

TOWN OF BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION



**Historic District Commission Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 1, 2024
at 7:00 PM
Town Hall - 10 Court Street, Bristol Rhode Island**

Written comments may be submitted to the Historic District Commission via regular mail addressed to:

Historic District Commission, Bristol Town Hall, 10 Court Street, Bristol RI 02809 or via email to ntoth@bristolri.gov

1. Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM, and the Pledge of Allegiance was promptly recited afterwards.

In attendance are Lima, Millard, Church, Ponder, Toth, and Teitz

Absent are Allen, Bergenholtz, and Butler

2. Review of Previous Month's Meeting Minutes

2A. Review of minutes of the January 4, 2024 meeting.

Minutes reviewed.

Church: There is a typo on page 21, about halfway down after Andy's name it says "sur" and it should be "sure".

Maynard: Thank you. I will correct that.

Motion made by Church to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 4, 2024 as correct; Seconded by Millard.

Voting Yea: Lima, Ponder, Millard, and Church

3. **Application Reviews**

3A. 23-175 5 Thames St, Robin Karian Discuss and act on replacement of 6 Andersen 400 series windows in kind.

Jeff Ramos from Marsh Building present. Representing Robin Karian. Gave a letter of representation to Nick.

Ramos: We are proposing to change 6 windows in the house. There are Anderson 400 wood windows which are 22 years old and beyond their warranty. They have broken balances, sashes, rods, and seal failures. We are replacing them in kind with the same windows.

Lima: What is the lifespan of the windows? 15 years?

Ramos: 20yr. My experience is that they start failing after 10-15 years.

Lima: We are talking about quality and wood.

Ramos: These are rental properties, so they are not maintained as well as they should be.

Lima: Do we have a cut sheet?

Ramos: Yes. Here are some pictures of the exact windows on the house to be replaced. Four on the front and two on the left side.

Lima: Do we know the exact windows that are going to be replaced?

Toth: We can add these to the application.

Lima: Should I put an exhibit number on it?

Toth: Sure.

Church: Are they aluminum clad?

Ramos: Correct. Aluminum clad outside and wood on the inside.

Church: Just wanted it on the record.

Lima: Is there anyone in the audience who would like to speak for or against this application?

Ramos: I have a question. Karian wants to replace a door eventually. If the existing door is fiberglass, can it be replaced in kind or does it have to be wood?

Lima: Whatever is there needs to be replaced in kind. You can check with Nick to see what has been done in the past.

Ponder: An application for that would still have to be presented.

Lima: See what is in the file with Nick to save yourself some aggravation.

Motion made by Ponder to approve the replacement of 6 windows as noted in the application with a finding of fact that the windows will be replaced in kind; Seconded by Church.

Voting Yea: Lima, Church, Ponder, and Millard

Secretary of Standards: #9

Project Monitor: John Allen

Toth: The green sheet will be available online.

Lima: Please put it in the front window of the house.

Ramos: Thank you.

3B. **23-181: 235 High Street, Town of Bristol** Discuss and act on relocation of previously approved HVAC units on roof onto ground locations, installation of transformer, fence to shield units and transformer.

Toth: This is to be continued to the March meeting.

Motion made by Church to continue the application to the March meeting; Seconded by Ponder

Voting Yea: Ponder, Millard, Lima, and Church

3C. **23-183: 88 Church St, Charles Cavalcante** Discuss and act on addition of screened in porch and roof for porch on rear deck of property.

James Tavares present representing the homeowners for the project.

Tavares: The project is basically a small roof at the back of the house over an existing deck. The deck is approximately 10x24 right now and the homeowner wants to screen in approximately half of the porch and to include a roof over the screened in portion. It would be an approximate 10x12 area.

Lima: Do we have a letter giving you permission to represent the homeowners?

Toth: I have it.

Lima: Please indicate in the minutes that we have it on file.

Maynard: I will do that.

Lima: This is at the back of house correct?

Tavares: Yes.

