

CHATHAM BOROUGH HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
May 17, 2022 7:30 p.m.

Commissioner James Greener called this Regular Meeting of the Chatham Borough Historic Commission to order at 7:30 p.m. This was a virtual meeting. Commissioners were present by way of Zoom.

Names	Present	Absent
James Greener	X	
Council Member Dempsey	X	
Lynn Magrane	X	
Council Member Truilo	X	
Karen Franklin	X	
Catherine Chin		X
H.H. Montague	X	
Liz Holler, Recording Secretary	X	

Also present, Justin Strickland, a future Commissioner.

(There may be missing parts in the beginning of this meeting. There were problems with the recording. This is what I derived from my notes. – L. Holler, Recording Secretary)

Public Comments

There were none.

Motion to Adopt Meeting Minutes

Council Member Truilo made a motion to approve the April 19, 2022 meeting minutes as submitted. Mr. Montague seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken. The minutes of April 19, 2022 were approved.

Discussion Items

Review of Planning Board Application # 22-001

Garden Terrace Nursing Home, 361 Main St., Block 85 Lots 2 & 3

Applicant is proposing an addition & a demolition of 353 Main Street

Architect: John W. Baumgarten

Attorney: Nino Coviello, Esq.

Mr. Greener asked that the Commission be given a tour through the proposed design.

Attorney Nino Coviello gave an opening statement. He noted that this existing building at 353 Main Street will be demolished by his client. A new building will be constructed in its place. This building will connect into the existing structure of Garden Terrace Nursing Home.

Attorney Coviello noted that three generations of the Flemming family have operated Garden Terrace Nursing Home. A member of that third generation, Peter Flemming, Jr. will be speaking tonight. Also speaking will be architects, Janet Siegel, and John Baumgarten.

Peter Flemming, Jr. noted that members of his family were present tonight: his sister Laura, his mother Phyllis, and his father Peter, Sr. He stated this his grandfather started the nursing home in 1964. He emphasized that his family's nursing home is not a corporate entity.

Mr. Flemming, Jr. explained that the proposed addition will not involve an increase in beds. His family would like to create a state of the art home for their elderly patients. An increase in day space will be included in this addition. More private rooms could also be created. He introduced Janet Siegel, a local architect, for this project.

Ms. Siegel noted that Garden Terrace's original structure had been a residential home. She put the proposed plans on the Zoom screen. Ms. Siegel pointed out the connection that will be constructed between the existing building and the new proposed structure. Ms. Siegel reviewed the appearance of the proposed windows and roofline of the new proposed building. There will be a gabled roof. The pitch of the roof of the new building will match the other buildings up and down Main Street. Ms. Siegel discussed the proposed building materials to be used. The new building will not be stucco like the original building. Ms. Siegel explained how she and the Flemmings have tried to make the proposed building and the original building complement each other, architecturally.

Ms. Siegel stated that the new driveway between the two buildings will be narrower than the original driveway. These plans will produce more parking.

Ms. Siegel submitted Exhibit A-1: a view of the subject property, going towards Madison.

Mr. Montague asked what would be the height of the new building.

Ms. Siegel answered that the building will basically be two stories. A third story will be used mostly for storage.

Using Exhibit A-1, Ms. Siegel described the front of the proposed new building. She pointed out that the Historic Preservation Commission encourages buildings in the Historic District to have a welcoming front. The distance between the current building at 353 Main St. and the nursing home is 87 feet. With the new proposed structure, this distance will become about 70 feet. Therefore the parking will be shrunk down, with the parking spaces to become diagonal.

Ms. Siegel showed a slide of the proposed front, wrap around porch of the new building. She reviewed the proposed measurements for the porch. A nice patio will be created in the back.

Council Member Truilo asked if any variances being sought, particularly for the front yard setback? Is that in compliance?

Ms. Siegel stated that the front setback is 35 feet. The proposed porch is at 40.8 feet.

Attorney Coviello pointed out that a variance is needed for the maximum building coverage. The minimum yard buffer will need a variance.

Council Member Dempsey brought up the way the existing and proposed building will connect. On what level will this connection exist?

