

# Town of Sudbury

## Historic Districts Commission

Flynn Building  
278 Old Sudbury Rd  
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### MINUTES

March 19, 2015

7:30 p.m.

Flynn Building, Silva Conference Room

Present: Fred Taylor, Chair; Linda Hawes, Vice Chair; Bill Andreas; and Lee Swanson

HDC Chair Fred Taylor called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

#### **Public Hearing – Case 15-4 – Applicant Michael Coutu, 770 Boston Post Road**

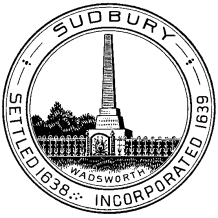
Michael Coutu, property owner, was present to request a Permit for Demolition of house located at 770 Boston Post Road. Mr. Coutu explained that he has been in Sudbury for many years and has his business, Sudbury Design Group, at 780 Boston Post Road. He purchased 770 Boston Post Road in 2006 and the Planning Board approved an ANR (Approval Not Required) subdivision of the property for two building lots. He has been paying property taxes on the two lots since. Given that the house was in poor condition when he purchased it and repairs could not be kept up it is his intent to demolish the house, keep the front lot as a buffer between his business and the back lot which he is selling so that a new house could be built there.

He said that when he inquired about demolition with the Building Inspector he was told that he needed to seek the opinion of the Historical Commission which determined that the house was historic and architecturally significant due to it perhaps being a Hodgson Company house dating from the 1920s or 1930s. However, the applicant was later made aware that since the property is located within the Wayside Inn Historic District he needed to seek a Permit for Demolition from the HDC. Since the applications came in there has been much debate about whether or not the house is in fact the Hodgson Company show house. The Historical Commission toured the property. Gretchen Schuler's survey form in the Phase 2 Historic Property Survey dating from 2006 and 2007 speaks to the fact that it is a "one-of-a-kind for Sudbury" and could have been a Hodgson House but it does not retain the signature marks of Hodgson house on the exterior. She had recommended careful evaluation of the interior for verification.

The Board debated the possible date of the house and whether or not it is, in fact a Hodgson House. In the absence of physical evidence it was unclear whether it was and discussion ensued as to its historical significance.

Mr. Coutu said that the house has been worked on for years. One of his employees had been living in it trying to repair things but after a while it just became unlivable due to poor construction. Mr. Coutu distributed photographs of the existing conditions which included rot, the poor foundation, and wood resting on the ground. To bring it up to livable standards would be extremely expensive due to its poor construction.

Mr. Coutu also pointed out where alterations had been made throughout time. Windows and the garage were added poorly so that mold and rot are occurring. He noted that the dormer in the back was an unheated space. The roof has leaked and he has repaired it but it has gotten worse.



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Water leaks, substantial mold, dormer in back is non-heated space. Has had leaks. Repaired roof but it has gotten worse.

Mr. Coutu said that he is a landscape architect and is sensitive to historic properties, but he was shocked to find out that this particular site was considered historic given its condition. He noted that any new construction on the back lot would be reviewed under the HDC's jurisdiction so the HDC will be able to impact what gets built. There was some discussion as to whether that should be a factor for consideration in the demolition debate. Mr. Andreas said that it was relevant to understand what the intention is with the lot. Mr. Coutu again said that the front lot will be a building lot left vacant to provide a buffer to his business, but a new house will be built on the back lot.

Ms. Hawes said that she has familiarity with Hodgson Homes on Cape Cod. She felt that it does not present itself as a Hodgson house. Mr. Andreas agreed that the house that is there now is not the show house due to its size. He said that its style has references to the 1940s Hodgson building plans but it does not appear to be the original.

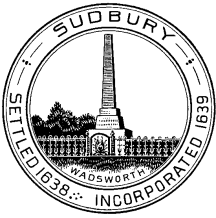
He said noted that stucco and brick were not materials commonly used for Hodgson houses and the one and half story height was unusual. He also added that there would be much more asbestos in the house if it were a Hodgson house. Mr. Coutu said that he had conducted a study to determine how much asbestos was present and except for areas around piping, for example, there was none detected.

Mr. Swanson said that he would be looking for characteristic Hodgson windows marked with an H which were typically found on Hodgson Houses. He said that it would be wonderful if a Hodgson House could be kept in town, but he can see that this house was not well-done.

