

**DOYLESTOWN BOROUGH
HISTORIC & ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

August 23, 2018

The regular meeting of the Doylestown Borough Historic and Architectural Review Board was held at 7:30 PM on Thursday, August 23, 2018 in the Council Chambers, 57 W Court Street, Doylestown PA. Members of the Doylestown Borough Historic and Architectural Review Board in attendance were: Chairperson Kim Jacobsen, Vice Chairperson Amy Taylor-Popkin, Denise Blasdale, Walter Keppler, Ralph Fey, Marie Kovach, Jenifer Jarret, Andy Happ, Heather Walton, and Karyn Hyland, Director of Building and Zoning.

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Jacobsen called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM.

MINUTES APPROVAL: On a motion from Mr. Happ, seconded by Mr. Keppler, the July 2018 minutes were unanimously approved as corrected.

SIGN APPLICATIONS:

64 S. Main Street, Fabby-Do, Robin Brackbill, applicant

The applicant appeared before the Board to request approval for a double-sided sign, as well as applications for the windows and door (presented as "Option 2" in her application). There will be no spotlight beneath the sign. On a motion from Ms. Blasdale, seconded by Mr. Keppler, the Board voted unanimously to recommend a Certificate of Appropriateness for the sign application as submitted and presented under "Option 2" (a single-standing post with a hanging sign, with window and door applications) and subject to final approval from Borough Council.

34 E. State Street, nourish by MAMA, Kendall Bajek, applicant

Ms. Anna Crestelli appeared on behalf of the applicant, requesting approval for new signs in a more "toned-down" teal color than what is show in the application. One sign will be hanging, while the other will be fixed; Ms. Hyland noted that the number of signs will be subject to zoning approval. Responding to a question from Ms. Hyland, the applicant stated that the hanging sign will be on the alley side. On a motion from Ms. Jarret, seconded by Ms. Blasdale, the Board voted unanimously to recommend a Certificate of Appropriateness for the sign application as submitted, subject to final approval from Borough Council.

20 E. Oakland Avenue, Sweetah's Gluten Free Bake Shop, Beverly Berkeley, applicant

The applicant appeared before the Board to request approval to re-locate a two-sided hanging sign from the Hargrove Bed & Breakfast to this location. Responding to a question from Mr. Happ, the applicant confirmed that it will be replacing a previous sign in that same location. On a motion from Ms. Blasdale, seconded by Mr. Keppler, the Board voted unanimously to recommend a Certificate of Appropriateness for the sign application as presented, subject to final approval from Borough Council.

BUILDING/REPAIR APPLICATIONS:

155 N. Main Street, Keila Gilbert, property owner

Ms. Keila Gilbert Connelly appeared along with Mr. Joe Connelly, requesting approval for a window replacement using Anderson 400 Series windows. The current windows are in poor condition and are rotted out. They also propose to use HardiePlank siding; the Board suggested using smooth-finish siding, to which the applicants agreed. The applicants specified that the header detail on the windows would be repaired or replaced as needed. Ms. Jarret asked the applicants to consider restoring the windows, especially the ones on the front of the building, rather than replacing them. The applicants were agreeable to restoring the windows on the front façade.

The Board also suggested retaining and repairing the original German siding on the front of the building. Mr. Fey and Mr. Happ recommended using a Boral siding that would better replicate the look and profile of the German siding for the sides of the building. Responding to a question from Ms. Jarret, the applicants confirmed that the window and door shutters are not original; the Board agreed that it would not be necessary to retain the shutters. Ms. Taylor-Popkin requested that the boarded-up transom under the porch be restored; the applicants agreed.

Restore front and south-facing side with original German siding; restore the windows; on the north side and rear, use Boral product in same German style and the option to use another product for the non-street-facing sides. The rear windows don't fall under HARB jurisdiction. Headers replicated or restored, shutters removed, transom will be replaced.