Ms. Siegel explained that the porch level will be on the first floor. The first floor levels of the two buildings will be aligned. Referring to the floor plans, Ms. Siegel pointed out the existing building as it related to the proposed building. A full basement will be constructed. An access from the basement level, going up, will be constructed.

Council Member Dempsey asked if there will be windows in the proposed connection.

Ms. Siegel displayed the front elevation slide.

Mr. Greener suggested that after Ms. Siegel finishes her presentation. The Commission could then circle back to the proposed connection and its details and appearances.

Mr. Greener asked where the accesses would be located on the proposed building were.

On the Zoom screen, Ms. Siegel pointed out the main entrance at the rear of the building. She noted that her presentation has been completed.

Attorney Coviello introduced John Baumgarten. Mr. Baumgarten stated that he was an architect for the project.

Mr. Baumgarten put the site plan on the screen. He stated that the present number of bed sites, 34, will remain at this site, if the proposals were approved and constructed. He pointed out that Garden Terrace provides excellent care to their residents; however, currently their building plant is obsolete. Because the building has wood-frame bearing walls, it makes it very difficult to renovate. The building's current lay-out is well below today's standards for senior care.

On the Zoom screen, Mr. Baumgarten showed comparative photos depicting the current obsolete conditions in Garden Terrace and how the proposed changes could eliminate or improve those conditions. Mr. Baumgarten noted that private rooms are very important in a nursing home's marketability. Newer nursing homes are providing excellent private rooms. Garden Terrace needs updated private rooms in order to compete with these newer nursing homes. Currently, Garden Terrace only has 5 private rooms. This is barely above 10% code minimum.

Mr. Baumgarten stated that Garden Terrace is proposing to construct an addition, which between the first and second floor, will have 10 private rooms. So, in the end, the number of private rooms increase from 5 private rooms to 21 private rooms.

Mr. Greener respectfully pointed out to Mr. Baumgarten that the information he has been giving is really for either the Borough Planning Board or Zoning Board. The Historic Preservation Commission is really concerned about the proposed architecture and massing.

Mr. Baumgarten understood Mr. Greener's comment. He just wanted the Commission to be aware that the code for nursing homes now require larger

rooms. He also reviewed the other amenities of Garden Terrace that are currently not meeting code. The proposed addition would address all of these shortcomings.

Attorney Coviello asked Mr. Baumgarten to focus more on the exterior aesthetics of the proposed addition.

Mr. Baumgarten stated that the link between the existing building and the proposed new building will have a stucco look. A white hardy-plank siding will be used. Contrasting shingles and shutters will be installed, as well as double hung residential windows. White residential trim, residential porch posts and residential lattice work will be included. He pointed out the size of the proposed addition and its position on the site is being driven by the need to have updated facilities that follow the Code for nursing homes.

Mr. Greener noted that the existing building that the applicant is proposing to demolish is a Contributing Building in the Chatham Historic District. Certain criteria has to be given for a contributing building to be taken down in the District. The building may be unsafe, or have serious financial issues due to situations like fire damage. He pointed out that the structure to be taken down was originally a residential home.

Mr. Greener stated that the Commissioners have to decide whether the proposed addition is a benefit to the overall community. He believed that Garden Terrace has a very positive presence in the Borough. However, Garden Terrace has to have a good reason to take down the building next door, 353 Main Street. Mr. Greener felt the applicant will have to prove to the Commission that demolishing 353 Main Street would be an overall benefit to the community.

Mr. Greener said this own personal feelings for these plans are “generally positive” because of the way the massing has been captured by the street. The proposed front porch and pitch of the roof is good. However, he had concerns about the proposed stucco connecting link. As an alternative, Mr. Greener asked if any thought had been given to a more glass-like appearance for the connecting link. Maybe more windows could be installed, giving the link a more of an independent, breezeway appearance.

Mr. Baumgarten answered that option hadn’t been deeply considered; however, they could take a look at that suggestion. It looked like it would provide a neutral element would be installed between the two.

Council Member Truilo agreed with the idea of a neutral element be used for the transition of the link.

Mr. Baumgarten pointed out that, with Mr. Greener's suggestion, more light would be permitted into the connecting link. It will also be a nice feature of light and glass when a person enters the vestibule. The interior of the building would benefit as well.