Mr. Andreas described the characteristics of 1930s models of Hodgson Houses and noted how they were advertised as strong houses despite the materials used. Given that this house has not held up well that could speak to whether or not it is a Hodgson House. He showed those present an image of the show house that he pulled up on his laptop. Mr. Swanson said that he has seen a few Hodson Houses and they all have a metal tag on them. He asked Mr. Coutu if one was found at this house. Mr. Coutu was not aware of one.

Mr. Taylor then asked for comments from audience.

Lyn MacLean, HDC Chair, referenced Gretchen Schuler's Historic Property Survey and narrative. She agrees that the house is in deplorable condition but she felt that some of that was due to the potential plans to take the house down. She said that Gretchen Schuler determined that it was a Hodgson House so the Historical Commission went with her assumption. Mr. Andreas felt that from the visuals the 1931 show house is not the same as what is there today. The show house was substantial and this one is not. Mr. Swanson said that he was unable to find a map showing the houses that were there in the area in the 1930s and said that sadly there are no markers found in the house to prove that it is a Hodgson House. The Board again noted that while Ms. Schuler makes the assumption that there was a Hodgson House on the property the survey narrative also notes that the existing house does not retain the marks of a Hodgson House.



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Mr. Coutu argued that the renovations since the 1950s have taken away the historic value of the house. He said that if he felt strongly that the house was historic he would have considered moving it, but he did not think that the house would survive a move.

Mr. Taylor asked Ms. MacLean if she saw any notable details that the house is a Hodgson House. Ms. MacLean said that she did not see any but was relying on the Schuler survey. She added that if Sudbury demolishes all its small houses then Sudbury would lose houses that would be good for families and seniors looking to downsize. But she said that the house has been let go. Historical Commission member Barbara Bahlkow said that if the house were fixed up then maybe the town could use it for affordable housing to help reach the Town's 10% affordable stock. Sudbury Resident Karen Palumbo, 11 Lafayette Drive, said that she thought it could be very expensive to move it.

Ms. Hawes said that if the house would be costly to renovate then Mr. Coutu would not be able to restore it at the cost. While she agreed with Ms. MacLean and Ms. Bahlkow that it is a shame to lose smaller houses in town, there would be some control from the HDC with what is newly built.

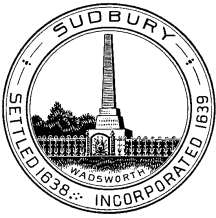
Chris Hagger, 233 Nobscot Road, said that he feels there a historic nature of this structure. He did not think that existing condition was the way to base the HDC's decision. He said that he has worked with Ms. Schuler for years and respects her opinion as one of the leading historian in the state. He asked about the possibility of adaptive re-use and suggested perhaps part of the main structure could be moved for an outbuilding.

The Board then discussed making a decision when it was yet unknown whether or not the house was a Hodgson House. Mr. Swanson said that he did not know where the evidence could be found if not yet found at the house. Mr. Coutu said that the house was dilapidated in 2007 when he bought it and he has since taken off the doors to remove appliances but he has not demolished any other part of it.

Ms. Palumbo said that the house does not really contribute to neighborhood. She appreciates the need for smaller house and historic houses, but added that the house is not an attractive house. She asked that the HDC be thoughtful with whatever new house gets built. Mr. Coutu said that he too is sensitive to the historic district, mows the traffic islands, and has painted the historic sign. His business is right there.

Fred Bautze, Historical Commission Member, said from the Shuler survey it looks as though there were two building permits obtained. He wondered if those would be useful to see. Mr. Andreas said that Ms. Schuler probably would have included the information in her survey if so.

Mr. Andreas said that he does not think it matters if parts of the house were Hodgson because it is not a typical house. He said that the interior is clearly not a Hodgson house. There is no asbestos and the pre-fab proof cannot be seen. Mr. Coutu said that he went up to attic to see if there was prefab material but he saw the nails and timber framing of a different type of building.



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Ms. Hawes felt that condition mattered due to the expense of renovation and she said that the HDC would be careful with any new house that were built.

