

**A SUMMARY OF THE MINUTES OF THE
GLEN RIDGE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
HELD IN THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

December 6, 2023

OPMA & ROLL CALL

Chair Darby called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and Ms. Hickey read the Sunshine Act Notice and called the roll.

This meeting was held via a video conference.

PRESENT: Chair Geoffrey Darby
Vice Chair Christine Yewaisis
Nicholas Colello
Robert Deacon
Peter Korian
Joaquin Stearns
Dina Deshan (Alt. 1)

Margaret M. Hickey, Consultant to the Historic Preservation Commission

ABSENT: Greg Lane
Jeff Link (Alt. 2)

HEARING OF THE APPLICATIONS

Chair Darby introduced himself and briefly described the hearing process to the applicants and the members of the public.

**40 High Street
Ronald Monacelli**

Chair Darby called for the application. Ronald Monacelli, owner, and John Guadagnoli, architect, presented the application, which is a return from last month, to convert a deck to a three-season porch with roof, spaced windows, wood shingles as the wall cladding, wood trim, and using awning windows that appear to be double-hung sashes. Mr. Stearns questioned some of the changes made and had concerns how the wall of the porch will abut the existing window at the back of the house; no HPC members expressed a concern, and it was noted that the condition will not be visible. Mr. Stearns noted the window configuration is an improvement. Mr. Guadagnoli asked if the owner could switch from a wood window to a composite; if chosen, the new windows will have to be reviewed at subcommittee.

On a motion by Ms. Yewaisis, seconded by Mr. Stearns, the application was approved as submitted with the following condition:

1. If Owner wishes to change the window material, any change will have to be submitted for subcommittee review.

Darby	Yes	Deacon	Yes	Korian	Yes
Colello	Yes	Stearns	Yes	Yewaisis	Yes

Lane	Absent	Deshan (Alt. 1)	Yes	Link (Alt. 2)	Absent
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29 Willow Street

John and Maureen Weining

Chair Darby called for the application. John Weining, the owner, and his daughter, Jessica Weining, presented the application to replace siding that was damaged by a recent fire that started under the front porch. The porch was rebuilt to match the original and the review of this work was addressed by the HPC Consultant as it was deemed an emergency; however, the fire also damaged the aluminum siding and the owner's contractor was unable to find a suitable match. The insurance company is stating they will pay for the cost of replacing the aluminum siding with vinyl unless the HPC mandates a different material is required. The owner presented both the vinyl siding along with a fiber cement siding with smooth face to better match the existing wood siding under the aluminum. Mr. Colello asked if there was wood siding under the aluminum and owner noted that yes there is but it is in poor condition. Mr. Darby confirmed with the owner that if the siding is replaced it will be the whole building and not just the area that was damaged. The HPC discussed and agreed that the best approach is replacement with the fiber cement board and the HPC Consultant should work with the owner to ensure a match to the siding set below the aluminum. The owner asked that the HPC provide a letter to the insurance company noting this requirement for the siding replacement.

On a motion by Ms. Yewaisis, seconded by Mr. Deacon, the application was approved to remove aluminum siding and install new fiber cement siding with the smooth side out and the following conditions:

1. HPC Consultant to confirm in the field the exposure of the original siding and detailing of the corner boards.
2. HPC Consultant to prepare a letter for the insurance company stating the HPCs requirements.

Darby	Yes	Deacon	Yes	Korian	Yes
Colello	Yes	Stearns	Yes	Yewaisis	Yes
Lane	Absent	Deshan (Alt. 1)	Yes	Link (Alt. 2)	Absent

336 Ridgewood Avenue

Bill and Priscilla Kremer

Chair Darby called for the application. Jody Shilan, designer, presented the application on behalf of the owners, to replace the existing concrete front steps and landing with a new brick veneer and tread with a brick edge to match a new brick patio. Mr. Stearns asked a series of questions on how the new brick will be installed if a portion of the concrete steps and landing were to be retained and expressed concern that the work may damage the side walls, which are to remain in place. Ms. Yewaisis expressed similar concerns and recommended Mr. Shilan measure and document the side walls prior to any selective demolition in case the walls need to be rebuilt. Mr. Stearns also confirmed the new brick will not be a veneer, but a full brick and the walk shall be in a herring bone pattern with border; Mr. Stearns noted the drawings should reflect these conditions. Mr. Stearns also asked why bluestone was not considered, and Mr. Shilan said they wanted to keep the detailing simple and the materials consistent. Ms. Yewaisis agreed all brick is the better approach.

