

# HPC OKs large addition to one of city's oldest homes

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — In a 5-2 vote, the city's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) approved a large addition to one of Cape May's oldest homes, at 223 North St., as well as renovations, a swimming pool and garage.

During an HPC meeting May 16, Chairman Warren Coupland said he and HPC Commissioner John Boecker visited the home and shared ideas with a contractor following an earlier hearing. Members of the HPC expressed concerns about the scale of the addition.

Project manager for the applicant, Adam Crossland of Bachich Architects, said he returned to the drawing board after the site meeting and a previous HPC hearing. A cantilever, a long supporting beam along the entire driveway side of the building, was removed from the plans, he said.

At a previous meeting, the HPC noted how "heavy

and tall" the house was in the rear portion. Crossland said Coupland and Boecker suggested placing a second small cantilever equal in size to the front at the rear of the building, only on the second floor, with a low-pitched roof.

Coupland said the rear of the house already has a contemporary addition, which the HPC approved for demolition in review prior to the meeting in order to beat the city's summer moratorium.

Crossland said previous plans called for an A-frame roof over the existing front cantilever, which has been lowered to reflect the existing conditions.

He said gingerbread trim on the house would be updated to match a house across the street. The current trim is not appropriate to the age of the building, Coupland said.

The existing baluster design on the building does not meet current code requirements, so it will be elongated to meet the 36-inch-high requirement

for railings, according to Crossland.

HPC Commissioner Tom Carroll suggested shutters be placed on the third-floor windows to match the first and second floors. Crossland said all shutters on the house would be new and functional.

HPC Commissioner Pip Campbell said the house would be huge under the new plans.

"It has so much mass and it's so long here," she said. "I will agree that it's different than what you had before but this a little, tiny Colonial house, it's one of the oldest houses in Cape May, built in 1815, and now it looks like that house up on Lafayette that has a bunch of additions on the back of it that make it all one, big, huge house."

Campbell said she understood the plan was the best the applicant could do to have a third floor and a lot of bathrooms.

Commissioner Jim Testa said the design preserves the front elevation and facade and tucks the addition

along the back of the lot, which makes it acceptable.

HPC Commissioner Janice Wilson Stridick said she shared Campbell's concern about the scale and the confusing visual impact of a house that looks like it was all built at once.

"One of the principles of historic preservation is the new construction should be distinctly different and it should respect the original and be secondary, and the more we build these huge houses and make huge houses out of old houses, the more the actual, authentic, historic fabric becomes secondary to the new," she said.

Carroll said the city's zoning ordinances allow homeowners to enlarge houses and the HPC has the job of trying to make it look as appropriate as possible without denying the owner the use of their property as guaranteed in the zoning laws.

Campbell said she feared when the house is reviewed again, it will no longer be

deemed as contributing to the historic district. Testa said it's debatable whether the house would lose its contributing status.

Commissioner Corbin Cogswell said walking along the side of the house, it currently can be seen where the original house was and each addition to the house was delineated.

"We lose that with this," he said.

Coupland said the additions to the house are not consistent with what was expected at the turn of the century and appeared to be from the 1950s or 1960s.

"If you were to keep that the way it is, it would detract from the community in my estimation," he said.

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3	11:30	11:32	5:24	4:54
4		12:14	6:05	5:37
5	12:13	1:01	6:48	6:26
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