

Franklin Township Historic Preservation Advisory Commission
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes
June 2, 2015

Location

Large Conference Room, Franklin Township Municipal Building, 475 DeMott Lane, Somerset, NJ

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Barbara Lawrence at 7:35 pm in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Law of 1975.

Attendance

Present

Members: Jean Ambrose, Andrew Burian, Thomas Gale, Susan Goldey, Robert LaCorte, Barbara Lawrence

Alternates: Nancy Hohnstine

Staff: Vincent Dominach, Senior Zoning Officer

Council Liaison: Councilman Chase

Historian: Bob Mettler

Absent

Members: Frank Aiello, Anthony Ganim, Joanne Kaiser, Barbara ten Broeke

Guests

Arie Behar, owner for 475 Canal Road, Somerset, NJ

Kristin Epstein, Executive Director, Yinghua International School, Princeton, NJ for the Kingston School, 25 Laurel Avenue, Kingston, NJ

Charles Greco, representing Amir Shakir for 1069 Canal Road, Griggstown, NJ

Kathryn Kopp, Esq., Attorney representing Jonas Realty for 1075 Easton Avenue, Somerset, NJ

Joe Korn, Manager, Jonas Realty for 1075 Easton Avenue, Somerset, NJ

Kurt Ludwig, AIA, architect for 1075 Easton Avenue, Somerset, NJ

Carlos Matos, representing Amir Shakir for 1069 Canal Road, Griggstown, NJ

Drew Patel, tenant for 1760 Easton Avenue, Somerset, NJ

Tuchman Real Estate Group representative and Craig Deutsch, Architect for the Kingston School, 25 Laurel Avenue, Kingston, NJ

Formal Reviews

1. Review of a Certificate of Appropriateness application submitted by the owners, Arie Behar and Julie Suesserman, requesting approval to add a new Bilco door for outside basement access to the previously approved plans to remodel the house at 475 Canal Road, Somerset, NJ, Block 59.01, Lot 2.01, zoned CP and located within the D&R Canal Local Historic District. File No. 15-00016

The Commission heard testimony from the owner, Arie Behar, and reviewed the CoA application, set of drawings prepared by Glenn R. Potter, AIA, PP, dated 5/18/15, that included the proposed rear elevation, right side elevation, foundation plan, first floor plan, and details of first floor that all show the addition of a Bilco door, as well as a Bilco door product information page and a printed black and white photo showing an isometric view of a sample Bilco door.

The history of the building was briefly reviewed. It was explained that in January 2013 the Commission approved a request of the applicant to renovate and remodel the existing building and add attached garages instead of completing their proposal to demolish the existing building and replace it with a new home that the Commission had approved in March 2009. Both prior applications were heard by the Zoning Board of Adjustment because there were a number of existing and new variances that needed approval in both plans. A condition of Board approval for the remodeling application included a requirement that the home be built as shown on the plans submitted to the Board and the Commission. In January 2015, the applicant again sought Commission approval of a request to amend the previously approved renovation plans with a proposal to modify the first floor levels in the work room and sun room, modify the proposed roof lines below a garage wing dormer and over several first floor doorways and bay window, change the proposed sun room exterior French doors to a window, and modify the porch by enclosing it with screened panels and adding access by changing a window to a paired French door and transom design. He also proposed to add a generator beside an existing freestanding garage that will be fueled by a new underground propane tank. The modifications proposed in January 2015 were approved as submitted.

Mr. Behar said they wanted to amend the previously approved plans to add access to the basement via an exterior Bilco door. The exterior door will be located at the rear of the building below the window in the office. The foundation, which has not been started yet, will be modified to accommodate the Bilco door and a set of prefabricated steel stairs. The actual dimensions of the door and stairs are to be verified based on the dimension from the finished grade at the door to the basement slab but the Bilco door will be about 4' x 6' 9". There will also be a new door installed in the foundation wall at the foot of the stairs.

No public chose to comment on this application.

A motion was made (Mr. Burian) and seconded (Ms. Goldie) to **recommend approval of the modifications to accommodate the addition of the exterior Bilco door as submitted** as it was determined that the proposal should have little new adverse effect on the historic value of the property or 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 the owner, Amir Shakir, 11 Heather Way, East Brunswick, NJ, requesting approval to repair damaged siding at 1069 Canal Road, Princeton, NJ, Block 11.01, Lot 84, Zoned CP, located within the D&R Canal Local Historic District. File No. 15-00015

The Commission heard testimony from the owner's contractor, Carlos Matos, and representative, Charles Greco, and reviewed the CoA application, a product description sheet for 1"x8" unpainted common board, and the property's State and National Register Historic District form.

In April 2015, the Commission reviewed a CoA application by Mr. Shakir requesting approval to repair the roof and replace the shingles, change windows, install missing gutters and downspouts and cover the existing siding with vertically grooved plywood panels. The Commission granted permission to replace the gutters and downspouts and the replace the roof in-kind with three tab asphalt shingles as submitted but took no action on the proposed changes to the windows and siding as the Commission expected the applicants to come back with a revised application that

proposed more appropriate materials for both. Commission members had advised the applicants that it was possible and more appropriate to replace damaged pieces of siding, keeping as much of the original as possible, rather than covering the building with the plywood proposed which members felt was an inappropriate material to use on a historic building such as this. Members had also expressed their opinions that the use of vinyl windows would be inappropriate here. Suggestions were made to consider wood replacement windows that would allow them to keep the existing casings and jams

The history of the building was also reviewed. From the National Register nomination page the Commission learned that the house is a c. 1791 1 ½ story center hall, 5 bay wide by 2 bay deep, vernacular style building that has a wing addition, front and rear dormers, and front vestibule that were all added c. 1915. The nomination page also notes the building's historical significance as it is attributed to be the homestead of an early settler in the area, Cornelius Simonson, and the stream that flows past the property is named for the family. From the pictures, members suggested that it was possible the front wide beaded edge clapboard siding and the raised panel shutters with early pintle style hinges were original, certainly very early and very significant.

Mr. Matos and Mr. Greco explained that the owner now planned to simply make in-kind repair of damaged siding where necessary using new lumber. Members were concerned about low quality of the lumber shown in the product sheet but Mr. Matos explained that the sheet was submitted just to give a basic idea of the type of product they will be using and that they intended to get a better quality material for the project.

Referring to the previous request to replace windows, the applicant's representatives said that they now intended to keep the existing windows and simply rehabilitate them. They asked about the possibility of installing shutters on the front windows of the wing addition and there was a brief discussion on what would be appropriate.

No public chose to comment on this application.

A motion was made (Mr. LaCorte) and seconded (Ms. Ambrose) to **approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application to repair the siding as submitted** as it was felt that the proposed in-kind repair was appropriate and should have no negative impact on the historic property and the local historic district. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

3. Review of a Certificate of Appropriateness application submitted by Rishay Group LLC, 5 Champlain Court, Randolph, NJ, requesting approval to install new business signs at 1760 Easton Ave, Somerset, NJ, owned by Easton Franklin State Shopping Center, Inc. Morris Turnpike, Short Hills, NJ, Block 424.02, Lot 23.02, Zoned GB, located within the D&R Canal Local Historic District. File No. 15-00011.

The Commission heard testimony from the tenant, Drew Patel, and reviewed the CoA application, a drawing prepared by JFS Engineering, PC, dated 3/17/15, titled C-1 Proposed Signage Plan, and two site surveys prepared by Brunswick Surveying Incorporated, dated 7/18/08, one which shows the lot perimeter and existing structures' locations and dimensions and a second that adds the parking spaces details.

Mr. Patel explained that he will be a new tenant in the end unit of the recently remodeled space in the late 20th century single story strip mall known as the Easton Franklin State Shopping Center. It may be noted that the Commission had reviewed and approved the remodeling of the former Drug Fair unit in July 2014 but no sign proposals were presented at that time.