On a motion by Mr. Stearns, seconded by Ms. Yewaisis, the application was approved as submitted with the following changes to be reviewed by the HPC Consultant, as noted:

1. Drawings should note the new material shall be full bricks and not veneer brick;

2. The brick shall match the front walk.
3. The designer shall document the side walls in case repairs or replacement are needed should they be damaged by selective demolition.

Darby	Yes	Deacon	Yes	Korian	Yes
Colello	Yes	Stearns	Yes	Yewaisis	Yes
Lane	Absent	Deshan (Alt. 1)	Yes	Link (Alt. 2)	Absent

Dina Deshan recused herself from the next application.

90 Ridgewood Avenue

Miguel and Elizabeth (Liz) Nieves

Chair Darby called for the application. Miguel and Liz Nieves, owners, and their architect, Jonathan Perlstein, presented the application to remove a one-story ranch with a new two-story house close to the existing footprint of the existing ranch. Sigrid Morgan, landscape architect, also joined the conversation regarding the repair of the front wall, which will match the existing, and adding new piers and a front gate. The owners explained the design approach for the need for a new home since the existing home is not remarkable architecturally and the property can have a larger house that suits their needs and the lot. Mr. Perlstein explained the design layout of the proposed two-story building at the front and one-story at the rear with the garage also at the front. The layout was designed with symmetry in mind and the architect looked at other houses in Glen Ridge for inspiration. Some of the key elements of the design include a front porch with brick arches articulated in stone and wood cedar shakes on the second floor. The front entrance is set at the center, the front porch with arcade is set to the north, and the two-car garage is set to the south of the front door. The architect also discussed the inspirations and the adjacent streetscape in comparison to the proposed house, which in his opinion, is in keeping with the size and shape of the surrounding houses.

Mr. Deacon asked for clarification from Ms. Hickey on the level of purview regarding the project. Ms. Hickey noted that the HPC must review the demolition prior to reviewing the new construction. In essence, the HPC will be looking at the new construction as an addition to the historic district, which is no different than looking at an addition to an existing home.

The HPC members first discussed the demolition of the existing ranch and whether the HPC should permit the demolition or simply encourage the addition of a second floor. Mr. Darby asked if the HPC members were okay with the demolition and most of the members said they were fine with the demolition, which permitted discussion on the proposed project, which is essentially a new house.

The HPC members next discussed scale. Mr. Stearns noted that the proposed design, just in context with regard to scale, is not out of line with the other houses along Ridgewood Avenue. Mr. Darby also noted that the house is also set far back on the property, which is a positive. Most of the members had no issues with the scale so the discussions moved toward massing and details.

Mr. Stearns asked the architect, since the inspirations were presented, what style of architecture did he think the house represents? Mr. Perlstein said he thinks it is a hybrid of the Renaissance-Revival and Prairie styles based on the various details from each style. Mr. Stearns noted that this is the issue he has with the design, which is nice, but is not necessarily appropriate in Glen Ridge, especially when looking at the precedents that were presented. The style is unclear with too many borrowed elements without a clear design approach. Mr. Perlstein did not agree because the house

is more eclectic, which can, in his opinion, be found in Glen Ridge. Ms. Yewaisis and Mr. Darby also agreed with Mr. Stearns. Mr. Darby noted that the stone appears out of character especially against the use of shingles at the upper stories. Mr. Stearns also agreed the use of stone is problematic and there is no real precedent in the town for this juxtaposition in this massing and design. Ms. Yewaisis also noted that the stone in juxtaposition against the brick wall is a problem; the brick potentially sets a precedent on the approach/articulation of the first-floor masonry. Mr. Colello agreed. Mr. Deacon noted that there are several different sets of criteria in the proposed design and by which to evaluate that creates a lack of consistency with a jungle of languages.

Mr. Deacon also noted that the resolution of the garage, which projects beyond the rest of the building yet is second back on the second floor above the garage and feels modern in its articulation. The roofline over the garage is also not well resolved; there is no tie-in to the rest of the house.

