

NASHUA HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Monday, June 28, 2021, 6:30 p.m.

NOTE: City Hall is now open to the public after the Governors Order has expired. Therefore, the Historic District Commission is meeting in Room 208 at City Hall. The public as well as applicants may still access the meeting via Zoom.

HDC Members:

Mariellen MacKay, Chair
Robert Vorbach, Vice Chair
Ed Weber
Bob Sampson
Chris Barrett
Bill Slivinski

Also present:

Carter Falk, Deputy Planning Manager/Zoning
Kate Poirier, Zoning Coordinator

Mr. Falk called the Roll Call, the attending members indicated their presence by verbal confirmation, and everyone stated that they are alone.

MINUTES:

April 26, 2021

MOTION by Mr. Barrett to approve the minutes as presented, waive the reading, and place the minutes in the file.

SECONDED by Mr. Weber.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VERBAL ROLL CALL OF THE MEMBERS.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. Brian & Anneliesa Law (Owners) A.J. LeBlanc Heating Co. (Applicant) 78 Concord Street (Sheet 65 Lot 98) requesting approval to install a heating & cooling system in the attic that would have an outdoor ground-level condenser and hidden duct line fortress fitting. RA Zone. Ward 3.**

Voting on this case:

Mariellen MacKay
Robert Vorbach
Bob Sampson
Ed Weber
Chris Barrett
Bill Slivinski

Brian Law, 78 Concord Street, Nashua, NH. Mr. Law said that they are putting an equipment compressor out back, and running a line up the house, painted to match the color of the house.

Lisa Law, 78 Concord Street, Nashua, NH. Mrs. Law said that it would be on the north side of the house, and will be in an area where there are shadows, and will really look like a downspout. She referred the Commission to the photographs indicating where it will be which is away from Concord Street. She said that this will allow them to remove the window A/C units, many of which face towards Concord Street.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR:

No one.

SPEAKING IN OPPOSITION OR WITH QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS:

No one.

END OF PUBLIC HEARING, BEGINNING OF PUBLIC MEETING:

All Commission members expressed support for the application.

MOTION by Mr. Slivinski to approve the application as presented.

SECONDED by Mr. Barrett.

Roll call for the vote:

Mrs. MacKay said yes.

Mr. Vorbach said yes.

Mr. Sampson said yes

Mr. Weber said yes.

Mr. Slivinski said yes.

Mr. Barrett said yes.

MOTION FOR APPROVAL CARRIES UNANIMOUSLY.

- 2. Patricia M. Thurber Rev. Trust (Owner) Tracy Turmelle, on behalf of G.M. Roth Design Remodeling (Applicant) 40 Concord Street (Sheet 67 Lot 99) requesting approval to construct an attached 12'-6" x 16' addition connected to a 24'x42' addition consisting of a 23'x15'-3" garden storage room and a 23'x25'-1" family gathering room on northern side of existing garage. RB Zone, Ward 3.**

Voting on this case:

Mariellen MacKay, Chair
Robert Vorbach, Vice Chair
Bob Sampson
Chris Barrett
Ed Weber
Bill Slivinski

Tracy Turmelle, G.M. Roth Design Remodeling, 12 Murphy Drive, Nashua, NH. Mr. Turmelle said that the addition will consist of a fully finished heating space that will be used for large family gatherings, and there will be unheated space in the rear portion that will be used for garden equipment supplies. He said that the previous application had it as storage space, and the owner has changed the design and will be now be fully finished fully heated space, and the addition will meet all the required setbacks.

Mr. Turmelle said that the previous application, it was described as being very large, and not appropriate for the district. He said that the existing footprint is 3,290 square feet, and the addition is 1,208 square feet, so the total increase in footprint is 36%. He said that there was a concern about the amount of green space remaining after the addition was constructed, but with the addition, the remaining green space will be 75% of the lot, where the minimum is 35% to meet the ordinance.

Mr. Turmelle said that the revised application has the structure as 12 feet shorter than originally proposed. He said that the ridge of the addition is 2'-4" below the main ridge, and 6" below the garage ridge. He said that they submitted photos of several residences that have accessory structures on the property, and many have additions that are substantially larger than the proposed. He said that the abutter across Rogers Street showed a picture that was marked up with the addition very close to the fence. He said that the latest version, the addition will be 20 feet from the fence, and the drawing perspective submitted in the package describes very well that it will not be an overpowering presence on the property. He said that the addition will not impact the sunlight coming in.

Mr. Turmelle said that the residence is described as mid-century. He said that mid-century architecture is typically characterized by clean, simple lines and simple materials and does not include decorative embellishments that are found on other homes. He said that they borrowed from the existing structure the slopes, door and window types, and sizes, and materials and details from the house. He said that one example is the casement windows, which exist on the southern side of the house, and they would be mirrored. He said that the package has a cut sheet for a garage door, and there will be no garage door on the addition, and no new curb-cut requested.

Mr. Barrett asked if the driveway will remain the same.

Mr. Turmelle said that the driveway will remain unchanged.

