

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 1, 2022**

ATTENDANCE: Guy Horvath, Chair; Susan Tabachnick, Co-chair; Kristen Alvanson, Tim O'Connor, Rachel Rockwell, Stuart Sachs,

OTHERS: Paul Boucher, Asst. Zoning Administrator; Damien Breier, John Villwell, Wayne Garrick, Mark Antonini, Center for Family Justice CFO/CAO

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Horvath called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. He called the roll and stated there was a quorum present.

PUBLIC HEARING

Mr. Horvath reviewed the rules for the Public Hearing, including having only one person speaking at a time and also identifying themselves when they are recognized by the Chair.

Continued Business:

There were no continued items to consider at this time.

Deferred Business:

There were no deferred items to consider at this time.

Tabled Business:

There were no tabled items to consider at this time.

New Business:

Application #2022-2 of Damien Breier/Thomas Ryder (LandTech) for an in-ground pool, boat house, two-story garage addition (front) and two-story house addition (rear) at the address of 39 Penfield Place.

Mr. Breier came forward and introduced himself. He stated that he was a professional engineer licensed in Connecticut and also a local business owner. He has also owned historic homes and worked on projects on all of them. He is planning on doing some extensive renovations on the Penfield Place residence, which has some leaks inside the building. This will require replacement of windows and masonry repairs.

Mr. Breier then displayed the site plans on screen and photos of the residence. He reviewed the layout of the parcel with the Commissioners. He noted that his addition will block his neighbor's view of the water. He also indicated where the gas line, AC line and other utilities will be located.

The plan is to add a garage with two bedrooms above it, rebuild the patio and the pool. He indicated where the driveway would be moved and the new garage would be constructed. The current garage will be turned into a mudroom and one parking bay will remain. He displayed how the roof line would be matched to the existing pitch.

Mr. Breier then reviewed the amounts of additional living space that would be added with the additions. He is attempting to make his home a green home by using geothermal or possibly having a Tesla solar tile roof. He concluded his remarks by saying that he would be significantly adding to the value of his property and that of most of his neighbors by beautifying the site.

Mr. Sachs had several questions about the length of the dock. Mr. Breier said that the dock was not part of the discussion but would only be used for kayaks or paddleboards. Mr. Sachs said that part of the application included the ramp, which is part of the Commission's purview. Mr. Breier said that the "boathouse" was actually just a shed for storage for items that can be carried to the water's edge. Mr. Breier said what appears to be a ramp had actually been removed from the plans. Discussion followed about the details.

Mr. Sachs asked about the pool being located directly at the setback line. He said that the angle might prove problematic in terms of a view.

Mr. Sachs noted that there appeared to be a hot tub aligned with the pool. Mr. Breier said that it was a spa. He noted that it was not picked up on the site plan. It was noted on Plans A11. Discussion followed about the vanishing edge and the location of the spa.

Ms. Rockwell said that she did not feel that it was designed with historic preservation in mind. She noted that there was only one mention of shingles and clapboard, but that was the only materials mentioned.

She said that the residence was probably not build any later than 1931 and went on to speak about the existing uneven roof line that was indicative of houses built in the 1930's. The six over one windows were also indications that the house was constructed in the 30's. The double doors with the sidelight is not in keeping with the time. She listed a number of proposed changes that were not consistent with the time period. The plans and drawings do not show that the house would look like it was built in the 1930's.

Ms. Rockwell asked what kind of material would be used for the front walk. Mr. Breier said that he would like to use more regular masonry material.

Ms. Rockwell asked about the type of fencing that would be installed around the pool. She asked for more details about the Tesla roof tiles and the type of garage doors. She suggested that Mr. Breier check with an architect that was familiar with the New England style of building.

Mr. Breier said that the architect was the one who he worked with in Southport. He pointed out that there were railings in the neighborhood that were not historic.

Discussion followed about the types of materials used in the project and the interpretations of the general statutes and Department of Interior guidelines. It was noted that the various Commissioners may have different views on the various aspects of the project.

The discussion moved to the details of the housing for the pool equipment, which Mr. Breier reviewed with the Commission. A question was asked about a propane tank for a 100 gallon water heater. Mr. Breier said that the inclusion of the propane tank was an error since the property has natural gas. Mr. Breier explained where the Tesla battery packs would be located.

It was pointed out that since the residence was located in a flood plain, the crawl spaces would need to have flood vents. Discussion followed about the fact that the plans show a basement under the existing structure and current FEMA flood zone requirements.

The discussion moved to the site plantings and the use of pervious pavement on the site.

**** MR. O'CONNOR MOVED TO CONTINUE THE PUBLIC HEARING ON APPLICATION #2022-2 OF DAMIEN BREIER/THOMAS RYDER (LANDTECH) FOR AN IN-GROUND POOL, BOAT HOUSE, TWO-STORY GARAGE ADDITION (FRONT) AND TWO-STORY HOUSE ADDITION (REAR) AT THE ADDRESS OF 39 PENFIELD PLACE TO THE MARCH HISTORIC DISTRICT MEETING.**

**** MR. SACHS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Application #2022-4 of Althea Johnson-Cole & Villwell Builders for removal and replacement of wood flooring to the existing front porch of the house at the address of 2090 North Avenue.

