

Franklin Township Historic Preservation Advisory Commission

Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes

September 2, 2014

Location

Franklin Township Municipal Building, 475 DeMott Lane, Somerset, NJ

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Andrew Burian at 7:30 pm in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Law of 1975.

Attendance

Members: Jean Ambrose, Andrew Burian, Tom Gale, Anthony Ganim, Joanne Kaiser (arrived 7:35 pm), Bob LaCorte (arrived 8:00 pm), Barbara Lawrence

Alternate: Nancy Hohnstine

Staff: Vince Dominach

Council Member: Ted Chase (arrived 7:35 pm)

Absent

Members: Susan Goldey, Barbara ten Broeke

Historian: Bob Mettler

Guests

Frank Aiello

Dave Dabrowski re: LED Restaurant Group Stage House Tavern

Eric Hambrecht re: LED Restaurant Group Stage House Tavern

Ray Jagiello re: 10 William Street, East Millstone

Kathryn Kopp, Esq. re: 1135 Easton Avenue - Monmouth Real Estate

Peter Richardson re: Rutgers Prep School

Colin Rutt – Pieros Construction re: 1135 Easton Avenue - Monmouth Real Estate

Nicholas Stewart re: 1135 Easton Avenue - Monmouth Real Estate

Formal Reviews

1. Review of a Certificate of Appropriateness application submitted for Rutgers Preparatory School requesting approval to replace 49 windows in the Upper Gym at 1345 Easton Avenue, Somerset, NJ, Block 466, Lot 1.01, zoned R-20 and located within the D&R Canal Local Historic District. File No. 14-00030

The Commission heard testimony from Peter Richardson, Director of Campus Operations at Rutgers Prep, examined a sample of the proposed window material Mr. Richardson provided and reviewed documents attached to the application that included photos of the existing building and a newer gym located at the rear (east) of the Upper Gym. We learned that the newer gym currently has windows similar to the replacements being proposed in the application. The approximate age of the building as listed on the application is c.1968. It is a brick two story building located near the front of the property close to Easton Avenue.

Mr. Richardson told the Commission Rutgers Prep wishes to replace the existing windows because they have become brittle with age and are not particularly energy efficient. He also indicated that one had recently shattered when hit by a ball so they feel the old windows have become a safety hazard. The proposed replacements will be Kalwall panels made of light colored translucent material with their Tuckerman square pattern grids installed. Of the 49 windows being replaced, 21 are located on the front (west) façade that's visible from Easton Avenue, 10 are on the south side, and 18 are at the rear (east). There are no windows on the north side. Ms. Lawrence asked if the windows on the rear will be visible from the canal and Mr. Richardson explained that there was a lot of property between the Upper Gym and the canal but more importantly the two story new gym at the rear of the Upper Gym obscures the view from the canal of most of the windows proposed for replacement.

A motion was made (Lawrence) and seconded (Burian) to accept the application as submitted as the building and the materials being replaced are not considered historic and the project should have little adverse effect on the D&R Canal Local Historic District and nearby historic properties. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

2. Review of a Certificate of Appropriateness application submitted by Monmouth Real Estate Investment Corporation requesting approval to replace the existing roof at 1135 Easton Avenue, Somerset, NJ, Block 259, Lot 79.02, zoned GB and located within the D&R Canal Local Historic District. File No. 14-00031

Katheryn Kopp, Esq. of the Law Offices of Peter U. Lanfrit appeared before the Commission to represent her client, Monmouth Real Estate Investment Corporation. In addition to hearing testimony, the Commission reviewed roof plan and detail drawings prepared by J. Guilder & Associates, P.C. of Parsippany, NJ that were submitted with the application.

The Commission learned that the applicant proposes to replace the existing roof on the portion of the modern single story strip mall that parallels Easton Avenue and the D&R Canal. Earlier this year the Commission approved façade modifications at this center made in connection with the opening of a Planet Fitness Club in the wing that the proposed roof covers. Ms. Kopp explained that while the roof will be replaced, all the mechanicals on the roof will remain and that there will be no change in their size or location. The replacement roof will be a white TPO (thermoplastic polyolefin) built-up membrane roof. Ms. Hohnstine asked if white was chosen in consideration of the Cool Roof Initiative and the applicant indicated that it was a consideration. Mr. Burian asked if there will be coping and learned that there will be in the parapet area. Mr. Gale asked about trim color and we learned that any trim will be earth toned. The Commission noted that the roof slopes front to back and the rear of the building sits close to the canal but it was felt that due to the height of the building and the low, nearly flat pitch of the roof it would not be visible from the ground.

