

Minutes

BENNINGTON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Bennington Town Office - Conference Room

November 12, 2014, 4:00 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Joseph Hall, Joann Erenhouse, Anne Bugbee, Jeff Goldstone and Michael Harrington.

Also Present: Beth Antognioni and John Hale

1. **450 Main Street/Sign Application – The Richards Group**  
The sign application was approved as recommended.

2. **604 Main Street/Façade Changes – Richard Sleeman/John Hale**

John Hale proposed the following façade changes to 604 Main Street:

- Addition of vinyl siding on west side of 604 Main Street (Valentine Street), the paint is deteriorating.
- Replacement of 5 windows over the eating deck at 604 Main Street, he proposes to keep the trim and use aluminum clad 8 over 8 windows.

After a lengthy discussion between the applicant and the HPC members, Michael Harrington wrote and submitted the attached recommendations regarding the application to the Planning Director Daniel Monks.

Respectfully Submitted,



Michael Harrington, HPC Secretary

Director of Economic and Community Development

attachment



## **BENNINGTON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

December 2, 2014

Daniel Monks, Planning Director  
Town of Bennington  
205 South Street  
Bennington, VT 05201

Re: 450 Main Street application for exterior alterations

Dear Planning and Permits Office,

On November 12, 2014, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) reviewed an application for the addition of vinyl siding, as well as window replacement to 604 Main Street, which is within the Historic Design Review District.

The Historic Preservation Commission believes that the inclusion of vinyl siding within the Design Review District is in direct contrast with the guidelines and recommendations outlined in "Time and Place in Bennington," which applies best practices for historic preservation to the downtown core.

Below we have cited town documents that support this position.

- Bennington Town Plan:  
*"Bennington's downtown is the historic heart of the community. The character and vitality of this unique area must be retained to support the social, cultural and economic goals set for this in this plan...The Historic Central Bennington Design Review District has been established to protect historic resources in a defined area of historic significance and to encourage new construction that will reinforce the best qualities of the area..." (p. 17-18)*

*"Require that the renovation and alteration of existing structures and the construction of new structures, is done in a manner consistent with the character of the historic district in which they are located." (p. 40)*

- Time and Place in Bennington (Town's historic guidebook):  
*"Retain old and original exterior wall materials. Avoid covering wall surfaces with metal or synthetic cladding, and avoid improper cleaning, repair, repointing or coating of masonry walls." (p. 47)*

*"Not Appropriate: Covering wall surfaces with metal or vinyl siding, or other synthetic cladding which differs greatly from original materials." (p. 48, n. 1)*

Natural, Scenic and Historic Resources:

*"Strict adherence to design guidelines and standards for additions or alterations to historic properties and for any construction or building alterations within the Historic Bennington Design Review District is required." (p. 41-42)*

As an alternative to the proposed alterations described in the related application, the Historic Preservation Commission recommends that the applicant be required to rehabilitate the existing wood siding using industry standards for lead abatement, and in accordance with "Time and Place in Bennington," or replace the existing siding with new materials that comply with the "guidelines".

However, if the Development Review Board decides to rule in favor of the applicant, we would ask that it require the applicant to preserve original features that are critical to the historic character of the building (i.e. woods soffits, moldings, trim, edging and other defining features), and that the vinyl cladding be installed according to the best practices including, but not limited to utilizing solid trim and casing materials with integral "j" channels to eliminate visible joints, no aligned joints in siding, etc.

Below we have included our specific recommendations for this specific application:

Window(s):

- New windows be painted wood or aluminum clad
- New window continue the design of the original windows (i.e. 8 over 8, etc.)
- If clad, new windows shall be detailed to simulate "putty glazed" frames and muntins.

Siding:

- If vinyl is allowed, we recommend that the entire structure be encapsulated, not just the west-facing side. This is to ensure material consistency and visual completeness.
- If vinyl is allowed, installation should be designed to minimize exposed "j" channels
- If vinyl is allowed, all wood trim, wood brackets, wood casings, etc. should be kept and restored.
- If trim is replaced with other than new painted wood, it shall be replaced with aluminum wrapped wood with integral "j" channels and with historically accurate joints.

The HPC recognizes that in the past, other structures have been approved for vinyl siding; however, it is clear to us, and we hope to you, that not all of the decisions made in the past are appropriate for the future. We must learn as we go and reserve the right to make adjustments that are in the best interest of our community. As structures in Bennington age, more and more applicants will come forward to request alternatives to preserving the original wood structures. If we hope to retain the historic character of our community, we must be willing to follow the guidelines that are put in place to do just that.

Thank you for your thorough review and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Harrington  
Secretary, Bennington Historic Preservation Commission