



Town of North Kingstown, Rhode Island

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NORTH KINGSTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

May 7, 2018

The North Kingstown Historic District Commission convened in the Municipal Offices Court Room, 100 Fairway Dr., North Kingstown, RI

The following members were present:

Wayne Trissler (Alternate)
James Shriner
Andrew Correia
Sarah Goldberger

Ms. Hallock Cyr was excused.

Shaun Lacey, AICP, Principal Planner, was present as staff liaison.

New construction: Application of James Shriner, 59 Washington Street, North Kingstown, RI 02852 for a proposed rear yard shed located at 59 Washington Street, AP 117 Lot 239, zoned Village Residential Historic (VRH)

Mr. Shriner said that Agenda Item #1 was being continued to next month due to procedural issues. He called for a motion.

Mr. Correia moved. Ms. Golberger seconded. All voted aye.

Alterations/Minor modifications: Application of Blue Hydrangea Homes, LLC, 159 Weybosset Street, Suite 3, Providence, RI 02903 for driveway, patio and walkway improvements, replacement of railings and stairs, and new air condensers located at 25 Pleasant Street, AP 117 Lot 132, zoned Village Residential Historic (VRH)

Mr. Omar Ajaj came forward representing Blue Hydrangea Homes, LLC. He told the Commission that he is asking tonight for review of a series of cosmetic and mechanical improvements at 25 Pleasant St.

The plans include creating off-street parking, moving a fence, replacing the broken brick walkway; replacing the front and rear railing; adding veneer to the existing front and rear concrete stairs; create a rear patio; and adding air conditioning to the home.

The driveway proposal includes removal of overgrowth and a tree; the relocation of metal fencing to the south side of the property; creating two off-street parking spaces utilizing pea stone with a cobblestone edging; replacing the brick walkway with gray pavers.

The work to the front and rear stairs includes changing the layout and veneering with bluestone capping and stone veneer sides and risers.

The current railings on the front and rear steps is metal; the plan is replacing that with wooden railings painted white.

The plan includes the addition of a rear patio – the patio would be 900 sq. ft.

The air conditioning installation includes locating the units on the south side of the home; landscaping will be put in around the units to mitigate the street view.

Mr. Shriner suggested discussing each portion of the plan separately.

The driveway:

Mr. Trissler asked about the tree that needs removal.

Mr. Ajaj said the tree is dying – he did have a landscaper in to see if it could be saved.

Mr. Shriner asked if the lot has the necessary depth to allow two cars.

Mr. Ajaj answered that he has brought a measurement plan with him. He passed it to Commission members. There is 21' across up to the walkway and 41' of depth.

Mr. Shriner commented that the property is quite established (mature) as a streetscape.

Mr. Ajaj assured Mr. Shriner the front will not be entirely stone. He pointed out where existing beds are and will remain (with some new shrubbery and plantings); the area now is a bit overgrown – the idea is to make the beds more planned.

Mr. Shriner said that removing the entire green buffer between the house and the street eliminates the property's only streetscape. The plan is too much driveway in a too small space. He suggests planning the driveway as one strip along the side property line.

Mr. Ajaj said that this property is actually the only property that does not have a driveway. He said the area he is proposing these changes to does not serve any purpose right now. If he were to put the driveway along the side property line, he will be encroaching quite a bit on the neighbor.

Mr. Shriner said he is not opposed to establishing a driveway – he is opposed to the scale of it.

Mr. Ajaj said he wished he had provided a site plan because there is landscaping planned also – the end look will not be just driveway.

Mr. Correia said he believes that this plan can be tastefully done if Mr. Ajaj were to scale back the driveway dimension just a bit. He said he understands the need in this day and age for off-street parking. He said he sees where a happy medium can't be achieved.

Mr. Lacey wanted to note that the Town Ordinance does state the requirement of two off-street parking spaces in residential zones. He said that the Ordinance also accommodates driveways that measure 8' for a single car; Mr. Ajaj could reduce the scale of the driveway to 16'. As suggested by Mr. Shriner, a tandem driveway can also work; actually, the majority of homes along Pleasant St. have them.

Mr. Correia said perhaps Mr. Ajaj could provide a site plan for review. He also said perhaps Mr. Ajaj could plan a "garden-type" of driveway.

Mr. Shriner said the driveway is proposed at 23' which will effectively replace any greenspace at the house front.

With no further discussion on the driveway plan, Mr. Shriner opened the meeting to public comment.

There was no public comment. Mr. Shriner moved to close the item to public comment. Mr. Correia seconded. All voted aye.

