

RIDGEFIELD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Lower Level Small Conference Room
Town Hall, 400 Main Street
Ridgefield, CT 06877
April 21, 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, April 21, 2016, and beginning at 7:30 p.m.

The following members were present:

Daniel J. O’Brien, Chair
Joseph Gasperino
Eric Pashley
Briggs L. Tobin

Absent: Jim Hancock, Rhys L. Moore, Sean O’Kane and Harriet Hanlon

AGENDA

- 1) 188 Main Street – new fencing, pathways, driveway, patio, pool, sports court and other landscaping
- 2) 188 Main Street – renovate existing Carriage House including proposed exterior changes
- 3) 103 Main Street – First Congregational Church of Ridgefield – various changes to proposed addition and parking area previously approved and other proposed exterior changes
- 4) 87 High Ridge Avenue – changes to front courtyard entrance including resurfacing and movement of existing front pillars
- 5) 258 Main Street – Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum – proposed extension of use of temporary sign previously approved

MEETING

The Meeting was called to order by Mr. O’Brien at 7:42 p.m.

- 1) 188 Main Street - new fencing, pathways, driveway, patio, pool, sports court and other landscaping

D. O’Brien recused himself from the discussion as he previously owned the home at 188 Main Street. Eric Pashley chaired the discussion. The owner, James Prusko was not present. The landscape architects for the Prusko family, Michael Mushak and David Westmoreland of Tuliptree Site Design were present.

M. Mushak presented a colored rendering. Wants to respect the historic aspect yet upgrade for a young family. The Prusko family has been involved in four restorations previously. The upgrades

will be a pool and sports court in the back of the property. The front yard will look the same. One tree was removed, and two trees were replanted there. The driveway has open arms to greet you. There will be a scalloped Walpole wood fence, 3 ½' to 4', to give a little interest, very traditional. The brick path remains the same on the side. The stepstone which leads to the front door is bluestone. The driveway is oil and stoning, which the family has had before and are familiar with maintaining. They are adding a parking court closer in to the house to supplement the current parking. The current asphalt will have the gravel on top. The new perimeter fencing will be on three sides. There will be a cattle guard set back and a deer fence in back of the property. Because of the 10' landscape easement, the fencing will be done on the inside, which is post and wire with arborvitae. Entire backyard will be screened. Hasn't determined a solid fence (north & east side) yet, but can do 6' maximum. The pool will have solid blue stone as the deck in front of the pool. They are keeping the marble steps and the lawn as a play lawn. The brick will be preserved. D. Westmoreland is a certified restorer. Products used will be biodegradable. Grass will surround the pool. Further down the slope a Sports court will be installed. A retaining wall will be built behind the pool. The Sports court will not be lit.

E. Pashley asked if the Sports court was visible from the outside. M. Mushak stated because of the grading in the front and the fencing in the back, no one would be able to see the Sports court.

J. Gasperino questioned the color of the fencing. M. Mushak stated because the fencing was black, it was harder to see.

J. Gasperino asked what type of drainage would be placed underneath the Sports court. M. Mushak said there would be a gravel bed underneath. J. Gasperino stated he was concerned about the drainage due to the slope.

J. Gasperino asked if the deer fence was solid or could it be post with wire. M. Mushak clarified that if the fencing were solid, it would be 6' high, if not, then it would be 8' high. J. Gasperino asked if the (north) fencing were solid, what the length would be from the brick wall to the end of the property. M. Mushak said the length would be approximately 260 feet. J. Gasperino said that would look like a football field size.

M. Mushak said they wanted to speak with one of the neighbors regarding landscaping. When the neighbor did their landscaping some of it encroached on the Prusko's property. Some of this landscaping would have to be moved. M. Mushak said they would talk to the neighbor about landscaping against the fence on their side, but certainly it would be at the neighbor's cost.

B. Tobin asked that for Saturdays visit at the property, visual sticks be put up at the corners.

J. Gasperino asked if the arborvitae were there yet. M. Mushak said they were not planted yet.

E. Pashley asked about the brick wall height. M. Mushak said it was 6' high.

E. Pashley asked about the fence around the pool. M. Mushak said it would be black metal according to code. The gate would move out.

M. Mushak said the exterior fencing follows the slope as smooth as possible.

E. Pashley stated he wanted markers with respective fence heights. E. Pashley said the Commission needed to see what was visible from the road.

E. Pashley said from the front, not from the driveway, how much is visible and how gradual did the property slope down without the landscaping. D. Westmoreland said the landscaping at the rear of the property has to be there by law.

E. Pashley asked the height of the back fence. M. Mushak said it was 6' high, post and wire. D. Westmoreland said they would put tall stakes to mark the height.

E. Pashley asked for pictures of the Walpole pool fence. M. Mushak said he would have the pictures available on Saturday. The pool fence was the standard type. E. Pashley asked the height of the arbor roof. M. Mushak said 9' high to allow for clearance.

M. Mushak said by the proposed cattleguard, there were Beech trees by the south side of the house which were great screening.

J. Gasperino asked if the bluestone was only at the head of the pool. M. Mushak said yes. This was to maximize the green grass. The current grading would allow a view of the pool, but not the patio nor the Sports court.

J. Gasperino asked about the elevation. M. Mushak said the elevation was about 195 at around the brick wall. There was a 24' drop around 90 yards. J. Gasperino was concerned about the runoff. D. Westmoreland said when getting the Pool permit, the runoff would be taken into account.

J. Gasperino asked if the fencing would be the same on both sides. D. Mushak said on the southside, would be solid wood fencing, where the view was of the garage. The wood would be natural cedar to blend in with the environment. Therefore, 6' solid on the south and 8' on the north side.

B. Tobin stated he would be looking forward to seeing the proposed upgrades on Saturday.

E. Pashley asked about the timeframe. M. Mushak said it could be six months to a year. There were no contractors in line yet.

D. Westmoreland asked if they should be attending Monday's meeting. D. O'Brien stated one of the landscape architects should attend. Additional commission members could have questions. There would be additional commission members attending Saturday's visit also.

2) 188 Main Street – renovate existing Carriage House including proposed exterior changes

The Carriage House architect for the Prusko family, Peter Coffin of Doyle Coffin Architecture was present. The owners of 188 Main Street were not present.

P. Coffin stated he is modifying the current Carriage House. Currently, looking down the yard at the bottom, the only visibility of the carriage house is the upper third floor. Modifications would be to the dormers on the back section. Currently, the dormers are unequal and not lined up. Not sure if the dormers were built at the same time. There is an existing apartment in the back and a brick fire wall. P. Coffin is looking to join both dormers in the back side of the garage. This carriage house will now be the family's pool house. Changes include installing French doors and maybe a pergola.

B. Tobin asked if the changes would be visible. P. Coffin said if there was no vegetation, could perhaps see a glimpse.

B. Tobin asked if the color would change. P. Coffin said he was not aware of any change.

B. Tobin asked if P. Coffin would be attending Monday's meeting. P. Coffin agreed.

Mr. O'Brien resumed the chair position and thanked Mr. Pashley.

3) 103 Main Street – First Congregational Church of Ridgefield – various changes to proposed addition and parking area previously approved and other proposed exterior changes

Dr. Charles Hambrick-Stowe pastor of the First Congregational Church and John Doyle of Doyle Coffin Architecture were present.

J. Doyle presented storyboards showing the revised proposed changes to the parking area and terrace. There is a simple bar handrail and steps to the church. There is no switchback handicap ramp to engage with the land. The site plan remains the same. The perimeter fence is not changing. From Main Street, the roofs blend in. There is a small sweep on the coned roof over the two double doors which is the main entrance to the church. Pastor Hambrick-Stowe said the goal was to tie both buildings by matching the roof style of the tower. J. Doyle said they added glass to the doors to open up the façade. On the parking lot side, there is a small raised terrace. Materials used will match what is currently on the Church. The goal is to get the people from the parking lot in to the church. Pastor Hambrick-Stowe said they are trying to maintain the "architecture integrity". The church house will be prettier from West Lane with the new windows.

B. Tobin asked where the chimney was on the plans. Decided to look for it on Sat's visit.

B. Tobin asked what happened to the funding. Did the Church still have it, what changed? Pastor Hambrick-Stowe said the costs were higher than expected by approximately \$1-2MM. They still have raised the original amount previously presented, that had not changed. However after reviewing the actual construction costs, they concluded that they couldn't make it work within their current budget and decided to redesign the plans.

D. O'Brien discussed meeting at 12:45pm on Saturday at the Church and everyone agreed.

4) 87 High Ridge Avenue – changes to front courtyard entrance including resurfacing and movement of existing front pillars

D. O'Brien spoke to the owner, Richard Jabara. They are looking to push back the front pillars and redo the courtyard. However, not ready yet to present.

D. O'Brien suggests the commission members stop by the property since they'll be out in the area reviewing other properties on Saturday.

5) 258 Main Street – Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum – proposed extension of use of temporary sign previously approved

E. Pashley asked if there was a post put in the ground. D. O'Brien confirmed the post was in the ground. E. Pashley said then in fact the sign was not 'temporary'.

D. O'Brien stated that Aldrich Museum called and asked for an extension to keep the temporary sign because they had not figured out what to do with the sign. E. Pashley said the concept of 'temporary' was not being used in its correct definition. D. O'Brien agreed extensions could not be kept giving out. E. Pashley wanted to clarify the definition of 'temporary'. D. O'Brien suggested an extension of 6 months and no further extensions.

B. Tobin asked if there had always been a sign. D. O'Brien confirmed a sign existed previously. B. Tobin asked how different was the temporary signage compared to the original. D. O'Brien said the graphics shown to him of the temporary and previous sign were very similar. He was hard pressed to see the difference.

E. Pashley reiterated his argument was not about the sign itself, rather the definition of what 'temporary' conveyed. Didn't want a precedent set for the future. Also, if the sign was temporary, did it require HDC's approval? D. O'Brien said HDC had to approve the graphics.

B. Tobin agreed with D. O'Brien to give an additional six month extension to decide on a permanent sign.

J. Gasperino said prior to voting, he wanted to hear from the Museum why it was taking so long to make a decision. A year was a generous amount of time to decide on a permanent sign. This was not a big project.

D. O'Brien suggested continuing the discussion on Monday as the paperwork requesting an extension was not submitted.

E. Pashley moved and J. Gasperino seconded a motion to adjourn the Historic District Commission Meeting at 9:05 p.m. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Fields