



TOWN OF WINCHESTER
Design Review Committee

Town Hall, Winchester, Massachusetts 01890

Juli Riemenschneider, RLA, ASLA, Chair
Ellen Spencer, Vice Chair
Adrian LeBuffe, LEED
Eileen Casciari, RA
Mary Grassi
Tracy Vartenigian Burhans, Artist
Jamie Devol, AIA

MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, January 4, 2023, 7:30 pm – Meeting by Zoom

Present: Riemenschneider, Spencer, Burhans, LeBuffe, Devol, Casciari,
Recording Secretary Nancy Upper

1. Open meeting. Vote to approve December 7, 2022, minutes -
All approved 6-0.

2. 7 Prince Avenue

PETITION NO. 3985 - That of BEN and ERIN McCOY concerning the property at 7 PRINCE AVENUE, WINCHESTER, MA. The petitioners are seeking a Special Permit under Section 3.5.5 of the Winchester Zoning By-Law in accordance with Chapter 40A, Section 9 of the Massachusetts General Laws so as to be permitted to construct a third story addition that will be located closer to the side property line than permitted as of right. The property is located in the RDB (Single Residence) zoning district and contains 5,000 +/- square feet.

Guest presenters: Keith Hinzman, project architect, owner of KWH Design Inc.
Benjamin McCoy, 7 Prince homeowner

- The McCoy family is growing, so they need more room. The homeowners hired Hinzman to create drawings for an expansion to the existing bungalow-style house.
- Hinzman said that the expansion would be achieved by “going up,” that is, by building on top of the existing house rather than enlarging its footprint.
- He showed his drawings of the proposed basement, first story, second story, and attic floor plans, side-by-side with drawings of the existing floor plans.

- Hinzman also showed front, side, and back exterior elevations, again comparing his proposed design to the existing house.
 - The proposed design opens the existing front porch to create a farmers porch that will extend across the front of the house. A hip roof will cover the new porch.
 - The proposed attic dormer will allow full-height headroom for interior stairs.
- Hinzman’s photos of abutting and nearby houses showed that the proposed expansion of 7 Prince to three-and-a-half-stories blends well with houses in the vicinity of similar size and style.

DISCUSSION

- Ellen Spencer appreciated that the expansion is “up,” not closer to the property lines.
- Spencer asked if Hinzman or the homeowners had consulted with abutters. Hinzman replied:
 - “We had informal conversations with the neighbors.”
 - “All were okay with the proposed plans.”
- Jamie Devol praised the design:
 - “It is appropriate, pleasant, and in character with other houses in the neighborhood.”
 - “The form, side bay window, and trim proportions all look good.”
- On Hinzman’s drawing of the proposed right-side elevation, Devol observed the removal of the existing masonry chimney. She said, “Keeping the brick chimney, and extending it above the new roof, is desirable.”
 - A line on the right-side elevation points to a protrusion intended to replace the masonry chimney. A note next to the line identifies this protrusion:

“New wood-framed enclosure to replace existing masonry chimney. New zero-clearance fireplace insert, installed and vented per manufacturer’s requirements including but not limited to minimum clearances to combustible materials.”
 - Hinzman said he could extend the masonry chimney to keep the existing fireplace.
 - Devol suggested installing a gas insert into the existing fireplace, thereby preserving the brick chimney.
- Eileen Casciari observed that door windows are divided light, whereas the house windows are all single-pane over-single pane as in the existing house.
- Devol pointed out the abundance of vertical bars in the front railings.

- She said the railings look “busy.”
- Hinzman said the railing bars are 4” apart so a four-inch ball will not go through them.
- Tracy Burhans expressed concern that the 7 Prince expansion would block views for people who live up the hill in bungalows.
 - Burhans encouraged Hinzman to speak with neighbors to be sure “they are okay” with the 7 Prince expansion.
 - Homeowner McCoy mentioned that the ZBA sends letters to all abutters who live within 300 feet of a proposed house expansion.
- Juli Riemenschneider asked Hinzman what materials he would use. He said:
 - 30-year to lifetime roof shingles.
 - Hardiboard.
 - Five-inch window casings.
 - For the foundation, block with a “little bit of brick.”
- Riemenschneider asked Hinzman to supply the Committee with a documented list of external materials for the members to approve.

Riemenschneider moved for favorable action with one condition:

That Hinzman send a documented list of external materials to the DRC for approval.

Vote: All in favor 6-0

Note: January 6, 2023, Architect Keith Hinzman emailed the requested external materials list to Juli Riemenschneider. Members reviewed the list individually and forwarded no objections.

DRC recommendation:

That the homeowners and architect contact abutters at 11 Prince to ensure they have no objections to the proposed 7 Prince expansion.

