

RIDGEFIELD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Lower Level Small Conference Room
Town Hall, 400 Main Street
Ridgefield, CT 06877
May 19, 2016

APPROVED MINUTES

A regular 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, May 19, 2016, and beginning at 7:30 p.m.

The following members were present:

Daniel J. O’Brien, Chair
Joseph Gasperino
Rhys L. Moore
Sean O’Kane
Eric Pashley
Harriet Hanlon
Briggs L. Tobin

Absent: Jim Hancock

MEETING

The Meeting was called to order by Mr. O’Brien at 7:30 p.m.

87 High Ridge Avenue – Jane Didona presented the proposed changes to the entrance of 87 High Ridge Avenue. She shared photos of the house taken from postcards when it was first built. She showed a current photo of the house with asphalt right up to the front door. The driveway entrance is also on a blind corner which presents a safety hazard.

The proposal is for an upgrade to the existing entrance with a gate. The home owners wish to create a secondary entrance on the south side of the property onto High Ridge Avenue. A narrow drive on the east side of the property will connect the two driveways. Ms. Didona shared a picture depicting the quality of the iron-like gate to be used to close off the current entrance. The entire property is now enclosed with the use of a chain-link fence located in the privet hedge. The secondary entrance will have a “cattle crossing” entrance.

Ms. Didona shared a sample of the proposed interlocking pavers for the courtyard area, with the space between filled with colored sand. These pavers are 2 ¼ inches in thickness. There is an aggregate resin on the top of the pavers that can be made of different colors. The border will be made out of Belgium blocks.

The walls in the entrance area will be brick with coping and with a “scoop” on either side. The brick will match the brick that is used there now. Ms. Didona showed a picture of the current piers at the entrance which will be moved to the High Ridge secondary

entrance. A decision has not been made for the top of the piers for lights and finials. There will be lighting by the proposed service entrance. The low brick wall will be 30 ft. in length, 3 ½ ft. in height sloping up to the 2 x 2 ft. – 6 ft. high piers.

E. Pashley asked if the entry is going to detract from the main house and suggested that the wall may become the focus. J. Didona indicated that the new second entrance is essential for safety reasons, but the historic entrance can be kept where it is. They did an assessment of all the trees. The ivy needs to be removed as it destroys the bark.

J. Didona stated how they are anxious to get started with the construction of the courtyard and the new service entrance. She will return with details of the gates, the pillars and the lighting.

B. Tobin questioned the need for baluster around the courtyard drive area. S. O’Kane stated how he believes that the balustrade is not needed and the less we do with the landscaping, the better the details of the house will show up. He suggests the same narrow entrance be retained.

E. Pashley stated that he believes that the wall is too grandiose. The wall will detract from the look of the house. S. O’Kane inquired about having the landscaping slope up to meet the courtyard rather than the use of a brick retaining wall. B. Tobin commented on how the bern already slopes up and why can’t the slope angle be increased. J. Didona replied that it is difficult to maintain landscaping on a bern. S. O’Kane stated how this is an important house on an important corner. The less we do with brick walls, the better.

J. Didona stated how she needs to go to the Highway Department to seek approval for the secondary driveway. She would appreciate if the Historic District Commission can approve everything except the “open” items. She will come back next week with the requests on the outstanding items. D. O’Brien suggested that the Commission vote at this meeting solely on the proposed secondary driveway. E. Pashley stated how he wants to explore further the plans for the entrance – he is not comfortable with the 30 ft. wall. D. O’Brien suggested that J. Didona take pictures from Peaceable Street.

E. Pashley moved and B. Tobin seconded a motion to approve the plans for the creation of a second entrance. The motion was carried 5-0.

316 Main Street (Lounsbury House) - Alex Bellina indicated that he is representing himself in this presentation and not his architectural firm. The proposal is to replace the existing freestanding signs for the Lounsbury House with new oval signs. The existing poles and lighting will remain.

Both B. Tobin and D. O’Brien disclosed relationships which neither believed constituted conflicts of interest but wanted to disclose such to the Commission in case a member believed otherwise. B. Tobin stated that Mr. Bellina is a Board of Director member of his employer. D. O’Brien stated how he has not been on the Board of Directors for the Lounsbury House for the past three years. There was no objection from the Commission members.

Alex Bellina stated how there are two signs out in the front of 316 Main Street. A lot of work has been done on the inside of Lounsbury House with a “new look” and “new branding”. In keeping with this “new look,” the Lounsbury House is creating a new look with the signage. There is also a new logo and new font to the letterhead used for the house. The signs will hang in the same two locations and each sign will be two-sided and will slip into place. There will be no change to the poles. There will be a flat crown molding look going around the signage, which sill set off the lettering and give the appearance of some depth. The sign will just say, “Lounsbury House, c. 1896.”

E. Pashley moved and B. Tobin seconded a motion to approve the new signage as presented. Approved as presented the replacement of the existing two freestanding signs located at the Main Street driveway entrance with two like oval signs. Existing poles and lighting to remain. Motion carried 5-0.

27R West Lane - Larry Spector presented the owner’s request for a new front door and a new window for the front of the house. There were two approved new windows put in last year – Pella windows, 200 series.

S. O’Kane stated the need for a rendering of the door sidelights and the top of the stone work which the applicant indicated that he will provide. It is important that the windows align so equal on each side.

B. Tobin moved and E. Pashley seconded a motion to approve the plans as presented. Approved as presented removing the bumpout window and installing a new window set flush to the house, replacing front door with new mahogany door with side lite, and adding stone facade to portico. S. O’Kane recused himself from the vote. Motion carried 4-0 with one abstention.

MEETING CONTINUATION

It was agreed to continue this meeting on Tuesday, May 24, 2016, at 7:30 p.m. in the same location in order to continue the presentation and discussion of the application for 87 High Ridge Avenue.

ADJOURNMENT

J. Gasperino moved and D. O’Brien seconded a motion to adjourn the Historic District Commission meeting at 9:01 p.m. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel O’Brien
Chair