

SALEM HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MINUTES
February 1, 2023

A meeting of the Salem Historical Commission was held on Wednesday, February 1, 2023 at 6:00PM via **Zoom Virtual Meeting**. Present: Larry Spang, Jamie Graham, Milo Martinez, Vijay Joyce, Mark Meche. Staff: Patti Kelleher. Not present: Reed Cutting, Rebecca English, Kelly Tyler-Lewis, Mark Pattison.

316 Essex Street—continuation

First United Church submitted an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for a new fence.

Documents & Exhibits

- Application: 12/15/22
- Slideshow/photographs

Peter Eschauzier was present on the call. Applicant noted that the church in question is the First Church (and referred to as First Universalist Unitarian Church, identifying structure as the first church in the United States). Received quote for over \$6,000 for fence. Posts will be put into the concrete; four to six posts at the most, round posts. Posts being proposed are 2x2 structural tube. Mr. Meche suggested a more original look would be either 2x2 or 1x1 square solid bars. Mr. Eschauzier was doubtful that the Church would act on this quote, but would rather prefer Northeastern Fence because of budget and because he believes this style/product is acceptable. Commission members who attended a site visit thought that the proposed fence looked “cheap.” Mr. Eschauzier again cited budget concerns with Cassidy’s quote. Mr. Eschauzier also expressed disappointment that only three members were able to attend site visit. Mr. Meche, Mr. Martinez, and Mr. Pattison were able to attend.

Mr. Meche requested looking at photograph in the originally proposed fence documents. The historic fence along Essex was shown, as was view from street where fence will be placed. Mr. Meche agreed that the fence cannot be seen well from the sidewalk; but approval should not be granted based on level of visibility alone. Mr. Meche noted that the proposed fence looks cheap, is tag welded, bent and pressed. Mr. Meche questioned installation of a lower quality fence alongside a treasure of a building. Mr. Meche proposed raising money in order to increase budget. Mr. Meche added that 2x2 tube steel is not bad; solid bar would also be acceptable, for posts on the Cassidy version. Mr. Martinez echoed Mr. Meche’s comments, adding that cost is not supposed to be taken into consideration. Mr. Martinez questioned if this should be taken as a Certificate of Hardship, if budget is a burden. Chair Spang questioned if budget is a concern, why not go with a different type of material (e.g. wood) that is less expensive than metal. A neighboring property has a wood fence right near where the Church wants to install. Mr. Eschauzier responded that he did not believe a wood fence would be appropriate, citing the need to be able to see through the fence. Chair Spang proposed shortboard fence (adults would see over the top); alternatively a picket fence that both kids and adults could see through (36” or 48” tall). Chair Spang expressed understanding that keeping children from running out of the courtyard was the priority.

Chair Spang proposed the fence at neighbor’s property; i.e. the short picket fence. Mr. Meche was of the mind that cast iron made was more appropriate for the large stone building than a wood picket. Mr. Eschauzier noted that he would have to check with standing committee of the Church to assess their budget, though the bid from Northeast Fence was thought to be in line with the anticipated budget. Mr. Eschauzier noted that the plan was for a 5’ fence.

Ms. Kelleher noted that Certificate of Hardship would require more documentation; and was unclear what cost(s) were associated with the original proposal versus the one at present.

Mr. Joyce expressed agreement with others' comments, noting that for a 5' tall wood fence, there would need to be some kind of visual delicate nature to such a tall fence; perhaps like the Pickering House fence, which has a more decorative picket, more fitting to the Gothic Revival era. Mr. Joyce noted that the Cassidy Fence design which attempts to replicate what exists upfront would be his first choice. Ms. Graham noted that a 4' tall fence would suffice according to building codes (re: childcare); though the application specifies 5'.

Chair Spang recommended continuing the application until the Church budget committee was able to examine the Cassidy quote in reaching a determination of their inability to afford. Mr. Meche proposed working out details and cost of the Cassidy fence if a vote would be taken. Mr. Eschauzier was of the mind that the existing fence at front of property could have been replicated. Mr. Meche questioned if picket spacing satisfied the crawl-through criteria.

No public comment.