Lima: Do you have what the materials are?

Tavares: Yes.

Lima: Does anyone have questions?

Church: It will not be visible from the street. I wonder about the screen panels though. Are they custom?

Tavares: Yes.

Church: Are they wood frames and screen?

Tavares: Yes.

Church: Can they be taken down?

Tavares: Yes, by screws. They will just be screwed in.

Church: What is the construction of the post supporting the roof?

Tavares: 4x4 pressure treated timber wrapped with 1x6 lumber which is treated and will be painted.

Lima: So, the existing deck will not change?

Tavares: Correct.

Ponder: Okay.

Church: Will there be asphalt shingles on the roof?

Tavares: Correct.

Church: Is there going to be a door on the east elevation?

Tavares: Yes, just a screen door.

Church: There is nothing here to indicate what the door will be.

Tavares: There will be two screen doors, one on the east and one on the west elevation.

Church: Is it something that you are going to make or purchase?

Tavares: They are going to be made on site. It will be mahogany, dark with screen.

Lima: Anyone in the audience want to speak for or against this application?

Ponder: So, you are not changing anything on the house?

Tavares: Nothing on the house is changing. There is already a door there going into the house from the deck.

Motion made by Ponder to approve the application as presented to screen in a portion of the existing deck with a finding of fact that it is at the back of the house and will not be visible to the street; Seconded by Millard.

Voting Yea: Ponder, Lima, Church, and Millard

Secretary of Standards: #9

Project Monitor: Susan Church

Lima: When you get the approval from Nick, Susan's name and number will be on there. Feel free to give her a call. Please put the approval in the window at the front of the house so it is visible.

Toth: Make sure to pull any necessary permits.

3D. **24-06: 267 Thames St, TSL, LLC** Discuss and act on roof addition and gate to accommodate new HVAC mechanic units located over the service/dumpster area of DeWolf Tavern.

Spencer McComb present.

McComb: I am the Architect for this project. This is regarding the small section attached to DeWolf Tavern which is the dumpster and loading area. The reason for the work there is that the 2nd floor kitchen for the tavern has multiple air handlers that are ending their lifespan. The neighbors are complaining about the noise. Upgrades to the HVAC means we need two more air handlers to add more fresh air to the kitchen which is packed with equipment. We are here to get approval for screening for those pieces. The neighbors love the idea. This adds a covering for 1 1/2 stories up to the roof deck that covers the dumpster, coolers, etc., and this covers the view from above for the neighbors. It will hover next to the stone wall which is the true part of the DeWolf tavern. There are stories of that wall being hit by boats during hurricanes. We will have a top covering and gates. The gates will help screen the equipment and the unpleasant things coming in and out of the kitchen. There will be big driveway gates to screen it off. There are pictures of the current conditions and screen walls that are there now. It is hard to see it from anywhere except for the neighbors. The condo association is all for it.

Lima: With all of this stuff, does the fire chief inspect it because of where and what it is?

Toth: If it is required, it would go across the Chief's desk.

McComb: There will be a sprinkler system installed just in case.

Lima: Thank you.

Church: Please list the materials for the various components.

McComb: There will be clapboard on the screen wall. The deck is plywood which will be covered in a membrane and PVC. Trim bands that are on the edge will be wood or PVC.

Church: Has that been approved for other things?

McComb: This is a new section.

Church: What is the trim on the front, the same side but further east?

McComb: The edge of deck will have cedar clapboard on the seawall and there will be PVC which will be painted.

Lima: Inside?

Church: No, outside.

McComb: It will sit under the seawall so the trim should be PVC.

Church: That is the vertical trim on the left of the gates on that wall?

McComb: That is cedar which is already there.

Church: The other trim should be cedar on the gate.

McComb: The gate will probably be pressure treated and painted. It is a harsh area with the saltwater exposure and it gets banged up a lot. We want a sturdy product.

Church: My concern is with the PVC is that you made decide to come back later stating that since we let you use it on one area, why not on another.

