

**MINUTES
OF THE
CRANBURY TOWNSHIP
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
CRANBURY, NEW JERSEY
MIDDLESEX COUNTY**

TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING

A regular meeting of the Cranbury Township Historic Preservation Commission was held in Town Hall, Cranbury, New Jersey, on March 5, 2013 beginning at 7:30 pm.

STATEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE

Pursuant to the Sunshine Law, adequate notice in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-5) was provided on December 3, 2012 of this meeting's date, time, place and an agenda was mailed to the news media, posted on the Township bulletin board, mailed to those requesting personal notice and filed with the Municipal Clerk.

CALL TO ORDER

With a quorum present, Ms. Marlow, HPC Chair, called the meeting to order.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Ms. Marlowe, Mr. Szabo, Mr. Williams, and Mr. Ziegler were present. A motion was made by Ms. Marlowe and second by Mr. Szabo to excuse Mr. Girardet, all in favor.

MINUTES

The minutes of the February 19, 2013 meeting was reviewed and approved with a motion by Mr. Williams, second by Ms. Marlowe, all in favor. .

APPLICATIONS

82 North Main Street (B25, L30) In Historic District, Classified C+; homeowner, Ms. Heather Scott was present for discussion of the submitted application for work being performed on the front porch. It was stated that Mr. Greg Farrington, Township Construction Official, would not be strict regarding the enforcement of a current construction code that stipulates when an existing railing on an historic home less than 36"H is removed in its entirety, reinstallation must be according to current standard building codes. He understands that historic homes should retain their characteristic detail which makes them unique in Cranbury.

National Park Service Preservation Brief #45; Preserving Historic Wood Porches was delivered to applicant. Mr. Szabo stated that this informative brief references proportional height. Ms. Scott stated that no further work has been performed since her previous visit to HPC on January 15, 2013. Ms. Marlowe stated that HPC is concerned about the removal of the original spindled frieze. Ms. Scott stated that this detail was not saved. Ms. Marlowe stated that, for future reference, if any details are removed from the house, they should not be thrown away. She stated that the originally the design of the front porch was done so it included the spindled frieze as a design element. The purpose of preservation is to preserve or maintain the details, not removal for the "betterment" thereof. Ms. Scott said that the porch project was not to replace the porch but to restore the porch that unfortunately turned into a replacement.

The current situation is that the original spindled frieze, the original hand rails with balusters have been removed and discarded. The bases on the turned column posts have been boxed in. The ceiling has been replaced with new beaded board.

Addressing the boxed in columns, Ms. Scott stated a wood base was replaced, so to match the other bases her husband boxed them all. Ms. Marlowe asked if any investigative work was performed to try to figure out why they were rotting and that usually water is the culprit. Ms. Scott addressed the

sloped angle on the top of the bases that could indeed catch water. Mr. Williams stated that the joint between the porch and base is usually spliced. The base is then boxed in to cover up the spliced repair. Mr. Williams questioned the repairs and how they adhere to Chapter 93 and the Guidelines. It was stated that the square balusters appear to have been installed closer together than the original turned balusters. A question was raised about the hand rail; the details in photo show evidence that newly installed hand rail profile where it meets the column does not match the original profile. It was stated that this is a replacement and not a restoration project. The railing is not the same design, the balusters are not the same design, and the spindled frieze is not being replaced. Ms. Marlowe stated that because of the different details that have been replaced, the historical character is gone. There is concern about precedence and its importance. Ms. Scott stated that her husband looked at what other owners did to their porches in town. Ms. Marlowe stated that some work performed on other porches may have been done prior to the Preservation Commission or Committee came into effect.

A letter copy dated January 26, 2010, was produced from the HPC file that was mailed to them as new residents within the Historic District regarding exterior changes/ordinary maintenance. Ms. Marlowe believes that the owners are aware of the application process due to history of a back addition that was recently built. The precedence issue was reiterated and the difficult position this creates for HPC. There was no opportunity for HPC to discuss options with the owners prior to discarding all the rotten balusters. Mr. Williams stated that the style of the original balusters could be reproduced and asked how the project got to this stage. Ms. Scott explained that her husband started sanding and repainting the front porch which did not require a permit and as he got more into the project it was then he realized that all the spindled balusters were rotten. So, he got rid of them and replaced them with square balusters. Ms. Scott asked if there is a way that HPC could have this project move forward without making a precedent for others. HPC responded that this project does set a precedent.