VOTE: Mr. Meche motioned to approve the modified application with the following changes: fence to be 4' or 5' tall (to comply with code) to match existing design of existing fence on Essex Street (except without stone base); new fence to be cast iron (or steel) with 2" x 2" posts at corners and at gate; gate and fence to be painted black; fence to be in approximate location where existing temporary fence is currently installed at corner of Church; final shop drawing from Cassidy must be reviewed by Commission member prior to installation. Mr. Martinez seconded the motion. Roll Call: Martinez, Joyce, Graham, Meche, Spang were in favor and the motion so carried.

143 Derby Street – Review of final design plans and materials - continuation

Stefano Basso, SV Design, was present. New drawings were shown to Commission based on proposed need for revisions. In particular, Basso discussed: spacing for panels on bays (in terms of height, there had not been equal spacing on paneling). New drawing showed attempt to make proportions work better: brought back freezeboard detail at second floor line, typical of what is seen on neighboring buildings and allows lower panels to be more related. Mr. Basso also showed that a quarter round was added to panels. The design team had also been asked to match bracket from other building, which new drawings showed. Additional details were noted by Mr. Basso.

Mr. Joyce noted that details being shown were very thorough and would need more review. Mr. Basso indicated that goal for evening was for volume of building and overall scheme in order to move forward to building permit (ZBA approval was obtained in May or June). Mr. Joyce confirmed that general scope/massing was desired. Mr. Basso noted that site visit samples for windows would be available for consideration. Mr. Joyce noted that neighboring structure's roofline would impact the current presentation's look. Mr. Basso showed that dormers were supposed to be scaled down at time; potentially bring back wing caps which had featured on neighboring building on property. The shed roof was also shown; dormer was lowered by one foot. The attempt was to distinguish buildings unto themselves by the nature of their roofs/rooflines. Mr. Meche expressed gleeful approval at buildings/rooflines upon having been revised. More drawings/blueprints were shown: and were referred to as 1A (with gable) and 1B (with shed). Mr. Joyce asked what would be necessary from applicants in terms of a vote. Chair Spang and Mr. Meche advised that future HVAC condensers and linesets should not be visible.

Moving on to the plans for door to garage, Mr. Basso showed two options. The first was more of a carriage door (6' x 7' double door panel door with smaller glass lite; would serve to distinguish building); the second showed fixed barn panel next to a single door. Mr. Joyce was in favor of either; expressed preference for gable dormers more than anything else, regardless of the doors. Mr. Martinez preferred the gables. Carriage doors were preferred by Mr. Martinez, Chair Spang, and Mr. Meche; though Chair Spang requested that the barndoors be slightly more centered under the windows than shown in the drawings. Mr. Joyce questioned the size of the dormer above the carriage doors; and Mr. Basso said that it was more narrow. Mr. Joyce asked if the gable dormer from one drawing could be used in conjunction with carriage door detail shown in separate drawing. Mr. Basso expressed openness to making revisions. Ms. Kelleher questioned if dormer was for living space, light, etc.; and questioned, given the expansiveness of the roofline, what the effect of reducing size of dormer would be (i.e. to make a *mini* dormer). Dormers could be narrowed to the extent that the door could be narrowed, Mr. Basso said, which Mr. Joyce preferred. Mr. Basso continued that ridgelines would be kept where they are and ensure that the carriage doors aligned below; and also noted a plan to skinny up dormer to minimum width that works for the door. Mr. Joyce volunteered to review ongoing plans. The two windows flanking door are awning windows (one sash; Mr. Basso guessed that sash is short of 6'). Mr. Meche suggested that the windows could be pulled up a bit. Mr. Basso made a note to bring the awning window head height up in a revised plan.

Mr. Martinez asked if there is still a staircase in the corner of the new building. Mr. Martinez asked for Commission members' opinions on raising windows in order to align with stairs; in doing so, potentially add windows closer to ground into basement/water table. Mr. Basso shared that the building has no basement but rather a crawlspace. Mr. Martinez noted that curtains or frosted glass may be used to obfuscate passersby from seeing inside. Mr. Basso was somewhat reluctant to agree with the altered window shapes/placement. Mr. Meche was of the opinion that this would be a perfect location to do something "funky" with windows on Derby. Mr. Joyce asked if alterations to window prevents massing conversation from going forward, which Mr. Basso expressed belief that the building department would defer to the Commission regarding any details to feature on the massing. Chair Spang noted that first floor bay will have a landing where the elevation line features; the question then is does the stair have to have railings/balusters that are protecting people from the window. Cited experience in historic renovations of having to protect window from damage at floor level. Further discussion of stairway inner floorspace/layout occurred. Chair Spang prophesied that the building inspector would take a while to look through drawings; reconciling stairs with window pattern which is consistent with the rest of the building. Ms. Kelleher recommended deputizing two or three members to oversee details moving forward. Mr. Meche, Mr. Martinez, and Mr. Joyce volunteered.

No public comment.

VOTE: Mr. Joyce made a motion to approve overall design subject to review and approval of final design details including windows (except corner bay windows of new construction, barn doors and gable dormers). Ms. Graham seconded the motion. Roll Call: Martinez, Joyce, Graham, Meche, Tyler-Lewis, Spang were in favor and the motion so carried. Commissioners Joyce, Martinez and Meche to review final details.

275 Lafayette Street—continuation

MD Property Development LLC submitted an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to renovate building and new construction. Applicants are still going through the ZBA process. Ms. Kelleher asked the Commission to continue this application to the next meeting.

VOTE: Mr. Joyce motioned to continue application to next meeting. Mr. Martinez seconded the motion. Roll Call: Tyler-Lewis, Martinez, Joyce, Graham, Meche, Spang were in favor and the motion so carried.

Public comment:

Polly Wilbert, 7 Cedar Street, expressed discontent at having sat through meeting up until now only to learn that the applicant was not in attendance. Asked that the Commission keep potential attendees from the public in mind in the future.

Chair Spang noted that the applicants' next scheduled appearance at a meeting will be March 1. Ms. Kelleher said that she would provide more advance notice in the future for similar circumstances.

415 Essex Street

The City of Salem Fire Department submitted an application for new signs after the fact.

Documents & Exhibits

- Application: 1/10/23
- Photographs

City of Salem submitted an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for new signs on fire station.

Ms. Kelleher noted that the Fire Chief had been on the call earlier in the meeting but had to leave. He asked for the Commission to continue the application to the next meeting but she noted that the Commission could consider the application if they were comfortable with the information provided. The Commission agreed that the information provided was sufficient for them to review without the applicant present. Photographs were shown of the signs which were already installed, as well as more maintenance / restoration painting efforts. Mr. Joyce asked whether the witch emblem was the logo of the fire department; a check of the department website confirmed the logo. Mr. Meche commended the work done on the building. Ms. Kelleher noted that the bay doors had been repainted to match the original dark green from the previous bright green that had been erroneously painted.

Mr. Martinez noted that the sign lettering has some alignment issues, likely the result of a volunteer painting the letters and not a professional painter. Mr. Martinez asked if large sign could be approved without approving the smaller (until further inspection can occur). Chair Spang confirmed that Mr. Martinez wanted to straighten out letters in smaller sign. Mr. Meche also wanted the pitch reduced; typeset it a little better; and noted that a revised version should be shown to Commission beforehand.

VOTE: Mr. Martinez motioned to approve the large sign over middle bay at 415 Essex as installed. Ms. Graham seconded the motion. Roll Call: Tyler-Lewis, Martinez, Joyce, Graham, Meche, Spang were in favor and the motion so carried.

VOTE: Mr. Martinez motioned to approve the small sign, provided that the lettering be repainted to bring letters into alignment. Ms. Graham seconded the motion. Roll Call: Tyler-Lewis, Martinez, Joyce, Graham, Meche, Spang were in favor and the motion so carried.

11 Warren Street

Christopher and Karen Nagle submitted an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for roof vent.

Documents & Exhibits

- Application: 1/18/23
- Photographs
- Product cut sheet

The Applicants and contractor were not able to be present. Ms. Kelleher presented application.

Ms. Kelleher noted that the applicants requested a continuation for location to be confirmed once airflow on rear ell is determined. The stated goal was to get turbine/roof vent as high to the ridge as possible while hiding it as much as possible. This would be acceptable to Chair Spang. Mr. Meche agreed that higher would be better, perhaps right at the peak. Mr. Joyce agreed. Mr. Martinez questioned other black pieces on roof and whether they were vents. Mr. Martinez noted that one should be at top and one should be at bottom.

No public comment.

West face of roof can be seen from Warren Street, Mr. Meche pointed out. Ms. Kelleher noted color options of vent include “mill”, black, brown, white, or weatherwood. Chair Spang noted that aluminum was being used on this roof, which Mr. Joyce affirmed.