Mr. Shriner then offered a summary of this proposal's discussion. The applicant will return with a more professional layout showing the actual accommodation of the driveway along with proposed landscaping.

Mr. Ajaj asked if he returns with a single stacked driveway plan along the side of the yard, would this be something the Board would be willing to approve.

Mr. Shriner answered yes; that would keep some greenspace on the street.

Mr. Shriner moved that the Commission accept an amended approval by the applicant to install a stacked (no wider than 11') driveway down the right-hand side of the property line. The applicant has agreed to maintain the material as proposed in the original application; and, provide to the Board for filing purposes a formal drawing of the plan.

Mr. Correia seconded. All voted aye.

Front and Rear Steps

Mr. Ajaj said that the step layouts will stay the same but changing the materials to bluestone capping and bluestone (which will be gray) veneer siding.

Mr. Trissler asked if there is cobblestone under the bluestone; and, the thickness of the veneer.

Mr. Ajaj said no the plan is for all bluestone. The veneer will be approximately ½” thick. The stone will be natural stone not manufactured stone.

Mr. Trissler asked for clarity on how the Commission looks at “veneering”.

Mr. Shriner responded that it is all over the historic district; it is a proper treatment; it is a material common in the village; all-natural stone as opposed to old moldy concrete.

Mr. Shriner then moved to open the meeting to public comment. Mr. Correia seconded.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Shriner called a motion to close the item to public comment.

Mr. Correia moved. Mr. Trissler seconded.

Mr. Shriner then entertained a motion.

Mr. Correia moved to accept this portion of the application as presented. The materials presented are appropriate and in keeping with the village character.

Mr. Shriner seconded. All voted aye. The motion carried.

Wood Railings

Mr. Ajaj said that presently the railings on the front and rear steps are iron and rotting. The plan is to simply replace the railings with new wooden railings painted white.

Mr. Trissler asked what type wood Mr. Ajaj planned to use.

All Commission members agreed that although it is out of their purview, they strongly recommend Mr. Ajaj switch that to cedar – it lasts much longer.

Mr. Shriner commented that the materials are in keeping, the scale is appropriate.

With no further comment from members, Mr. Shriner motioned to open the meeting to public comment.

Mr. Trissler seconded.

Mr. Steve DiMarzo commented said it seems to be what is best for keeping within Wickford.

Mr. Shriner moved to close the application to public comment.

Mr. Trissler seconded. All voted aye.

With that, Mr. Shriner entertained a motion to accept the plan for wood railing replacement.

Mr. Trissler moved that the stairways meet the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines; they are planned as wood, with correctly spaced balusters. The design and scale are keeping with the area. The metal railings and concrete were not original to the property. This plan is an improvement in keeping with the Historic District.

Mr. Correia seconded. All voted aye. The motion carried.

Patio

Mr. Ajaj told the Commission the plan is to install a patio with grey pavers. The proposed size will be approximately 900 sq. ft. This is to provide the property with some outside living area. The patio is at the rear of the home and is not visible from the street. Mr. Ajaj presented the paver samples – 6"x6" and 6"x9". Bluestone grey.

Mr. Trissler asked what will happen to the brick patio there now.

Mr. Ajaj said they are using that brick in the construction of the new brick walkways in the front of the house.

Mr. Shriner asked why Mr. Ajaj wasn't planning to use either bluestone or cobblestones.

Mr. Ajaj said that would be more expensive.

Mr. Shriner said that the Commission generally does not look favorably on the use of pavers. The owners of these historic homes understand the care, materials and costs of maintaining and repairing them – the cost measure does not stand up as a finding in an approval. The minute pavers are allowed then the floodgates are open and historic nature starts to go down. He added that there are a few things the Commission is not fond of – replacement windows and pavers being two. He ended saying he personally does not feel pavers are appropriate for the village.

Mr. Ajaj said he understands this completely, but the patio will be entirely out of street view.

Mr. Shriner responded that the only time the Commission looks favorably on unacceptable materials even out of view is when it comes under circumstances – like allowing aluminum clad windows in a high velocity wind zone.

Mr. Shriner and Mr. Correia understood that cobblestone/bluestone is expensive, but they agreed that they could not vote to OK it – it would set precedent.

Mr. Trissler suggested perhaps keeping with the brick – this is something the Commission would look favorably on.

Mr. Lacey commented that although pavers are a contemporary material, the patio will not be seen from the street, this is the reason he recommended approval. He can see their concern and will make a point of this with reference to future applications.

Mr. Ajaj said that to keep on track with his project, if he took note of the appropriate materials – would the Commission be willing to conditionally approve the patio. Bluestone, brick or fieldstone – he would like to see what would work design wise as well as cost wise.

