



HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Town of Ridgefield, Connecticut
400 Main Street
Ridgefield, Connecticut 06877
www.ridgefieldct.org

SPECIAL MEETING AND SITE VISIT MINUTES

Sunday, November 8, 2020

62 High Ridge Avenue

Attendees

Dan O'Brien, Chair
Briggs Tobin, Vice Chair
Sean O'Kane
Rhys Moore
Kam Daughters
Mark Blandford

D. O'Brien called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. Mr. Alex Wattles, homeowner, was present and was later joined at the meeting by his fiancé. Mr. Wattles presented his application to replace the existing wood shake roof with a GAF timberline asphalt product with a weathered wood color. Mr. Wattles explained that the existing roof was badly deteriorated and was in need of replacement. He believes that the present wood shake roof was put in place in 2003 as part of a significant renovation of the house at that time by the previous owner. While there is no documentation to support, Mr. Wattles believes that since the house was built in 1940, the current wood shake roof likely replaced an asphalt roof.

Mr. Wattles said that he had two roofers look at the roof and obtained estimates to replace the wood shake roof with an asphalt-based product. He stated that cost is a factor in his interest in using an asphalt-based product.

B. Tobin said that a wood shake roof was the preferred historically appropriate material for replacement of an existing wood shake roof within the historic district. D. O'Brien said that a wood shake roof is the preferred historic appropriate roof within an historic district pursuant to the preservation guidelines published by both the Commission and the National Park Service. Moving from an existing wood shake roof to a lesser historically authentic material is not a preferred practice. D. O'Brien also pointed out that the roof on the Applicant's house was a prominent feature of the structure.

S. O'Kane observed that the deterioration of the current wood shake roof to the degree it has over only 17 years likely indicates other roofing problems which may exist such as improper roof ventilation and lack of proper roof maintenance such as occasional oiling of the wood shake

roofing. Mr. Wattles agreed that such may be the case and indicated that in the six years that he has owned the house, regular maintenance of the roof has not been performed.

S. O'Kane suggested to Mr. Wattles that he consider consulting with a roofer familiar with installing wood shakes and suggested that he call the Executive Director of the Keeler Tavern for the contact information for the roofer Keeler has used to recently replace its wood shake roof.

S. O'Kane also suggested that Mr. Wattles explore with such a wood shake roofer any ventilation issues which may exist with his roof.

D. O'Brien asked that Mr. Wattles consider the comments made by the Commission members in his preparation for the regular monthly meeting on Thursday, November 19, 2020, at 7:30 p.m. via Zoom on which this application is on the agenda.

Mr. Wattles asked what the meaning of the terms "contributing" and "noncontributing" meant in apparent reference to how those terms were used when an initial property inventories and filings were made with respect to the establishment of an historic district. D. O'Brien said that such terms referred to those structures which were more historically significant to the area at the time such filings were made, which in the case of this historic district were likely in the 1960's some 60 years ago.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel J. O'Brien, Chair