Mr. Happ made a motion to recommend a Certificate of Appropriateness for the building project, with the following conditions: that the applicant will restore the siding on the front streetscape and south-facing streetscape, and replace the remaining siding with a Boral or HardiePlank German siding profile product; that they will restore the third-floor windows, as well as the street-facing and south-facing windows, with the remaining windows being Anderson 400 Series replacement units with simulated divided lights; that the applicants will open the third transom on the front porch; that the siding and trim colors will be as presented; and that the shutters will be removed. Ms. Hyland seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved subject to final approval from Borough Council.

172 E. Oakland Avenue, 120 Athens Avenue Associates LLC, property owners

Mr. Bob Wurster appeared before the Board and noted that the plans were submitted to HARB and were approved in 2017. The applicants appeared before the Zoning Hearing Board to remove a condition of their previous approval requiring them to retain a certain tree. The request was denied and they have appealed that decision. The application subject to review at this HARB meeting has been submitted as a precautionary measure in the event that the appeal is not approved. The modification would involve removing the porch, with everything else remaining the same. Responding to questions from the Board, the applicants clarified that the porch element was approved by the ZHB, but only if the tree remained.

Responding to a question from Ms. Jacobsen, the applicants stated that they are proposing a brick chimney rather than stone. Mr. Fey suggested that the frontage of the small portico roof be a painted panel rather than siding. The applicants also propose to use half-round gutters.

Ms. Anna Shantz, 193 E. Oakland Avenue, asked for some clarification regarding the process between the ZHB and the HARB, which the Board provided. Ms. Hyland clarified that the ZHB had denied a request to remove the condition involving the tree,

which was appealed to the Court of Common Pleas. The appeals could continue for some time, and no one can foresee what conditions may be added at a future date. This particular meeting is focused on the project architecture, however. Ms. Kathy Pelley, 160 E. Oakland Avenue, wanted to clarify the domain of the HARB; the Board clarified that their jurisdiction involves what is visible from the street. Ms. Jacobsen explained that, even if a property has two front yard set-backs, one is the "primary" (Oakland) and the other is "secondary" (Church) from an architectural perspective. She noted that the garage on the Church Street side is "stepped back."

Ms. Jarret made a motion to recommend a Certificate of Appropriateness in the event that the applicants abandon their current zoning conditions, with the following conditions: that the chimney be brick; that the applicant add portico roofs over both doors facing Oakland and Church; and that the portico roofs be standing seam metal, with panels rather than siding. Ms. Blasdale seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved subject to final approval from Borough Council.

168 E. Oakland Avenue, 120 Athens Avenue Associates, LLC, property owners

The applicant appeared before the Board along with Tom Gockowski of Carroll Engineering, who provided the structural engineering report. Responding to a question from Mr. Happ, the applicant could not say whether anything had been done to preserve the home such as tightening the roof or closing the windows. The applicant explained that the proposed new home will replicate the existing home, using some of the original materials (shutters, front porch posts, etc.). Ms. Hyland added that the original submission for the subdivision included the note that the existing home was to be demolished; that note was removed. The applicants were unsure of the exact date of the house, but they believe that it dates from "the late 1800s." Ms. Jacobsen confirmed that the home dates from 1874.

Ms. Taylor-Popkin noted that, in previous discussions, the Board had asked that the original home remain but that the addition could be removed. The applicant stated that all submitted plans are based on the existing home being demolished. Ms. Blasdale noted that the original structure is symmetrical, while the proposed structure is asymmetrical; the Board had previously asked that the façade be maintained.

Mr. Gockowski stated that he had visited the site in March to do a structural assessment. It was found to be in very poor condition due to moisture intrusion through the exterior walls. There is significant deterioration in the exterior brick, with interior and exterior moisture damage. There is evidence of moisture intrusion in the rubble stone basement walls as well. The wood-frame condition of the kitchen is in "deplorable" condition. Mr. Fey pointed out that the structural imperfections would be more important than any surface conditions. Mr. Happ noted that many of the flaws described so far indicate that the current owners are not maintaining heat in the house; Mr. Gockowski confirmed that there appeared to be no power in the house during his March visit. Mr. Gockowski reported that the ceiling height in one of the second floor bedrooms in the addition is sub-standard. Ms. Blasdale pointed out that many houses of that era featured ceiling heights that would no longer be considered "standard." Mr. Gockowski added that there are sub-standard ceiling dimensions on the third floor of the main house. There is also mold evident in several areas throughout the interior.

