APPROVED

TOWN OF GILMANTON
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
ACADEMY BUILDING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2011 – 7 p.m.

MINUTES

Present: Chairman Allen Everett, Don Guarino (Selectmen's Rep), George Roberts, Ernie Hudziec (alternate), Deborah Chase
Land Use Clerk – Annette Andreozzi
Absent: Ella Jo Regan

Chairman Everett opened the meeting at 7:01 PM.

Chair Everett seated Mr. Hudziec as a voting member.

Continued Public Hearing - Case # 2-2011 Susan Barr, applicant/ 493 Province Road LLC, owner: Request demolition of circa 1970 addition, 74' x 18'. Property located at 493 Province Road in the Corners Historic District; Tax Map/Lot # 127/57.

Mr. Everett asked the applicant if she felt that Ms. Chase should recuse herself, since she had not been at all the meetings. Mr. Roberts said that all members can vote even if they haven't been at the meetings. Mr. Guarino didn't see any reason why Ms. Chase couldn't vote. Mr. Bedard asked about the proper procedure. The clerk explained the RSA's allow Boards to vote on a recommendation for a member to recuse themselves, but no one can require a member to step down. There was a discussion on the topic. The Commission members felt Ms. Case should remain at this time.

Ms. Barr presented a petition signed by persons that live in the historic district, stating that the ell should be removed and asking the HDC to consider their viewpoint. Ms. Barr said that the house sat empty for at least 7 years, they are willing to restore the two period structures, but can't afford to restore the ell. If the property continues to deteriorate surrounding property values will go down.

Mr. Everett noted that a letter from Gilmanton's Health/Building Officer had been delivered to the Board and applicant that evening. He read it for the record, a copy of which is in the file. Ms. Barr had asked the officer to look at the building because she was concerned about people working among all the mold.

Mr. Everett said that a memorandum from architect Paul Mirski had also been delivered that evening, everyone had had time to read it, and a copy was in the file. Mr. Hudziec asked who had requested the information from Mr. Mirski. Mr. Guarino explained that

Mr. Roberts called Mr. Mirski. Mr. Roberts said he called some people on the state list, who were unavailable. He remembered that Mr. Mirski had done the renovation of the Academy Building and the vault, so he had called him. Mr. Everett asked Mr. Bedard if he was present when Mr. Mirski viewed the ell. Bedard said that he was present and that Mr. Mirski is an architect and knowledgeable of preservation issues.

Mr. Bedard stated that Mr. Mirski's conclusions were based on incorrect assumptions that the barn was moved to the property and that a substantial portion of the original ell remains.

Mr. Roberts & Mr. Bedard agreed that the front house and the barn are period structures according to the HDC regs.

Mr. Roberts claimed to know what date building permits were taken out on the building. He said that the house could not have been lived in without a wood storage building. He stated that anything built in 1977 is not period.

Mr. Bedard pointed out that wood could have been stored in the area that is presently the kitchen. He said that the original house was built to look like a square house when viewed from the street and the church. The clapboards on the original house next to the ell have received weathering showing the at some time they were exposed and no building was attached .

Mr. Hudziec confirmed that the rock foundation is only on one side of the first part of the ell and that the ell was probably moved to that place because there is a space between the house and ell.

Mr. O'Shea stated that he did walk through the ell. He remembered when the in-law addition was put on in the 1970's. There was a tacit approval by the HDC to allow those changes to the ell. There is no record that the town took any action to require that the Gilmores restore the building to the way it looked before they made changes.

Mr. Bedard stated that he new the roof on the ell was removed after 1890's, but not how long after. There are few historic timbers and none of the rest of the materials are historic.

Mr. Guarino said that there is no question that there were changes.

Christy Owens said that the issue is the black mold. The whole place will have to be gutted anyway. She knows it is a historic district, but the discussion is over if the only historic members[posts] are a few timbers that have been hacked. There is nothing to be saved.

Mr. Everett asked if the present walls were even attached to the old beams. Mr. Bedard & Mr. Guarino felt the wall framing must have been on the outside of the old timbers.

Lainie Rosato said that if the mold isn't addressed it could spread to the original historic structure. If Mr. Bedard could save a structure he would. She was thankful that Ms. Barr had brought property; finally someone cares. If no one stopped anyone from doing all the changes in 1977 what is the big deal now.

Mr. Hudziec asked Mr. Bedard that given what he knew about the ell, could the exterior shell be removed to let the old framing stand. Mr. Bedard said it would collapse.

Ms. Chase said that it is the responsibility of the HDC to be true to the regs, and get as much information as possible. She did not want to compromise the Commission's integrity; and the HDC needs to do right by everyone including the town.

Mr. Roberts stated that houses go through changes, and he wants harmony in the district; it doesn't matter when the skin of the house was put on. He stated that his concern was not when the house was built but what is there now and what the look of the village is. He stated that the HDC was not doing its job if they allow a tear down for just mold or a leaky roof. The applicant could get rid of the 1977 addition; he was not concerned if the house is gutted. He felt that the façade shell has been the same fabric for 100 years. He stated that the focus needed to be a solution concerned only with the exterior.

Mr. Bedard stated that Mr. Mirski wrote about a harmonious look in the district; he said the HDC had several examples of houses not connected to their barn. He would like the historic parts of the property saved, originally the house was not connected to the barn.

Ms. Chase asked how the ground elevations would be addressed if the demolition were granted.

Mr. Bedard stated that the old stone façade could be left to create a patio area, or fill could be used to bring that side up to the other level.