Mr. John Villwell greeted the Commissioners. He gave a quick synopsis of the situation where the porch flooring had been removed by a former employee and replaced with another type of material. The original flooring is rotted and will be replaced by similar tongue and groove flooring. The existing railings have been removed and are being stripped for repainting and then will be reinstalled.

Mr. Villwell was asked if the new porch flooring would have a painted finished. He said that they will be repainting the flooring.

Mr. Villwell was asked if the replacement flooring would be pine. He confirmed that it was. A recommendation for using fir instead was made. It was agreed to make the use of fir a condition of approval. Discussion followed about the details of the replacement decking measurements. Mr. Villwell said that they were just replacing the rotted decking with the same dimensions that were there originally.

Mr. Horvath asked if there was anyone present who wished to speak in favor of the application. No one indicated that they did. Mr. Horvath asked if there was anyone present who wished to speak in opposition to the application. No one indicated that they did. Mr. Horvath then closed the hearing on Application #2022-4 of Althea Johnson-Cole & Villwell Builders for removal and replacement of wood flooring to the existing front porch of the house at the address of 2090 North Avenue.

Application #2022-3 of Wayne Garrick & Center for Family Justice for an ADA compliant ramp to the rear of the building and the removal of the bay door on the garage and the installation of a french door with side windows at the address of 800 Clinton Avenue.

Mr. Wayne Garrick from New Haven, greeted the Commissioners and gave a brief overview of his work as an architect. He noted that much of the front portion of the house was original and in decent condition. He said that he prefers to meet with the Building Official to review the local codes before starting a project. This is followed by a working session with the client. The main interior staircase is original and quite striking.

Mr. Garrick said that the existing ramp that faces Clinton Avenue does not meet ADA requirements and is not attractive. In the back of the house is a staircase from the first to second floor that is dangerous and can be eliminated. He proposed replacing that staircase with a 100% code compliant staircase and relocating the Clinton Avenue ramp to create a wrap-around ramp by the new staircase. He also spoke of replacing a few of the windows in the front of the building with smaller fenestrations. The ADA requirements only require the first floor to be accessible by code.

Mr. Garrick went on to speak about the exterior of the building and how this would be handled. He said that this new staircase would be somewhat concealed from the nearby street because there is a hedge along the property that will be maintained.

He said that he was sure the Commission realized that this was a home for domestic violence victims. Often the displaced family members bring pets along, which are helpful in resolving issues. The garage on the property will be converted into a place to maintain the pets. There will be five kennels inside the heated, air conditioned and sound resistant space. The current driveway door will be replaced with one that brings more light and ventilation into the building.

Mr. Garrick also reviewed the details of the ramp railing with the Commissioners.

Mr. Garrick was asked if he would be changing the windows in the front of the house. He confirmed that this was so and said that the new windows would match the rest of those in the house. Discussion followed about the trim, options for replacing the windows and details of the formerly enclosed porch. It was agreed that the door and a small porch facing Beechwood would be removed.

A question was raised regarding a utility box in the front of the building that was surrounded by bollards. Mr. Antonini, the Center for Family Justice CAO, explained that the cable company had installed it and similar units were being installed all over the City.

A discussion followed regarding the hip roofs that were being proposed rather than the existing gable roof design. Mr. Garrick explained that they were trying to soften the roof line and make it less severe. He added that if the Commission insisted, they could make the change back to a gable style and echo the brackets from the main portion of the house. The focus is on moving the project forward because the current facility is overcrowded.

The porch roof and overhang were the next topics of consideration. Mr. Garrick said that they had not yet decided on the details for that roof, but could continue some of the same type of trim that is present on the rest of the house.

The discussion moved back to how the gables should look and their directional orientation. It was noted that the house had been neglected and the changes would improve the neighborhood.

Mr. Horvath had several comments regarding the dimensions of the rear staircase and the ramp construction. Mr. Garrick explained that he designs his ADA ramps to be wide enough so that two people can walk side by side in case one of the individuals needs to provide assistance. A discussion followed about the original plans with the ramp in the front of the building and the ADA parking in the back. Mr. Garrick then listed a number of reasons why having the ramp in the rear of the building would be beneficial, but noted that they would have to make some changes in the roof line and possibly have to move the staircase closer to the house.

A question was asked about some chain link fencing. Mr. Garrick explained that the description should have been listed under Fencing rather than under Decking. He added that the fencing he was proposing was called a hedge fence and would be located along the driveway where the existing chain link fence is. There would also be a sliding gate for security. Discussion followed about possibly using a winter creeper vine and the use of a more traditional type of fence in place of the chain link fence.

The details regarding the garage doors, the trim around the door and window casings along with the size and type of windows in terms of the building code were the next topics of discussion.

