

Truro Historical Review Board Public Hearing
January 4, 2014, 10:30 AM
Cobb Meeting Room, Truro Public Library

Present:

Matthew Kiefer, Chair HRB

David Kirchner, HRB

Fred Todd, HRB

Robin Robertson, Truro Historical Commission

Atty. Benjamin Zehnder, representing the Applicant

Regarding Application for Demolition Approval from Gary and Susan Cameron, owners of 574 Shore Road, Truro (parcel 5-27-0-R).

Meeting was opened by Mr. Kiefer at 10:30 AM. Quorum present for HRB: Kiefer, Kirchner and Todd.

Chairman Kiefer reviewed the Preserving Historic Properties Bylaw and the function of the Historic Review Board (HRB) to preserve and protect historic resources important to the heritage of the Town. The HRB is charged, together with the owners of significant properties, to explore alternatives to demolition and can impose a delay of up to 12 months. He indicated that the three HRB members would be voting and that members of the Historic Commission have been invited to attend to add input in accordance with the Bylaw.

He noted that the cottage at 574 Short Road was judged significant by the HRB because it is: 1) over 75 years old (the Truro Historic Resource Survey Form B lists construction as ca. 1917-1925) and 2) according to the Form B, a characteristic example of an early Beach Point individually-owned seasonal cottage. Typical of other Beach Point cottages of the period, a front porch faces the road and a second porch faces the water side; the roof line matches on each side and is distinctive with the steep pitch of the main roof and shallower pitch of the porch roof (a so-called 'cat slide.') Front and back each have a 14 foot shed dormer originating at the ridge, leaving 6 feet plus overhang of main roof on each side of the dormer. The overhang of the roof along the gable ends is wide and distinctive.

Atty. Zehnder explained that the property in question was originally on a larger lot that was subdivided. After protracted litigation between a prior owner and the Town, the Supreme Judicial Court ultimately determined that lot line changes caused the property to lose its legally pre-existing non-conforming status such that any alteration would require a variance from the ZBA.

The current owners purchased the property in December, 2011 as an unfinished (exposed studs, not heated, etc.) seasonal cottage. They sought and, in July 2012, obtained variances from the ZBA to increase the living space on the dormered second floor (currently only about 264 square feet in area.) According to Atty. Zehnder, they wanted to keep the building as a seasonal residence and not winterize it.

He reported that they were then told that because the improvements were in excess of 50% of the value of the structure (current assessor's property card lists the building at \$40,000), the entire renovation would have to meet current building code requirements, including flood-proofing and stretch code compliance, requiring raising the entire house and fully insulating it. They then submitted a second application for variances from the ZBA to demolish the house and construct a new building on substantially the same footprint (same size but moved to align with the property line). Variances were granted by the ZBA in May, 2013.

Plans for the proposed new construction were presented and discussed. The Board noted that while the first floor was the same size as the original cottage (approx. 528 square feet), the second floor as proposed extends shed dormers on front and back to the full width of the main roof. The west-facing porch has been eliminated, changing the roof line as seen from the road. The overhang along the gables was not evident in the plans.

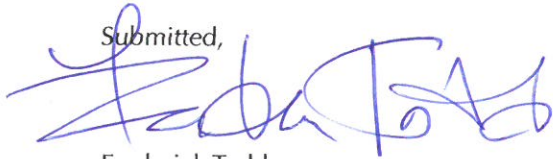
Mr. Kiefer asked if the owners had considered alternatives to demolition and said the board would be interested to have more information regarding cost comparisons, engineer's reports, contractor assessments, etc., and whether there were further discussions with the Building Department about the extent of required code compliance. Robin Robertson noted that the policy essentially precluding renovation of seasonal dwellings would seem to contradict the Town's desire to lessen the year-round impact on Beach Point septic systems. Fred Todd noted that the town zoning bylaw has a category and regulations for seasonal occupancy dwelling units. The board asked if the building's status as historically significant was relevant to the building code issues.

The HRB expressed its desire that a demolition delay would encourage the owners to: 1) explore further the possibilities of renovating the existing building as a seasonal dwelling in accordance with their stated preference, perhaps with adjustments to gain additional second floor area; 2) as an alternative, adjust the proposed plan for the roof and dormers to be more in line with the current; and 3) to return to the HRB to present this exploration of alternatives, including to outline the cost and technical issues leading to the decision to demolish if this is still the preferred option.

After discussion, David Kirchner moved that the HRB invoke the 12 month demolition delay. Fred Todd seconded. The vote was unanimous (Kiefer, Kirchner, Todd).

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 AM.

Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Fred Todd', is written over the word 'Submitted,'.

Frederick Todd