

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION #1
OCTOBER 6, 2015
REGULAR MEETING**

ATTENDANCE: Stuart Sachs, Chair; Susan Richter; Guy Horvath

STAFF: Diego Guevara, City Design Review Coordinator

OTHER: Maura McNeil, Owner of 90-98 Hackley Street; David Barber, Architect

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 PM. A quorum was present. The Chair reviewed the hearing procedures to those present.

PUBLIC HEARING

- 1. Certificate of Appropriateness: Application #2015-07 by Maura McNeil to construct a two-story single family home with a 2 car garage at 90-98 Hackley Street in the Black Rock Historic District.**

The Chair asked if there was anyone present to speak for the application. David Barbour, 202 Pearsall Place, announced himself as the architect and speaker for the application.

Mr. Barbour stated that the site is on the inlet in proximity to Ellsworth Park, the marina and Seaside Park. He stated that after spending quite a bit of time in the area in order to get a sense of the neighborhood's urban pattern, he came up with the current design. He stated that in future, there may be some solar panels.

Mr. Barbour displayed images of properties in the area, and noted the presence of simple gables with protruding rake and fairly flat simple trim. He also noted the presence of double hung windows with a rake, and similar accessory structures featured across the street from where Ms. McNeil currently lives. He stated that the high floor levels in his design are a result of being in a flood zone, but that he believes it to be an architecturally appropriate move.

Mr. Barbour provided photographic examples of 2-story, single family homes in the area. He stated that when designing, he worked from the main high water as the property limit, rather than the line itself. He stated that he wanted the home to be somewhat private, featuring a private garden on one side, and using two elements of the architecture to make a court entry and gated screen with a bar above and swinging gates to create the area.

Mr. Barbour displayed a sketch and stated that the design is extremely close, the only change being that they moved the house and accessory structure closed together. He stated that they address the street by twisting the entryway and canopy to face the corner. He stated that the open wall is to the water, and that the dock shown in the rendering has been approved for construction.

Mr. Barbour indicated the service side of the building in the drawing, which features circulations, closets, and bathrooms. He indicated that the other side of the building opens up to a flexible room that could be used as a den or guest bedroom. He stated that the idea was to open up the plans, and yet maintain an appealing facade to visitors. He stated that the windows are to be simple, double hung, two over two and 6 feet tall. Mr. Barbour stated, in the interest of a minimal maintenance building, they would employ concrete with a cement finish. He stated that while there are no vents yet, they would be placed.

Mr. Barbour stated that as the corner is carved away and twisted, they wanted to do something special with the face, and that the material would change from the siding. He stated that they were thinking of employing steel cables and posts that are thin in profile as a support for the canopy. He stated that as you move around to the water, you see the side of the garage and a small outdoor balcony above the breakfast alcove. He stated that they intend to lift the air conditioning equipment up, and that the windows go to the kitchen counters.

Mr. Barbour stated that they wanted the garage to be subservient to the larger building, and tried to deal with the wideness by stepping the front in with a cross-gable. He stated that it is wider than the house in order to accommodate two cars.

Mr. Barbour presented an old photo of an indeterminate year that Ms. McNeil located. The photo was taken from across the inlet at the boatyard of the house. He noted that there is a remnant on the property's side that appears to be a concrete slab, and that the land was much lower at the time. He stated that Maura and her father built the stone embankment, and that there was a house that occupied the approximate location they currently intend to place their home structure. He further stated that there was a wood retaining structure.

Commissioner Sachs indicated an area on the photograph and asked if it was an additional building. Maura McNeil, 90-98 Hackley Street, indicated that it was likely a little shack-type building.

Mr. Barbour passed out the material manufacturer's literature, courtesy of Ms. McNeil. He stated that he would be happy to answer any questions.

Commissioner Sachs stated that the first floor elevation is listed at 14 feet, and asked about the most recent required height. Mr. Barbour stated that the house is in a 12 to 8 feet zone.

Commissioner Sachs asked if the elevation is the same for the air conditioner, and Mr. Barbour answered in the affirmative, stating that it has its own pedestal, which will be finished like the foundation of the building.

Commissioner Sachs inquired about the general landscape character of the property, as the presentation included no mention of landscaping. He further asked if they have considered additional placement of trees, which is fairly characteristic for the area. Mr. Barbour stated that they have not specifically designed a landscape, though they fully intend to create a neighborhood appropriate design. He further stated that they hoped to address the issue of privacy to the north of the house while still allowing as much view of the water as possible, as Ms. McNeil is concerned about being a good neighbor.

Commissioner Horvath noted that there was no reference to exterior lighting, and asked if they had considered but not documented this yet. Mr. Barbour stated that is is correct, and that he anticipates a light to illuminate the home upon approach in the form of a simple, nautical fixture on a vertical scale. He stated the intention to have a similar fixture at the back on the garage. He stated that while they didn't have plans to illuminate the lot as a whole, they were open to suggestions. Commissioner Sachs stated that they generally look for lights that are shielded so they are not prone to light trespass. He stated that, ideally, they should not be able to see the actual bulb or filament of the fixture, whether that means a downlighting form or the presence of a baffle. The Commissioner stated that there are a variety of recessed or shielded options, and that as it is in a nautical area, they wouldn't want anything so bright as to be an eyesore or that would threaten the context and character of the area they are trying to encourage.

