Town of Groton

**173 Main Street**

**Groton, MA 01450**

**Historic Districts Commission**

**September 19th, 2023**

**7:30 pm**

**First Floor Meeting Room**

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

**Others Present**: Attorney Bob Collins, Jim Desrosiers

**Administrative Assistant**: Amanda Urmann

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

**Chairman Benedict read aloud the Public Hearing notice:**

**250 Farmers Row, “Regnier House” Public Hearing:**

Applicant: Groton School

Attorney Bob Collins

PUBLIC HEARING:

Member Cartier read aloud the public notice:

In accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40C, the Groton Historic Districts Commission (GHDC) will hold a Public Hearing on **Tuesday, September 19, 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 owner, Groton School, seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for **250 Farmers Row, Assessors Map 219-9** to replace windows, shutters, doors and gutters, and chimney removal, reconstruction of rear entry, landscape restoration and fence installation**.** 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.

Attorney Bob Collins was present to represent the applicants for this public hearing. He explained that this house was a nondescript house built in the 1920’s and explained that it is the building right in front of where the new proposed track fields were being put in. The owners would like to freshen this house up and update the windows, as they are the original windows and are too old and they will be replaced with custom Pell units that replicate the pane design with the divided light, as shown in the cut sheet that was given. Attorney Collins also said that a couple of the windows will be moved, on three facades. The front is essentially staying the same, but the left-hand side, towards the back of the house, one of the two windows in what is the dining room will be moved back closer to the corner and it will appear more symmetrical. On the opposite side of the house, the middle window on the second story will be moved about six inches because of the bathroom renovation that is on-going. The final window that will be moved is on the back of the house, which isn’t visible from a Historic Road, to create two windows in the eating area in the kitchen. Following this, there are two chimneys on this house and while one will be staying, there is a chimney that is centered in the roof line that is not functional and it is currently leaning. It was the original furnace chimney but the owners would like to remove this and put a replacement roof in this location with matching roofing products to match the current roof. Attorney Collins proceeded to explain that the house currently has wooden shutters on most of the windows (but not all) and the owners would like to replace these shutters that are currently existing with the same design. These shutters are currently black and they would like to replace them with the “Groton Green” color. Mr. Collins also mentioned that the front door currently has an aluminum storm door combination and the owners would like to remove this, as it likely was never approved, and either restore the current door itself or replace it with a Pella unit, which will have eight panes, almost like a French door and have it colored as the dark green as well. Attorney Collins also mentioned the front porch and the temporary screens that had been installed and while they have already removed these, they would like to keep these off as they are not a part of the original house. He then went on to the exterior lights portion of the changes and explained that there were only two outside lights, one which is underneath the porch roof and this will be replaced with the same type of light that was installed at Sturgis House on the front door. The other light is on the back that will be utilized as an exterior light for the rear entry and they will be replacing this will a wall mounted light that was also used at Sturgis House. Mr. Collins also explained that the gutters on the front porch are wooden and rotting, so the owners would like to replace this with a seamless metal gutter that will replicate the design of the wood. The current garage is hard wood paneled from the 1960’s and is being proposed to replace this with the custom units that they also used at Sturgis House garage, which have planking and windows across the top as shown in the cut sheets. Mr. Collins also said that in the back of the house, in the back corner, the owners would like to run forty feet of fencing, which will be used for the dual purpose of privacy and it will hide the new heat pump units that will be installed and they will use cedar fencing. The rear entry is an add-on that likely wasn’t an original feature of the house and Mr. Collins explained that it is currently leaning and that it is not structurally sound and this will be torn down and will be rebuilt as the exact same size and design. The trim will also meet the rest of the house. The only change would be to the right-side façade that has an off-center window and this will be replaced with a slightly larger window and it will be centered. The driveway is currently a straight away and then at the end is circular, and this circle is actually too tight to be used as it was intended to be used when made into a circle. Due to this, the plan is to tear this out and put a stone patio back there for the occupants and make a place so someone could back up and turn around. Mr. Collins continues explaining the proposed design of the driveway by explaining that on the left side will be a spot that can accommodate two vehicles. The current foundation plantings are overgrown and these will be replaced with new plantings, and Mr. Collins will send this out when he gets this but it likely won’t be until next spring. Back to the windows, these will be Pella windows and they will fit within the existing frame, so the exterior trim will not need to be change. However, if any rot is discovered, this will be replaced with the same size and composite boards. The garage roof is a three-tab roof and does not match the house and while they don’t intend to do this yet, this will be replaced with architectural tab shingles that are matching the main house.