Mr. O'Shea said that if the HDC imposed a requirement on applicants that could tear down the 1977 addition but put back everything else, how would they know exactly would it should look like.

Mr. Roberts said the HDC doesn't want to impose on anyone. He said the applicant could take care of the interior as they see fit; it could be empty space. The continuous architecture needed to be kept.

Mr. Hudziec clarified that there is no access to the barn from any part of the ell other than the addition that was built in 1977.

Ms. O'Shea said that as custodians everyone wants to the keep what is appropriate in the neighborhood, but she would rather see a restored livable home than a deteriorating building. She has a vested interest in keeping the historic district looking the best it can be.

Mr. O'Shea stated that in 1974 they purchased a derelict in the district, and they had to come before the HDC. Everyone is a trustee of their home to be passed on in the best way possible. These are difficult economic times. What he didn't want was for the regs to keep applicants from making their community a better place. The HDC needed to be flexible.

MOTION:
Ms. Chase moved to close <u>Public Hearing Case # 2-2011 Susan Barr, applicant/ 493 Province Road LLC, owner.</u> Seconded by Mr. Guarino.
Motion passed unanimously.

DELIBERATIONS

Mr. Roberts made a motion to allow the applicant to demolish only the 1977 addition behind the barn. There was no second.

Mr. Guarino stated that he was more comfortable discussing the whole thing.

Mr. Roberts said that the owner bought the property to turn it around. There are two things that could be done. They could tear everything down or tear down only the 1977 addition and gut the rest of the ell. He thought the second was a good conclusion, and that the HDC would be doing best for the town regardless of economics. He then talked about the Crowley house.

Mr. Hudziec read from the HDC regs "Approval to demolish or remove any structures that has deteriorated or been damaged by fire to such an extent that they cannot be repaired." He said the 1977 addition wasn't an issue; everyone seemed to agree that could be torn down. According to the architect's report once the shell is removed perhaps something can be done, he indicated that that was why he had asked if the frame would stand if the shell was removed. The second condemning document[letter from the Health Officer] is the black mold. So much has been done to the ell; it has been cut and mutilated. He didn't see any course but to approve the application. He didn't have any issue with restoring the property to its 1820 look, two separate buildings. There are plenty of homes in NH that don't have ells to barn. It won't detract from the historical district, but will improve the district with a nicely resorted 1820 home.

Mr. Guarino stated that when the regs are looked at, he felt they said that the structure had to be damaged to the point it could not be repaired. He didn't consider the structure not repairable. The report from Mr. Mirski speaks about how it looks. It appears there was an ell there for 100 years in different forms. It is part of the architecture of the district now. Mr. Guarino called the LGC and asked if one can use financial reasons for talking down buildings in a historic district; their lawyer said no. The house and the barn seem structurally sound, the ell could be gutted. If the whole issue is economic it can be left for the next owner. The application should be voted up or down to avoid being contested. The 1977 addition is in such bad shape it should just be torn down.

Mr. Roberts stated that if the application was voted down the HDC could tell the applicant what they could do.

Ms. Chase stated that the regs were non specific; extenuating circumstances are always present. She was 100% in support of harmony in the district. The house and the barn are nice historic pieces, that will continue to stand only if the present ell is not there. She asked that if the ell was restored what time period would be picked for the restoration considering that there is no documentation to indicate what it looked like at any other time. She did not consider that a few timbers inside the shell were a substantial amount of historic fabric. If those timbers could stand alone as a frame then it would have to be saved. There were so many changes she didn't know what was being dealt with. There is a health issue. She was not comfortable with letting a structure with black mold stand. The HDC has discretion. She didn't feel that the economics should be considered, that would muddy the waters. The application needs more description in how the old foundation will be handled, and how to handle if a door or window is discovered after the ell comes down.

Mr. Guarino stated that there was evidence that something has been attached to the original house for a long period of time. That something had a different pitched roof.

Mr. Roberts said he was not interested in the interior. He knows that the 1977 addition does not add to the architecture.

Ms. Chase appreciated that the district has houses of different eras, but 1770-1840 are the very clear purview of the HDC which need to be sustained and protected. The HDC doesn't know when the parts of the ell were put together. The original house is 1820 with a 1820 barn, in between are other structures that are problematic. Each property is considered by its age.

Mr. Roberts stated that he didn't know for sure when the buildings were built. The historic district is to preserve whatever is there. Architecture went through continuum, but they can take down 1977 addition. The architect says it won't be harmonious. The application is incomplete.

Mr. Guarino said that so much has been said about the report, but the building inspector did not condemn the ell as structurally unsound.

Motion:
Mr. Everett moved to approve <u>Case # 2-2011 Susan Barr, applicant/ 493 Province Road LLC, owner</u>: Request for demolition of 74' x 18' ell. Property located at 493 Province Road in the Corners Historic District; Tax Map/Lot # 127/57.

Conditions: There will be an inventory of historical parts and the parts will remain with the property. Any change or improvement in

the property elevations or filed plans must come back before the HDC.

Seconded by Mr. Hudziec.

Mr. Everett explained that the exterior clapboards and door framing on the back of the original house can be seen, which is what the applicants will match when the ell is removed.

Mr. Roberts asked if he voted on the motion could he then make a change to the motion. Mr. Everett said he could make an amendment before the motion was voted on if he wished.

Motion carried 3 in favor, 2 opposed.

Mr. Hudziec moved to adjourn. Ms. Chase seconded. All in favor.

Adjourn at 9:16 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Annette Andreozzi
Land Use Clerk