Plans call for front façade signage area covering 180 s.f. with the individual lettering and logo sign elements covering 90 s.f. The plans also call for signage on the side elevation along Cedar Grove Lane to have total signage area covering 40.5 s.f. with the individual lettering and logo sign elements covering 29.7 s.f. The letters and logo will be made of acrylic in the business colors of red, white and black and will have internal LED illumination. The application will go before the Zoning Board of Adjustment for variance approval because a maximum of 30 s.f. of signage is permitted in the zone.

Commission members discussed the total coverage of the signage. Mr. Burian suggested coverage might be reduced by keeping the logo but removing the secondary lettering on the side elevation. Mr. Dominach stated that Township staff did not have a problem with the size and he and Councilman Chase discussed amending the sign standards in the zone. Mr. Gale said he did not like approving sign applications so far in excess of the permitted size but would consider approving this application only because Township staff did not object.

No public chose to comment on this application.

A motion was made (Mr. LaCorte) and seconded (Mr. Burian) to ***take no exception to the Certificate of Appropriateness application to install new business signs as submitted*** and was approved by unanimous voice vote with one abstention (Ms. Goldey). The property itself is not considered historic nor are the neighboring properties with the exception of the historic D&R Canal and State Park across Easton Avenue from the property. It was felt that the proposal will have limited additional negative impact on historic canal and state park and on the local historic district as a whole.

4. Review of a Certificate of Appropriateness application submitted by Signal Sign Company, 105 Dorsa Avenue, Livingston, NJ, requesting approval to modify the existing monument sign to accommodate new tenants at 1760 Easton Avenue, Somerset, NJ, owned by Easton Franklin State Shopping Center, Inc. Morris Turnpike, Short Hills, NJ, Block 424.02, Lot 23.02, Zoned GB, located within the D&R Canal Local Historic District. File No. 15-00012

The Commission heard testimony from the tenant, Drew Patel, and reviewed the CoA application, a drawing prepared by Signal Sign Co., dated 5/8/2015, that shows the existing and proposed dimensions and design of the site's monument sign and site survey prepared by Brunswick Surveying Incorporated, dated 7/18/08.

The Commission learned that the application, which requires Zoning Board of Adjustment approval, proposes to modify the existing monument sign for the Easton Franklin State Shopping Center at the SE corner of Easton Avenue and Cedar Grove Lane to accommodate signage for new tenants, including Bottle King and another to be determined in the future. The proposal will increase the signage area height by 7", increasing its height from 10' 4" to 11' 1". The overall height of the monument sign will also be increased by 7", from 18' 11" to 19' 6" but the width of the sign will stay the same at 9'. The existing tenant signage will remain unchanged and the Bottle King logo, which

consists of red and white lettering on a black background, will be added to the top of the sign with the to-be-determined tenant signage located immediately below the Bottle King logo. Mr. Dominach indicated that Township staff felt that the scale of the sign was appropriate and Mr. Patel offered that the height of the proposed sign will still be lower than the sign for the gas station on the opposite corner.

No public chose to comment on this application.

A motion was made (Mr. LaCorte) and seconded (Mr. Burian) to ***take no exception to the Certificate of Appropriateness application to modify the existing monument sign as submitted*** as the proposed size increase is minimal and the property itself is not considered historic nor are the neighboring properties with the exception of the historic D&R Canal and State Park across Easton Avenue from the property. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote as it was felt that the proposal will have limited negative impact on historic canal and state park and on the local historic district as a whole.

5. Review of a Certificate of Appropriateness application submitted by Jonas Realty Corp., P.O. Box 999, Orange, NJ, requesting approval to replace the existing façade and signage at 1075 Easton Avenue, Somerset, NJ Block 259, Lot 77.01, Zoned GB, located within the D&R Canal Local Historic District. File No. 15-00013

The Commission heard testimony from Kathryn Kopp, Esq., Joe Korn, and Kurt Ludwig and reviewed a set of drawing prepared by Kurt J. Ludwig, AIA, dated 4/29/15 that included Sheet A-1 with key front elevation and floor plans and A-2 with enlarged front elevations in sections with four printed black and white photos of the existing front façade, two printed color photos of existing front façade, undated but appearing to represent current conditions, and a set of color renderings, also unsigned and undated, representing the proposed front façade alterations including two views with new brick masonry bases for the front columns and two views with the columns completely wrapped.

