

**Somersworth Historic District Commission**  
**February 22, 2023**

**Members Present:** Mrs. Barry, Mr. Brooks, Mr. Gerding, Mr. Metivier, Mr. Poulin, Ms. Shoen, Mr. Young.

**City Staff Present:** Mrs. Mears.

**Members Absent:** Mr. Monahan.

Mrs. Barry called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

**APPROVAL OF PAST MINUTES**

Mr. Metivier made the motion to accept the minutes as presented.

Mr. Gerding seconded the motion.

Motion passed 7-0.

**PROJECTS OF MINIMAL IMPACT**

Mrs. Mears reported;

64 Winter St was approved for solar panels on the rear of the roof.

8 Beacon St was approved for a small in-kind roofing section.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were none.

**OLD BUSINESS**

There were none.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**A) Central Perk LLC, 29 Noble St. HDC #05-2023**

**B) Central Perk LLC, 27 Noble St. HDC #06-2023 (added as a joint discussion item during review)**

Mrs. Mears noted the proposal is for new construction of a 3-bedroom home with 2-car garage.

Russ Abbott provided a brief description of the proposed construction.

Mrs. Barry asked if there was an existing foundation.

Mr. Metivier indicated the property was previously an emergency water reservoir for the mills.

There was a brief discussion about the history and features of the property as they exist now.

Mr. Brooks asked about whether the two applications proposed on Noble St were simply the same house but each being a mirror image of the other.

Mr. Abbott noted that they are mirror images of each other and noted the lots are deeper than they are wide.

Mr. Brooks noted this property is the left of the two properties when looking at them from Noble St. He said the plans show an overhead plot plan, but provide nothing to show elevations depicting the ground elevations as it would be related to the building and its foundation exposure. He questioned if the granite wall along the front and left side of the property will be retained or removed.

Mr. Abbott noted all utilities are already in place but had hoped to remove the wall and grade the property as needed.

Mr. Brooks noted that the granite walls are features that provide character to the Historic District and would rather see it preserved if possible.

Mr. Brooks stated that the house seems to fit the character of the area well, but noted the small windows on the left side of the building seem out of character being so small and similar to a basement window. He questioned whether the windows could be changed to match the size on the front of the house to keep a more consistent arrangement more in line with the character of older houses.

Mr. Abbott agreed that the windows could be changed.

Mr. Metivier noted that because the HDC had two back-to-back house proposals which are basically identical other than being a mirror image, it would make sense to discuss them together to save time but vote on them independently once a motion is made.

The HDC's reached a consensus that it made sense to discuss both **27 and 29 Noble St** in tandem but with a separate vote for approval.

Mr. Gerding agreed with Mr. Brooks about having larger windows on the left side elevation to match the windows on the front elevation.

There was a brief discussion to clarify which windows specifically would be larger while noting that the 29 Noble house would be on the left elevation while the 27 Noble house would be on the right.

Mrs. Barry asked if the windows would be double hung or awning style.

Mr. Abbott responded that they would be double hung.

Mr. Gerding noted he would favor the 6 over 6 light patterns for the windows unless most of the board wanted a different pattern, but would suggest they all have the same pattern throughout the house.

Mr. Abbott presented a window he had brought in as a sample and noted the windows will have an integrated J-channel, the trim boards will be Azek, the roof will be architectural shingles, the front porch will also be Trex as well as other composite materials and have no pressure treated wood.

Mrs. Shoen agreed that she would be in favor of keeping the granite retaining wall located along the front of the property and noted that if more than 2 feet of foundation height is exposed, that the applicant should reappear before the HDC to discuss plans for its appearance. The 6 over 6 window light pattern would be preferred and agreed with having larger windows in place of the smaller windows mentioned earlier.

Mr. Poulin asked about the materials of various trim features.

Mr. Abbott noted that most of the trim is composite with only the rake board being pine wrapped in aluminum.

Mr. Metivier suggested the Applicant use Azek for all the trim since the majority is proposed as such and doing so would keep the material consistent throughout the building.

Mr. Abbott noted that if the vinyl siding was approved, they would use all composite instead of pine wrapped in aluminum.

Mr. Metivier noted that if the 4" door and window trim with 8" corner boards and other trim features as displayed in the plans are Azek or similar products, he would be in favor of approving the proposal.

Mrs. Barry inquired about the set back dimensions and suggested setting one house back a bit more than the other house to give them an offset placement.

Mr. Abbott did not have an objection to that idea.

Mr. Brooks proposed having the right (27 Noble) closer to the road and the left (29 Noble) set back further from the road to prevent the building from encroaching on the granite retaining wall and help preserve it. As for the window pattern, he suggested either the 2 over 1 or 6 over 6, but found the 6 over 1 to be out of place as he could not think of a building that has that arrangement within the Historic District. He inquired if the front façade would be a different siding than the rest of the house, and didn't have an opinion, just inquiring what the actual plan consisted of.

Mrs. Barry asked if we had further questions or if we were ready to make a motion.

Mr. Metivier suggested starting with **27 Noble St. HDC #06-2023** for a motion.

**MOTION:** Mr. Metivier made a motion to accept the proposal with several amendments:

- The house will be set back 5 feet closer than depicted on the plans;
- Azek or similar material will be used for all trim;
- Bracketing be built as shown with the builder's choice of material;
- The windows will be 2 over 1 light patterns.