Responding to a question from Ms. Jacobsen, Ms. Hyland stated that the original demolition denial would have been in late 2016. Mr. Adam Smerconish, appearing on behalf of the applicants, stated that many of these conditions were existing when the

property was purchased. Responding to questions from Mr. Fey, Mr. Gockowski stated that his firm does typically perform assessments on historic structures, and that he himself has made such assessments in the past. However, the firm has not undertaken historic restoration projects on structures such as this one.

Ms. Jacobsen expressed concern that a demolition was denied two years ago, and the house has not been heated and maintained since. Knowing that it would continue to deteriorate under such conditions, it is not fair to now request a demolition. She noted that the house is not on the historic register but does have historic significance; it is one of the first homes occupied by an African-American family in the Borough. Ms. Jacobsen stated that the deterioration since 2016 reaffirms that care should have been taken to mitigate the conditions. The applicants replied that they have utilized dehumidifiers and fans, and have taken other measures to hold off deterioration; to suggest that the current condition of the house is solely their responsibility is incorrect. Ms. Jacobsen asked what renovation efforts have been undertaken; the applicants replied that they believed the case for demolition to be so "clear-cut" that renovation was never their plan. Mr. Smerconish stated that the applicants are open to replicating the look, feel, and texture of the original structure, but that it should not become a "neighborhood political issue."

Ms. Taylor-Popkin noted that the structural integrity of the "primary" portion of the house is still intact, and that it has historical importance. The "bones" of the building could still be utilized, with a design structured around it. Responding to questions from the Board, Mr. Gockowski stated that the home is not in imminent danger of collapse, and that "anything is restorable." He pointed out that there is structural damage near the "seam" between the original portion and the addition.

Ms. Anna Shantz, 193 E. Oakland Avenue, stated that to tear down the house would be to tear down a portion of the Borough's history. The proposed replacement is also not in keeping with the neighborhood. Ms. Jarret pointed out there will be two new homes built as part of this subdivision and that, coupled with the other new house across Oakland, this will be one of the last remaining older structures in that immediate area, which is worth considering. Mr. Fey asked whether a design professional had been brought in to create an alternate design, incorporating the original structure, which would still meet their structural improvement goals? The applicants stated that there was no process put in place to keep the original structure; however, they believed that their proposal was a good replica. Mr. Fey noted that things are not supposed to be replicated; the national standards specifically urge repairing and restoring, but not replicating. There should be a clear understanding of where the historical house stands, and where additions have been made. Unless the walls are imminently failing and are not restorable, it seems anathema to the Historic District to make no efforts to retain the structure.

Mr. Richard Brown, of Jefferson Avenue, recommended utilizing as much of the original home as possible. The Board made note of several projects in town that had done exactly that. The applicants suggested that they could re-use the original bricks; the Board was not in favor, as that would still involve tearing down the original structure itself and simply re-using the materials. Ms. Jarret emphasized that the brick "central core" of the original home is what should be preserved. Ms. Kathy Pelley, 160 E. Oakland Avenue, stated that the more this is delayed, the more damage is going to occur. It must be preserved at this point until some action can be taken; she believes that the condition of the building is due to "willful neglect."

Ms. Blasdale made a motion to deny the application to demolish the complete structure. Mr. Happ seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved subject to final approval from Borough Council.

340 W. Court Street, Greg and Giovanna Shore, property owners

Mr. Happ recused himself from the application. Mr. Richard Brown, architect, appeared on behalf of the owners, who regretfully could not be present. They are requesting approval for an addition to the rear of the house in order to enlarge the kitchen, and to add an unenclosed porch to the front of the home. The Zoning Hearing Board granted approval for both additions. The current porch is a shed roof; that will be removed and replaced by a hip roof. What is presented is the "basic form and organization" of the porch. Responding to a question from Mr. Fey, Mr. Brown confirmed that the current windows and design piece over the front door will remain. Mr. Fey pointed out several possible issues regarding the new porch structure, and how it attaches to the existing porch. Responding to a question from Ms. Jacobsen, Mr. Brown stated that the new porch projects out eight feet.

