An effort to protect the large tree will be made by cutting but it will still be precarious. The plan will be to preserve corner board with a small set back. Most of the clapboards and original so will match the profiles and use wood windows. will be fairly true to the originals. By keeping the roof flat try to minimize the impact of the addition.**

**KAB expressed appreciation to the Acton Women’s Club for the time and attention and work into this project and maintaining the building.**

**PL shared her impression that the renderings demonstrate the minimal impact of the addition.**

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**DH asked about the width of the corner board. He focused on the fact the corner boards on the addition were a bit smaller than on the main building. DH indicates 5/8" preferred on the trim.**

**DH noted that the tree is an oak and that works to the advantage of its survival.**

**DH noted that the architect's skills are apparent in the drawings and design work.**

**RR asked about the windows but had no concerns.**

**MG speaking as a member of the public felt the plan is well-integrated, a nice job.**

**DH moved to approve the drawings as submitted tonight referenced 5/30/14 for 1417, 504 Main Street.**

**Findings:**

**HDC commends the applicants for a well-prepared and sensitive addition.**

**Recommendations:**

**Since the tree helps form the setting for the historical building, HDC encourages the applicant to take any steps necessary to protect the tree.**

**Seconded by RR.**

**Accepted unanimously.**

**Separately, CK asked about which body would have purview over the hanging of a banner to celebrate the hundred anniversary of the club. KAB suggested getting in touch with Scott M ???**

**8:31 PM      Brief Discussion of Zoning in Historic Districts**

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**David Honn explained how Scott Kutil took the GIS system and field**

**cards with the Planning Department staff and analyzed every property, computing the FAR to get a sense of the density and breaking out multiple zoning districts within the historic districts.**

**He then computed the statistics to determine actually currently exists.**

**SK's focus is asking what would make sense in the districts**

**themselves                      comparing what currently exists against the zoning prior to 1995.**

**What exists versus what the code allows in order to avoid exploiting the districts in the future.**

**Recently SK has analyzed the code as it pertains to the historic districts allowance for hammer head lots. How many currently exist and why were they allowed. There are various ways in the code to squeeze out additional lots. How many exist now and how many could be added.**

**Currently in**

**West Acton – none, South Acton – one at 56 River, Center – three**

**Potentially in**

**West Acton - seven, South Acton – none, Center – one**

**SK has indicated that hammerhead lots disrupt the district as the front of new houses faces the back of older house “misplaced construction”, more driveways, mailboxes, and light poles.**

**SK wonders whether HDC wishes to take a position on hammerhead lots. DH indicates that surrounding towns do not allow such lots.**

**KAB asked MG whether there is likely to be a fall TM during which these issues could be brought forward.**

**The question would be whether to go back to the pre-1995 code which offered more protection to the historic districts.**

**8:45 PM      Application 1420: 603 Massachusetts Avenue – Question about Fencing**

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**Matt M. explained the need for a fence for their small child and the proposed location in the front of his property for it. AR asked about the specific location out of concern about how it would meet the porch suggesting it should not meet the house on the curve of the porch.**

**DH suggests the need to know where the lot line is in the front. Mark Barbadaro is the Acton fence master.**

**Matt M. had marked out the location of the Hamilton fence, but also wanted to consider using a cheaper fence such as a post fence with webbing through the woods and around the back of the property. KAB Suggested that he formalize the request concerning tht part of the fence.**

**9:00 PM      Application 1412: Public Hearing 450 Main Street: Demolition of Outbuilding**

**KAB read the public notice appearing in The Beacon to open the public hearing.**

**RR shared that the applicant would like to remove this eyesore and has no plans for the location at this time. DH shared that the lot cannot be further subdivided which had been a concern.**

**No public comment.**

**KAB closed the public comment portion of the hearing.**

**RR moved to approve application 1412 - demolition of an outbuilding**

**Seconded by AR.**

**Findings:**

**No current plan to put anything at the location.**

**The structure was built in the 1970s and is non-contributing.  
The building exists on a hammerhead lot created in 2004 and cannot be  
further subdivided under current zoning.**

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**Unanimously accepted.**

**9:10 PM      Application 1420: 603 Massachusetts Avenue – Question about Fence  
continued**

**MG suggested that the previous abutters list should still be valid.**

**DH suggested putting stakes in and using ribbon to get a sense.**

**MM will work with the fence master, has chosen Hamilton style, and  
will plot out options.**

**DH explained that the fence has two purposes to keep the child in but  
also to draw a line in such a public space.**

**9:25           Meeting adjourned.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Pamela Lynn  
Secretary**

