

**Minutes of the Plainfield Historic Preservation Commission Regular Meeting
April 27, 2010, 8:00 PM, City Hall Library, 1st Floor, 515 Watchung Avenue, Plainfield, NJ**

I. Open Public Meeting Statement

Chairwoman Sandy Gurshman called the April 27, 2010, regularly scheduled meeting of the Plainfield Historic Preservation Commission to order at 7:43 PM and read the following into the record: *“This meeting has been duly advertised in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, 10:4-6 et seq. The annual schedule of board meetings has been published in the Courier-News newspaper. In addition, copies of the notice have been posted in the City Clerk and Planning Division offices. This is a regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission.”*

Name, Class Designation (term expires)	1/26/10	3/23/10	4/27/10	5/25/10	6/22/10	7/27/10	8/24/10	9/28/10	10/26/10	11/16/10	12/14/10
Chairwoman Sandra Gurshman / Class B (12/31/2010)	X	X	X								
William Michelson, Esq. / Class B (12/31/2010)	X	X									
Patricia Turner Kavanaugh / Class C (12/31/2011)	X	X	X								
Elizabeth King / Class C (12/31/2012)		X	X								
Vice Chairman Reginald Thomas, RA / Class A (12/31/2012)		X	X								
David Westlake, RA / Class A (12/31/2012)	X	X	X								
Bill Garrett / Class B (12/31/2012)	X	X	X								
Regular Member #8 vacancy / Class Designation (12/31/2010)											
Regular Member #9 vacancy / Class Designation, (expiration?)											
Alternate #1 Jan Jasper / Class C (12/31/2010)	X	X	X								
Alternate #2 vacancy / Class Designation (unexp. 12/31/2010)											
HPC Consultant Gail Hunton	X	X	X								
HPC Secretary Scott Bauman, PP/AICP		X	X								

II Adoption of the March 23, 2010, Regular Meeting Minutes

On motion made by Ms. Kavanaugh and seconded by Ms. King, the HPC unanimously adopted the March 23, 2010, meeting minutes; all voted in favor, none opposed.

III. New Certificate of Appropriateness Applications

1. HPC 10-02: 714-720 Park Avenue; Block 713, Lot 3; Van Wyck Brooks Historic District

Applicant: Historic Building Architects, LLC / Owner: First Unitarian Society of Plainfield

Mr. Bauman informed the HPC that the Applicant has served notice and the HPC has jurisdiction over the application. Annabelle Trenner, AIA of Historic Building Architects, LLC (312 West State Street, Trenton, NJ) has the owner’s permission represent them for the hearing. Ms. Trenner described the scope of work which includes: restoration of stone walls and steps at the North Porch entrance based on historic photographs as reference, replacing the sidewalk to parking lot using stampcrete concrete pressed to imitate slate, removing the contemporary concrete patio and retaining walls and restoring the wood porch at the Parish Hall entrance using historic photographs as reference. The proposed work also includes the installation of a barrier free access lift entrance door adjacent to the barrier free parking space at the Parish Hall, restoring a large stained glass window facing Park Avenue, raking out and re-pointing the church Park Avenue elevation, including both towers, and installing a new slate roof and flat pan metal roof on Parish Hall.

Ms. Trenner asked the HPC to turn to Drawing A-401 of the plan and she explained the proposed work to the east elevation of the sanctuary including repairing and restoring wood trim, restoring all sides of the masonry towers, infilling new brownstone, and rake/re-pointing all masonry joints.

Ms. Trenner asked the HPC to turn to Drawing A-402 of the plan and she explained the proposed work to the north elevation of the sanctuary including removing a planter and terrace, and cleaning the stone wall concealed behind the terrace.

Ms. Trenner discussed the proposed drainage improvements to the property, slate shingle roof replacement, and restoration of the stain glass window. The plexiglass storm window will be removed from the stain glass window.

Chairwoman Gurshman commented that there is a lot to absorb. Mr. Westlake asked if the walls in the new terrace are splayed; Ms. Trenner said they are but will be straightened. Mr. Thomas and Ms. Trenner engaged in a discussion over the comparative costs of Worthington fiberglass columns versus wood columns. Mr. Westlake asked for more detail on sheet A-406 that calls for the installation of a brickface at the side of the stairs. Ms. Trenner said they are putting back used brick. Mr. Westlake is concerned about the texture of the brick, i.e.: face brick versus common brick.

Mr. Westlake directed Ms. Trenner's attention to Drawings A-410, and A-411 "east porch plans", and east porch elevation section and details". Mr. Westlake asked if the guard rail was high enough; Ms. Trenner replied that they are high enough, she believe it was checked. Mr. Westlake commented that the height of the porch is 30 inches above grade and the height of the guard rail should be re-checked. Mr. West lake commented that the handrails on the east porch need to have a return- the rail should be returned to the newel post rather than turned down. Ms. Trenner said they are supposed to be returned to the post and will correct this error on Drawing A-411. Mr. Westlake said he would like to see the Simpson base eliminated; the way it is shown on the plans is inappropriate and not attractive and is more akin to the way a deck is constructed. If newel post is moved back to the bottom riser it can be tied in and stabilized there.

Chairwoman Gurshman asked about the terrace demolition plan on Drawing A-402 and if the flexible drainage pipe will be removed once the work is complete. Ms. Trenner said that the flexible pipe will be placed under grade and will not be seen. Chairwoman Gurshman opened the meeting to the public; hearing no response, she closed the public portion of the meeting. Chairwoman Gurshman asked for a motion on the application; on a motion by Ms. Kavanaugh, and seconded by Mr. Garrett, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the application as submitted.