3. 407 Highland Avenue

PETITION NO. 3986 - That of THE WINCHESTER COMMUNITY MUSIC TRUST (aka THE WINCHESTER COMMUNITY MUSIC SCHOOL AND WCMS) concerning the property at 407 HIGHLAND AVENUE, WINCHESTER, MA. The petitioners seek Site Plan Review under Section 9.5.1(3) of the Winchester Zoning By-Law so as to be permitted to construct an addition that will exceed 25% of the existing building floor area and will have greater than 20 parking spaces. The petitioners also seek Site Plan Review under Section 9.5.1(5) of the Winchester Zoning By-Law so as to be permitted to construct an addition where the total floor area of the building will be greater than 5,000 square feet. The property is located in the RDB (Single Residence) zoning district and contains 2.72 +/- acres.

Guest presenters: Ralph Dinneen, retired architect representing the property owners.

Keirsten Deegan, Principal and Project Manager with [Ci Design, Inc.](#)

- Ralph Dinneen clarified that Petition 3986 is a “Site Plan Approval process,” not a Site Plan Review.

Note: The application letter from WCMS director Laurie Russell to Janine Viarella, administrative assistant for the Building Department, confirms:

“... Application for Site Plan Approval under Articles 9.5.1(3) and 9.5.1(5).”

- Laurie Russell’s application letter explains that “WCMS is celebrating more than 40 years of continuous existence in Winchester, 24 years of which have been at 407 Highland Ave.”
 - During the forty years, WCMS enrollment increased from 30 to 950.
 - The current 50-seat concert hall often fills to capacity and beyond.
 - Increased demand for the school’s services necessitates:
 - ♦ A raised stage area.
 - ♦ Support facilities for performers, students, faculty, and staff.
 - ♦ Musical instrument storage.
 - ♦ A “Studio Wing” for new teaching studios, ensemble studios, and a recording studio.
- Deegan said the original building was built in 1919 as a residential structure, but the architect is unknown.
- Deegan showed views of the existing site and plans for the proposed building expansion, parking, site access, lighting, and landscaping.
- As to lighting and landscaping, she said:
 - “We are being very careful not to have light flood onto neighboring properties.”
 - Landscaping around the sides of the building and the proposed expansion will screen light from shining onto abutters.
 - Landscaping around the front will enhance the entrance and the building’s street-view appearance.
- Deegan said:
 - The existing building is “in good shape,” so “we will not touch that.”
 - They will make the proposed expansion as ADA accessible as possible.
- Dinneen directed the Committee’s attention to two features on the proposed plans:
 - A second-floor “cutout” built into the end of the expansion to house mechanical equipment.
 - An enclosed shaft to house a new elevator that will service all three floors of the existing building.

DISCUSSION

- Adrian LeBuffe asked if the designers are able to match existing building materials.
- Deegan replied that they intend roof, wood trim, stucco, and stone all to match existing.
- Jamie Devol noticed the original gracious roof over the front door, and the porch over the side door. She asked why the simulated view of the addition showed no roof over the door in the new wing. Three sloped roofs (the main roof, and the two side gables) slope down to this door; water will drip down to the door from three sides and snow will pile up.
 - Deegan replied: "That door is an emergency exit, so we don't want to draw too much attention to it."
 - "We want people to keep using the front and side doors."
 - Devol reiterated that connecting the two gables with a small roof over this door would be better functionally and aesthetically, even if it is an egress door.
- Eileen Casciari commented that the elevator enclosure could blend better with the building. She said, "It looks like an add-on."
- Dinneen replied, "This is a complicated project." He explained that:
 - The original 1919 building "is beautiful beyond belief."
 - The 1999 addition "has the same feeling, but is starkly simple and unornamented."
- A simulated photo shows the proposed elevator shaft as a plain enclosure tucked between the original building and the 1999 addition.
- Dineen mentioned other plain block additions to the building over the years.
- Devol pointed out they are on the rear of the building, not the front.
- Juli Riemenschneider asked about landscaping and about any large existing trees that might need to be removed.
- Dinneen replied that:
 - Landscapers will use existing plants from other parts of the property and transplant them to important locations around the building and proposed new wing.
 - All new plants will be of "significant size."
 - There are few large trees along Highland Ave.
- Devol raised the issue of the mechanical equipment cutout in the gable roof of the new addition.
- Dinneen replied:
 - "We are considering plantings to hide it and to buffer sound."

- "I think we found a "really nice place on the site" to hide the equipment."
- Ellen Spencer said, "We like the design, but there are two problematic areas:"
 - The mechanical equipment cutout.
 - The elevator enclosure.
- Casciari asked if the DRC could see another iteration of the design.

Adrian LeBuffe moved for favorable action with one condition:

That the DRC is granted ongoing review of architectural details and selected problematic sections of the proposed building expansion.

