

Milford Historic District #2 – South of the Green – Commission Meeting and Public Hearing
February 14, 2018 – Minutes

Attendees: Chair Carol Smith (by telephone), Vice Chair Gary Becker, Walter Ortoleva, Marika Mosley, Arthur Stowe, Liz Kennard

Mr. Becker called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm and the roll was taken.

Mr. Stowe moved that the minutes of the January 10, 2018 meeting be approved and Mr. Ortoleva seconded. The motion carried.

Mr. Becker adjourned the Commission meeting and opened the public hearing to consider the application of Chris Cranos and Sarah Ferrante for a certificate of appropriateness to add an attached garage to the property at 7 Pond Street.

Mr. Becker collected the record of mailing for the required notice to the neighbors. Ms. Ferrante presented a letter in support from the owners of 27 Green Street (Franke) and a petition signed by several other neighbors in support of the application. Applicants also submitted a letter with pictures of the houses at 31 Pond Street, 52 Pond St. and 31 Green St.

Mr. Cranos and Ms. Ferrante then presented their plans to the commission.

Mr. Stowe asked how far the garage was set back and how the proposed breezeway would be situated. Applicants explained that the garage would be set back 13 feet from the front of the house and the breezeway would be set back further to provide a separation from the house.

Mr. Ortoleva asked for the dimensions of the proposed garage. Applicants said it was 23.5 ft by 24 ft or approximately 550 square feet. Mr. Ortoleva asked why it was connected by a breezeway instead of connected directly to the existing house. Applicants explained that connecting directly to the house would require removal of a wall and some windows, whereas the breezeway could be made from the existing porch in that area.

Mr. Ortoleva asked if the upper floor was a full finished floor or just an attic. Applicant affirmed that it was intended to be a full finished floor with living space. Mr. Ortoleva noted that other houses in the neighborhood do not have full finished floors over an attached garage.

Ms. Smith asked about the stairs to the second floor of the proposed addition. Applicants stated that the stairs would be internal.

Discussion ensued about the houses at 31 Pond Street, 52 Pond St. and 31 Green St. shown in Applicants' letter. Mr. Ortoleva noted that none of them were as wide as the proposed garage at issue here. Mr. Becker noted that the ones at 31 Green Street and 31 Pond St. were set farther back, that the bulk of the garage in those locations was at least partially hidden behind the main house and did not compete for attention with the main house. He also noted that 52 Pond St. and 31 Green Street were added prior to the establishment of the Historic District. Mr. Becker

expressed his concern that there could be a "ratcheting effect" caused by allowing departures based on additions to other properties that were made before the historic district was created.

Mr. Ortoleva asked about the reason for the height of the roof on the proposed addition. Applicants confirmed that the height of the addition was within approximately 4 feet of the height of the main house and stated that it needed to be that high to accommodate the second floor living space.

Mr. Becker asked how wide the combined house and garage would be. Applicants confirmed that it would stretch from 2 feet away from the property line on the right (facing the house from the road) to 10 feet from the property line on the left.

Mr. Becker asked if one could see the rear of the house or the addition from any public street. Applicants said that only the upper story was visible from Union St. and perhaps Lafayette St.

Mr. Becker asked the applicants to confirm that the siding, windows and trim on the proposed addition would match existing siding, windows and trim. Applicants said that they would although some of the rear windows would be casement windows and the front upper windows would be awning windows, rather than the double hung windows in the main house.

Applicants stated that, while not shown on the plans, they had considered facing the area around the proposed garage doors with stone to distinguish the new addition from the existing house.

Ms. Kennard noted the Secretary of the Interior Standards suggested that additions be complementary but not identical to existing structures. Ms. Kennard also asked about the proposed balcony on the garage. Applicants said that it would be narrow and was intended to allow the French door to open but was not intended to be functional beyond allowing one person to stand on it.

There being no further questions from the commission and no members of the public seeking to be heard, Mr. Becker closed the public hearing and reopened the commission meeting.

Mr. Stowe moved that the commission consider the approval for a COA for the property at 7 Pond Street. Ms. Kennard seconded. Discussion ensued.

Ms. Smith noted the width and scale of the proposed final structure and reminded the commissioners of the position the commission took with respect to the proposed addition at 19 Reed Street.

Mr. Ortoleva complimented the frontal appearance of the proposed garage, but expressed concern about the massing and height of the structure. Particularly in light of the fact that it is set back from the front line of the house by 13 feet.

Mr. Stowe indicated that he did not believe the proposed stone facing would be historically appropriate for the neighborhood. Mr. Stowe also indicated his concern with the size and the

amount of the lot width that would be occupied but opined that he did not see where else an attached garage could be put.

Ms. Kennard asked whether the garage could be attached to the back of the house or even detached and moved back.

Ms. Smith observed that two of the three garages pictured in the applicants' letter were added prior to the historic district and that the one at 52 Pond Street may not be approved if it came up today.

Ms. Smith suggested that consideration of the application be tabled for two weeks to allow the members of the commission to walk the site and gain a better understanding of the placement of the proposed garage and how it might look from the front.

Mr. Stowe moved to table the discussion for 2 weeks. Ms. Mosley seconded. Motion carried.

For the President's report, Mr. Becker read an email written by Bob Berchem which documented the creation of the Historic Preservation Commission in Milford, which has jurisdiction over those structures in the City that are on the National or State Historic Register but not in one of the two delineated historic districts.

Mr. Ortoleva gave the Treasurer's report. He reported that the Register was adding a \$15 charge to the legal notice fees to cover online access, which was driving the notice costs higher than the application fee charged. Ms. Kennard said she would approach the Register about dropping that charge as the Commission is obligated to put a notice in the print edition only. Mr. Becker reported that he had done that several years ago and was told it was a package deal and could not be separated. Mr. Stowe suggested that we consider raising the price to \$100. Mr. Becker suggested that it be put on the agenda for a vote at a future meeting.

Mr. Ortoleva reported that he had researched the issue of two story garages through the assessor's office and noted that, with the possible exception of 52 Pond Street, all the spaces above garages in the district were considered to be either 1/2 story or 3/4 story attics.

The Commission discussed changes to be made to the website to make it easier to locate the commission page. Ms. Mosley volunteered to follow up.

Mr. Stowe voted to adjourn. Ms. Mosley seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Minutes taken by Gary Becker