Mr. Barbour stated that, budget permitting, they would like to consider lighting under the nose of the steps so you don't see the light, but rather the tread illuminated. He stated that desire to install something similar in the deck railing where the source is concealed. Commissioner Sachs stated that this is within the bounds of what they are aiming for, and could easily compatible. Mr. Barbour stated his desire to be architecturally compatible with the district while still accommodating Ms. McNeil's request for a simple, modern house with a cottage-like form.

Commissioner Sachs stated that he particularly appreciates the profile from the north, and the execution of the windows, which speaks of the property's expansive view.

Returning to the issue of landscaping, Commissioner Sachs stated that planting of trees is an environmental concern rather than an immediate purview of the historic commission. He stated that they would expect to see some trees eventually, but that placement is at the discretion of the applicant. Mr. Barbour asked for a suggestion on the type of trees, and Commissioner Sachs stated that while this was not their purview, he was certain there are people Mr. Barbour could speak with outside of the application process.

Commissioner Sachs asked if there was anyone present who wished to speak in favor of the application. The resident of 34 Hackley Street identified himself and gave a glowing endorsement about Ms. McNeil. He stated that she is very neighborhood-oriented, sensitive to the architectural and environmental heritage of the area, and that he was exceedingly pleased when he found out she had won the bid. He further stated that the house's scale is perfect, the material beautiful, and that it fits the character of the street nicely.

Commissioner Sachs asked if there was anyone present who wished to oppose the application. Hearing none, the hearing closed on Application #2015-07.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Application #2015-07- 90-98 Hackley Street

Commissioner Sachs noted, as an engineering comment, that they should consider making the potential railings vertical rather than horizontal in order to curtail climbing hazards for children.

**** COMMISSIONER HORVATH MOVED TO ACCEPT APPLICATION #2015-07 RE: 90-98 HACKLEY STREET BY MAURA MCNEIL TO CONSTRUCT A TWO-STORY SINGLE FAMILY HOME WITH A 2 CAR GARAGE AT 90-98 HACKLEY STREET IN THE BLACK ROCK HISTORIC DISTRICT WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITION:**

- 1. ANY EXTERIOR LIGHTING WILL BE CONSTRUCTED SO THAT IT IS DOWNCAST IN NATURE, EXCEPTING THE INSTALLATION OF A LOW-WATTAGE DECORATIVE ITEM.**

**** COMMISSIONER RICHTER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

Commissioner Horvath stated that the application displayed a good synthesis of the historical district in terms of volume and form. He suggested a condition relating to lighting be included in the approval.

Commissioner Sachs articulated the precise wording on the condition. He further suggested that, while they have no purview over the construction of a dock itself, he hoped that the dock's railing material would be synonymous with the house's materials.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

OLD BUSINESS

Commissioner Horvath stated that he would like to follow-up with a property on the East Side previously in violation. He stated that the property is formerly Bob Halsted's, and that the complaint was in relation to an illegally constructed fence consisting of partial chain link, partial barbed wire with a pressure treated railing. He stated that he believed a violation notice had been sent out, but was wondering what the status was.

Mr. Guevara stated that while they don't have the manpower to actively and regularly enforce violations through home visits (given the existing workload of the zoning inspectors), they try to send notices to property owner. He stated that he believes Cory Bromley sent a note, and that he will double check, then email the Commissioner.

MINUTES OF JULY 2015

While the proper individuals were not present to vote on the minutes, Commissioner Sachs noted the following corrections for future reference:

1. Beginning Page One, 3rd Paragraph and recurring: **DAYHILL DONOFRIO** is to be respelled as indicated, throughout the document.
2. Page Two, 5th Paragraph: Sentence clarification- **"The discussion then moved to the location of a basement window in the water table board on or around the foundation."**
3. Page Two, 5th Paragraph: Insertion- **"-and could easily accept the basement window rather than its current placement."**
4. Page Three, 2nd Paragraph: Clarification- **WOOD** clapboard.
5. Page Three, 7th Paragraph: Clarification- **"He then asked if there was anyone present who wished to speak in opposition. Five individuals raised their hands."**

6. Page Three, 9th Paragraph: Correction- Barber is to be spelled **BARBOUR** throughout the document. The street in question is to be respelled **PEARSALL Place**.
7. Page Four: Correction- The address is to be noted as **340 BREWSTER STREET**, and **Mr. Kenneth ALCORN** is to be spelled as noted throughout.

ADJOURNMENT

- ** COMMISSIONER RICHTER MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
- ** COMMISSIONER HORVATH SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting closed at 7:01 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Ramos
Telesco Secretarial Services