Mr. Gerding offered a friendly amendment that the windows on the right side are the same as the windows on the front façade.

Ms. Shoen offered a friendly amendment that if the foundation has more than 2 vertical feet exposed, the applicant will return for approval.

Mrs. Barry suggested getting a consensus from the Commission considering the window pattern and asked each member to give their preferred pattern.

2 over 1 – Mr. Brooks, Mr. Young, Mrs. Barry    6 over 6 – Ms. Shoen, Mr. Gerding    6 over 1 – None

2 over 1 was added as the window pattern.

Mr. Metivier accepted all amendments to his motion.

Mr. Gerding seconded the motion.

The motion passed 7-0.

Mr. Metivier made a motion to accept the proposal for **29 Noble St. HDC #05-2023** with several amendments:

- The house will be set back 5 feet further than depicted on the plans;
- Azek or similar material will be used for all trim;
- Bracketing be built as shown of the builders' choice;
- The windows will be 2 over 1 light patterns;
- The windows on the left side are the same as the windows on the front façade;
- If the foundation has more than 2 vertical feet exposed, the applicant will return for approval;
- The granite stone retaining wall be retained except for what needs to be removed for the driveway.

Mr. Gerding seconded the motion.

The motion passed 7-0.

### **C) Jacob and Courtney Lampert, 38 Mount Vernon St. HDC #07-2023**

Mrs. Mears noted the proposal is for a 3-bedroom house with 2-car garage.

Mr. Lampert provided a brief description of the proposal.

Mr. Brooks noted that this application may be missing a piece as there is no plot plan as well as no elevation displayed even though this is a more level lot than the last two plans presented tonight.

Mr. Lampert noted they did purchase both the vacant properties located on Mount Vernon St. The house would sit on the same property as the pump house which will be retained.

Mr. Metivier thanked the applicant for keeping the pump house and noted that the plans have outlined many details answering many questions that would normally be asked.

Ms. Shoen agreed that keeping the pump house is important being a very defining feature.

Mr. Poulin complimented the plans on being well done and agreed the building looks great and noted the extra trim detail proposed for the top of the window trim.

Mr. Gerding agreed that the house has many details that complement the Historic District. He also questioned if the two small windows upstairs on the left elevation could be changed to match the rest of the house.

Mrs. Lampert agreed to the change of windows.

Mr. Gerding asked if the 6 over 6 windows would be used throughout.

Mrs. Lampert stated yes, 6 over 6.

Mr. Brooks inquired about the lower end of the roof trim and the use of the pork chop shape opposed to the cornice return that creates a shelf as traditionally constructed on older houses.

There was brief discussion between Mr. Abbott and the Lamperts about the specific styles of the lower end of the roof trim and what options could be constructed.

Mr. Brooks stated overall the plans are well done and include many details that complement the Historic District.

Mr. Metivier noted that nearly every house in the vicinity does have the eyebrow returns at the lower end of the roof trim.

Mr. Brooks stated he would be in favor of the proposal considering the change to the windows.

Mr. Metivier asked what the material would be for the front door.

Mrs. Lampert noted it would be fiberglass.

Mr. Metivier asked if the eyebrow returns at the lower edge of the roof would be considered.

Mr. Lampert noted they would be willing to add the eyebrow returns.

Mrs. Lampert asked if the eyebrow returns were an aesthetic feature.

Mr. Metivier answered yes, it would then match a feature that is found on every other house on the block.

Mr. Lampert provided a verbal description of the placement of the house noting the driveway would be on the right toward the other vacant lot and would meet setback requirements.

Mr. Brooks asked if the lots would be merged or kept as two individual lots.

Mr. Lampert indicated they would be kept as two lots.

Mr. Metivier made a motion to accept the proposal as presented with the condition that eyebrow returns would be added and the two small windows on the left elevation be increased in height to match the other windows.

Mr. Gerding seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously 7-0.

### **WORKSHOP BUSINESS**

Mr. Brooks noted that the subcommittee members will discuss a time tonight to schedule a meeting to finish work on the rules of procedure.

### **COMMUNICATIONS AND MISC**

Mr. Gerding stated that the Economic Development Committee had discussed possible options for street signs in the Historic District starting with streets located along High St. and passed around pictures of the signs being considered.

Mr. Poulin asked about a few properties that have had decks approved but not painted as required.

Mr. Brooks asked if the street signs would be black with white lettering and whether it will be only a few streets to start.

Mr. Gerding noted that they would likely start with those streets and add a few more each following year.

Mrs. Mears announced that Anna Stockman has been hired as Planning Secretary.

Mr. Gerding noted the EDC had approved installing way finding signs and asked the board to consider possible historic points of interest.

Mr. Metivier asked for an update on the Winter St retaining wall that should have covered existing cement blocks as well as porches and decks that are in various stages of repair notably on Prospect St. and Maple St.

Mrs. Mears noted that she will need addresses or lot numbers of those.

**MOTION:** Mr. Metivier made the motion to adjourn.

Mr. Brooks seconded the motion.

Motion passed 7-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:11 pm.

Submitted by

Richard Brooks, HDC Secretary

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