

Village of Cold Spring Historic District Review Board

85 Main Street, Cold Spring, New York 10516 (845) 265 3611

MEMO TO THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS REGARDING 192 MAIN STREET - 06/26/20

At the request of Chair Wolfe, we write with comments on the proposal by Jen Zwarich and John Wayland, owners of the property at 192 Main Street, to reconstruct an existing carriage house/barn in the NW corner of the property, near the property lines, and within the zoning code-defined rear and side yard setbacks. While we have not yet received an application for this project, we have met with the homeowners in two workshop sessions, and conducted individual site visits to view the existing conditions.

The homeowners have demonstrated four crucial elements to be considered under the purview of the HDRB:

- Sanborn maps and contemporary press coverage place the construction of a carriage house/barn on the location between 1899 and 1905. The structure, as was common for such utilitarian buildings, is located as far as possible from the home to both maximize open space and limit exposure to the odors and disruption of the use.
- Very little historic fabric remains in the extant structure, indicating that it was rebuilt on the location. Materials and ownership records suggest that this happened sometime in the 1990s.
- The reconstruction was undertaken poorly, without a proper foundation. Over time, the sill and lower walls have rotted significantly, and the continued adaptive reuse of the structure depends upon stabilizing and fortifying it. Given the extent of both non-historic material and existing deterioration, reconstruction is a reasonable alternative under Chapter 64 and the HDRB Design Standards.
- The homeowners have not been able to locate historic photographs of the original structure, but what is on the site today is in keeping with designs of carriage houses/barns from the period of initial construction. The character-defining features of the building are its primary façade with gable-end doors, mass, scale, roofline, material palette and, significantly, its location on the site.

The context of the neighborhood and Historic District surrounding 192 Main Street is critical to consider. The area was developed long before the Village's suburban-style zoning code established the metrics of setbacks. Traditionally, primary structures were built close to the street and accessory buildings were placed in logical, deferential locations that maximized open space and separated uses.

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Historically, as now, Villagers did what they could to maximize the space and utility of the cheek-by-jowl lots that make up Cold Spring's street context and community character. This Village was built for dense, spatially-efficient living.

With all this in mind, the HDRB supports the placement of the reconstructed carriage house/barn at 192 Main Street in the location and configuration proposed by the homeowners, for the following reasons:

- Carriage houses were traditionally placed at the back of the property to limit odor and noise impacts on quality of life in the residential structure.
- The proposed location maintains the apparent and visible bulk and appearance of the carriage house from the primary public right of way on Main Street and does not introduce new design or structural elements on the street-facing elevation; in terms of the public's experience of the property from accessible rights of way, this is the vista of most concern to the HDRB.
- Relocating the structure out of its existing, historic location and placing it elsewhere on the property outside the mandated setbacks will make it significantly more visible from more public rights of way.
- The historic location of the structure maintains a relationship to similar utilitarian structures on adjacent properties; they are grouped to create a cohesive, logical service corridor of like uses, and follow the historic placement pattern of accessory structures throughout the Village

In summary, after our workshops and site visits, we conclude that the location as proposed is appropriate to the building typology, compatible with the surrounding structures, and meets the Design Standards of the HDRB. The proposal as presented in no way detracts from maintaining the character of the Historic District, which is a primary mission of our Board, and in fact provides for the continuation of the common, historic use pattern seen nearby. Most of the Board feels that we have not seen or discussed any alternatives which achieve these goals as successfully.

Members of our Board will attend the public hearing on July 2nd, and we are happy to further discuss this proposal in a joint workshop session.

Albert G. Zgolinski, Chair; Kathleen E. Foley, Vice Chair
Members: Carolyn Bachan, Sean Conway and Andrea Connor Hudson