

RIDGEFIELD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Lower Level Small Conference Room
Town Hall, 400 Main Street
Ridgefield, CT 06877
December 17, 2020

APPROVED MINUTES

A meeting of the Ridgefield Historic District Commission (“HDC”) was held via teleconferencing, which was open to the public, on Thursday, December 17, 2020, and beginning at 7:30 p.m.

The following members were present:

Dan O’Brien, Chair
Briggs Tobin, Vice Chair
Rhys Moore
Harriet Hanlon
Mark Blandford (Alternate voting for Sean O’Kane)

AGENDA

- 1) **62 High Ridge Avenue – Roof replacement**
- 2) **30 Main Street – Installation of pool and related fencing**
- 3) **43 West Lane – Installation of pool and related fencing**

MEETING

The meeting was called to order by Mr. D. O’Brien at 7:32 p.m.

1) **62 High Ridge Avenue – Roof replacement**

D. O’Brien advised that Mr. Alexander Wattles, the owner of 62 High Ridge Avenue, requested via email that his application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the replacement of the wood shake shingles on the house with an asphalt shingle product be withdrawn. The request was recognized as such by the Commission.

2) **30 Main Street – Installation of pool and related fencing**

Mr. Craig Studer and Ms. Sophie Buscaglia of Studer Design Associates presented on behalf of the homeowners.

C. Studer presented plan drawings online to the commission. C. Studer said the house was built in 1935. He first showed where the property was situated in relation to the historic district area. A revised page LA 5 (Planting plan) was most recently submitted to the HDC, presented online. C. Studer said the project was essentially a rectangle pool that was tucked in, behind the house. There were a series of concrete and blue stone steps. They would be putting in a double French door, about 5 ft. wide. The stairs were a double loaded set of stairs, with wrought iron railing on it and they would come down to the pool area. The pool was designed

for lap swimming. There would be brick paving and on the left side, they would be cutting into the hill about 2 – 2 1/2 ft. On the right side, they would be filling in about 3 ft. All the plantings would be on the slope. The trees and the fence would be at the toe of the slope. At the top of the slope there would be boxwood hedge. On the slope there would be a mass of hydrangeas. To screen the spaces between on the left side (west), they would put evergreen trees, green giant arborvitae. On Saturday's site walk, the fence that turned from the property line back to the house with a gate did not have plantings in front of it. Since the site walk, laurel was planted. During the site walk they also showed the individual type of plants they would plant. The pool equipment would be located on the east side of the pool and also a generator. This would be completely enclosed on three sides by a dark green, solid wood board fence for screening and noise purposes. They would also surround it with additional plants.

C. Studer said that one of the concerns and comments that were made on the property by the Commission were that the front was a public access way. C. Studer said this was not a public access way, but that it was a shared access way under private ownership. That Quarantello's and the first neighbor to the east had easement to pass over to get to their property. In the back, on the rear portion of the property, there was a single driveway to a rear lot that was not considered an access way, as defined by the Zoning department. He said it was considered a drive to a shared lot.

D. O'Brien said the Commission had been interpreting a public way, as anything like a parking lot on a church property that bordered on someone else's property that created a public way. So that there was a broader view of access ways as public ways, particularly when they accessed to multiple properties as a way used by the public. C. Studer said one could not see the physical pool from that rear property line where that single driveway came in, but you would be able to see if someone was standing in that pool area from their knees up. D. O'Brien said you could not see from Main Street. C. Studer confirmed that was correct, because that was lower than the existing corner of the house. D. O'Brien said the house was one lot in from Main Street.

Following the drawing, there were several images. C. Studer said the second image from the right was where the stairs came out. The a/c condenser to the left of the square would be relocated to the side of the house. The Propane tank would come out. There were small stone walls that would not be visible from the street and would match the foundation stone. Images on right showed double loaded stairs. There would be flagstone treads. The risers would be stone, to match the stone of the house. Other images, including the brick walk from the Keeler tavern, illustrated the inspiration for the proposed brick walk.

M. Blandford moved and B. Tobin seconded a motion to approve the application as presented for the proposed installation of a pool and related fencing and equipment pad as proposed in the plans presented, and which includes the following various elements:

- A. Construct 18 ft. X 45 ft. swimming pool**
- B. Jerith pool enclosure fence (black aluminum)**
- C. Brick pool terrace**
- D. 6 new steps w/ landing risers to be stone veneer to closely match stone used on residence treads to be 2" thick thermal bluestone**
- E. Retaining/guide wall at step**
- F. Proposed wrought iron handrail**
- G. Bluestone walk on concrete**
- H. Proposed storm water retention area**
- I. Landscaping**

Motion passed 5-0.

