

## September 16, 2002

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Smith, Mr. Treadway, Mr. Graney and Mrs. Picton

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Talbot

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Mrs. Rives

ALTERNATES ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Mrs. Shade

### PUBLIC HEARING

#### **DiBenedetto /214 Calhoun Street /install picket fence and front entry portico.**

Mr. Smith opened the Public Hearing at 7:40PM to consider the application for Certificate of Appropriateness submitted 8/30/02 by Anthony DiBenedetto, 214 Calhoun Street, to install a picket fence and front entry portico. He read the legal notice which appeared in **Voices** on 9/8/02. Mr. Smith seated the members and seated Alternate Rives for Mr. Talbot. Mr. DiBenedetto was present.

Mr. DiBenedetto brought additional information which had been requested by Mr. Talbot in his application completeness review of 9/10/02. He presented to the Commission a site plan, photos of proposed fence with gate and detailed drawings of the portico by Moisan Architects (marked rec'd 9/16/02).

Mr. DiBenedetto said the idea of a portico seems to be meeting a fair amount of resistance from the landscape designer and Mrs. DiBenedetto. He thought the relatively small portico as drawn by Moisan would be in keeping with the rest of the house. In front of the door now is a cemented over granite area which over the years has broken and sunk into the ground.

Mr. DiBenedetto said he would like to get approval for the portico then think about it for a while. In the interim he wants to clean up the granite - use two larger pieces (one 6ft and one 8ft) to repair the steps, and use some of the smaller pieces to make the beginning of a walkway from the house to the fence. He said that they would like to give the house the appearance of being further back from the road but by adding a portico, it brings the house out toward the road. But after the fence is added they will have a better idea of how the portico will look. They will probably make a decision in the spring.

Mr. Smith noted there was a considerable difference between the portico drawing submitted with the application and the drawing from Moisan. He added if the Moisan drawing is the one to be considered, the Commission will need a copy for the file. Mrs. Picton asked if the Moisan drawing is in response to Mr. Talbot's request. Yes. The members studied the drawing. There was a brief discussion as to whether the shutters would be left on the house if the portico is added. Mr. DiBenedetto stated that the Moisan drawing with all the dimensions, details and materials to be used is the one they propose if a portico is to be installed. This work will not be done until spring, if at all, and Mr. DiBenedetto said he will come back to the Commission when they are planning to proceed with the portico.

Mr. Smith suggested to the members that they consider the fence and then come back to a discussion of the portico. Mr. DiBenedetto said that would be good because he would like to get started on the fence.

Mr. DiBenedetto presented new pictures of the proposed fence (marked rec'd 9/16/02) which will have more of a square peg look than the Nantucket style as presented with the application. There will be a single 36in gate. Mr. Treadway asked where the fencing would be. Mr. DiBenedetto brought a scale drawing to explain the detail of the fencing (marked rec'd 9/16/02) and its location. Mrs. Picton verified that the fence will just be paralleling the road and will not angle back. Yes. Mr. DiBenedetto said some of

the original posts are still in place from an old fence. He intends to follow the line of the existing posts. There will be an equal distance of 45ft on either side of the gate anchored by a large maple and 6ft returns on either end. Mr. Treadway asked how far the fence will be from the road. Mr. DiBenedetto said it averaged 13.5 to 14.5ft. Mr. Smith asked if the original fence went back along the sides of the property. No, only along the front. Mr. DiBenedetto said he checked with the Zoning and Building departments and they told him to come to HDC first.

Mrs. Picton asked if any outside lighting is planned. No. And what type of hinges and hardware will be on the gate. Probably black hinges and hardware. The members agreed that the hinges and hardware should be as simple as possible. Mr. Treadway said depending on which way the gate swings, the hinges may not even be visible. Mr. DiBenedetto said the gate will swing in so the hinges will be on the inside and will not be visible. He added there may be an outside handle. Mr. Smith reiterated that the idea is to keep it all relatively plain and simple.

Mr. Smith asked if the parking area is going to be paved. Mr. DiBenedetto said there will be no paving. He explained that the previous owner had cut in a parking area for three cars in front of the house, approximately 30ft wide by 20ft deep. His intention is to remove some of the rocks which are piled up, plant some grass and bring in some tan stone for a parking area large enough for two cars. The view from the road will be a nice picket fence, the grassy apron area and the stone parking area which will not be very noticeable. Mr. Smith asked the members if they had a good idea of what the parking area will look like and if the location is acceptable. Mr. Treadway said he had no problem with it. All agreed. Mr. Smith asked the Commission if they had additional questions or needed any more information on the fence. No.

The Commission proceeded to discuss the portico and its design. Mr. Treadway asked if there was originally a portico on the house. Mr. DiBenedetto said no but at one time there was a sleeping porch overhanging the side door which provided some shelter over the door. Mr. Smith said he understands the need for the portico, but the issue is the design of the portico in relation to the rest of the house. Mr. Graney noted that historically, porticos on houses come and go. Mr. Graney shared with members a book which showed pictures of various designs of porticos as they have appeared on houses over the years. Mr. Treadway said federal houses had porticos and the DiBenedetto house is a federal style. Mr. DiBenedetto said the house is more Italianate. Mr. Graney and Mrs. Picton agreed - looking at the low hip roof, the height and the proportions of it - the house is from around the 1850's.

