Town of Groton

**173 Main Street**

**Groton, MA 01450**

**Historic Districts Commission**

**April 25th, 2023**

**7:30 pm**

**1st Floor Meeting Room**

**Members Present:** Peter Benedict, Brian Cartier, Jennifer Rand

**Others Present**: Gus Widmayer, members of the public

**Administrative Assistant**: Amanda Urmann

**Meeting Called to Order at 7:30 pm by Chairman Benedict.**

**Chairman Benedict read aloud the public hearing notice:**

Killbourn Place, LLC, 240 Main Street

Assessors Map 112-90

In accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40C, the Groton Historic Districts Commission (GHDC) will hold a Public Hearing on **Tuesday, April 25th, 2023, at 7:30 pm at The Groton Town Hall, First Floor Meeting Room, 173 Main Street, Groton, MA 01450. This meeting will be held** to consider the application submitted by Gus Widmayer, seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for **240 Main Street, Assessors Map 112-90** to remove the balustrade from the roofline.Copies of the application and supporting materials are available for review by contacting the GHDC via the Land Use Dept, 2nd floor of the Town Hall.

Applicant Gus Widmayer was the presenter for this public hearing.

Mr. Widmayer explained that he previously came before this committee with plans to renovate the old Donelan’s building on Main St with plans to put in a second floor with a collineated front. Mr. Widmayer brought a picture of what it was intended to look like at the time of the original proposal and then a new proposed picture of the balustrade removal. It was supposed to be the center focus of the second floor but because things didn’t go well with the planning board, they went through a few re-designs and the second floor got removed, so they went for a more civil façade for the ground level. What Mr. Widmayer is requesting is to remove the balustrade from the plan and to ask for more time beyond the certificate of occupancy to remove the posts that were installed in preparation for the balustrade. Emerson Hospital, the tenant, is looking to get their Certificate of Occupancy in a few weeks but Mr. Widmayer is not prepared for this.

Member Rand asked how long it would take the posts down and Mr. Widmayer wasn’t sure how difficult it would take to take them down.

Member Cartier noted that he liked the design of the balustrade and that without it looks more modern and industrial but understood that designs that are developed like this go through changes. He also mentioned about ice damming and how it almost acts like a snow rail so snow wouldn’t be sliding down into the entryway and wasn’t sure if the applicant considered this. Mr. Widmayer’s concern was more the long term maintenance of these rails, which included the wood and painting of it.

Chairman Benedict commented that there have been many design changes throughout this process, and how they approved this design previously and now he’s asking to remove a major focal point of this design. Mr. Benedict asked if the concern was the cost of these because it was brought up before how he was worried about the cost and Mr. Widmayer said that was not the main reason, although it is an astronomical price for them. While it will cost to take it down, but it wouldn’t be nearly as much as they are with. Mr. Benedict also brought up the fence that he promised would go up and how this was a contingency in the original approval. He wanted to ensure that this goes up before he gives the occupancy permit and explained how he cannot approve the occupancy permit until it is up. In response to this, Mr. Widmayer explained that the back concrete wall is not relevant to the property line, so he wanted to express that the committee is asking him to install a fence that is three to four feet of his property behind the fence on the abutters side. Another comment he had was that what the abutters are getting today is light years improved compared to what used to be at this location. Mr. Benedict understands his concerns but it is written in the original approval for this fence to be completed. Mr. Widmayer asked if the entire fence needed to be installed or if segments could be put up, and Mr. Benedict recalled it being the entire fence. An abutter of this property suggested putting in a gate to access these three to four feet that Mr. Widmayer is concerned about. Mr. Widmayer mentioned that he did have an appointment on May 5th with a fencing company and has invited this abutter to this appointment. Mr. Widmayer mentioned contacting Town Planner Takashi Tada about this and asked what was required and Mr. Tada said that there were no requirements for the planning board and at the time it did not occur to Mr. Widmayer that this was in the historic district.

Member Cartier made a motion that the HDC approve the application for the certificate of appropriateness for 240 Main St, Killbourn Place, Assessors Map 112-90, for the purpose of remove the previously designed balustrade from the roofline with the existing post to be removed within six months. Member Rand seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-0.

**Chairman Benedict read aloud the public hearing notice:**

28 Willowdale Rd

Assessors Map 112-130

In accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40C, the Groton Historic Districts Commission (GHDC) will hold a Public Hearing on **Tuesday, April 25th, 2023, at 7:40 pm at The Groton Town Hall, First Floor Meeting Room, 173 Main Street, Groton, MA 01450. This meeting will be held** to consider the application submitted by John A. Walker, seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for **28 Willowdale Rd, Assessors Map 112-130** to repaint existing white masonry existing walls, existing green vinyl siding exterior walls, and black vinyl shutters to (3) exterior windows at the south end elevation facing Hollis Street**.** Copies of the application and supporting materials are available for review by contacting the GHDC via the Land Use Dept, 2nd floor of the Town Hall.

Applicant and owner John Walker was the presenter for this public hearing.

Chairman Benedict clarified with Mr. Walker that he wanted the entire building white with black shutters and Mr. Walker agreed with this. These will be standard shutters and he verified that they would be installed the correct way.

Member Rand asked what would happen with a new sign and Chairman Benedict said that when a new business goes in, they will come before the HDC and they can discuss this then.

Member Cartier mentioned this would be a great improvement to this location.

Member Cartier made a motion that the HDC approve the application for the certificate of appropriateness for 28 Willowdale Road, Assessors Map 112-130, for the purpose of repainting the existing white masonry walls, existing green vinyl siding exterior walls, and black vinyl shutters to (3) exterior windows at the south end elevation facing Hollis Street**.** Member Rand seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-0.

**Chairman Benedict read aloud the public hearing notice:**

58 Hollis Street

Assessors Map 112-113

In accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40C, the Groton Historic Districts Commission (GHDC) will hold a Public Hearing on **Tuesday, April 25th, 2023, at 7:50 pm at The Groton Town Hall, First Floor Meeting Room, 173 Main Street, Groton, MA 01450. This meeting will be held** to consider the application submitted by owners, Luke and Katie Kenney, seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for 58 Hollis Street**, Assessors Map 112-113** to install a fieldstone retaining wall**.** Copies of the application and supporting materials are available for review by contacting the GHDC via the Land Use Dept, 2nd floor of the Town Hall.

Member Cartier made a motion that the HDC continue the discuss on 58 Hollis Street until the next scheduled Historic District Committee meeting. Member Rand seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-0.

**Chairman Benedict read aloud the public hearing notice:**

Waters House, 11 Lowell Road

Assessors Map 113-11

In accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40C, the Groton Historic Districts Commission (GHDC) will hold a Public Hearing on **Tuesday, April 25th, 2023, at 8:00 pm at The Groton Town Hall, First Floor Meeting Room, 173 Main Street, Groton, MA 01450. This meeting will be held** to consider the application submitted by the owner, Groton Lowell Road LLC, seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for 11 Lowell Road**, Assessors Map 113-11** to renovate the exterior of the building**.** Copies of the application and supporting materials are available for review by contacting the GHDC via the Land Use Dept, 2nd floor of the Town Hall.

Applicant John Amaral was the presenter for this public hearing.

Mr. Amaral gave a brief history on this property, explaining it was owned by Lawrence Academy for multiple decades and in that time, they had done some work to make it suitable for dorms. They had done some work that covered some original features and Mr. Amaral and his team are hoping they will be able to bring some of these back and try to save as much of this detail and character. Their plan for the use will be changed and it they are going to propose that these dorms get converted into six apartment units. They are unsure if it was a rental basis or if they will be managed by the Groton Inn, and if these could be long term rentals or shorter-term rentals such as functions like bridal parties. Mr. Amaral then went in to some background on his team and their experience on similar projects.

Nicole Kirouac, the lead architect on this project, then started her part of the presentation.

