

CHATHAM BOROUGH HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
June 21, 20227:30 p.m.

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

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

Justin Strickland, a future Commissioner

Also present: Nino Coviello, Esq., attorney for Garden Terrace
James Baumgarten, architect for Garden Terrace
Laura Collins, a representative of the Flemming family

Public Comment

There was none.

Motion to Adopt Meeting Minutes

Council Member Truilo made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 17, 2022 HPC meeting as submitted. Mrs. Franklin seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken. The May 17, 2022 minutes were approved as submitted.

Continuing Review of Planning Board Application #22-001

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

Application is proposing an addition & demolition of 353 Main Street

Architect: John W. Baumgarten

Attorney: Nino Coviello, Esq.

Attorney Coviello noted that Commissioners should now have before them the architectural plans revised on June 2, 2022 by John Baumgarten. Also, a site plan has been submitted by Andrew Clarke on June 9, 2022.

Attorney Coviello stated that Mr. Baumgarten, the architect for Garden Terrace, has been sworn in. He remains under oath tonight.

Mr. Baumgarten put a rendering of the proposed structure on the Zoom screen. He recalled that the Commissioners, at the last meeting, had requested that a reduction be made of the proposed building's façade, specifically the street wall. Since then, Mr. Baumgarten stated that a setback was done on that street wall, significantly reducing the length of the proposed front gable.

Mr. Baumgarten stated that the floor plan has now been re-configured to reduce the mass of the front wall and to reduce the length of the primary gable. He reviewed the recent changes made to the front porch. The area the visitors will be using to enter the facility will be "more inside" the nursing unit than it was previously. A decision was made not to link the eave directly with the ridge. A shallower shed roof will be constructed. Mr. Baumgarten explained the reversed gables that are now being proposed to help break up the scale of the street wall.

Mr. Baumgarten stated that the pitch of the front porch roof will be lowered. A standing seam roof is now being proposed to reduce the appearance of bulk. The columns on the front porch will now be made slightly thicker. The railing design has now been revised. As a result, a better visual corridor will be created for anyone sitting on the front porch. The lattice-work will be framed out.

Mr. Baumgarten described the revised plans for the connecting link between the existing building and the new building. Hardy or aszek trim with raised panels will be used for the exterior. A "through visual affect" will be created giving people a chance to look out to the back patio or to the front. A shallow-pitched roof will be constructed for this connection. A tree will be planted to blend the transition of the two buildings.

Mr. Baumgarten stated that the color of the proposed addition has now been changed to a dark grey. He felt that this new color will reduce the perceived scale of the building.

Council Member Truilo noted the symbolic entryway at the front of the current nursing home facility. He suggested a symbolic pathway be created, leading up to

the front porch of the proposed addition. This would make the addition appear more inviting.

It wasn't depicted on the rendering, but Mr. Baumgarten stated that a pathway will be created, starting from a semi-circular brick area and then connecting with the sidewalk.

Council Member Truilo stated a preference that the entryway be on Main Street. That's the case with other buildings on that section of Main Street. He will leave that suggestion with Mr. Baumgarten.

Mr. Greener pointed out that the scale of the proposed addition has now been improved. The darker color being proposed will compress the visuals of that building. Mr. Greener approved of the changes made to the connecting wing. The more transparency created, the better. Regarding the new wing, Mr. Greener brought up the two windows at the top of the front steps. He realized there was a room containing those windows, however perhaps some architectural detail could give the impression of something more than two windows in that location.

Regarding building materials, Mr. Greener felt the Commissioners would have problems with the painted trim and lattice-work. There may be other options to look into.

Mr. Greener was curious about the plans for the porch ceiling since it will be elevated. Mr. Baumgarten answered that he was considering bead boards for the ceiling.

Mr. Greener asked for more information on the proposed windows. Mr. Baumgarten answered that these windows will not be true divided-light windows. He clarified that he is proposing aluminum windows. Mr. Greener felt muttons could also be a possibility.

Mr. Greener asked Commissioners if they had any opinions on the front porch's proposed railings, specifically their height.

Mrs. Franklin asked if thought could be given to lowering the railing height, while still following the building code requirements.

Mr. Baumgarten stated that the intention was to make the railings code-required with minimum dimensions. He pointed out that cable materials for these railings may hurt someone's hands.

Council Member Truilo stated, for the porch railing, he would be satisfied with the classic Victorian profile.

Mr. Baumgarten thanked Commissioners for their excellent suggestions. It has moved this project on in a positive direction.

Attorney Coviello asked Laura Flemming Collins to come forward.

Ms. Collins noted that at the last meeting an inquiry was made, how exactly Garden Terrace and the Flemming Family contributes to the community.

Mrs. Collins stated that local students enjoy sharing their musical talents with nursing home residents. Also, volunteers from the Key Club at Chatham High School, Christmas carolers entertain the residents, as well as different church groups who pay visits to residents. Dance recitals are performed. Mrs. Collins also noted that college students have done internships at Garden Terrace. She pointed out that an adequate presentation space is needed at Garden Terrace for these many events given by these churches, school groups, and retirees who love to entertain and educate the nursing home residents.