The members studied the Moisan drawing of the portico. Mr. Smith questioned whether the Moisan design is consistent with the design of the house because consistency is the key for the Commission in considering the application. Mrs. Picton asked Mr. Smith if he was concerned with the elaborateness of the entablature. Mr. Smith said he wonders about that. Mrs. Picton agreed. She added it seems complicated and elaborate compared to the rest of the house. Mrs. Picton pointed out the big plain frieze across the top of the house and the bay of windows on the second floor and she wondered if the portico will seem almost out of scale. Mr. Smith asked if she thinks the portico is too small. Mrs. Picton replied in a way it is too small yet too complicated - the rest of the house is so simple. Mrs. Picton asked if the original drawing submitted with the application is still under consideration. Mrs. Picton said she does not have a problem with the original drawing, she thinks it is better. She added the posts are typical Italianate with a pedestal about one-third of the way up and a square post on top of that with a simple hip roof. The members compared the two drawings. Are the pilasters and the small entablature part of the present door? Yes. Mrs. Picton commented that if the pilasters are there now, they are relatively new. Mr. Treadway remarked that the door in the Moisan drawing seems narrower than the door in the original drawing.

Mr. Smith asked the Commission if the concept of a portico is acceptable. Yes, all agreed. He then asked Mr. DiBenedetto if he wants to commit to the Moisan drawing. No.

Mr. Smith said the width of the portico in the original drawing is an issue because of the shutters and the reaction to the Moisan drawing is that maybe it is very narrow. Are we looking at an aesthetic juggle between the two drawings; finding a width that would be good. Mr. Treadway said the portico will have to be narrow because of the shutters. Mr. Smith asked the members which drawing they think would be more acceptable. He said the sense he is getting is that if the portico in the Moisan drawing was slightly wider, but not as wide as the portico in the original drawing, that would be agreeable. And secondly, if the portico is to be as narrow as in the Moisan drawing, should it be simpler. Mrs. Rives said by next spring there might be a whole new design.

Mr. DiBenedetto said right now the portico is not happening and he would be more than agreeable to some type of approval that would allow him to move forward with the portico in the spring with the provision that the Historic Commission would like to see some revisions. He understands that some of the concerns are the width and the detail of the roof and before proceeding he would submit changes for HDC approval. He said he would be more than happy to get a conditional approval that he could put a portico on with the stipulation that he meet again with the Commission and at that time submit a detail that is based more on simplicity.

Mr. Smith asked the Commission if they would turn down the portico drawings by Moisan. Yes. The original drawing is better except for the width. Mr. Smith summarized that they would approve the front entry portico subject to the submission of a final design taking into account the discussion in this meeting. Mr. DiBenedetto asked if there would be minutes of this meeting available. Mr. DiBenedetto said he would forward a copy of the minutes to Mr. Moisan's office at the appropriate time. Mr. Smith said there is also a tape of this Public Hearing.

Mr. Smith asked the members if there were any additional comments or questions. There were none.

MOTION: To close the Public Hearing to consider the application for Certificate of Appropriateness for Anthony DiBenedetto, 214 Calhoun Street, to install a picket fence and front entry portico. By Mr. Treadway, seconded by Mr. Graney and passed 5-0.

Mr. Smith 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

Mr. Smith called the meeting to order at 8:27PM and seated the members and seated Alternate Rives for Mr. Talbot.

Pending Business

### **DiBenedetto /214 Calhoun Street /Install picket fence and front entry portico.**

MOTION: To approve the application for Certification of Appropriateness submitted August 30, 2002 by Anthony DiBenedetto, 214 Calhoun Street, to install a white picket fence as illustrated by documents submitted September 16, 2002 and a front entry portico subject to the submission and approval of a final design incorporating the considerations noted in the Public Hearing September 16, 2002. This work is to be completed by September 16, 2003; else this approval shall be void. By Mr. Treadway, seconded by Mrs. Rives and passed 5-0.

Consideration of the Minutes

MOTION: To approve the 8/19/02 minutes as written. By Mrs. Picton, seconded by Mrs. Rives and passed 5-0.

Other Business

**Discussion of sandwich board signs on the Green**

The members discussed a letter(dated 7/11/02) from Janet Hill, Land Use Coordinator, regarding a complaint she received regarding the "temporary" sandwich board signs belonging to the Congregational Church and the store in the Green District. Mr. Treadway and Mrs. Rives have both received complaints and Mrs. Rives added that the signs are becoming less attractive as time goes by. Mr. Treadway stated he is in favor of removing both the signs - he does not think the signs do that much for either institution. Mr. Smith observed that these signs are now almost permanent - if the Church and store want these signs they will have to bring them in at night.

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

Mr. Smith adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:55PM.

FILED SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

Respectfully Submitted,

Martha T. Shade,  
Secretary