A motion was made (Ambrose) and seconded (Burian) to accept the application as submitted as the building and the materials being replaced are not considered historic and

the project should have little adverse effect on the D&R Canal Local Historic District and nearby historic properties. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

3. Review of a Certificate of Appropriateness application submitted by Ray Jagiello requesting approval to repair the porch at 10 William Street, East Millstone, NJ, Block 64, Lot 6, zoned R-10-H and located within the East Millstone Local Historic District. File No. 14-00031

In addition to hearing testimony from the owner, Mr. Jagiello, the Commission reviewed a description of the proposed project along with several undated photos representing current conditions and unsigned and undated drawings representing the final appearance after the proposed alterations are completed. The building is a plainly styled, modest sized, c. 1890 two story, single family, side gabled, four bay, frame construction house with a single story front porch that extends across the majority of the front façade.

Mr. Jagiello told the Commission there currently are multiple issues with the porch, including a missing post plus problems with the roof and deck. He proposed replacing the existing white roll roofing with white shingles. After some discussion, it was decided that the use of shingles would not work on such a low pitch roof so the applicant was advised to instead use some type of continuous roll roofing. The applicant also expressed his desire to change the existing Yankee type internal gutter system on the roof to an external system. It was determined that the porch gutter system will match the existing house design.

The applicant noted that the current porch posts were square but said he had found a turned post in his basement that he felt might be a more appropriate design for the new posts he wants to install. Ms. Lawrence noted that the survey page for this property in the East Millstone State and National Register Historic District Nomination includes a photo of the porch with columns that the text describes as “wood lattice style” that “are unique in East Millstone and rare along the canal”. She asked if the lattice style might not be a better design than the turned post proposed by the applicant. Further discussion led to the opinion that since the square posts were clearly not original and there was a possibility that the lattice columns were replacements as well and since turned posts were found elsewhere in East Millstone and were considered appropriate for the era of the house, the proposed posts would be acceptable. The new posts are expected to be 4”x4” with decorative turnings.

Mr. Jagiello indicated that he intended to use mahogany decking to replace the existing decking. Commission members advised him that not all mahogany is the same so for longevity he should find true Honduras mahogany or consider using red or Spanish cedar or fir. There was a question about the need for railings as the current design does not have them and they were not shown in the proposed design. Mr. Jagiello said the height of the porch is about two feet and that he would prefer not to have railings. When asked if the lattice around the lower portion of the porch would be plastic or wood, Mr. Jagiello said he would like to use plastic for longevity.

A motion was made (Burian) and seconded (Lawrence) to accept the application as submitted with the recommendation that the roof receive a rolled roofing material and the new porch gutters match the existing style on the house. The project as approved was considered appropriate for the historic property and the Commission believes it should have little adverse effect on the East Millstone Local Historic District and nearby historic properties. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

4. Review of a Certificate of Appropriateness application from LED Restaurant Group dba Stage House Tavern requesting approval to replace the existing flat roof, replacing the roof mounted equipment and building a screening/safety wall around the perimeter as well as relocate a parking sign at 1719 Amwell Road, Somerset, NJ, Block 417.01, Lot 5.01, zoned R-40H and located within the Middlebush Local Historic District. File No. 14-00032

The Commission heard testimony from Eric Hambrecht and Dave Darbrowski as well as reviewed a site plan with sign locations and dimensions, a roof assessment report prepared by Somerset Consulting and Thermography Inc. dated 7/25/14 that includes a description and photo documentation of existing conditions and a proposal to repair the flat roof using a new Rubicon 5-ply membrane system with reinforced silicone coating and install four 10-ton air conditioning units plus kitchen exhaust fans, along with architectural drawings prepared by Carol C Hewit Architecture and Engineering that include south and east elevations and a floor plan showing details of the proposed screen wall.

The restaurant incorporates the historic two story c. 1793 Voorhees House in its front section but the proposed roof replacement will be on the modern one story addition at the rear of the facility.

The Commission was introduced to the large parking sign last month when it learned that the sign had been installed without approval near the front entrance on Amwell Road. At the August meeting the Commission suggested it be moved to the rear of the property and the site plan submitted with this application reflects that change. We learned the sign will be 8' wide by 3' high and stand 7' 8" tall, 2' lower than before.

The roof project documents highlight multiple issues with the existing roof that will be corrected with the proposed project. The applicant also explained that the exhaust fan and HVAC units were poorly installed making them inefficient and difficult to maintain. They attributed a recent fire in the system to these issues. The units will be redesigned to improve their function and access for maintenance. The tallest unit was said to be 2'x 4.5'.