Vote: All in favor 6-0

4. 14 Thompson Street

[See Design Review Committee December 7, 2022, meeting minutes, Item 5.](#)

Guest presenters: Kevin Foley, retired architect representing the property owners.
Iverson Guo, owner of the proposed Karma Restaurant

- Foley said that his great grandfather built the 14 Thompson Street building. Foley himself has been involved with the building since 1989.
- He said, "A new restaurant needs a new look."
 - He mentioned the "beautiful Karma restaurant" in Concord MA.
 - Foley and Guo aspire to create a similarly attractive and popular Karma at 14 Thompson Street.
- In response to DRC members' previous concerns about damaging or mismatching historic façade bricks, Foley said:
 - "The existing bricks are not the original bricks. This building has evolved over time."
 - On photos of the façade taken in Aug 2007, Aug 2019, and Nov 2020, Foley pointed out color differences in the mortar between bricks, sections of brick that subtly do not match others, and lintels that looked newer than others.
 - "We are very attuned to the historical verity of the building and want to make it as true to the original character as possible."

DISCUSSION

- Ellen Spencer asked the material of the proposed three awnings. Foley replied:
 - "Copper, to correspond with the copper overhangs in the Thompson courtyard."
 - Over time, the copper will acquire a patina to match the courtyard overhangs.
- Iverson Guo said they want to open the front of the restaurant to

make it appealing and welcoming to customers.

- Juli Riemenschneider: “We have never seen pictures or drawings of how the new design and openings compare to existing and previous designs and openings.” Such pictures, and architectural drawings, would answer questions DRC members raised, including:
 - Eileen Casciari: Is the new entrance door recessed?
(Guo replied that it is. He added that the entrance door will be ADA compliant.)
 - Jamie Devol: Do the folding doors fold out or in?
 - Ellen Spencer: Will the angled door [at the courtyard entrance] remain untouched?
(Guo replied yes, that door will remain as is.)
 - Tracy Burhans: How bright are the exterior lights?
(Guo replied, “The lights are soft, not bright.”)
 - Devol said six lights along this wall seems too many and suggested removing the middle two, on either side of the picture window.
- Riemenschneider: “We like the direction this design is heading, but we need architectural drawings, measurements, and materials.
- Guo and Foley agreed to bring to the DRC’s February 8 meeting architectural plans showing the details the Committee requested.
 - Foley said, “We know now what we need to provide for you.”
 - He added, “Iverson’s company has done a really nice job with the new aesthetic. I will work with Iverson to try to get the right balance between the historic and the new to appeal to a contemporary clientele.”
 - “We will get back to you quickly and will submit new plans for your February meeting.”

5. Sign Permits –358 and 362 Washington Street

Guest presenter: David Errico, owner of the 358-362 Washington St. building

- Errico explained that the building houses:
 - His Errico Realty office.
 - His son’s upstairs apartment.
 - The Eighty-Eight Café Chinese Restaurant.
- The existing bright yellow awning:
 - Extends across about half of the building façade.
 - The red lettering and logo on the awning identify just the Chinese restaurant.
- The proposed new awning will extend across the entire façade.

- The new awning materials will be the same as the existing.
- New awning color: red, with white lettering and logo.
- On a simulated photo of the proposed awning, lettering on the left third identifies Errico Realty. Lettering and logo on the right two-thirds identify the Eighty Eight Café Chinese Restaurant.
- A vertical white line about 12" wide separates the realty text from the café text and logo.
- Errico said, "The white 'stripe' is intended to delineate the two businesses."
- Tracy Burhans proposed two thinner white lines instead of the single thick line.
- Ellen Spencer agreed.
- Errico said he was "okay" with two thinner lines.

DRC Recommendation:

DRC members unanimously approved of the new awning but recommended changing the single white line to two thinner lines.

6. Old Business – Town Planner Job Description

[See Design Review Committee December 7, 2022, meeting minutes, Item 7.](#)

- DRC members continued discussion of the Planner's job description.
- All members felt strongly that language in support of the Design Review Committee should be in the Planner's description of responsibilities.
- Ellen Spencer agreed to write a letter to the Personnel Board, Planning Board, Select Committee, Historical Commission, and Town Manager to communicate:

Design Review Committee members unanimously agree that the revised job description for the Town Planner should specify the Committee by name, and that the Town Planner's responsibilities include providing consultation to the Design Review Committee as needed.

7. Election of New DRC Chair and Vice Chair

- The term of current Chair Juli Riemenschneider ended as of this January 7, 2023, DRC meeting.
- Both the Chair and Vice Chair of the DRC are voted on annually in rotation.
- Because Mary Grassi, the member up next in the rotation, was not present at the January 4, 2023, meeting, the vote on Vice Chair was tabled until the February 8, 2023, meeting.

Juli Riemenschneider nominated Ellen Spencer as the new DRC Chair.

Vote: All in favor 6-0

Adjourn.

| SUMMARY of Design Review Committee VOTES – January 04, 2023 | | | |
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| Minutes # | Item | Address | Vote |
| 2. | Petition 3985 | 7 Prince Avenue | Favorable action 6-0 with one condition |
| 3. | Petition 3986 | 407 Highland Ave | Favorable action 6-0 with one condition |
| 7. | Election of Chair and Vice Chair | Ellen Spencer, new Chair Vice Chair pending | All in favor 6-0 |

Next meeting: Wednesday, February 8, 2023. Location to be announced.

Respectfully submitted by Recording Secretary Nancy Upper.