Mr. Greener suggested residential style windows could be used for the proposed link between the buildings. These windows could be over-sized. An effort could be made to design a view all the way through that connecting link for people entering the building.

Mr. Baumgarten answered that he could envision such a design.

On the Zoom screen, Janet Siegel showed photos the Wm. Bradley's Funeral Home and the contributing building. She discussed the perspective of the wide space between these two buildings, and the existing large parking lot. On the existing nursing home, there is an existing side which has gone through recent changes and is not attractive. This unattractive appearance will disappear with the construction of the proposed link. Less space will also result between the funeral home and the proposed building.

Mr. Greener asked Council Member Truilo his opinions on the proposals thus far.

Council Member Truilo noted that the building be demolished is classified as a Contributing Building by the HPC. He asked Mr. Baumgarten if any thought had been given to incorporating this Contributing Building (353 Main St.) into the existing nursing home.

Mr. Baumgarten answered that option had been considered; however, the existing building is too far away, even with the proposed addition. A spreading footprint would result which would be very impractical for the staff when caring for the residents.

Council Member Truilo confirmed with Mr. Baumgarten that it would be impossible to line up the floor levels between the two buildings.

Mr. Greener asked Mrs. Franklin and Mr. Strickland for their thoughts on these plans.

Mrs. Franklin commented that the proposed roof porch did not extend down towards the proposed connection. It looked like it ended just along the front.

Mr. Baumgarten agreed with that observation.

Mrs. Franklin confirmed the door location of the new building with Mr. Baumgarten. She questioned why the front steps would up to just a window.

Mr. Baumgarten explained that everyone coming to this facility, parks their vehicle in the rear and would not use a front entrance.

Mr. Greener felt there would be a number of local people who would be inclined to use a front door if provided.

Mr. Baumgarten explained that there will be a walkway provided on the left side, which would lead a pedestrian behind the building to reach the main entrance.

Mrs. Franklin brought up the porch railing height meeting code heights. She was concerned if a solid building material was used for the railing would impede the view for nursing home residents, who on the porch. Perhaps a horizontal wire-type material could be used for at least part of the porch railing.

Mr. Greener felt that if the Board wants to move forward on this application, they could decide that this is a generally favorable application; however there is work still to be done. For one, the HPC would want to see the suggested updates made for the connecting link. More details on the porch could be provided. If the applicant is willing to work further with the HPC on further details, there is a chance they will get good results.

Mr. Strickland asked what types of community activities go on at the nursing home. Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts? How would the new structure benefit these community activities even more?

Mr. Flemming reviewed the different programs/visitors that would visit Garden Terrace in pre-Covid times. At least twice a month a community group would visit the nursing home to entertain or interact with the residents. In 2009, Garden Terrace won an award for NJ Family Business of the Year. That award was based on community service. Mr. Flemming pointed out that the existing building could use more open space for visitors to give presentations.

On the Zoom screen, Mr. Baumgarten showed a slide depicting the second floor of the new building which provide more space for community activities. The new building will be a community amenity as well as an amenity for the nursing home.

Mr. Montague had no comments or questions.

Returning to the existing site plan, Council Member Truilo asked for a comparison between the existing front yard setback and that of the proposed building.

Ms. Siegel answered that the front of the proposed porch has a front yard setback of 40 feet 8 inches.

Council Member Truilo was concerned that the new building would be placed closer to Main Street by 10 feet. He felt the proposed building looked rather bulky. Is there any way the façade could be articulated to diminish the perceived wideness of the proposed building? Is there some way to break up the appearance of bulk?

Mr. Baumgarten answered he could take another look at the design.

Mr. Flemming gave an explanation of why the proposed addition will be constructed in this chosen location, why it is being slightly pushed forward. He explained that the nursing home residents like to spend a great deal of time outside, weather-permitting. Currently Garden Terrace does not have enough existing patio space.

Council Member Truilo still felt there were ways to articulate the proposed building's façade to reduce the perceived bulk. He felt the proposed building was a little out of scale with the other buildings on Main Street.

Mr. Baumgarten believed he could make adjustments.

Council Member Truilo stated that Garden Terrace has always been a good neighbor to the town since 1964. He will endorse the application with some of the minor suggestions made by the HPC tonight.