The historic house blocks the view from the street of a portion of the flat roof but the existing units are currently visible. The application calls for a 4'x4' wood panel screen to be installed on the south and east perimeters of the single story roof to mitigate the visual intrusion of the roof mounted units. The screen will be painted white. The Commission noted that there was a gap in the south run that would leave the units visible between the end of the screen and the historic house. The applicant said that was done to allow access to the roof but stated that they would be willing to fill the gap with a gate of panels to fully close the view of the roof.

A motion was made (LaCorte) and seconded (Ambrose) to approve the sign relocation as submitted and the roof replacement proposal with the condition that a gate be installed so there is no gap in the perimeter. The projects as approved were considered appropriate for the property and should have little adverse effect on the Middlebush Local Historic District and nearby historic properties. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

Informal Reviews

None

Correspondence

1. Letter from Peter U. Lanfrit, Esq., to Andrew Burian, FTHPAC Chair, dated 8/14/14. Re; Somerset Volunteer & Rescue Company No. 1, Inc. Docket # PLN-14-0007. In the letter Mr. Lanfrit requests relief of the condition of approval for the proposed new fire company building. The condition requested the applicant to provide samples of the exterior materials for final administrative approval by the Chair but Mr. Lanfrit indicated that providing the samples would be difficult and costly so instead referred the Chair to the contractor's website and asked to be advised if further action was needed.

Approval of Minutes

The approvals of the meeting minutes of July 1, 2014 and August 5, 2014 were tabled due to Secretary Goldey's absence.

Reports

1. Open Space Advisory Committee - Mr. LaCorte reported that the Committee does not meet in August.

Unfinished Business

1. Historic Resource Survey – There was a brief discussion about the project's progress but it was acknowledged the preliminary steps were still being taken. The incorporation of GIS (geographic information system) data was mentioned. Ms. Lawrence noted that she will not be able to participate in October.
2. Commission Member Handbook – Ms. Ambrose discussed the progress of the handbook. She said that aside from the Chair's letter everything was complete. The Commission voted to approve the handbook.
3. Pleasant Plains Schoolhouse – There was a discussion on the status of the Pleasant Plains Schoolhouse lead abatement work. We learned that the State licensed abatement contractor the Township hired has finished their work though it morphed once started to include window and door replacement not originally planned. There is still a possibility that the soil around the building may be contaminated and need abatement, according to Mr. Dominach. Soil testing is expected to be done. Also discussed was the Commission feeling that there should be a formal discussion with someone from the Township regarding the work done on this project and the status of maintenance of the Township's other historic properties. A proposal was made and approved to have the Chair send a letter to Council requesting that discussion. Mr. Dominach also suggested the Commission invite

Tiffany Delaney, Special Projects Manager, to discuss the status of projects and our concerns. Mr. Burian felt that we could also use the meeting with her to discuss grant opportunities.

Jean has asked to amend this section to read (her changes are in italics):

Pleasant Plains Schoolhouse – There was a discussion on the status of the Pleasant Plains Schoolhouse lead abatement work. We learned that the State licensed abatement contractor the Township hired *finished their work though it morphed once started to include apparently was not informed that the structure was of historic importance before work began, and their work has resulted in significant, perhaps fatal, damage to its integrity. Specifically, the work included unauthorized window and door replacement not originally planned. . There . . .*

4. Stoothoff-Gunther farm – Ms. Lawrence reported that after working with Ms. Delaney she learned that the building stabilization project was finally moving forward. She said the project will be submitted to the NJ SHPO for approval.
5. Historic District Signs – There was a brief discussion about the signs. It was reported that the subcommittee had made their recommendations and East Millstone signs will be located first.
6. CLG Status – Mr. Burian asked about the progress of the Township’s CLG (Certified Local Government) application. Mr. Dominach volunteered to check on the status.

New Business

1. Mr. Burian discussed the progress of adding Mr. Aiello as the 2nd alternate. He reported that he learned that apparently someone was appointed to the position last year but while we were not informed and he has never attended a meeting he will first have to be removed before Mr. Aiello can be appointed by Council.

Public Discussion

None

Upcoming Meetings

None

Next Meeting Announcement

October 7, 2014

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Thomas Gale, Vice-Chair

EC:

Robert Vornlocker, Township Manager
Ann Marie McCarthy, Township Clerk
Mark Healey, Director of Planning
Vincent Dominach, Senior Zoning Officer
FTHPAC members