Mr. Ziegler queried every one of the missing details. He feels that the spindled frieze added character which was in the scale of the house. Viewing a current photo of the house without the frieze detail makes it obvious that the column proportions should contain and retain this element. He stated that the original frieze added an air of refinement to the house which made it especially unique. He was uncertain of the look should squared spindles be installed. He questioned if replacing the frieze with square spindles be a mitigating detail? Ms. Scott felt this option was interesting without destruction to the work already performed. Another alternative is to replace the hand rail balusters with similar spindled balusters. Mr. Williams stated that there are regulations which Chapter 93 addresses. The protocol for preservation projects were made known to the homeowner in the letter. Should the owners initially come to HPC prior to any work performed, perhaps a plan or options could have discussed but this opportunity was lost. HPC is charged with adhering to Chapter 93. Ms. Scott realizes that the current situation was caused by their doing; she is trying to find a way to move forward. Mr. Ziegler stated the most pure way is to replace everything as was. A suggestion was made that since the spindles are gone, to replace the hand rail cap with a more appropriate size like the original and to reinstall the frieze with straight spindles. Mr. Szabo noted that the spacing of the new spindles should be further apart which will visually improve the tallness of the railing. He suggested re-spacing the spindles and re-use extra spindles on the above frieze. Both sets of spindles should be the same style and spacing. HPC suggested looking at other homes in the area with friezes so the spacing can be placed appropriately.

After much discussion, HPC stated that the spindled frieze, hand rail and balusters should have the same scale, proportion and spacing as it once had. A copy of the HPC file photos was given to the homeowner for reference and evidence to note spacing. It was suggested to enlarge the photos to view the original details and talk to local contractors or possibly Mr. Gittings, who designed their back addition. It was mentioned that a local contractor, Mr. Golisano, replicated a porch railing and spindled frieze for a side addition on Scott Avenue some years ago. HPC suggests no more work be performed until a plan is decided upon. Ms. Scott will return to HPC with a proposed detail plan for the front porch.

The next meetings will be held March 19th, April 2nd, and April 16th.

18 Station Road (B18, L16) In Historic District, Classified C; homeowner, Ms. Susan Carter was present to discuss her application to remove three deteriorated concrete front entrance stairs and replace them with three wood steps and risers. Both flanking concrete block side walls will be removed. Three steps each consisting of one piece of wood and risers will be installed. The wood steps are more authentic to this house. Hand rails are proposed for each side of steps. Photos of front of house, existing steps, squared balusters located behind shrubbery and picture of proposed steps were included with application. Shrubby will be trimmed back but whether they remain is not a concern right now. The concrete walk will remain. Mr. Williams suggested that the owner install a simple metal "colonial style" rail that would serve as a hand rail as well. Ms. Carter felt this is a good suggestion. A pair of wrought iron rails will be installed and attached to the bottom step and porch decking. Ms. Carter thanked HPC for their guidance and suggestions. Work should be performed by April 15th per her insurance company instructions.

After much discussion of the hand rails installation, a roll call to approve this application as discussed was approved. AYES: Ms. Marlowe, Mr. Szabo, Mr. Williams, and Mr. Ziegler.

NEW BUSINESS

June 6, 2013, NJ History and HPC Conference will be held at the Newark Museum, Newark, NJ. Early registration ends April 30th.

OLD BUSINESS

Acrymax Systems was mentioned at the last HPC meeting. Information has been requested and distributed for HPC to view. Mr. Szabo has personally used this product on his home. He found this product to be flexible, easy to work with and it comes in several colors. It is felt that since this product has been used in the Historic District of Cape May, NJ, it would be useful for repairs in Cranbury.

2012 Year End memo will be emailed to Ms. Marlowe. This report should be brought to and discussed with the Township Committee prior to it being sent to SHPO per CLG requirements.

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

There being no further business, a motion duly made by Ms. Marlowe, second by Mr. Szabo and carried, the meeting was thereupon adjourned.

CERTIFICATE OF SECRETARY

I, undersigned, do hereby certify;

That I am the duly appointed secretary of the Cranbury Township Historic Preservation Commission and,

That the foregoing minutes of the Historic Preservation Commission, held on March 5, 2013 consisting of 3 pages, constitute a true and correct copy of the minutes of the said meeting.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my name on this 19th day of March 2013.

Linda M. Scott, Recording Secretary