Mr. Shriner said no.

Mr. DiMarzo asked if he could comment. Mr. Shriner said that it is not the appropriate time, but he would allow it. The gentleman said that there are different sized of brick – it allows for original design – Mr. Ajaj would not have to stick to the classic 1898 pattern.

Mr. Shriner commented that the Commission did not want brick colored pavers.

Mr. Ajaj said that he would gladly change the patio material to brick.

Mr. Shriner asked for further comment of Commission members. There were none, so he asked for a motion to open the application to public comment.

Mr. Correia moved. Mr. Trissler seconded.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Shriner moved to close the application to public comment. Ms. Goldberger seconded. All voted aye.

Mr. Shriner moved that the application be accepted as presented, the applicant has agreed to substitute pavers with natural brick in keeping with the existing brick used both in the front and back of the house.

Mr. Correia seconded; he also echoed that it is in keeping with the brick that is already on the property and the material the applicant has agreed on is appropriate.

All voted aye. The motion carried.

A/C

Mr. Ajaj said that he wishes to install air conditioning to the home. The units were planned to be placed at the south side of the home; however, now that the driveway is approved as two-stacked, the units will have to be installed at the rear of the home. The units will be placed behind the stairs – they will be totally out of view of the street.

Mr. Shriner asked if Commission members had questions or comments.

There was none. Mr. Shriner then called for public comment.

Mr. Trissler seconded.

A gentleman asked the size of the unit.

Mr. Ajaj answered that there are two units; they are approximately 3' by 4'. He added that he will probably place some lattice work and plantings around them.

Mr. Correia moved to close the application to public comment. Mr. Shriner seconded. All voted aye.

Mr. Shriner asked that the Commission/Planning staff be sent a new site plan showing the new unit placement.

Mr. Ajaj said of course.

Mr. Shriner then moved to accept the proposal as amended by the agreement that the air-conditioning units be moved to behind the ell on the south side of the property. The units will be out of sight of the street and shielded by appropriate shrubbery. The air-conditioning units will be out of view and have no impact on the look and/or feel of the village.

Mr. Correia seconded. All voted aye.

Mr. Lacey asked for clarification. Was it a condition of approval to require the screening or was it by being appropriate? Mr. Shriner said that is was more by virtue – the units will be unseen from the street – so the screening is a recommendation.

Informational Items and Announcements

Mr. Lacey asked for the Commission time to update them on some items happening within Wickford.

Update of Brown Street Wickford Village Design Standards and Guidelines

Mr. Lacey said the steering committee has released a set of draft design guidelines; and, also made a recommendation to the Town Council. The Planning Commission is due to look and review the draft at their June 5 meeting; they will vote on whether to send a positive or negative recommendation to the Town Council. Mr. Lacey also gave a synopsis of the process, reasoning and general outline of the Design Guidelines

Update of Wickford sewer project

Mr. Lacey told the Commission that the Town is working on a design for striping West Main St.; the extension laterals will be completed within two weeks; the Wearing course on West Main St. will happen the week of May 14; milling and paving of Brown St. will begin the week of the 21st.

Rune Stone shelter proposal

Mr. Lacey said that although the Rune Stone is not within the Historic District, the Town Manager has asked to update the Commission. The Town Historian, Tim Cranston is working with a vendor to come up with a design for a shelter for the Rune Stone – the concern being weather and vandals. The New England Antiquities Research Association (NEARA) has graciously donated the money to accomplish this. Mr. Cranston has provided a design that he, Town Manager Ralph Mollis, Public Works Director Phil Bergeron and Mr. DiMarzo of the NEARA have come up with a general type of design for the structure. The design concept will be presented to the Town Council soon; Mr. Mollis is hoping to present the Historic District Commission's thoughts as well.

Mr. Trissler commented that Plymouth Rock is covered with a great looking shelter.

After comments wondering why a rock would need shelter, Mr. DiMarzo came forward again to give a brief history on the importance of the stone. The money to construct the shelter has been donated to the Association; proving there are people who believe in its authenticity.

He also told the Commission that research is still being done on the inscription's meaning; he said there is research to back this up. He said that he will send the formal report on the stone and search for its meaning to distribute to the Commission.

Minutes

Mr. Shriner entertained a motion to accept the February 5, 2018 meeting minutes into record.

Mr. Trissler moved. Mr. Correia seconded. All voted aye. The minutes are approved.

Adjournment

Mr. Shriner then called to adjourn. Mr. Trissler seconded. All voted aye. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15PM.

Recording Secretary