Ms. Siegel pointed out that the applicant is scheduled to appear before the Chatham Borough Planning Board at their July 6th meeting.

Mrs. Magrane urged the HPC to show some support for the applicant's plans, but Garden Terrace should also understand that the HPC has the responsibility to maintain the historic presence of Main Street. Mrs. Magrane agreed with Council Member Truilo's suggestion that some of the bulk be reduced. She also agreed that the life of our senior residents should be enhanced, which the Flemming family has been doing for a very long time.

Mr. Greener suggested to Attorney Coviello that Garden Terrace return for the next HPC meeting on June 21st to take another look at the plans. That would give the Commission enough time to write and submit their views of the application to the Planning Board.

Attorney Coviello agreed with this suggestion. He and his client, Garden Terrace, will return to the HPC with revised drawings. Attorney Coviello and his client thanked the Commission for their time.

Review of Zoning Board Application #22-002

48 Fairmount Avenue – Block 91 Lot 4

Alterations are being proposed for this existing house

The following were present:

Ben & Courtney Lampert, the owners of 48 Fairmount Ave.

Tim Klesse, the architect for Mr. & Mrs. Lampert

Mr. Lampert gave an introductory statement. He stated that he and his wife moved into 48 Fairmount Ave. eight years ago. Their home is now celebrating its 140th birthday. Their Victorian house is half brick. He and his wife enjoy their home very much. Mr. and Mrs. Lampert noted that they had met at an earlier time with the HPC about the fence they wanted to install.

Mr. Lampert stated that he and his wife, when they were considering changes to the interior of the house, wanted to respect the home's history. He noted that Mr. Klesse had worked previously with them in renovating the attic. Mr. Klesse had helped them make the odd-shaped rooms in the house more usable.

Mrs. Lampert discussed current conditions in the home. She would like the washer and dryer to be re-located from the basement to the second floor. Mrs. Lampert would like to extend the existing kitchen to allow her family to eat in the kitchen. Currently it is a galley kitchen. Mr. Lampert noted that he and his wife are very

aware that the bricks on the exterior came from the nearby Lum brickyard which was in operation in the 1800s.

Mr. Klesse felt the Lamperts' home would be excellent for a house tour someday. It is immediately adjacent to Borough Hall.

Mr. Klesse showed a slide of the existing porch. He pointed out where the proposed addition would be constructed. Mr. Klesse pointed out the low-pitch roof. He showed a slide of the "high side" of the house, closest to Borough Hall. Mr. Klesse felt that the Lamperts' home was in good condition. The applicant's lot is undersized, which triggers the need for certain variances.

Mr. Klesse put up his architectural drawings that will eventually be submitted to the Zoning Board of Adjustment. He pointed out the projection going over the front porch. There is an existing staircase which is cantilevered off of the building. The proposal is to project 6 feet into the side yard. A projected window will be added. A small banquette area and a mudroom will be created. A new back porch will be constructed.

Mr. Klesse described the plans for the second floor. No actual addition will be done to second floor. Mr. Klesse showed the left side elevation and the siding which will be used. He described the right side elevation and the proposals. The existing turret will remain in the middle. The proposed back porch will match the existing front porch.

Mr. Klesse asked if the Commissioners had any questions.

Mr. Greener noted that the proposed addition is modest in size. He confirmed with Mr. Klesse that the addition would not be seen from the street. Mr. Greener commented that the proposed back porch does not need to replicate the front porch. He suggested the proposed Victorian detail on the back porch could be modified a little. Mr. Greener asked for comments from the other Commissioners.

Mrs. Magrane, Mrs. Franklin, Council Member Dempsey, and Council Member Truilo felt it was a very acceptable design. The house will become more functional and, at the same time, the history of the dwelling is being respected and maintained.

Council Member Dempsey made a motion to approve Application # 22-002 – 48 Fairmount Avenue. Council Member Truilo seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken. All Commissioners present voted aye. The motion passed.

Mr. Greener informed the Lamperts and Mr. Klesse that the HPC will forward a favorable report on their application to the Borough Zoning Board of Adjustment. The Commissioners wished them good luck.

At 9:41 p.m. the meeting adjourned.

The next Chatham Borough Historic Preservation Meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 21, 2022, 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Liz Holler
Recording Secretary