Mr. Greener clarified that the HPC has to look out for Contributing Buildings, especially when a proposal arises to demolish one. At times a Contributing building may be in poor condition, is unsafe, and a demolition would be justified. Sometimes a fire may seriously damage a Contributing building. Mr. Greener noted that Mrs. Collins is talking about the great contributions that Garden Terrace gives to the community. He felt Commissioners were already aware of these wonderful contributions. There aren't many facilities like Garden Terrace in the Chatham area.

Mr. Greener asked if Commissioners had any questions for Mrs. Collins on these proposals.

There were no further questions or comments.

Mr. Greener asked Attorney Coviello if there was anything further he would like to present this evening.

Attorney Coviello answered that the presentations from the applicant's family and professionals are all finished. He thanked the Board for their time and consideration of these plans. Attorney Coviello briefly summed up the application. Mr. Greener confirmed with Attorney Coviello that the next step is for Garden Terrace to present their application to the Borough Planning Board.

Council Member Truilo asked if there were any members of the public in attendance tonight who would like to comment on the application.

Valerie Clark, a Borough resident, stated that she was pleased with the plans.

Council Member Truilo thanked Garden Terrace for the beautiful job on maintaining their grounds, all year-long. He believed great care was put into these proposed plans. The proposed expansion would certainly benefit the community.

Council Member Truilo made a motion to approve Garden Terrace's application #22-001 with the following recommendations:

- 1) A pathway to be created, with landscaping, to run from the Main St. sidewalk to the proposed front porch
- 2) The two double-hung windows at the top of the front stairs could be better articulated in some way

Before a vote was taken, Mr. Greener clarified that the HPC has 45 days to submit a report to the Borough Planning Board, giving the HPC's position on this application. These architectural suggestions made by Council Member Truilo could be included in the HPC report. If the Planning Board approves this application, the HPC would like to have Garden Terrace to return to them to further discuss architectural details, such as the coloring of the building.

Council Member Dempsey seconded the motion made by Council Member Truilo. A voice vote was taken. All Commissioners present voted aye.

Attorney Coviello asked Mr. Greener if the HPC could still send a letter, giving their views on this application, to the Planning Board for their July meeting.

Mr. Greener answered yes, a letter will be sent.

Application for 350 Main Street
Cornerstone Search Group, LLC

Applicant: Steven Raz

Architect: Timothy Klesse

Stephen Raz introduced himself and his wife Jennifer. He stated that they operated Cornerstone Search Group. It is an executive search firm dealing in bio-tech executives. Cornerstone Search Group started in 2000. Mr. and Mrs. Raz decided to move their business to Chatham. Mr. Raz is proposing to renovate the structure at 350 Main Street. The building was a residential home built in 1928. Mr. Raz is proposing to keep this building, however some renovation will be done. A new structure will be added at the back for Cornerstone's eight employees.

Mr. Klesse, Mr. Raz's architect, gave a Zoom view of driving down Main Street going west, with 350 Main St. appearing on the right. Mr. Klesse stated that one of the proposals is to remove the existing enclosed porch of 350 Main St. This porch was added, probably in the 1950s. to the house after it was constructed. A new driveway will be added to the right side of the property to give access to the building and the new connecting structure behind it.

Mr. Klesse's Zoom screen went blank for a few minutes.

In the meantime, Mr. Greener shared on the screen the historical info he had found about the applicant's house. He noted that Mr. Raz's structure is a Contributing Building in the Borough's Historic District. The house has been standing since 1912. The side porch was not part of the original structure.

Mr. Raz assured Commissioners that he would like to enhance the current house and make it even better.

Mrs. Franklin asked Mr. and Mrs. Raz if they and their employees currently occupying 350 Main Street and working out of it?

Mr. Raz answered no, not yet. However, he tries to keep the lawn mown on the property.

Mr. Klesse returned to the Zoom hearing. He put the proposed plans on the Zoom screen. Two parking spaces are being proposed in front of the building. A new front porch will be constructed. Mr. Klesse felt the existing driveway was "too tight" to work with. The proposal to remove the screened porch will allow for the creation of the new driveway on the right side of the house. Mr. Klesse described the circulation link which will be added behind the existing structure. He reviewed the proposed work rooms in the connecting structure. Three parking spaces will be

created at the rear. A 7 ft. buffer will be planted between 350 Main Street and the neighboring homes behind on Ward Place. Mr. Klesse described the rooms for the basement level of the connecting new structure.

Mr. Klesse reviewed the plans for the second floor of the existing structure. On the Zoom screen, he also showed the front elevation of the existing front elevation minus the side porch. The new front porch is now shown. Putting the slide elevation on the screen, Mr. Klesse described how the proposed linked-in building would relate to the existing building. He pointed out the proposed rooms of the new, connecting building.