McComb: It will be painted and fully dimensional so you would not be able to tell the difference.

Lima: Would it be anywhere else on the roof or just on the part of the roof that you have built on?

McComb: You can see in the details that the two lines that go to PVC trim are just a one-foot base above your head. It should be PVC.

Lima: I understand and kind of agree with PVC and with the water, wood would rot and not last very long.

Church: Is this setting a precedent for other parts of the building? Will they come back later and pull something?

McComb: The gate will be pressure treated pine and painted.

Church: Page A 1.0, that area is already constructed?

McComb: Yes, it is.

Lima: How far above is it?

McComb: It is 12ft high. Above will be a screen wall made of cedar.

Lima: I do not have a problem with it.

Ponder: Just put a finding of fact that it is on the water side so they cannot come back later.

Lima: Mary, any questions?

Millard: No. I agree with you.

L: Is there anyone in the audience who would like to speak for or against this project?

Motion made by Ponder to approve the application as presented to add a new HVAC over the service dumpster area with a finding of fact that the Commission is allowing PVC trim on the water side only and that is not easily seen from the street; Seconded by Millard.

Voting Yea: Lima, Millard, Ponder, and Church

Secretary of Standards: #9

Project Monitor: John Allen

Lima: Please put the green sheet in the front window of the building.

Toth: It will be available online.

- 3E. **24-08: 70 Griswold Ave, Constance Laflamme** Discuss and act on raising of roofline by 24" to accommodate structural improvements and code compliant stairwell.

Toth: This application is to be continued to the next meeting due to an error in the application. This will be for a concept review only.

4. **Concept Review**

- I. **24-08: 70 Griswold Ave, Constance Laflamme** Concept reviews of renovations to property, including windows, French doors, garage doors, new roof shingle system, replacement of exterior doors, replacement of garage door, in-ground swimming pool, fencing around property

Constance LaFlamme, homeowner; Steven Ricci, Designer from the Avant Guard Design Group; Gordon Horton, Engineer; and Eric Malong as the Contractor from Avalon Design present.

Ricci: When we went through the house, structurally the house is in dire need of repair. In the center section of the house is the kitchen area. We were over that area of the house on the second floor. There were four of us and Constance's Labrador came into the room and started scratching his ear which made the whole floor vibrate so much we thought it was a tremor. We went downstairs and we looked through the whole house. Specifically, we saw that the structure 5½x5½ beam across the ceiling had no floor joists. It had dropped 3 inches in the center. We were lucky that it did not collapse. We put pump jacks in to lift the ceiling and hold it in place.

The beam is 80 inches and very low. It has to be raised to get a proper ceiling height. There are two bedrooms above the kitchen and Constance would lose those two rooms and would have no choice but to raise the roof to make it usable.

Lima: What is the maximum height after raising roof?

Ricci: 25ft to the ridge after construction.

Malong: It will still be lower than front roof.

Lima: We have a height limit, so I was just checking.

Ricci: The attic stairs are hard to get up as well. You have to go up so far then turn to avoid the rafters.

Toth: I have been there, and it is a head hitting hazard.

Ricci: The wood is bug infested and rotted. The rafters are terrible. We want to replace the entire roof and raise it 24 inches to make it more usable. The outside will be stripped and redone exactly how it is now. We would like to put Tesla shingles on the roof. The roof was done in 2012 when a two-car garage was built.

Lima: Is there a record of it?

Toth: It is in the file.

Ricci: The building inspection file was in the file. They are just regular asphalt shingles.

Malong: The proposal to raise the roof 24 inches will still sit below the main roof at the peak.

Ricci: Those are the two main things. At the back of the house there used to be a wicker sunroom. It has been pushed off the foundation and it is bowing. The wall needs to get stripped down to foundation to see what is going on. The sill is probably destroyed. Constance has a wish list of things she would like to do. French Doors on that side of the house and she is thinking of an inground pool in back.

Lima: Can this be seen from the street?