2. HPC 10-03: 947 Madison Avenue; Block 758, Lot 22; Van Wyck Brooks Historic District
Applicant & Owner: Steve & Catherine Baffoni

Mr. Bauman informed the HPC that the Applicant has served notice and the HPC has jurisdiction over the application. William Toth, Jr., AIA of 950 Fernwood Avenue, Plainfield represented the owners Steve and Catherine Baffoni. Mr. Toth informed the HPC that the Applicant proposes to replace the existing 80 year old slate shingle roof with new asphalt shingles (GAF Slateline). There will be no change to existing hanging gutters. The slate is crumbling and is deteriorating. The weight of the slate is pushing the sidewalls away from the house. The valley beams are undersized and are splitting; the original structure was not designed properly for slate roof shingles. When asked about a cost comparison, Mr. Toth said he obtained a slate replacement quote for \$40,000 and an additional \$20,000 in framing modifications. The GAF Slateline shingles would cost \$17,000 without the need for any framing modifications.

Chairwoman Gurshman mentioned to Mr. Toth that she has received complaints that the owner replaced an 8 over 1 wood window with a 1 over 1 vinyl window. Mr. Toth said that he is aware of this window and it is a temporary situation and that the correct window will be installed.

Chairwoman Gurshman opened the meeting to the public; hearing no response, she closed the public portion of the meeting. Chairwoman Gurshman asked for a motion on the application; on a motion by Ms. Kavanaugh, and seconded by Ms. King, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the application as submitted.

IV. New Business

1. 2010 Historic Preservation Conference: Sustainable Past / Sustainable Future

Mr. Bauman informed the members of the Commission that the State Historic Preservation Office is holding their annual conference on June 2, in Elizabeth. The cost is \$80.00 per person, there is money in the HPC budget to send Commission members to the conference. Mr. Bauman asked that interested Members contact him by the end of next week.

2. **2010 Financial Disclosure Forms**

Mr. Bauman reminded HPC members to fill out their disclosure forms and hand them to him.

V. Staff Report

1. **Historic Preservation Commission Website**

The Commission discussed what to do with their own website and how it should relate to the city website. The HPC expressed a commitment to work with their own webmaster for 2010 and to work with Chris Payne with the City’s website. The City website can contain meeting agendas, minutes, and a roster of members while the HPC website can contain more non-updatable material like design guidelines, historic district information, pictures, links to articles, resources, etc. Chairwoman Gurshman agreed to work on getting a meeting together with the City webmaster to ensure that everyone is on the same page.

2. **Survey of 413 Properties for Proposed Historic District**

HPC members were provided a map showing the study area. Ms. Hunton told those present that she wanted a better idea of potential boundaries. After discussing the merits of all of the streets on the map and in the Streetscape Summary, the HPC concluded the following:

Streets Included	Streets Not Included	Streets Needing Further Examination
Brook Lane	Lake Street	Chetwynd Avenue: Medium/weak street. Look at the abutting streets: 1920s, 30s, 40s. Vinyl on some structures, starting to see inappropriate additions and repairs.
Cedar Brook Road	Park Avenue (from Prospect Avenue to Thornton Avenue)	Hillside Avenue (lower part)
Edgewood Avenue	Pine Street	Marlborough Avenue: Not strong-replacement siding on at least 8 of 19 structures. Gail only looked at the north side of the street but has now agreed to quickly assess the south side of the street.
Evergreen Avenue	Spring Street	Martine Avenue: less strong Hillside Avenue to Woodland Road). Where will the break occur?
Highland Avenue	Watchung Avenue	Thornton Avenue: Medium strength street-many of the structures have been diminished by additions and repairs.
Kensington Avenue		
Martine Avenue (Park Avenue to Hillside Avenue)		
Prospect Avenue (1 house- Lot 31)		
Woodland Avenue (from Prospect and Watchung)- both sides		

Chairwoman Gurshman opened the meeting to the public. Carol Bicket of 1083 Hillside Avenue said the Streetscape Summary shows 6 properties on Hillside but there are actually 2: Lots 3 and 4. Lot 1 faces Chetwynd Avenue, Lot 42 faces Marlborough, and Lot 5 faces Thornton Avenue. Joyce Phipps of 1200 Martine Avenue asked the question “what is the conceptual framework of architectural integrity?” Ms. Hunton responded “degree and kind”: it is a judgement call; you look for distinguishing features and if a certain percentage of features are gone or missing, then the building has lost its architectural integrity. Ms. Phipps followed up by asking “what is the conceptual integrity for the geographical area that you have chosen for this study?” Ms. Hunton responded by saying some historic districts have a strong central theme; Plainfield as an affluent suburb is still the theme, the area being studied represents a certain period of growth in the city.

A discussion ensued over the positive and negatives of being in a historic district. Chairwoman Gurshman instructed the Commission members to look at the streets that needed further examining for next month.

VI. Old Business

1. Historic Designated Properties with Code / Maintenance Violations

The HPC discussed the status of the Lampkin House on Terrill Road, 187 North Avenue, and 822 Webster Place.

VII. Adjournment

There being no further business, Ms. Kavanaugh made a motion for adjournment, and seconded by Ms. King the commission voted all in favor, none opposed. The meeting adjourned at 10:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Scott Bauman, AICP, PP
Principal Planner / HPC Secretary
Plainfield Planning Division
May 2, 2010