

APPROVED
As of 4/1/2009
HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW COMMITTEE
Regular Monthly Meeting No. 306
Wednesday, December 3, 2008

MINUTES

This regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Review Committee (HPRC) was convened at 7:30 PM in the East Conference Room in Borough Hall. Nora Kerr, Vice-Chairperson opened the meeting in accordance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, Section 5, Chapter 231, P.L. 275 by reading the following statement:

In conformance with the requirements of the Law, Notice was provided of the date, time and location of this special meeting by posting a copy of the adopted Schedule of Regular Meetings in the Borough Hall, by mailing copies to the Trenton Times, Princeton Packet, and by filing a copy in the Office of the Clerk of Princeton Borough. Adequate notice was provided to the public and to all parties concerned.

PRESENT: James Constantine (*left at 9 pm*), Nora Kerr, Carolyn Robertson, Celia Tazelaar, Kirsten Thoft, and Regan C. Tuder.

ABSENT: Jane Faggen, William Howard, and Jeanne Perantoni.

ALSO PRESENT: Derek W. Bridger, Historic Preservation Review Officer and Danielle A. Britton, Recording Secretary.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The draft Minutes of Special Meeting# 302 and #304 were reviewed. C. Tazelaar made motion to approve minutes as amended. K. Thoft seconded. Motion was approved unanimously.

ADMINISTRATIVE WAIVERS

34 Bank Street, Block 19.01, Lot 43
Pinneo Construction/ Applicant
Adam Bauser/ Owner
Bank Street Zone/ Central Historic Overlay District
Window and Siding Replacements
Approved-September 22, 2008- Jeanne Perantoni

20 Nassau Street, Block 19.02, Lot 19
Cheryl Goldsmith/ Applicant
Richard Scott/ Owner
CBD Zone, Central Historic Overlay District
Signage and Awning
Approved-September 23, 2008- Jeanne Perantoni

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**25 Mercer Street, Block 37.01, Lot 52
Trinity Church/ Applicant & Owner
R3 Zone-Mercer Hill Overlay District
Window & Skylight Replacements
Approved-September 25, 2008- Jeanne Perantoni**

**12 Stockton Street, Block 37.01, Lot 54
Princeton Project 55 Inc. / Applicant & Owner
R-3 Zone-Mercer Hill Overlay District
Pergola Removal
Approved-October 17, 2008- Jeanne Perantoni**

**84 Nassau Street, Block: 20.01, Lot 41
CBD Zone/ Central Historic Overlay District
Twist Yogurt/applicant
80-84 Nassau Street LLC/Owner
Main Business Sign Request
Approved-October 31, 2008- Jeanne Perantoni**

**36 Nassau Street, Block: 19.03, Lot: 35
CBD Zone/ Central Historic Overlay District
Lululemon Athletica/Applicant
Pilaf Partners, LLC/Owner
Main business Sign and Awning request
Approved-November 12, 2008- Jeanne Perantoni**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

D. Bridger informed the Committee that the T-Mobile application for historic preservation review, conditional use authorization and minor site plan approval scheduled to be heard at tonight's meeting would be carried over to the January 7, 2009 meeting at the applicant's request.

HEARING

**Morven Concept Plan; Block 12.01, Lot 4
Mercer Hill Historic Preservation District
Historic Morven, Applicant
State of New Jersey, Owner
Courtesy review of proposed visitor center**

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D. Bridger provided a brief overview of a proposed new building concept plan from the Historic Morven Museum. Mr. Bridger noted that the applicant had previously appeared before the Committee on October 18, 2005 and had presented a concept plan for courtesy review of a new visitor's center, a new administration building, and various site improvements.

The State Historic Sites Council denied the application. The applicant again appeared before the Historic Sites Council on June 19, 2008 with a revised concept site plan. The State Historic Sites Council informally reviewed the application and recommended that the application be reviewed by the Princeton Borough Historic Preservation Review Committee as part of its role as a Certified Local Government.

The concept plan proposes a single-story, 3,000 sq. ft. visitors/interpretive center to be built on the southeastern side of the subject property adjacent to the Princeton Borough Municipal parking lot. The proposed 'short side' of the building would face Stockton Street to lessen the visual impact as viewed from Stockton Street. The height of the structure would be limited to 14 ft., which is the height of the second-story windowsills on the main house. The interior of the building would consist of a lower/basement level which would be utilized as mechanical and exhibit equipment storage room(s), staff offices, coat lockers, and an archive room. The upper level would be comprised of restrooms, a multi-purpose room, ticket lobby area, and a café/catering station. Landscaping would be planted along the property line to provide screening of the proposed building from the municipal parking lot.

Other proposed site improvements include a kitchen garden and orchard to be located on the existing parking lot on the western section of the property. The parking area would be reduced as a result of these new gardens. The existing swimming pool would be filled in and utilized as a possible garden. The pool house located at the subject lot would be preserved.

In attendance for the applicant were Richard S. Goldman, Esq.; Drinker Biddle & Reath; Raymond Pepi, President of Building Conservation Associates, Inc. (BCA); Karen Arrigoni, Architect; and Martha Wolfe, Executive Director of Historic Morven and Garden.

