

RIDGEFIELD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Lower Level Small Conference Room
Town Hall, 400 Main Street
Ridgefield, CT 06877
March 21, 2019

APPROVED MINUTES

A meeting of the Ridgefield Historic District Commission (“HDC”) was held in the lower level small conference room of the Town Hall, 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT 06877, on Thursday, March 21, 2019, and beginning at 8:00 p.m.

The following members were present:

Dan O’Brien, Chair
Briggs Tobin, Vice Chair
Joseph Gasperino
Sean O’Kane
Kam Daughters (Alternate for Rhys Moore)

AGENDA

- 1) 57 Rockwell Road – Various exterior changes and possible roof replacement**
- 2) Approval of the HDC Meeting Minutes – February 21, 2019**

MEETING

The meeting was called to order by Mr. O’Brien at 8:02 p.m.

- 1) 57 Rockwell Road – Various exterior changes and possible roof replacement**

Maureen Rivard, the homeowner, was present along with Steve Anderson.

D. O’Brien reiterated the proposed kitchen windows change. Essentially, two more windows would be added. Changing from a set of two windows to a set of four wood clad windows in the kitchen.

D. O’Brien asked if M. Rivard had gotten any more quotes on the roof. S. Anderson said they had not but that he had replaced some roof pieces himself already. M. Rivard said they were interested in the longevity of asphalt (20-25 years) versus wood (10 years). She said they had difficulty obtaining insurance on the house because of the wood roof. They only found their current insurer because they weren’t asked what the type of roof was on the home.

J. Gasperino asked if they had looked at the roof rafters. S. Anderson said in the old section, he could not look there. On the newer section, the wood was 2 by 12s. J. Gasperino said asphalt shingles were heavier. As such, the old rafters might not be able to bear the weight. S. Anderson said he hadn’t had a chance to look. S. O’Kane said a determining factor to take into consideration was the wind and snow. S. Anderson said he assumed they would be ok. J. Gasperino said that cedar was a very light material as opposed to asphalt shingles. It was important to check the condition of the rafter system. M. Rivard said if they had to put additional structural support, it would be understandable because at that point they would be looking at installing a new roof.

D. O'Brien said it didn't appear that any professional roofer had performed a sufficient investigation of the roof. S. Anderson said currently, they were not being asked to replace the roof. If they were being forced to replace the roof, maybe they would appeal.

M. Rivard said that S. Anderson had already fixed the roof leaks. Venting was done in the new and old section. The roof was not failing right now. And while they could partially replace a section with cedar now, they would like to have the option to replace the roof with asphalt shingle later, although they do love the wood.

D. O'Brien asked if they had done enough investigative work. M. Rivard said they got the \$80K quote. The Keeler Tavern had to do a roof replacement a year ago. S. O'Kane said the Keeler Tavern received several quotes. S. Anderson said there were so many hips and valleys to take into consideration.

M. Rivard asked what was considered a life span. S. O'Kane said his wood roof was 30 years old. B. Tobin said his childhood home which had a cedar roof replaced in 1985 also lasted 30 years. M. Rivard said products used 30 years ago might have been a better quality. S. Anderson said the insurers were not looking to insure their home if their wood roof was over 10 years old. B. Tobin said in the District, he counted four pre-revolutionary-era homes. Keeler Tavern, the Hawley House, the Old Trading Post, and the Benedict House (the subject of the current application). All of them have wood shingle roofs, and the Keeler Tavern recently replaced its roof. Some were actually new or had recently replaced their cedar roofs. B. Tobin said that for this house at 57 Rockwell, the roof was an important feature. M. Rivard asked why. S. Anderson said it was not readily viewed. D. O'Brien said the home was considered an important historic house. In fact, while doing research on historical properties, 57 Rockwell was pictured and referenced. D. O'Brien passed around the literature that showed a picture of the roof as a distinctive feature. M. Rivard said the roof was a very small part of what you actually saw. D. O'Brien said on the road, in the public way, it was an extremely distinctive feature. K. Daughters and J. Gasperino both agreed.

M. Rivard said she honored the Commission's view. However she wanted to know what was the guideline with respect to other historic properties, like the Lounsbury House that had asphalt shingles. D. O'Brien said every house had a different location and historical background. In fact, the Lounsbury House was not a pre-revolutionary home like 57 Rockwell. But as to how it wound up with asphalt shingles, he was unaware of the background but certainly it was not replaced during the ten years he has served on the Commission. He assumed that it likely had a slate roof in some earlier period. This Commission looks at each application individually based on the unique facts and circumstances of each structure. The Commission looks at the age of the home, prominence, appearance, really each situation is different.

S. O'Kane said in researching for a new roof, he met with several roofers. He suggested to the Applicant that they get a series of quotes before they choose a roofer. S. O'Kane said the roof is currently with mixed media – wood and metal. They should do a thorough evaluation. The whole roof might not have to be done. M. Rivard said the ongoing issue might be that a wood roof might not be the right thing. D. O'Brien said they should speak to other roof experts. M. Rivard said that the roof is not failing. They had fixed the leaking portions already. They wanted to do the right thing. They looked forward to their home as an investment. They would do more homework.

D. O'Brien asked if they wished to withdraw the roof portion of their application at this time. M. Rivard agreed they were withdrawing the roof portion from the application.

S. Anderson said that he was working on a sketch plan of a wooden bulkhead cellar door as a replacement of the metal bulkhead door (added by the previous owner and not approved by the Commission) and that such plan would be submitted to the Commission for its consideration. As noted previously, the addition of the wooden handrails on the front porch which were added by the previous owner and not approved by the Commission have been removed.

B. Tobin moved and J. Gasperino seconded a motion to approve the application for the replacement of the wood clad windows, from a set of two windows in the kitchen to a like set of four. Motion passed 5-0.

2) Approval of the Special HDC Meeting Minutes – February 21, 2019

J. Gasperino moved and K. Daughters seconded a motion to approve the February 21, 2019 HDC meeting minutes, with Commission members who did not attend such meeting abstaining. Motion passed 3-0.

B. Tobin moved and S. O’Kane seconded a motion to adjourn the Historic District Commission meeting at 8:32 p.m. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Fields
Recording Secretary