Mr. Slivinski asked if all the materials will be the same.

Mr. Turmelle said yes.

Mr. Slivinski stated that the addition is about 400 square feet less, and lower.

Mr. Turmelle said yes.

Mr. Slivinski said that the entire length of the house with the addition will be 135 feet long. He said that most of the houses along Concord Street go back from the street, as they did back then when they had horse garages. He said that there isn't a house with 135 feet of frontage on a lot that is 180 feet wide.

Mr. Turmelle said that if they had that opportunity, they would have taken advantage of it.

Mr. Slivinski said that this request is difficult, as the question is what is the spirit of the historic district. He said that when someone buys a house in the Historic District, they are making a commitment to try to promote the District and that includes anything you do to modify the house. He said he questions whether or not this promotes it, while understanding it was built in the 1950's, and it's not expected to have steeples or Queen Anne windows or anything like that. He said he questions extending it as a nonconforming design.

Mr. Weber said he voted for this the last time they were before the Commission, the reason is that all the buildings around there are much bigger, with bigger garages, taller garages, and the overall houses are much bigger. He said that most of the houses nearby are much bigger than this house is.

Mr. Vorbach said that the original house is an anomaly, built in 1952, and with regards to exterior materials, it had a respect for the district, with clapboards, the windows were ranch style windows from the 1950's. He said that there are ways to do it that harmonize with the history of the district. He said that he wouldn't have done it the way it's proposed. He said he doesn't think it was well designed, based upon his training and experience as an architect, he would have done it very differently, vertical siding, pipe rail, the window types, etc. He said that the addition that's proposed does belong in a better way to what exists, it's a better sense of scale, materials will match, and it will be in harmony with the house. He said that he is passionate about design excellence, and in Nashua, it's rare. He said that this is a better proposal than the last one.

Mr. Sampson said that the builder of the home intended to have it be the home with an office, which was not allowed, so it started off on the wrong foot. He said that he regrets that it is there, but would agree with the modifications.

Mr. Barrett asked if there is any intention to turn this into a multi-family.

Mr. Turmelle said that is not the intent, it will be used for family, it's an extended family room.

Mrs. MacKay said that access seems to be through the garage, which seems a little strange. She said that the addition is also way too big for an ADU, the square footage is just too much. She said that it almost looks like a business. She said that she's not so inclined to be happy with it, and thinks it's too big.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR:

John Martin, GM Roth, 12 Murphy Drive, Nashua, NH. Mr. Murphy said that in conversations with the owner, they had strong desire to be in keeping with the existing house. He said that everyone realizes that it's not a period house. He said that they tried to match what was there, since it was approved a number of years ago, and by diverging from anything that was there, felt it would be incongruent and have even more objection. He said that the family is large and extended, and over the years, they value family functions. He said that they're looking for a place to gather and celebrate the family history. He said that it's a triple lot, and being confined to the design of the original house does not overwhelm the lot, and most of the property is behind the fence so it is not easily seen, besides the opening of the driveway. He said that they will have met the ordinance with the open space, and cannot be penalized just because the lot is long and narrow, and not long and deep like others on Concord Street. He said that they're using the exact same materials as what is on the house now, so it will be done in conformance with the house.

Phil Pinkerton, 45 Concord Street, Nashua, NH. Mr. Pinkerton said that he is in support of the application, the property is always immaculately kept, nice landscaping, and the roofline is in keeping with the existing architecture, and has no concerns with it.

Mrs. MacKay read the following three letters in favor into the record:

Jeremy Catlin, 2 Rogers Street, Nashua, NH. Mr. Catlin said that he is in favor.

Ann Dionne, 43 Concord Street, Nashua, NH. Ms. Dionne said that she is in favor.

Linda Willette, 4 Davis Court, Nashua, NH. Mrs. Willette said that there are well-designed changes to the building and is in favor. She said that it is a non-contributing structure to the District, and there is nothing the owner can do to change that, since the house does not represent the older styles of the older buildings on Concord Street.

In attendance speaking in favor:

Patricia Thurber, 2 Davis Court, Nashua, NH. Mrs. Thurber read a letter she wrote into the record, clarifying her intentions and desires for the addition, stating that it will meet the Historic District Commission's roof height, lines, siding, windows, beautification with landscaping and visual appearance. She said that there are no exceptions or variances required. She said that her daughter resides in the house now, and it's been their current project for many years. She said that it is a single-family home, and will remain so. She said that her daughter lives there, she has four adult children, and this house has been a gathering spot for holidays and celebrations for the family, and the current house needs more room for family to come together. She said that the property was in considerable disrepair when they bought it in 2014. She said that the house is a mid-century ranch, and the renovations they did were approved by the Commission. She said that the proposed addition will complement the existing structure and will enhance the building in both value and appearance.

