

20 February 2020

RE: 253 West Main Street

Dear Historical Planning Committee,

We have previously submitted documentation for the upcoming February 26<sup>th</sup> HPC Hearing demonstrating the justifiable logic from a town-based historical, as well as structural evaluation that the current home is not viable for remodel and or retrofit, and therefor should be removed from the Town's list of historical properties.

In addition to the above effort, we have made the following findings in the field, looking closely at built architectural elements and details:

1. There are several non-original windows retrofitted into the structure, including aluminum single paned slider type windows, specifically on the side elevations. (See image on slide #1)
2. The rear of the building appears to have been entirely walled / filled in and is therefor not original, this is evidenced both from the inside and the outside. Homes of this type typically had a rear exterior shanty styled porch, and in this instance it looks to have been filled in. (See image on Slide #2)
3. Lattice elements have been applied to "enhance curb appeal" at the front and rear facades and are not original, and appear as a decorative applique only. (See images on slide #3)
4. The shingles that wrap the exterior appear not to be original, as they are placed in odd locations such as horizontally on the underside of the porch columns, there is a mix of type, and most notably they abut trim details at openings with little to no reveal, which is atypical for how homes were crafted. (See images on slide #4)
5. In many areas there also appears to be building paper under the shingles, which is a construction methodology that significantly post-dates the given date of this home, suggesting that the current shingles at least, are not original. The building paper itself is also rotting away, in addition to the rotted shingles. (See images on slide #5)
6. The side "window glass panels" at the front porch, which seemed original at first glance because the glazing itself has an "antique glass" warble to it, and are single paned, are not original – they are cut in around the above mentioned shingles, rather than the building siding material butting the framework. These were perhaps added some time ago, however they were done post re-shingling. They also pose a significant safety hazard, as they are collapsing, untampered single paned panels. (See images on slide #6)
7. While "pretty" there are several trim details around older wood windows that are not original. The casing material used is more modern, and not accurate for this type of home – in fact, one of the profiles used to trim the exterior is actually an interior milled trim piece that is meant for plate rails, not window casing. (See images on slide #7)
8. As referenced in the structural report, the perimeter concrete foundation wall is only legitimate at the base level. There appears to have been a top-coating added to wood construction members, then the shingles bent or flared to meet this new applied coat. The concrete bears no structural effort, and is thin and crumbling throughout.

The shingles have then been layered to meet the chamfered concrete top-coating, again, not an original detail relevant to the style of home not construction methodology. A more appropriate and common detail, also seen throughout historical districts is a belly band or belt separating the foundation walls at the floor plate with two siding types butting – one above and one below, as seen on the immediately neighboring home. (See images on slide #8)

The current home can best be classified as a Bungalow with Craftsman influences (per “A Field Guide to American Houses” and “American Homes” books). The overall massing is simplistic and typical of this style, with some added roofing details that are more often seen on Tudor homes such as the “jerkinhead” or hip on gable detail at both the front and rear of the home. (See images on slide #9)

While the current property is a mix-up of elements both new and old, there are some redeeming details and aspects of the home that the home-owner would like to pay homage to in the new design. Creating a single story home, with a slightly raised porch and stoop that are friendly to the neighborhood and harken details of the “Bungalow” styled street friendly front of house design will be important. The split roof rafters that create a flare at the eave, suggest craftsmanship and attention to detail. These elements will influence with new construction and help to drive a design that is even more timeless and adds historically influenced character to the neighborhood. (See Image on slide #10)

The home itself is in a state of decay and ill-repair. Details that might seem “historical” are not, as evidenced above. This, combined with the structural report, as well as the detailed research from the Town Library showing no historical persons ever lived, nor did any events take place at the subject property, show that the home may reasonably be removed from the Town’s listing and replaced with a new, single story, traditional home befitting of the neighborhood.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Bess Wiersema', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bess Wiersema, studio3 design, inc.