VOTE: Mr. Joyce motioned to approve vent to be placed as high up to the ridge as possible and as close to main box of the house as possible with location on east side of roof preferable. Vent to be finished in black. Ms. Graham seconded the motion. Roll Call: Tyler-Lewis (abstain), Martinez, Joyce, Graham, Meche, Spang were in favor and the motion so carried.

Other Business

Review of Correspondence Regarding Upcoming Meetings

The City of Salem is ready to return to discussion of Pioneer Village. A member of the public is desirous of adding Pioneer Village to National Register of Historic Places. Ms. Kelleher floated the possibility of holding a special meeting to discuss these issues. Chair Spang asked if the City’s team has availability on February 22, 2023. Chair Spang noted that a letter from the National Park Service was expected to be forthcoming, preceding a longer discussion about the fate of Pioneer Village and Camp Naumkeag. Ms. Graham asked if members could vote on this issue if they were not on the Commission at the onset of the issue being brought to the Commission. Ms. Kelleher noted that the Commission has already denied the WDDO. The City of Salem has since submitted additional information for the project. The discussion at this point is determining if buildings can be moved without their destruction, and the expectation of a new business plan. Chair Spang noted that public interest was considerable on this item; some were adamantly

opposed; some were intrigued with the City's plans; etc. Mr. Meche noted that the City supported denial of the waiver, eventually. Chair Spang noted that a continued component of discussion would be the Commission's jurisdiction over moving buildings. No new application(s) exist regarding these properties. The demolition delay ordinance does not say anything about "moving" but rather "removal/removing." Commission members questioned: would a building inspector require a permit for a building being moved? National Park Service wants MHC to make determination if Camp Naumkeag or Pioneer Village is historic place, which will then come before SHC for a determination. This is a typical process of the National Register. The Commission discussed protections afforded to public property by being put in the National Register of Historic Places. If a property is listed in the National Register, any use of federal or state funds, permits or licenses require a review by the MHC. Mr. Joyce noted he would be unable to attend on February 22.

Property on Winter Island Road

Chair Spang noted having seen a structure/property "quite disassembled" in the Willows. This was an older building given the sheathing seen to exist. Photos were taken. It appears that the persons redoing the house came before ZBA with the idea of putting a substantial third floor on it; raising roof and roof pitch which has resulted in substantial demolition of roof. Under new definition of "demolition" in WDDO, this qualifies for Commission's review. The City did not catch this, building inspector did not flag, zoning did not review. This was approved in early 2022 by ZBA, subsequent drawings reviewed and approved by building inspector. Beth Renard, City Solicitor, was talked to. General recommendation from staff is that the homeowners are not brought in for review and discussion, given that part of transition between old and current DDO, this item slipped through the cracks. Chair Spang desired to bring before group for discussion rather than unilaterally come to a decision on. If brought before Commission, this item would be brought onto agenda for March 1. The building inspector would also need to shut down the job for a month, at least, and then bring drawings, etc. before Commission. Ms. Kelleher and Ms. Renard were not in favor of intervening at this point. Mr. Meche questioned location; Winter Island Road was named. Mr. Martinez asked what stage construction is in; Chair Spang said the structure is a shell at present; two and half walls are left; floors are in process of being rebuilt; attic will be new according to drawings. It was a 1920s four square according to Ms. Kelleher and Chair Spang. Ms. Kelleher discussed the prospect of making more of a regimented online portal process to catch and halt these issues from happening in the future. Chair Spang noted the definition of "demolition" to include taking down more than 50% of the roof. Chair Spang expressed surprise that so many entities were passed through without attention having been flagged to SHC.

Commission members discussed sending out notices to local architectural firms and contractors to make others aware that historic district rules need to be recognized and acknowledged. In this particular case, a local architect was used, though not one that the Commission usually sees in applications. Mr. Martinez asked if the offenders need to come in for discussion; and potentially the building inspector as well. Chair Spang floated this idea by Ms. Kelleher; i.e. the prospect of bringing in applicants to discuss but not penalize. Chair Spang noted that Winter Island Road is not part of a historic district, but is part of the Willows National Register District.

Adjournment

VOTE: Mr. Joyce motioned to adjourn. Mr. Martinez seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion so carried.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Dan Graham, Historical Commission Clerk