Ricci: No, there are wetlands near it so nothing can be seen. Those are the three structural problems. There are other things as you can see on rendering. Constance wants to put a porch around the right side of the house, but that part is known as the front door. She would like to wrap a porch down to the French doors. This is a wish list item. The inside of the house will be stripped down and everything that can be reused will be reused. We want to save as much as possible.

Toth: It is gorgeous in there.

Ricci: Some of the wood shifted and cracked. We will save what we can. Some steps in house are 10½ inch risers.

Lima: How long has it been since someone lived here.

Ricci: They recently just moved out and never did anything. The beams were stained. Where they are sagging, you can see where the stain was a different color on the beam. The garage door header on the two-car garage attached to house is a 16ft door and the header is 2x7. There is a huge bowing, and the baseboard has the same bowing upstairs. We want to take out the huge door and make two separate doors which will match the other door. Nothing faces the street.

Toth: I can confirm that nothing faces the street.

Ricci: We want to replace the short windows in the two bedrooms and replace them with wood to match the existing windows. Clapboards will be the same, and the shingles will be the same, and the foundation remains the same with the skirt boards.

Ponder: Are all of the shingles and clapboard far gone?

Ricci: Nothing matches.

Ponder: So, you are going to replace with same?

Ricci: Yes. There is a picture in your conference room that shows this house back then. It shows a door where there is not one now. We were shocked. It was a Dutch door.

Church: On that addition?

Ricci: Yes, on the center portion of the house.

Lima: I think looking at what is there I will say I am not too keen on putting on the porch because it might give a false sense of history. I am not too thrilled with that since you will be doing so much work to restore as it did look. I am not sure I would like that. Is there anyone from the State that may be available.

Toth: I have heard mixed things from the State about tax credits.

Lima: Have you asked about tax credits?

Ricci: No.

Teitz: Tax credits may not be available for single family homes.

Church: I am opposed to raising the roof. This building is a very significantly historical and architecturally contributing building to the district and there are not too many left. I am not sure if you are aware, 996 Hope Street has the same configuration, built by the same person, Simon Pierce. I think this house needs to be preserved the way it is. The State Historic Preservation Commission advised that this house should be considered for listing on the State and National Register of historic homes.

Constance: Who is "they"?

Church: The Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission did a survey on the building, and it was their recommendation.

Constance: We have an 1800 house in California as well. We love the historic nature of the house. We want to make it livable, safe, and remain as original as possible. I appreciate any consideration about the roof.

Church: I would change the scale of the building.

Ricci: I agree about the main roof, but the center needs to be redone, and not without columns.

Millard: You have a classic 1790 house and when you make the changes, you are then turning the house into a colonial revival.

Constance: The structural piece is here. Shows images to the Commission. The structural piece here is coming down. This is the most important thing to raise. Needs to be raised up to 6ft high. The ceiling is coming down. This is a structural issue.

Ponder: Scrap the main structure of house.

Contance: If you do not like it, we will scrap it.

Millard: Inside they chronically under framed old houses, using steel beams or steel bonding with plates is one way to stabilize the roof.

Ricci: It is a 5½ inch beam in the kitchen which expands 14ft.

Millard: That can be fixed.

Ricci: If a steel beam is done, then you would have to do floor joists to hold it up.

Millard: No, steel plate on the sides of the beam would hold it.

Ricci: If we fix the floor, the minimum is 7, 7, 6. The two bedrooms above will lose ceiling height. They are already now less than 7ft.

Malong: 7/6 is code ceiling height.

Constance: If it structurally no good, we would have be up to code.

Gordon: In general, when you have a situation like this, to put steel plates on it, you have to apply some sort of a load to determine what is structurally required to make it safe. We have to turn to the building code. What sense would it make to design a new floor system that would not meet code. I did the preliminary numbers with the minimum depth we need assuming timber, and not considering steel, was 12 inches. The ceiling is already lower than what is the code minimum. The depth of the floor is 6 inches. To make that be up to the required occupancy loads, we

would be losing 6 inches above and it will not be utilized.

