

July 21, 2008

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Gilchrist, Mr. Kerr, Mr. Smith, Mr. Talbot

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Chute

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Mrs. Boyer, Mrs. Mills

STAFF PRESENT: Mrs. Shade

OTHERS PRESENT: Mr. Klemm, Mr. Tittmann

PUBLIC HEARING

Ms. Gilchrist reconvened the Public Hearing at 7:38PM to consider the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness submitted 5/29/08 by Christina and Peter Klemm, 11 Ives Road, to construct an addition to the east side of their house and add a mudroom off the kitchen. She seated the members and seated Alternate Boyer for Mr. Chute. Mr. Klemm was present as was his architect, Mr. Harold Tittmann, Tittmann Design and Consulting.

Mr. Tittmann presented the new drawings(rec'd 7/7/08). He said they went through a series of options – trying to keep the continuity of the existing house while getting as much light as possible into the new space. Mr. Tittmann noted they simplified the window plan; keeping in mind the size of the window panes. He was aware there were some concerns about the addition being too big, but after working with several options and considering the needs of the Klemm family, they decided to keep the size of the addition the same as in the previous plans.

Mr. Talbot asked Mr. Tittmann to present the new revisions to the Commission along with the rationale for making those revisions. Mr. Tittmann said the primary change they made was to the windows. Transoms were added and proportions were changed – window panes are now taller. Mr. Tittmann said these windows are casement windows and will be custom made to mirror the look of the doors. Mr. Talbot commented that casement windows have different characteristics that are not usually seen in an historic district. Mr. Klemm said he just assumed that these windows were the traditional double-hung type and that is what he prefers.

Ms. Gilchrist asked the Commissioners what they thought about there being no change in the size of the addition. She said she thinks it makes the house look too long. Mr. Talbot said he felt the scale was too big - the central section is being dwarfed. He asked if they had listened at the last meeting to any of the members' comments about scale and mass. Mr. Klemm replied size was discussed, however this is not a big house and they need the addition. He said they have considered different ways of adding on and their first plan was a lot bigger. Mr. Tittmann said they did not want to mirror the first addition and they did bring the chimney inside to make the addition shorter. Mr. Kerr said he like the taller windows and asked if they could break the roofline to make it look like two small additions rather than this large one.

Mrs. Mills commented that this is the last small farmhouse in the district. Mrs. Boyer said each time an addition is built, the original part of the house becomes less. Ms. Gilchrist said this is anathema to the character of the district; a problem for the Commission. She said if the Commission approves this addition, the size(including the first two additions) will be triple the size of the original house. Mr. Klemm stated others in the district have added on. Ms. Gilchrist noted the Commission has made other applicants adjust their project. Mr. Talbot added; each project is taken on a case by case basis. It is

unfortunate when you did your first addition that you did not think about your future needs. The mission here is to review what is appropriate so as not to completely lose the character of the historic district. The big issue is the size of the addition in relation to the rest of the house and to not create such a wall along the front of the street. Mr. Tittmann said they have tried to keep it in proportion. He asked if the problem is the entire house or the addition. Ms. Gilchrist said it is the scale of the addition and the way it seems to diminish the original central part of the house.

Ms. Gilchrist asked if they had considered gaining interior space by changing the angle of the addition. Mr. Klemm replied that would not make interior sense and would mess up the floor plan. Mr. Talbot asked if there was any other solution - anyplace else for them to put this program? Mr. Klemm stated he has no intention of using the barn. He wants the emphasis to be on the house. Mr. Klemm said the silo is falling down and the barn is in bad condition. He was told by a contractor that they cannot be fixed. Mr. Talbot responded that Mr. Klemm has an incredibly valuable piece of property; an important house and barn that are part of the Calhoun-Ives historic farming district. The barn and silo are hugely contributing to this district and are being ignored. The members briefly discussed the results of "benign neglect".

The members concluded that Mr. Klemm should come back with an appropriate design for the district.

MOTION: To close the Public Hearing to consider the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness submitted 5/29/08 by Christina and Peter Klemm, 11 Ives Road to construct an addition to the east side of the existing house and a mudroom off the kitchen. By Mrs. Boyer, seconded by Mr. Talbot and passed 5-0.

Ms. Gilchrist closed the Public Hearing at 8:25PM.

This Public Hearing was recorded on tape. The tape is on file in the Land Use Office, Bryan Memorial Town Hall, Washington Depot, Connecticut.

REGULAR MEETING

Ms. Gilchrist called the meeting to order at 8:30PM and seated the members and Mrs. Boyer for Mr. Chute.

Pending Business

Klemm /11 Ives Road /one-story addition and mudroom

Ms. Gilchrist asked the members for discussion on this application.

Mr. Smith: Initial reaction – to increase size is inappropriate. It's too large, too in your face. Need to think more, but I'm not comfortable with two extensions on either side of the original house and a third in back. Don't think it works. Big change in character, scale, mass.

Mrs. Mills: Agrees with Mr. Smith. Too big along the road.

Mrs. Boyer: Size takes away – parallel to road. So big it destroys the last bit of what the farmhouse was.

Mr. Kerr: Will defer to people who know history of the house better than I. Not sure if 2 to 3 feet would make a difference.

Mr. Smith: My concern is to wonder if there is a way for essentially small houses to move through the

history we are moving through.

Mr. Talbot: There should be a way of making it be more appropriate and less dominating to the façade. That's one of the challenges of working and living in an historic district. Think you need to work harder on it. Take ideas from other additions that are not a block and a street wall.

Ms. Gilchrist: The Commission needs to think if this is appropriate. Would it protect the character of the district. The character and feeling that recalls the agricultural past – that's what we're charged with protecting. It is clearly stated in the Guidelines. I would have a hard time voting yes for this proposal. It looks suburban – further diminishes the block of the house and also contributes to erosion.

Mr. Kerr: Key for me is if the central section of the house could remain the dominant feature.

Ms. Gilchrist: Would also like to see the original side of the house preserved.

Mr. Talbot: We can't solve anything until we see a proposal. This needs work to make it respond to what you hear from the Commission.

Mr. Tittmann: Would like to withdraw this application and re-submit.

The Commission decided on the date of Monday, August 11, 2008, to hold a Special Meeting and Public Hearing for Mr. Klemm.

Application has been withdrawn.

Consideration of the Minutes

MOTION: To approve the 7/7/08 minutes as written. By Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Kerr and passed 5-0.

MOTION: To postpone approval of the 6/18/08 minutes until the next regularly scheduled meeting on 8/18/08. By Mr. Smith, seconded by Mrs. Boyer and passed 5-0.

Other Business

Zoning in Historic Districts. Mr. Talbot read the letter he wrote to the Zoning Commission regarding roof lines and heights in historic districts. The members approved the letter and agreed it was important to send it to Zoning and ask for their help.

Permission to document historic structures. Mr. Talbot would like to ask permission to document the Stuart barn and any other structure in the three historic districts that seems ready to fall down. Mr. Kerr suggested the Town check with their insurance carrier as this could be a dangerous job. The members also discussed the possibility of the Town passing a Property Maintenance Ordinance.

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting. By Mr. Talbot.

Ms. Gilchrist adjourned the meeting at 9:50PM.

FILED SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

Respectively submitted,
Martha T. Shade, Clerk