Mr. Boucher suggested that due to the number of suggested changes, the application be delayed for a month to allow those changes to be incorporated. Mr. Antonini expressed concern about having an additional month's delay since they wished to get the project moving forward. Discussion followed. It was decided that Mr. Garrick would resubmit the drawings to the Commission for consideration at the March 1st meeting.

**** MR. O'CONNOR MADE A MOTION TO CONTINUE APPLICATION #2022-3 OF WAYNE GARRICK & CENTER FOR FAMILY JUSTICE FOR AN ADA COMPLIANT RAMP TO THE REAR OF THE BUILDING AND THE REMOVAL OF THE BAY DOOR ON THE GARAGE AND THE INSTALLATION OF A FRENCH DOOR WITH SIDE WINDOWS AT THE ADDRESS OF 800 CLINTON AVENUE TO THE MARCH 1ST MEETING.**

**** MS. TABACHNICK SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

RECESS.

Mr. Horvath declared a short recess. He reconvened the meeting a minute later.

DECISION SESSION

Application #2022-4 of Althea Johnson-Cole & Villwell Builders for removal and replacement of wood flooring to the existing front porch of the house at the address of 2090 North Avenue.

**** MS. TABACHNICK MOVED TO ACCEPT APPLICATION #2022-4 OF ALTHEA JOHNSON-COLE & VILLWELL BUILDERS FOR REMOVAL AND REPLACEMENT OF WOOD FLOORING TO THE EXISTING FRONT PORCH OF THE HOUSE AT THE ADDRESS OF 2090 NORTH AVENUE WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITION:**

1. THE FRONT PORCH WOOD REPLACEMENT IS TO BE FIR PLANKS.

**** MS. ROCKWELL SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

MINUTES:

• January 4, 2022 (Horvath, Tabachnick, Alvanson, O'Connor, Sachs, Rockwell)

The following changes were noted:

Page 2, at the top of the page, please remove any duplicated lines from the previous page.

Page 2, regarding Calvary Temple, please change the following from:

“Nick said that if there was a sense of urgency for getting the work done this winter, it might be possible for the contractor to come up with a viable solution to issues regarding the door.”

To: “Nick said that if there was a sense of urgency for getting the work done this winter, it might be possible for the contractor to come up with a viable solution to issues regarding the dormer.”

Page 3, under Application 2021-19, paragraph 3, line 1: please change the following from:

“Commissioner Tabachnick suggested that they could allow the roof to be re-shingled for now and have them come back later with a proper solution.”

To: “Commissioner Tabachnick suggested that they could allow the roof to be re-shingled for now and have them come back later with a proper solution for the dormers.”

Page 3, under Application 2021-29, paragraph 2, line 1: please change the following from:

“Commissioner O’Connor said he had sent around a photo file from the original application,”

To: “Commissioner O’Connor said he had sent around a photo file from the original application to actually establish historic district by Charles Babbage.”

Page 3, under Application 2021-29, paragraph 3, line 3: please change the following from:

“and the needs of the associated steeple.”

To: “and the need for ventilation of the associated steeple.”

Page 4, under **MOTION**, please change the fourth bullet from:

• EXISTING UNDALAGEABLE TRIM AND MOLDING ASSEMBLIES, AS REMOVED, SHOULD NOT BE INITIALLY DISCARDED, BUT RETAILED FOR USE AS TEMPLATE REFERENCE TO MATCH EXISTING CONDITIONS.

To:

- **EXISTING UNSALVAGEABLE TRIM AND MOLDING ASSEMBLIES, AS REMOVED, SHOULD NOT BE INITIALLY DISCARDED, BUT RETAINED FOR USE AS TEMPLATE REFERENCE TO MATCH EXISTING CONDITIONS.**

Page 4, under Application 2021-31 **MOTION**, first bullet point: please remove the words “See Attached”.

Page 5, first bullet point in **MOTION**, please change:

- **THE SIDE WINDOW IS TO INCORPORATE EITHER A SIMPLE RECESSED PANEL OR CLAPBOARD BELOW THE WINDOW TO MATCH THE HOUSE.**

To:

- **THE SIDE WINDOW IS TO BE A CASEMENT WINDOW THE SIZE OF THE ORIGINAL UPPER SASH, AND THEN HAVE THE RECESSED PANEL BELOW IT.**

Page 5, under **OTHER BUSINESS**, paragraph 1, line 1: please change the following from:

“ there was a house on Brooklyn Avenue next to the Red Cross that was in the process of being sold. There have been proposals to put a house on the property.”

To: “there was a house on Brooklawn Avenue next to the Red Cross that was in the process of being sold. There have been proposals to put a house on the adjacent back property.”

- ** **MS. TABACHNICK MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED.**
- ** **THERE WAS A SECOND.**
- ** **THE MOTION TO ACCEPT THE JANUARY 4, 2022 MINUTES AS CORRECTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

D. Other Business: None

ADJOURNMENT

- ** **MS. TABACHNICK MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
- ** **MR. SACHS SECONED.**
- ** **THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.
Respectfully submitted,
Telesco Secretarial Services

City of Bridgeport
Historic District Commission
Regular Meeting
February 1, 2022