Mr. Goldman explained that the proposed development is vital to the growth and life of the museum. A visitor center is needed to draw people to the museum and participate in what Morven has to offer.

Mr. Pepi presented a PowerPoint presentation and discussed the following building and site elements:

- Site plan with existing conditions onsite
- Historic conditions onsite
- Site location with proposed development
- Alternate building site plan
- East and west building site comparison
- Site disturbances
- Overall site and proposed site location of where archaeology investigation took place

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- Conceptual design studies of proposed design parameters, height restrictions, massing, and roof- line

Mr. Pepi explained that the proposed size of the building is based on an analysis of Morven's program needs and has been kept as small as possible while remaining viable for its intended use. The placement of the building allows for a greater area of continuous garden space and would provide direct access to the garden, which is desired. The configuration of the garden, main house, and the proposed visitor's center would encourage a connection with the garden for cultural and educational events.

Mr. Pepi noted that the proposed location of the development on the southwestern side adjacent to the Borough Hall parking lot would not negatively impact the view shed from Stockton Street or the Mercer Hill Historic District. The proposed location of the building violates the required zoning setback, which is 50 ft. from any lot or property line. However, the property is owned by the State of New Jersey, which is exempt from local zoning regulations. Mr. Pepi described the proposed location as the least disruptive of those considered for the site.

K. Arrigoni explained that the building shape would be designed to minimize the mass of the proposed building. The footprint envelope would be broken up into smaller sections so as to relate the existing outbuildings and the main house. The height of the new building would be limited to the height of the second floor window-sills on the main house (14 ft.) in order to minimize its presence, and maintain a secondary relationship with that structure.

N. Kerr questioned whether a final architect had been selected. Ms. Arrigone stated the project was at the conceptual stage and that BCA would draft a Request for Proposals, which would include the design standards outlined in the concept plan.

Mrs. Wolfe addressed the Committee and noted that the introduction of a kitchen garden and a rose garden into the existing parking area would reduce the number of onsite parking spaces from approximately 60 cars to 45 cars. Mrs. Wolfe referred to a parking study, conducted by a traffic consultant for Morven, which had set the required number of parking spaces at 35. The proposed plan calls for 45 spaces for automobile parking in the remaining lot and two large bus parking spaces, which would be nestled in the trees along the western edge of the horseshoe drive.

Mrs. Wolfe described the additional site-plan alterations that included the restoration of Farm Lane, originally located on the site next to the brick wall, and forms a boundary of the parking lot. The pool house would be preserved. There were no firm plans for the swimming pool other than it would be filled in and possibly utilized as a garden. The Committee questioned whether the pool house would be open and whether a water feature had been considered for the pool. Mrs. Wolfe noted that the exterior of the pool house would be preserved, but that no decision had been made about keeping it open. She responded that Morven would consider a water feature in its final design. C. Robertson questioned why the pool house was being saved and whether any work would be done to the existing carriage house. Wolfe noted that the Historic Sites Council considered the pool house an important part of the social history of the site.

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The current plans for the carriage house would be to restore it to its original size (1600 sf.) and include a small addition of a potting area and bathroom. N. Kerr asked how deliveries would be made to the new building. Mrs. Wolfe stated deliveries would be accommodated by way of a new sidewalk situated off of the horseshoe driveway on the eastern side of the main building.

There was no public comment.

Discussion. The proposed concept preserves the view shed of Historic Morven as well as the Mercer Hill Historic Overlay Zone. Maintain a maximum building height of 14 ft. and the footprint limitation of 3,000 sf. are sensitive approaches to the existing structure and the challenging site conditions. The Committee requested that Morven share its parking study to ensure that the reconfigured automobile and bus parking plan will accommodate the anticipated demand. The Committee commended Morven for not demolishing any of the existing structures.

ACTION: C. Tazelaar moved to recommend approval of the concept plan with the following design features and elements:

- The proposed location of and design guidelines for the interpretive center.
- Adaptive reuse of the swimming pool as a design feature either as a garden or as a water element.
- The development of the kitchen garden and orchard on what is currently a parking lot.
- The new building configuration with its subservient relationship to the main house from all vantage points.

K. Thoft seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS.

Demolition Ordinances

C. Robertson provided copies of a sample demolition ordinance. There was general discussion about how best to implement an efficient demolition ordinance that would withstand legal challenges and assist in the preservation of threaten historic structures.

Grant Opportunity

The Committee discussed a grant opportunity to host a Commission Assistance Mentoring Program (C.A.M.P.) program being jointly presented with Preservation New Jersey. The grant would award funds to a Certified Local Government (CLG) to host a mentoring session for CLG's and Historic Preservation Committees and Commissions in New Jersey. The deadline for the grant is January 5, 2009.

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At 9:30 p.m., N. Kerr moved that the meeting be adjourned. K. Thoft seconded. Motion was moved and approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Danielle A. Britton, Recording Secretary
Historic Preservation Review Committee