Ms. Kopp introduced the proposal to modify the front façade and signage on the c. 1975 two story strip mall that contains multiple retail spaces on the ground floor and office space on the second floor. Mr. Ludwig explained the proposal is to alter the original Mansard Roof-like second story that is currently covered in green 3-tab asphalt shingles and has recessed second story windows. The proposed second story will be vertical walls covered in a neutral color stucco-like EFIS coating. New windows will be installed flush with the new wall and receive a decorative EFIS lintel and keystone detail. The second story will also have a decorative cornice and corner pilasters all done in harmonizing EFIS. The existing first story canopy façade, both front and sides, will be modified in EFIS to match the details of the second story.

Mr. Korn explained the replacement signage will be internally lit, individual channel letters and logos instead of the existing internally lit box signage in about the same signage area size as the existing box signs which are typically about 12' x 34.5". There was discussion about the signage for the second story offices. Mr. Korn stated that the signs for the three office units, referred to as towers, will be similar to the retail signs. Members thought it would be appropriate to limit the size of the office tower signs to 30 s. f. each.

Mr. Korn and Mr. Ludwig next discussed the different treatments proposed for the metal columns that support the first story canopy. One design calls for low brick bases around each column and the other calls for completely encasing the columns with EFIS material and simulate decorative bases in EFIS. Mr. Korn stated that he personally preferred leaving the columns as they are but felt the need to “upgrade” them along with the other renovations. Mr. Gale suggested that if the columns were left as they are but painted the same dark color as the window trim on the retail windows the columns would tend to fade away. An informal poll was taken with the majority favoring no additional detail on the columns. No changes to the rear of the mall were presented or discussed.

A motion was made (Ms. Goldey) and seconded (Ms. Ambrose) to **approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application to modify the front façade and signage as submitted with the conditions that the individual office tower signs not exceed 30 s.f each and that the existing columns be retained and simply refurbished.** The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote as the property itself is not considered historic nor are the neighboring properties with the exception of the historic D&R Canal and State Park behind the strip mall. It was felt that the proposal as conditionally approved will have limited negative impact on the historic D&R Canal and State Park and on the local historic district as a whole.

6. Review of a Certificate of Appropriateness application submitted by The Township of Franklin, 475 DeMott Lane, Somerset, NJ requesting approval to renovate the existing school building at 25 Laurel Avenue, Kingston, NJ Block 5.01, Lot 141, Zoned R-20, located within the Kingston Local Historic District. File No. 15-00014

The Commission heard testimony from the project architect, Craig Deutsch, a Tuchman Real Estate Group representative and Kristin Epstein representing the Yinghua International School, the proposed tenant, and reviewed the CoA application, a set of architectural drawings prepared by harman deutsch architecture dated 5/21/15 that include SP.0, showing the existing site plan, SP.1 showing the proposed sign plan, EX-2 with existing conditions elevation, A-3.0 with proposed elevations of all four sides and proposed new freestanding sign, EX-1 with existing condition floor plans for three floors, A-1.0 with proposed floor plans and interior elevations, a Louver Products Catalog from Architectural Louvers.