Focusing on the exterior of the renovations, they are trying to make the historical details “shine”. They will also be replacing all of the windows, with a modern series window pane. They will be black and wanted to note that there will be some changes to some of these windows, such as the third-floor windows. These windows are double hung windows and when you go to open them, they maybe open three inches. So, while they’re going to take the same profile of these windows, they are planning to change them to a casement window so that they will open for better egress and allow better ventilation. On the back addition piece, two windows will be taken out because they will be bedrooms. She also mentioned that they are proposing to change the exterior color to a dark grey color (Benjamin Moore Charcoal Grey) so that it will help it stand out and differentiate from nearby buildings. They also will be adding additional balconies in areas that already exist as flat roofs so that all tenant space can end up with a balcony or patio space. She explained that from the front there would be two balconies. Ms. Kirouac then went on to explain that there is currently one window in the back, facing the Inn. The plan for this is to mimic what the current window looks like to be placed on the adjacent side where there is not a window to give the building symmetry. She then mentioned the railings and gave two proposed options: one where they would replicate the front porch with glass above and another where they would replicate the woodwork and put a solid base above it so that they can reach the minimum requirements for railings.

Mr. Amaral mentioned that the elevation had an overhang and it was explained how it was put on much later and it doesn’t belong there, therefore they will be removing it. Mr. Amaral explained that they think it’s important for each unit to have a balcony (or patio) for outside space for the residents, but that these have been designed so that they blend with the building and that it fits the characteristics of the porch and railings.

Chairman Benedict asked for the applicant and his team to explain the railing with the glass on top. Ms. Kirouac said that to get to the height they need, they will be wood details on the existing front porch and replicating this and adding a tempered glass to get the railing height to that needed height requirement. The other option for the rail would be taking the same woodwork detail and putting a solid board beneath it to give more privacy. Mr. Benedict also asked if this would be all wood or azek and it was answered that they would do what was best for longevity and that the plastic would likely achieve the best detail.

The windows will be a true divided light panel. The roof is also all existing; it will be repaired but most of it is in good shape currently. The parking lot is currently planned to stay the same as is.

Member Rand brought up the balconies on the third floor and the doors that accompany them and asked if these would be glass with just black edges around them. Ms. Kirouac agreed with this statement. The arch that is currently on these doors will stay but the door will be opened for full glass lighting.

Chairman Benedict asked where all the mechanical items going and it was explained that they will be in the back and on ground level. The back side was explained to be the side facing the Groton Inn.

Mr. Benedict asked if there were any plans for lighting on the exterior of the building and Ms. Kirouac explained that the only plan was replacing the down lights that are in the porch. Mr. Benedict also asked if there would be any multi-unit mailbox situation and Ms. Kirouac explained that there would be unit mailboxes in the vestibule for the people who are accessed there and mentioned that they were planning to meet with the postmaster for the one tenant that could be put right outside their door but there would be space for all 6 mailboxes in that vestibule.

Member Rand asked how many air conditioning units there would be and it was answered that there would be fix or six.

All present HDC board members agreed that they would prefer if the applicants not used the glass-on-top railings and that the solid underneath railing would be a better option. For the solid wood below the railing, the applicants agreed that they could mimic the existing vertical wood and putting this in a frame to make the solid wood railing look better.

Member Rand asked about the door that is black and Ms. Kirouac said that all of the doors and windows trimming will be black so that it will blend in and this one door is a utility door so they did not want to lead people there. The current door is flat and they are looking to replace it with a more weather-tight door but most likely steel; focusing on it to not look like a unit entryway.

The front door is currently solid wood with no glass and they are proposing to replace it, mentioning that when they looked back in its history in the trim and building, that at one point it was built in with a new door. It is clear that this was not the original door that was always there. Their intent is to use a two-panel door, half-light.

Wait on approving the actual final railing design; the applicants to come up with a mock-up of a new proposal for this. Wait on approving the front door and possibly the side door; the applicants to come in with an example.

Member Cartier made a motion that the HDC approve the application for the certificate of appropriateness for 11 Lowell Rd, Assessors Map 113-11, for the Marvin true divided-light windows, the exterior color of Benjamin Moore Kendall Charcoal with white trim and black doors, as per the drawings and plans submitted with the exception of the front door, possibly the side door and the detailed mock-up or drawing of the railing detail. Member Rand seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-0.

**Commissioner Updates - None**

**Approval of Minutes:**

Member Cartier made a motion to approve the January 17th, 2023 meeting minutes as submitted. Member Rand seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously. 3-0

Next meeting to be held on May 23rd via Zoom.

Member Cartier made a motion to adjourn. Member Rand seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 3-0.

**Meeting Adjourned: 8:40 PM**

Respectfully Submitted By: Amanda Urmann