Mr. Klesse stated that the existing building has an asphalt roof with wood clapboard. A glass-link will connect the two buildings. The new building at the rear will be three stories high with a habitable attic. On the screen, Mr. Klesse put a rendering of what the existing building and the proposed connecting building would ultimately look like. He put up a rendering of what the neighborhood would look like if these proposals were made to 350 Main St. Mr. Klesse pointed out that the connecting building at the rear will not be seen from the street.

Mr. Klesse noted that the existing front portico will be removed. A new porch will then be constructed.

Council Member Truilo asked what will be done with the existing driveway.

Mr. Klesse answered that it will be removed and grass will be put in its place.

Council Member Truilo asked if a DOT curb entry permit would be needed for the new driveway. He believed Main Street is classified as a state highway.

Mr. Klesse wasn't sure about such a permit. Perhaps the applicant's site engineer could look into that situation.

Council Member Truilo asked if any handicap accessible features will be included for the newer structure.

On the side elevation, Mr. Klesse circled the grade level floor where a handicap access could be included. However, the building does not have the occupancy to require an elevator.

Mr. Strickland asked how common is it to have parking created in front of a historic Contributing Building.

Mr. Greener answered that it was not common. Mr. Klesse agreed it was not common; however, he felt that the front parking could be shielded by landscaping from any view from the road. Mr. Klesse believed the proposed parking is needed to satisfy the parking requirements.

Council Member Truilo pointed out that the current Borough Zoning ordinance does not allow parking in a front yard.

Mr. Klesse wasn't clear how many parking spaces are really needed. Six parking spaces will be created in the back.

Mr. Greener had problems accepting the proposed front porch on this Contributing Building. Also, he could not accept the proposed parking in the front yard. However, Mr. Greener liked the connecting building in the back. The proposed plans are paying a tribute to the original Contributing building in the front by the separation of these two structures.

Council Member Dempsey stated that she could accept the proposed front porch since she felt it maintained the architectural theme of the original home. She felt the parking in the front would detract from the building.

At Mr. Greener's request, Mr. Klesse put the rendering on the Zoom screen showing the house with the proposed front porch. Mr. Klesse said a variance would not be needed for this porch. He felt the proposed porch would be helpful to the house. Mr. Klesse had doubts that the existing portico was part of the original structure. Mr. Greener recommended that a railing may be needed for the porch.

Mr. Strickland asked about the decision to move the driveway to the other side of the property.

Mr. Klesse explained that he and the applicant decided to use the 14 feet on the other, unused side. Removing the side porch would yield that 14 feet. The current driveway space was too narrow.

Mr. Strickland asked the Commission what if that side porch had been part of the original home.

Mr. Greener answered that it could be a possibility. Mr. Klesse noted that the Sanborn maps could reveal the outline of the original home. Mr. Strickland suggested referring to the collection of Borough tax maps that the Chatham Historical Society keeps. Those maps date back to the 1930s and 40s.

Mr. Greener felt that if the side porch were to be removed, the historical character of the home will still be maintained. It was Mr. Greener's personal opinion that the primary structure is the dominant feature on the property. A number of Commissioners agreed with that point.

Mrs. Franklin questioned what the original siding was. Mr. Greener pulled up Bob Guter's evaluation of the home done in the 1980s. Mr. Guter mentioned the home had synthetic siding at that time. Some people at the meeting believed it was a wood siding.

Council Member Truilo asked to have another look at the colored rendering of the house and the proposed linked-in building.

Mrs. Franklin believed the proposed design was interesting, with the two buildings being very different, but still connecting well into each other. She warned Mr. Raz and Mr. Klesse that the neighbors at the rear, on Ward Place, may have run-off concerns with the proposed new driveway.

Looking at Mr. Klesse's rendering, Council Member Truilo indicated he could not accept the proposed parking in the front. Also, this parking arrangement would increase the impervious lot coverage on the property.

Mr. Greener confirmed with Mr. Raz and Mr. Klesse that the next entity they will be presenting these plans to would be the Borough Planning Board. Mr. Greener noted that the HPC will vote tonight on what the tone will be for the report the HPC will forward to the Planning Board.

Council Member Dempsey made a motion that the HPC approve of this application minus the front yard parking. Mrs. Franklin seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken. All Commissioners present voted aye. The motion passed.

Mr. Greener clarified that the report the HPC will forward to the Planning Board will state its primary objection will be for the front yard parking. He believed the Planning Board will also probably question the front yard parking. The Planning Board may not approve of a front porch on the front of a Contributing Building.

Mr. Greener felt that Mr. Klesse, in these plans, has held onto the integrity of this building's architecture and has played up the integrity of the structure even from what is was considered in the 1980s. Mr. Greener liked the connecting structure in the back.

Mr. Raz and Mr. Klesse thanked Commissioners for their time.

On other matters, Mr. Greener reported that the new Historic Design Guidelines for Chatham Borough has officially been put on-line, on the Chatham Borough website.

Council Member Dempsey will talk with Borough Administrator Steve Williams to see which Council Meeting the HPC can give a presentation on these new Guidelines.

At 9:15 p.m. the meeting adjourned.

The next Chatham Borough Historic Preservation Commission Meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 19, 2022, 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Liz Holler
Recording Secretary