Mr. Taylor questioned if the house has historical value then what would be done with the house. He was not sure how feasible the suggestions were for affordable housing. He would rather see a more concrete plan that made sense. Mr. Swanson asked if it was the HDC's job to determine a use for the house.

Mr. Taylor wanted to know more than he knew at the meeting and to find out what could be done with the house.

The Historical Commission members said that it was their job to show whether or not the house is historic. They did note that the house would need thousands of dollars of repair. They looked to the Schuler report for their evidence.

Mr. Coutu already has an agreement for the sale of the back lot so a decision would be timely. He has already delayed the project for the HDC meeting.

Bryan Semple, 15 Revere Street said that his concern would be having two large houses such as one that stands at Lafayette which is out of character for the district. Mr. Andreas said that this board has never approved a large house in an historic district and new construction would have to be approved by the HDC.

Mr. Taylor said that this board is sympathetic to that point of view but added that people should speak out at the time a developer is coming before the board to look to build a house. It is hard to balance the wants of a developer and balance the needs of the historic district.

Mr. Taylor suggested continuing the hearing to find out more information.

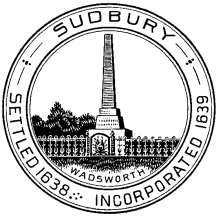
Mr. Coutu said that this would cause a financial issue due to the delay in the closing date.

The board discussed either continuing or voting.

A motion was made to continue the hearing for another week. Mr. Taylor voted in favor of continuing. Ms. Hawes, Mr. Andreas and Mr. Swanson were opposed. Therefore a motion was made to vote to approve the permit for demolition as proposed in the application dated February 17, 2015. Ms. Hawes, Mr. Andreas and Mr. Swanson approved of the demolition and Mr. Taylor was opposed. The motion carried and the demolition was approved.

### **Public Hearing – Case 15-5 -- Applicant Michael Carney, Walker Development, 4 Maynard Road**

Mr. Carney was present to request approval to replace existing windows at 4 Maynard Road for which he had received a previous Certificate of Appropriateness (#15-2) to rehab and restore. Mr. Carney had brought with him a sample of a window that had been approved by the HDC for his building project at 239 Concord Road explaining that he wanted to use this model of window at 4 Maynard Road. The aluminum clad, double-hung, four over one pane, simulated divided lite window was manufactured by



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Pella, Proline model number KM9Y, 185SS9999. Cost was a major driver in window selection. This window runs about \$500 per window as quoted by Sudbury Lumber and since it was already approved at a previous project in a historic district Mr. Carney thought that should work for 4 Maynard Road.

Mr. Carney felt that the expenditure was a fair price for a house on a corner that many cars go by daily. Windows would be replaced on all sides of the house.

The board was not opposed to the 4 over 1 lites.

Mr. Taylor asked about the casings. Mr. Carney said window casings would be wood and the measurements would be the same as are there today. Mr. Andreas said that he would be inclined to approve Azek due to weathering.

Window color would be white to match what is there now and if a buyer wants a color then approval would be sought from the HDC.

Mr. Andreas asked whether Mr. Carney had looked into restoration instead of replacement and Mr. Carney said he did check into that but restoration but would run about \$1,000 per window and there are forty windows at the house which is too expensive.

A motion was made to approve the Pella Proline window model number KM9Y, 185SS9999 in white with wood casings to match existing casings. All approved.

### **Continuation of Public Hearing Case #14-21 – Applicant Michael Carney, Walker Development, 197 Old Sudbury Road, Lot B:**

Mr. Carney requested a continuance of case #14-21 so that he could prepare architectural renderings for 197 Old Sudbury Road, Lot B. The Board agreed to continue the discussion until April 9, 2015.

### **Other Business:**

Next the Board reviewed the minutes from the March 5, 2015 meeting. The minutes were unanimously approved without any changes.

Mr. Taylor noted that the Selectmen would be assembling a new Town Hall Blue Ribbon Committee to determine the future of the Town Hall. The HDC was asked to recommend a representative from the committee to serve as member of the Committee. It was decided that Frank Riepe would serve as the representative.

Mr. Taylor said that he would be attending a training on the Open Meeting Law.

Next the Board continued discussing the draft of Specific Guidelines focusing on colors and lighting and trim, shutters, and windows.

There being no further items of business the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.