Church: Could you dig down?

Ricci: No, it is a concrete slab.

Constance: I hear what you are saying and want to make it as historically as possible, but this particular piece is the original kitchen area, and it is completely unlivable.

Millard: Interior steel does not matter; it is the exterior that would be the issue.

Constance: So, I beseech you on this. It makes almost 1/3 of the house unusable and we want to make it usable. We just need to have this extra room. This does not change the roof line of the home. This is just so the kitchen would be to code.

Millard: What is the date of the addition? 1793 for the main house and additions were done after that, I think.

Constance: I totally get it. We want to make this historical. This piece, pointing to an area on the pictures, here needs to be picked up so we can have a kitchen.

Church: How much height?

Ricci: I will lower it as much as possible.

Church: We will need the sketches. Did you find the lemon wood tree? It is the largest in America.

Constance: There is a maple tree that is the largest in Rhode Island. We contacted an arborist and had everything checked. We can give you a list of what was taken.

Church: There were gardens.

Constance: That is way in the back and there is an outbuilding that is on another property.

Catherine Zipf: I have a different set of concerns which might get us out of this problem. I prepared a report. There is a failure to understand the historic

post and beam house with mortis tendons which work with both compression and tension. When you have a sill wrapped around it operates like a rubber band in the sense that in addition to holding it together, it will collapse if snapped. The chimney stack is an integral part of the post and beam house. Given all of that, the roof line issue is dispensed. This is what that corner joint would look like, pointing to a picture in her report, and it would be a structural disaster. Raising the roof would also be a disaster. I get the condition issues. It can be remedied in other ways. It does not have to be rebuilt. Also, hollowing out of the chimney stack is not acceptable.

Ricci: It is a closet. We did not hollow it out.

Zipf: I do not see the flue on the new chimney. Also, you cannot remove the entry staircase. It is part of the charm. You need to keep the entry staircase in. The corner posts that are getting moved and cut in the interior renovations. You can get a second opinion on bowing. There are Preservation standards. You need to keep the original materials on the roof, not a Tesla roof. Also, the French doors are a violation of standards. Why are you replacing the clapboards when they can be repaired instead of being replaced. You do not need to gut the interior and then put it back. Also, I am fine with the porch. I understand that you have anxiety about being energy efficiency like the Tesla roof shingles, may I suggest solar panels. Post and beam houses breath so you are not going to seal up the building. A heat pump is a better choice. Interior designs of modern spaces are about larger spaces, but post and beam homes do not foster that. In this corner, showing imagines, you are losing a lot of structure, not going to go the way you think it will. I just don't think you will get what you are looking for, it's designed for smaller rooms.

Zipf: The possible idea is that the L-shaped addition is not particularly historic. You can rebuild the L and garage to whatever standards you want. If you want a large dining room, that is where you put it. If you want a master bedroom, that is where you can put it. The core of the house is the 1790 structure. That is important to preserve and leave alone. Most of this can be addressed with an addition. Take that L addition and do something different with it. Just leave the historic structure alone. The integrity

could not be higher, and I would beseech you as well to do as little as humanly possible. Do not take up the floors or take out the trim, etc.

Teitz: Please finish the concept review first and then Ms. Zipf can come back up.

Zipf: Living in it requires loving it the way it is.

Constance: The reason for the floorboards being removed is that they are very warped, and I have really bad vertigo, so it is necessary to have them fixed.

Toth: The construction on the inside is not under our jurisdiction.

Ricci: We will revise the plan as best we can and bring it down. That house should be condemned because of that floor. It needs to be fixed. We are not trying to spend her money foolishly. I will revise that section and send it to Nick. Please come to the house to see it so you understand the issue.

Lima: That was something I was going to say.

Toth: I will set up a site visit.

Ricci: Would the walkthrough be just the Commission or is it open to the public?

Lima: I do not want them to go through the trouble and then keep changing. Andy, can we do a site visit?