Attorney Collins said that while from afar, this house doesn’t appear to be in rough shape, if up close enough, it is noticeable but believes with all of these updates that it will bring it back to life.

There was conversion about the changes that Attorney Bob Collins mentioned, which mostly included clarification for these changes. The proposed windows on the garage to not be included. The front door to be reconsidered for a different option, if it needs to be replaced rather than restored.

*Member Rand motioned for item number one to be accepted as presented, item two to be accepted as presented, item three to remove the shutters from small windows on the north and south side, to have the applicant reconsider front door item, and to use existing door if possible and if it is not possible, to come back before the HDC, the exterior lights to be accepted as presented, the gutters to be accepted as presented, for the garage door to not include the strip of windows, the fence to be accepted as presented, the rear entry to be accepted as presented and for the landscaping to be accepted as presented. Member Hicks seconded this motion and it carried unanimously.*

**Chairman Benedict opened the floor for the Public at this time.**

Jim Desrosiers, resident and owner of 228 Main Street was present and had a few questions for the Board about potential updates they planned to do or might be doing at a future date. Mr. Desrosiers mentioned that window replacements are one item on the to-do list and explained that the current windows are outdated single-pane wood windows and some don’t even open, while some other windows are not even original windows. The other concern that they have is the front door, which is black, which swells and shrinks throughout the year. They would potentially like to either change the color or use a storm door so that they have a solution to this issue, and if they are allowed to have a storm door, they would like to have a screen on the top half if possible. They would also like to add a large garden in the back of the house in the back yard. As for the back yard and landscaping goes, it was explained by Peter Benedict that typically this does not fall under the HDC purview and that it is more of the hardscape, such as a stone wall, that would fall under their purview. The Board and Mr. Desrosiers discussed his potential updates in detail and explained what is more likely to get approved and what is least likely to get approved. It was recommended that Mr. Desrosiers submit a certificate of appropriateness with any update they may plan to do in the near future.

**163 Main Street –Sign Permit Application Continuation:**

Applicant: Nichole Evans

This new sign is to be added on to a currently existing sign as a replacement.

There was brief discussion on the newly submitted information for this sign permit application.

*Member Cartier motioned that the HDC issue a certificate of appropriateness for a sign permit for 163 Main Street as per the revised submission. Member Hicks seconded the motion and the vote was carried unanimously.*

**145 Main Street –Sign Permit Application:**

Applicant: Prescott Community School (Friends of Prescott, Inc.)

This is a temporary sign.

There was discussion on whether or not the Board should approve this sandwich board.

*Member Hicks motioned that the HDC deny the sign permit application at 145 Main Street, based on the Select Board policy on sandwich boards. Member Rand seconded the motion and the vote was carried unanimously.*

If the applicants would like to revisit this, the Board is willing to talk to them if they come in person to a meeting to discuss this.

**Commissioner Updates:**

111 Farmers Row has talked to Peter Benedict about the framing concern and they fixed the problem the same day. Bob Prescott also asked a question about the stone wall that was previously approved and Mr. Benedict gave the go-ahead on this as well.

There are trees on the Boynton Meadows property that the owners would like to remove. It was requested that the owners get a third-party certified arborist to give a health report on these trees and determine if they are an immediate danger of falling and once the Board receives this, more can be discussed.

Historical plaques to be a topic of discussion for a future meeting when Aubrey Theall is able to attend.

**Approval of Minutes:**

August 15th meeting meetings to be pushed to the next meeting.

Next meeting to be held on October 17th, 2023.

Member Cartier made a motion to adjourn. Member Hicks seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**Meeting Adjourned: 9:23 PM**

Respectfully Submitted By: Amanda Urmann