Mr. Stearns reiterated that the HPC's review is for new houses within the context of the Glen Ridge Historic District; this design may be perfectly fine outside of the district. He also noted that he agrees with Mr. Deacon on the composition of the garage and the second floor. Ms. Yewaisis would prefer the garages not be placed at the front of the house. Mr. Darby agreed the second floor should not be set back from the garage. There was a detailed discussion on how to resolve the garage without compromising the ability to park two SUVs in it.

Mr. Stearns returned to the stone verses brick and that the HPC should not necessarily dictate the material but that the architect needs to look at the materiality, how it is detailed, and how it applies to the overall context of the site. Not all members have an issue with the stone, but again, it is about how it is detailed and the juxtaposition of the other existing materials.

Mr. Stearns spoke about the other issues he had with the design, which included the busyness of the windows using too many lights in the windows; and the use of bluestone for the front steps, which does not match the stone being proposed.

Ms. Yewaisis also noted that the shape of the arches is a problem, and they may be too prominent. There was discussion about the use of arches in the commercial and residential properties in town and Ms. Yewaisis found there to be little precedent in how the proposed design articulates the arches, which are segmental rather than full arches.

The HPC members emphasized that the architect and owner need to take the comments and return with a design that works with the architecture of Glen Ridge.

Ms. Morgan reviewed the design for the front entrance gate, which includes repairing the front wall to match the existing wall. The gates are primarily for aesthetic reasons because someone could walk around the walls. The light on the post is to mimic the original entrance that was in the neighboring property; this lot used to be one lot with the neighbor. The HPC members generally had no issue with the design for the wall, but its approval will have to be taken at the next meeting.

Mr. Darby asked for public comment on this application:

Mr. Philip Johnson, 55 Chestnut Hill Place, noted he appreciated the design for this site and would like to see this approved as soon as possible.

Ms. Amy Owens, 11 Meade Terrace, also said the couple are an asset to the community and would like to see the project approved.

Based on the discussions, the Owner asked for this application to be continued at the next meeting.

Ms. Deshan returned to the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

October 4, 2023, Minutes – Mr. Stearns noted that the address for the High Street property is incorrect in the minutes. Ms. Yewaisis moved, and Mr. Stearns seconded to approve the October 2023 minutes with the corrections highlighted by Mr. Stearns. All agreed with Mr. Deacon abstaining.

November 1, 2023, Minutes – Ms. Yewaisis moved, and Mr. Stearns seconded to approve the November 2023 minutes. All agreed with Mr. Korian abstaining.

SUBCOMMITTEE:

64 Benson Street (exterior repairs and rear addition/front stoop): The Owner returned with an alternate siding, which was to change to clapboard, but the HP Consultant also sent the Owner the wood composite shingles, which were approved by the HPC for the Country Club. This one is still in progress and any final decision on this will be prior to the next meeting.

69 High Street (two new front windows in larger opening on the second floor) – Clarifications on dimensions requested at the November meeting were approved by subcommittee.

957 Bloomfield Avenue (addition over enclosed porch) – The applicant revised the roof form and siding materials, which were reviewed and approved by subcommittee.

OLD BUSINESS

- Ordinance Changes: Chair Darby noted that the ordinance will have to be rewritten so it will be taken up in the New Year.
- 560 Ridgewood Avenue: Vice Chair Yewaisis gave a summary of the Planning Board review for the change from slate to asphalt shingles at 560 Ridgewood Avenue. Ultimately, Ms. Yewaisis noted that the Planning Board upheld the HPC's decision but that was after some discussion among the board members where two members felt the house did not architecturally need a slate roof and that the HPC should be looking at slate replacement on a case-by-case basis. HPC members discussed the decision-making and that it was not arbitrary but dealt with several conditions.
- Continuing Education: Planned for the February meeting, which will be in person.

NEW BUSINESS

- 183 Sherman Avenue – Mr. Stearns recommended Ms. Hickey review the front door, which is not within HPC purview.

- 30 Snowden – The balustrade is incorrect; the space between the balusters is at least four inches when it should be narrower. Ms. Hickey will address the issue with the architect.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Ms. Deshan, seconded by Mr. Stearns, with all in favor, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret M. Hickey, AIA
Consultant to Glen Ridge HPC