Teitz: I think since a site visit would be a good idea and you were invited you can do that. Formally a meeting of the Commission needs to be posted with the Secretary of State's office as a meeting. Technically, the public could attend but they do not.

Lima: I am not sure because if it is not safe to walk on it, should we go in? We just cannot go on the property individually. We need your legal permission. I need to see what you are talking about.

Teitz: With any plan to replace windows, that would be justifiable for site visit. Reserve your decision about the HDC not having jurisdiction over the interior, however; changes that would change the exterior, like a chimney issue, that is the sort of

thing that would be. It appears that from the State study the last addition is the 1900 L addition. With that information on that L addition, then it does make more sense that there would not be a problem replacing that completely which would allow you to do whatever you want and keep with the scale. That might be a way to accomplish everything. Please find out more information about the L.

Zipf: We can volunteer Ray for that. If it is a concrete slab, it may be more like 1910. I get the issue, but I am worried. A similar incident happened in Newport and the building fell apart.

Constance: We want to take care of this house and grounds. The trees that are getting cut down are falling apart. I really appreciate everything you are saying and that you appreciate what we are trying to do.

Zipf: This is not something that we come across every day, but construction is different on this house.

Constance: Thank you.

Ricci: Just want to address the issue about the chimney. The chimney is a closet where a bathroom is going in. We are not changing the chimney.

Zipf: Some things you said tonight are different than what I thought were on your plans. You want to remove as little as possible and keep as much historically as possible.

Lima: We would probably do a site visit and even do another concept review after you have gotten more information and checked things out so when you get to the point of doing the work, you are ready. There are enough people in the preservation community with expertise that you can draw upon. I think with some other people with a background in history would help you to get to the point where you need to be without jumping through 15 hoops. This is never going to be simple. We are more than happy to assist you. We would certainly welcome this. We want to see what you are talking about. Nick, please set up a site visit. Also, there are other people that you can pick their brains for information.

Zipf: I have names I can recommend.

Toth: We will put this on for the March meeting.

Lima: We will do it before the next meeting.

Toth: I will set it up for later in February.

Lima: As soon as we can get it done.

Church: Are you living in the house now?

Constance: No. I am actually in Maine, but we probably will be out in San Fransisco as well.

Toth: Steve, there will be a lot of windows that will be repaired not replaced so we will set up as soon as possible.

Ponder: What is your timeline?

Constance: As soon as possible, as soon as it is approved.

Ponder: Thanks for already knowing that we do not want to touch the main house.

Ricci: We can work together.

Church: So, you are okay with solar panels?

Constance: I thought that was a no go.

Teitz: It is possible since they are removable.

Contance: I live next to a Tesla engineer, so it is a very interesting product.

Teitz: Please present the information on it. If they are airtight and trap moisture, it may make things worse. Generally, we are okay with solar panels because they are removable and if they are not visible from the road.

Constance: I just want to be energy efficient. Thank you.

Teitz: If you put in a new addition on the L, that would be a good spot to do this.

Lima: If you have the Telsa roofing product, please bring choices for a visual. It helps.

Constance: I would rather have solar panels because they are removable. I was not aware that it could be used.

Ponder: I do not mind if you raise the roof in the back on the addition.

Lima: Thank you for saving the house. Nick will be in touch. It is easier to give too much information than not enough. It keeps us moving forward.

Constance: Would a deck be okay on the back?

Lima: Bring choices of materials as much as possible.

Constance: At the next meeting?

Lima: Correct.

Church: And sketches to scale.

5. **Monitor Reports & Project Updates**
6. **HDC Coordinator Reports & Project Updates**
7. **HDC Coordinator Approvals**
 1. **Administrative Approvals**
8. **Other Business**

Toth: I am working on the CLG grant. Expect a copy of the status report from the resurvey just came in today.

Lima: Oh good.

Millard: What status report?

Church: They are looking at everything again about the district.

9. **Adjourned at 8:32p.m.**