Ms. Jarret pointed out that the proposed porch would not damage the main core of the house, and would be an example of a "reversible" modification. Responding to a question from Mr. Keppler, Mr. Brown stated that they would use HardiePlank siding, with Boral trim on the porch; price will ultimately determine the specific material. Mr. Fey noted that several design details are missing, such as where and how the porch railing will be attached shy of a window. The Board asked that the applicants include more design details for the porch and roof, as well as a materials list. Mr. Brown noted that they propose to use Anderson 400 Series windows with simulated divided lights.

Mr. Brown stated that they will re-evaluate the roof, and return with additional details and materials. The application was tabled until September.

278 W. Oakland Avenue, Kurt and Amy Kremser, property owners

Mr. Bob Nase of Nase Architects appeared before the Board to request approval for an addition to an existing home. He passed out updated information regarding the application, pointing out a prized ginkgo tree that they will attempt to preserve. They tried to emulate all aspects of the existing construction, including the bracket and pent details from the front elevations. The windows on the addition would be a wooden Marvin product with true divided light; they would be open to using Boral instead of the restoration siding as well. True slate and metal would be used for the roofs.

Mr. Fey complimented the applicants on their clear and concise design drawings. He asked whether they had considered not including the pent roof above the garage. The applicant agreed to replace the pent roof with a trellis or shading device. Responding to a question from Mr. Fey, the applicant confirmed that the trim will match the original home. The applicants also noted that the garage doors will be Lancaster series PVC overlay doors. Responding to a question from Mr. Happ, the applicants stated that the steps will be slate and brick with wrought iron.

Responding to questions from Mr. Happ, the applicant stated that the standing seam metal roof will likely be a pre-finished product with a one-inch seam, in a dark red. The upper roof will also be a standing seam in the same red. The slate will be used on the pent roofs, to match the main roofs on the original home. The Board expressed concern about the amount of red roof space; the applicant suggested that the main addition roof could be

slate, with only the east and west dormers and the pent roof being standing seam. The Board clarified that the red color is the cause of their hesitation; a copper or bronze may work better. The applicant agreed with that suggestion.

Mr. Fey made a motion to recommend a Certificate of Appropriateness for the building application as submitted, with the following changes: that the primary addition on the roof be a bronze standing seam metal; that the pent roof over the projecting bay above the garage doors be removed, and be replaced with a shading device at the discretion of the architect; and that the garage doors be the Lancaster series general door in a PVC overlay. Mr. Happ seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved subject to final approval from Borough Council.

66 E. Oakland Avenue, Anthony and Anita Trasatti, property owners

Mr. Brian Wilcoy appeared before the Board and stated that they have revised the roof and siding in accordance with the Board's suggestions. They have replaced the mansard roof with a flat roof, and added a projecting (five foot) front balcony. Responding to a question from Mr. Fey, the applicant confirmed that his goal is to determine if this design is acceptable to the Board; if so, he will return with complete elevations and a material list.

The Board noted that the building actually has two street frontages, essentially creating two front elevations. After some discussion, the Board made several design suggestions, including making the windows as tall as possible, to soften the "industrial" look of the structure, and to work on the roof details. Ms. Jacobsen suggested lowering the pent roof element to provide more room for the windows. The Board complimented the applicants on their patience and willingness to make changes to their designs.

After additional discussion, it was decided that the application would be tabled until the applicants could return with revisions, a complete set of elevations, floorplans, and a materials list.

187 E. Court Street, William and Laurie Schutt, property owners

Mr. Happ recused himself from the application. The applicants appeared before the Board with revised designs; the garage structure has been reduced from 61 feet to 45 feet. Windows have also been added to the Mechanics Street façade.

On a motion from Ms. Blasdale, seconded by Mr. Keppler, the Board voted unanimously to recommend a Certificate of Appropriateness for the building application with the presented revisions, subject to final approval from Borough Council.

RENOVATION CONTINUANCE: None.

NEW/OLD BUSINESS: None.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 11:10pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dirk A. Linthicum
Meeting Minutes Secretary