

Minutes  
Historic Preservation Meeting  
Wednesday, March 23, 2016

Members Present: Johanna Hoffman, Chairperson, Don Uldberg, Steve Ryan, Alyssa Bouthot, scheduled for appointment on March 28<sup>th</sup>, and Bob Hamblen, City Planner. Absent: Jay St. John, Kelley Archer

**1. Review of 42 Fairfield Street. Tax Map 39, Lot 199. Zoned R-1b. Applicant, PDT Architects on behalf of Thornton Academy. Request to demolish single family home and attached barn, to replace with new structure, to contain an apartment, and small business office for Thornton Academy based on Sec. 713(5) of the Zoning Ordinance.**

**Bob:**

- Review of 42 Fairfield Street. Tax Map 39, Lot 199.
- Zoned R-1b. This property is not in the Historic Preservation District.
- Applicant, PDT Architects on behalf of Thornton Academy.
- Review under Section 713(5) of the Zoning Ordinance: a request to demolish single family home and attached barn, and to replace with new structure to contain first floor office space and second floor apartment.

See the applicant's cover letter for discussion of the building and neighborhood. Note that this is not the usual Certificate of Appropriateness application. Section 713 of the Zoning Ordinance (attached) allows offices to be established in residential zones, but only in converted residential structures so as to maintain residential character. Several examples exist along Main and North Streets, and elsewhere.

The proposal by Thornton Academy is subject to this language:

713(5) In special situations where a building is extremely dilapidated and structurally unsound and where re-use is therefore not practicable or economically feasible or where a building is not judged to be a significant component of the neighborhood's overall architectural and historic character, the Planning Board may approve plans to replace an existing residential building with a proposed new office building whose scale and design would be appropriate to the site and to the neighborhood. **The Board shall obtain the recommendation of the Saco Historic Preservation Commission before granting permission to demolish. The Commission and the Planning Board shall utilize the standards of this paragraph and those in Section 413 relative to demolition in determining whether to permit the demolition.** In the historic district and on historic sites the decision on demolition shall rest entirely with the Historic Preservation Commission.

The Planning Board is scheduled to review the project on April 5. The HPC's charge is to arrive at a recommendation on the matter for the PB's consideration.

Members may be aware that the property was acquired by the City in 2015 due to the non-payment of taxes, and purchased by T.A. in December of last year. The building has been evaluated, and the decision made to demolish and replace with a new structure. The building is not in the Historic District; the district boundary is Fairfield Street and properties on the northerly side of the street are in the district, but not on the south side. The building is circa 1900 according to tax records, and has been allowed to deteriorate by recent owners.

We sought input from Code Enforcement Officer Richard Lambert on the building's condition:

I read Lyndon's letter and fully agree with his analysis of the present building. The barn is in very poor condition and appears to be in danger of collapse. The remainder of the building lacks maintenance and has been vacant for some time. The building's plumbing was not winterized and will need to be completely redone. The status of the central heating system is questionable as the former residents heated the home with an improperly installed wood stove in the kitchen. The electrical system is outdated and requires replacement. I am not an expert in architecture but there doesn't seem to be any distinguishing features on the structure that would indicate that it is contributing to the historical character of the neighborhood.

Hope this information helps. Dick

The Section 413 standards re: demolition are attached. The HPC is directed to utilize the standards found in Sec. 713, and in 413 "...in determining whether to permit the demolition." See 413.11(5)(d) Standards of Approval for direction on arriving at a recommendation, listed below:

d) STANDARDS OF APPROVAL In order to approve an application for the relocation or demolition of a Contributing Building in an Historic Preservation District, or of an Historic Landmark or an Historic Site, the Commission must find that the proposal meets one of the following standards of approval:

1. Not a contributing structure in the historic district nor an historic landmark or site. The determination of what is a contributing structure is based on "Saco Historic Resources Inventory", marked "(late 1999)", and "The Middle Street-School Street Area – April 7, 1997".

2. The Commission determines that the building or structure is not of historical significance;
3. The building or structure, or predominant portions thereof has been determined by the chief Code Enforcement Officer to represent an immediate hazard to the public health or safety because of severe structural deficiencies, which hazard can not be abated by reasonable measures.
4. No prudent and feasible alternative exists, or
5. The property is deteriorated beyond repair.

**Lyndon Keck, PDT Architects:** As Bob noted, this building is not in the Historic District. TA acquired this property from the City of Saco. It can't be salvaged. It is a 2-family house, covered with vinyl siding and has no distinctive architectural features other than some interesting porch column brackets, which they plan to save, refinish, and remount on the new house. The house resembles a "Folk Victorian", with very little ornamentation, except for some porch column brackets, and porch railings. Fairfield Street is bounded on the south by a series of one and two family houses that were built between 1870 and 1930. The house has significant structural damage, with water damage in the basement and all the building's systems and finishes significantly degraded due to its age and lack of maintenance.

They plan to demolish the building. The existing built-up grade around the house will be lowered approx. 3-4 feet to more closely match the grading of the adjacent properties. The house has been designed to look like a single family house similar in size to the existing structure. The existing footprint is 1,415 s.f. The new building footprint will be 1,804 s.f. the height will go from 26ft to 31ft.

The building has been designed with one upstairs apartment and a small business office, so it can be easily converted to a second apartment on the first floor. The building will have two small exterior porch roofs covering the three main entrances into the building. The porch on the Fairfield Street elevation will have new turned wood columns with eight restored brackets reinstalled on the porch roof. Vinyl siding, wood corner boards, aluminum cladboards, double hung windows, and no basement.

Steve: have you looked into any other options besides vinyl? Because if you get water on the inside, it will cause a lot of damage. But if you do go with vinyl, you might want to go with white, because vinyl fades over time.

**Lyndon:** As usual, money is an issue. This will be a more narrow building.

**Don:** "I move to recommend that the proposed demolition of the buildings at 42 Fairfield Street be allowed to move forward based on the application submitted and staff comments, based on the standards in Section 713 and 413.11(5), and the finding that said buildings, house and barn:

- a. Are not contributing structures in the historic district nor an historic landmark or site;
- b. Are not of historical significance."

seconded by Steve. Motion passes 3-0

Meeting adjourned at 4:45p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Maggie Edwards  
Board Secretary