Michelle Thurber, 40 Concord Street, Nashua, NH. Ms. Thurber said that they did a lovely renovation to the home, it's very comfortable inside, and it has a lovely design and features and has been a blessing to live there. She said that she talked to many neighbors and heard nothing but positive comments from folks on how the house looks, and their gratitude for the renovations that were made and their acceptance of the proposed addition. She said that she just moved here from a historic home in Virginia, and understands the importance of living in one, and said that the house will be an asset to the District.

SPEAKING IN OPPOSITION OR WITH QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS:

No one.

END OF PUBLIC HEARING, BEGINNING OF PUBLIC MEETING:

Mr. Slivinski said that finding if something fits into the Historic District is a very subjective decision, and it is not easy. He said that GM Roth is very experienced, and sometimes it is good to bring something in on a discussion basis, to see what changes are proposed. He said that its subjective judgement. He said that it's really the expansion of a nonconforming design in the District. He said that he is going to go along with what the Commissions architect says.

Mr. Vorbach said that the renovation did definitely improve the house. He said he wouldn't have done it that way, though and does not like the way it was done from a standpoint of design. He said that there are ways of approaching this that are more complementary, as it looks very clinical, very crisp and sterile. He said that it does look like an office building. He said that in an of itself, though, it's well done with respect to construction and detailing. He said that the proposed addition is much more in scale now than it was previously. He said that he is not going to object as some work has been done to improve the addition in terms of scale, the materials are a given, the designers are dealing with what they had been dealt. He said he wishes that designers would bring their "A" game.

Mr. Weber asked about any stipulations.

Mrs. MacKay said that per testimony, this would never be more than a single-family dwelling. She said that they want the decision to reflect the exact understanding and words that we heard from the applicant.

MOTION by Mr. Weber to approve the application as presented, and that the residence will remain as a single-family.

SECONDED by Mr. Barrett.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY PER VERBAL ROLL CALL OF THE MEMBERS, 5-0-1, WITH MR. SLIVINSKI ABSTAINING.

Mrs. MacKay said that she is going with this one since it will remain a single-family dwelling.

OTHER BUSINESS:

MEMBERS COMMENTS:

Mr. Sampson asked about a letter that was submitted relative to a garage addition that was approved by the Commission, with concerns about the height of the garage.

Mr. Falk said that a Building Inspector went out to take a look at it, and believed that everything met the submitted plans, and Staff is just looking at the letter as correspondence, and no action is going to be taken.

Mr. Sampson said that the letter also mentioned that she wanted the Commission to recommend to the Alderman relative to changing the rules for this type of structure.

Mr. Falk said that would entail changing the Code for not just her neighbors garage, but every other one in the City, and it would be a monumental request, as the single-family home height is 35 feet, and this structure was well below that, and that would create thousands of nonconforming structures overnight. He said that this request is not a valid reason for the city to amend the ordinance with respect to height of structures in this zoning district. He said the garage submitted an application that was approved by the Commission, it is way past the appeal deadline, the garage addition is substantially completed, and there is no action that Staff will take.

Mr. Sampson said that the President of the Nashua Historical Society is in attendance, and one of our rules is that there must be a member of the Historical Society who sits on the Commission. He said that Dean Shaloup is in attendance.

Mr. Shaloup said that he works for the Nashua Telegraph, and has been involved with the Historical Society for a number of years, too. He said he is the current President. He said that it could be the President or another officer of the Historic Society on the Commission. He asked how an appointment would be made.

Mr. Sampson said that the position is appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Board of Alderman. He said that the City's Ordinance states that one of the members shall be a member of the Nashua Historical Society, along with other specified members.

Mr. Falk said that it doesn't have to be the President, it just has to be a member of the Historical Society.

Mr. Sampson said that the Mayor can appoint any person that they want, but historically, someone from the Commission has usually suggested names to the Mayor. He said that there are projects that the Commission and the Society may take together, such as buildings or sites in the city that have historic interest that are not in the Commission boundary, but which perhaps the Society and the Commission could work together to get recognition of those certain places, such as Amherst Street School, and there are several Fire Stations that were built before 1900. He said that many cities and towns have little signs that they put on buildings in the historic district, saying the name, occupation and date it was built.

Mr. Shaloup asked if the terms for appointment are staggered.

Mr. Falk said that either Staff, or anyone from the Commission could bring forth someone's name for appointment. He said that there are certain people who staff the Commission, such as an Architect, Planning Board member, Alderman, Resident of the District, someone from the Historical Society. He said that staff could certainly mention that we know of someone who is

interested in serving, and it would be meeting the Ordinance with respect to the slate of persons who are on the Commission.

Ms. Poirier said that she is in regular contact with the Mayor's office about appointments and vacancies anyways.

Mr. Slivinski said that the Society would be in a great position to influence the District to serve some history for Nashua, perhaps a \$5,000 grant, and put signs up.

Mr. Sampson said that Steve Eddington is back in town, and would be interested in serving on the Commission again. He said that he's suggested re-appointing him to the Mayor's Office and hasn't heard anything.

Mr. Falk said that sometimes it takes a little while.

Further discussion ensued.

MOTION TO ADJOURN by Mrs. MacKay at 7:53 p.m.

CF/cf