This formal review follows an informal review held in May 2015 that reviewed the proposal for the currently vacant Kingston Elementary School at 25 Laurel Avenue in Kingston, NJ. Mr. Dominach had explained that the Township, as the owner of the property, will actually be the contractor on the project. In May we were introduced to a project architect and an employee from the Tuchman Real Estate Group that is connected with the non-profit Tuchman Foundation from Kingston. We learned the Tuchman Group plans to establish a long term lease for the school, renovate it and then sublet it. They explained the current plans were to sublet it to a not-for-profit independent school that presently operates in a church building just outside Kingston. In addition, we learned that there will be space made available to the local community. We were told the arrangements are complicated in part because the property is encumbered by Green Acres regulations as it is listed on the Green Acres Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI). It was noted that the building has been vacant for a number of years and has suffered from neglect. It was stated that all the existing building issues will be resolved under the proposal and we heard from a representative of the

Kingston Village Advisory Committee that there is a great deal of interest in and support for seeing the building restored and opened to the public and that they were encouraged by the current plans.

The current school building consists of two separate but connected sections. The contributing, original, c. 1920, raised basement, one-story, Prairie style block has a stucco exterior, bands of large double hung windows, a hipped roof with wide overhanging eaves, and a projecting, pedimented, two-story, entry pavilion with a bracketed hood over the entry. The larger, linear, non-contributing, c. 1950, one story, flat roofed wing has a brick exterior with bands of large awning windows.

At the June meeting, Mr. Deutsch reviewed all the proposed changes. In the c. 1920 building he noted that the existing 3-tab asphalt roof will be replaced in-kind. Several of the smaller fixed and operating windows in this section will be retained and repaired where necessary but the larger existing windows will to be replaced with new, reproduction, divided-light, double-hung wood windows with aluminum exterior cladding. He noted that they will use a c. 1933 photo to reproduce historically accurate front doors to replace the modern doors currently installed. The modern wood canopy extending at an angle off the rear will be replaced with a metal entranceway hood similar to the front hood but supported by posts rather than brackets.

In the c. 1950 section, he said the flat roof will be placed with a new torched down roof. The brickwork will be repointed where necessary to new mortar matched to the existing mortar. They plan to replace the glass in the existing jalousie windows with 3/8" insulated glass but retain and repair where necessary the existing steel frames. He explained that there will be two new roof-mounted HVAC units that will be screened on all four sides be louvered screens. There was discussion about what was planned for the existing brick chimney above the former boiler room in this wing that is no longer needed. Mr. Deutsch said he had planned to support it and possibly use it to house mechanical equipment. Commission members were concerned about supporting that much weight and noted that the c. 1950 wing was not really a contributing element so either keeping the chimney to house mechanicals or removing it seemed appropriate.

We learned that the proposed sign would be painted wood, consisting of a 6' x 4' panel supported by two 8' high decorative posts, and be illuminated from below by a flood light on a timer that turned off the light when the building was not in use.

There was discussion about two items not on the plans and one that was but will not be installed. One item not on the plans was a fence around the play area proposed behind the c. 1950 wing but there was not enough information available to proceed with the approval of a fence. Another item not on the plans was a new entry door in the c. 1950 wing to offer access to the proposed play area. The new door being proposed would be steel similar to others in the wing and have a vertical vision panel. They would also treat the head of the door in the same style as others in this wing. As for the item not being installed as planned, Mr. Deutsch explained that the new fabric canopy proposed for the nook between the older and newer sections in the front where there is an entryway that is represented on the plans that were submitted will not be installed due to cost issues.

No one else came forward so the public portion of the hearing was closed.

A motion was made (Ms. Goldey) and seconded (Ms. Ambrose) to ***approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application to renovate the existing school building as submitted with the***

additional approval of the new door as discussed and the removal of the proposed fabric canopy over a front entryway as discussed and passed by unanimous voice vote. It was felt that the proposed renovations were appropriate and should have no negative impact on the historic property and the local historic district.

Informal Review

There were no informal reviews.

Correspondence

There was no correspondence to report.

Public Discussion

There was no one from the public that wished to speak.

Approval of minutes

Approval of the April and May 2015 meeting minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the meeting minutes of the April and May 2015 with the consideration of the minor corrections offered by Ms. Goldey.

Due the late hour a motion was made, seconded and passed by unanimous voice vote to table the remaining agenda items and adjourn.

Next meeting – July 7, 2015

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Gale, Secretary

EC:

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