3) 43 West Lane – Installation of pool and related fencing

Mr. Craig Studer and Ms. Sophie Buscaglia of Studer Design Associates presented on behalf of the homeowners.

C. Studer presented plan drawings online to the Commission. He said the house was built in the 1970's. This was a cape style house with a two-car garage. In the back, there was an existing deck with a 45 degree clipped corner. They would be squaring off the deck and adding a set of stairs down to the rear yard, with some stepping stones. Straight out was a series of wood stairs shown on the drawing. They would be creating a masonry set of stairs, taking it down another foot because of the change of grade, from where the bottom of the wood stairs were now going out towards the pool. These would be one foot contour intervals so that the pool was an elevated plateau and would slope down to the yard. All work was going to be more than 100 ft. away from the wetlands. And there were also setbacks required for structures from the swimming pool for which they were pretty much in line with regards to orientation.

D. O'Brien asked about the 100 ft. setback requirement. C. Studer said it was now a requirement by the Wetlands Code. You had to make an application if you wanted to do work closer than the 100 ft.

This was not a pool designed for swimming. This was a pool to hang out in. There was a large tanning shelf on the right side with a foot of water and steps leading into the pool. The deepest portion was about 5 ½ ft. And there was a 2 ½ ft. wide NY blue stone coping. The Spa would be elevated 20" higher than the pool and would cascade into the pool. And there would be a small platform for resting.

Looking at the L shaped wall, both ends at the top were only 18" higher on both sides. In the outside elbow of the wall was where the wall would be the highest. About 4 ½ ft. maximum from the low side of that wall to the top of the sitting wall. That wall would be buffered by broad leaf evergreen plants. Also there would be a series of trees that would run perpendicular to the back of the house and parallel to the side of the house. Plantings would be pruned into a tall high hedge. The pool equipment on the right side of the house would be on a concrete pad, surrounded by a 4 ft. high, stained dark green solid wood. There was an existing wire fence along the property line that would remain. Along the property line down to an existing tree, going towards the wetlands, there would be a semi evergreen privet hedge. These would grow fairly tall over time.

C. Studer pointed out a wall with a grade change on the right of the property. On the left side was the blue stone cap for seating purposes. The detail underneath the retaining wall was the masonry set of stairs that would receive the wood set of stairs existing that come off the deck. Those wood stairs were fairly wide, 20 ft. wide wood. The stairs were built sometime between the drawing application and the survey. So on the survey, they were shown as proposed steps.

Following the drawings, there were several images. The gate looking from the road on the left side was on an existing wooden fence that opened in. For pool closure purposes, that gate had to open out. There was a second wire fence that contained the dog, which would open out. This was technically the pool enclosure. But they would be working on the wood fence for pool purposes.

B. Tobin said Studer Design had done a great job presenting. The Commission saw a lot of applications and these were a very nice set of materials that stood out. R. Moore agreed. D. O'Brien said Studer Design was well prepared at the site visit and did a great job of walking the HDC through the project.

B. Tobin moved and R. Moore seconded a motion to approve the application as presented for the proposed installation of a pool and related equipment pad as proposed in the plans presented, and which includes the following various elements:

- A. Proposed deck addition with new steps and railing to match existing. Weaving in wood decking to existing decking to blend**
- B. Proposed masonry landing and steps – bluestone select blue for treads, landings, and stone risers**
- C. Proposed seat/retaining wall–stone veneer to match stone risers. Top of wall to have 2” X 12” wide bluestone wall cap.**
- D. Proposed shotcrete swimming pool – 3.5’ – 5.5’ depth w/ under water S steps, tanning shelf, and swim out bench**
- E. Raised spa with underwater steps and benches**
- F. Proposed pool equipment pad**
- G. Existing gate to be modified to swing out**
- H. Landscape buffer**

Motion passed 5-0.

4) Approval of the November 19, 2020 HDC meeting minutes

R. Moore moved and H. Hanlon seconded a motion to approve the November 19, 2020 HDC meeting minutes, with Commission members who did not attend such meeting abstaining. Motion passed 5-0.

H. Hanlon moved and R. Moore seconded a motion to adjourn the Historic District Commission meeting at 8:03 p.m. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Fields
Recording Secretary