

**Northampton Historical Commission
Minutes**

DATE: Monday, January 28, 2019
TIME: 5:30 PM
PLACE: City Hall Hearing Room, 210 Main Street

Member	Present
David Drake – Chair	
Martha Lyon – Vice Chair	X
Barbara Blumenthal	X
Pauline Fogel	X
Dylan Gaffney	X
AIA Nominee - vacant	
Craig Della Penna	
Sarah LaValley - staff	X

Vice Chair Lyon called the meeting to Order, 5:35 PM

Public Comment

None

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Blumenthal moved to approve the minutes of August 27 with minor additions. Seconded by Ms. Lyon, the motion carried unanimously.

5:30 PM – Public Hearing: Request for a Local Historic District Certificate of Appropriateness pursuant to Section 195 of the Northampton Code. Proposed work to include exterior lighting, HVAC equipment installation, and architectural revisions to previously approved addition. 1924LLC, 49 Round Hill Road, Map ID 31B-004.

Tom Douglas provided an overview of plans, design changes to include a mansard roof to have a more historic look in reaction to comments provided by MassHistoric as part of the historic tax credit process, retaining an accessible ramp on the front/east elevation, HVAC units with screening, and exterior lighting. Lighting was initially proposed to be pole lights, but the planning board required that these would be shut off at 9:00 PM, so wall sconces controlled by motion sensors are proposed.

Chairman Drake noted that the Historical Commission reviewed the development in accordance with the Local Historic District design standards, and that MassHistoric review extends only to the historic tax credit program. Additional lighting was not reviewed or approved locally.

Mr. Douglas replied that a local historic district permit should have been applied for sooner, but that the revised roof proposal responds to MassHistoric’s comments that the addition should be made more compatible with the existing building. MassHistoric and the Historical Commission did not interpret the Secretary of the Interior’s standards the same way.

The Commission reviewed and discussed the proposed lighting. Mr. Douglas stated that lighting is necessary for safety and for employees of the business accessing other portions of the campus. Chairman Drake noted that some areas likely will not be used at night, and asked whether alternatives to sconces are possible since the original building did not have wall mounted lighting. Ms. Blumenthal added that higher mounted lights create a focus on buildings rather than walkways. Ms. Lyon stated that she is sympathetic to concerns about lighting on the area and also to challenges. Ms. LaValley added that the Commission's purview with regard to lighting is the fixtures, and the planning board addresses light levels in conformance with the zoning ordinance.

Janet Gross, abutter, asked if Checkwriters will have multiple shifts. It will not, though some employees may work late.

A neighbor noted that the wall lights may be attractive, but not necessarily historically appropriate.

Mr. Douglas noted that all sconces will be on motion sensors, and that safety is related to visibility and personal safety.

Ms. Fogel asked about possible pathway lighting, which would prevent alteration to the façade of the historic structure. Mr. Douglas replied that bollards are very expensive. Chairman Drake added that he has concern not only about the fixtures, but drilling holes in the building.

Ms. Gross expressed concern about the levels of existing lights. Ms. LaValley stated that these were previously existing so do not need Planning Board review even if they do not meet current standards.

Jim Hebert noted that tax credit benefits are not received for lighting, and that previously existing incompatible fixtures will be removed.

Ms. Lyon noted that the walkway pattern is not a beneficial component of the overall site design and shouldn't be heavily emphasized with walkway lighting.

The Commission discussed motion sensor units. Details for those were not provided by the applicant.

Mr. Douglas requested that the lighting portion of the application be able to be withdrawn without prejudice. The Commission agreed. A subsequent application will be filed once full details are available.

Ms. Blumenthal moved to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the accessible ramp to remain on the east elevation, and HVAC units in the locations shown, with planted screenings. Fences shall not be utilized as a screen. Seconded by Ms. Luon, the motion carried unanimously.

The Commission requested that staff communicate with the Department of the Interior and MassHistoric regarding disagreement on interpretation of the Secretary of the Interior Standards, and requesting that the Commission be copied on tax credit correspondence.

Determination of Significance Pursuant to Demolition Review Ordinance – 43 Finn Street

Ms. Lyon moved to determine the building significant based on association with broad architectural and cultural history. Seconded by Ms. Fogel, the motion carried unanimously.

Other business not foreseen when agenda was prepared

The Commission unanimously agreed to provide support for Historic Northampton's application for CPA funding to restore and properly display clothing.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM