

Martin, Jason

From: Mary Tsangarakis [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, January 23, 2022 7:28 PM
To: Martin, Jason
Subject: [Possible SPAM] 67 Williams - January 24, 2022 HDC Meeting

Dear Jason and HDC board members,

The applicant for 67 Williams has incorporated several of the modifications proposed by the HDC board at the December 20, 2021 meeting, an improvement to the previous design, however there are still architectural elements which appear to be out of character in the historic district namely:

- the large and prominent visually presence at all levels of the structure of a modern asphalt roof, and
- the modern PVC railings and PVC cornices and freezes

These do not appear as though they should be acceptable elements in a historic district.

There are several other neighbors' concerns mentioned in Lily Bogosian's email to the neighborhood which I will not repeat here but were also sent to the HDC, which brings up another comment/request:

In past HDC meetings several of which I have attended, the participants from the neighborhood had been given the opportunity to voice their concerns by "raising their hand" and speaking but also for those who had sent in written letters or emails, the Commission had at a minimum reported on the total number of such letters/emails received along with a brief summary of the letter/email content. This has not been done in the most recent meetings. I trust this was an inadvertent omission.

It would of service and information to the community if the HDC would return to that practice so we can all hear and learn from the community .

Thank you.

M. Tsangarakis
[REDACTED]

Martin, Jason

From: Rhonda Berchuck [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, January 23, 2022 6:20 PM
To: Martin, Jason
Subject: January Historic Commission

Mr. Martin,

After attending the last commission meeting in December, I wanted to send you a brief note prior to the January meeting. My wife and I live at 389 Benefit Street in the Tully-Bowen building and with windows facing John Street we've been watching with interest the development of the John and Williams lots.

We feel that well-designed houses will be an upgrade to the current untended lots. What we saw proposed, while not exactly like of any existing building, appears to blend in well with the small- to medium-size houses on Williams and Benefit streets. Especially if some of the Commission's changes are incorporated like moving the balconies to the rear of the house.

Seeing the process has been very interesting and we look forward to following the development,
Rhonda Berchuck

Providence Historic District Commission
23 January 2022
Regarding: 67 Williams Street: Conceptual Review
From: Susan H. Costello
13 John Street

It is particularly hard to judge the conceptual aspects like scale and height as none of the surrounding buildings are included in the drawings.

I question the character of the building.

The "widows walks", which cut off and truncate the roofs, were built on very particular homes. They are not typical (generally used) historic elements.

The front porch and porte-cochere are not well integrated into the building and also seem out of character for the historic district.

The exposed, elevated decks, again not incorporated into the massing of the building are also out of character. They also present serious privacy issues for surrounding neighbors, particularly for the new residents of the Gardeners cottage and the houses below on John street.

Lastly, with regard to conceptual approval, I was under the impression that the intent of the allowable height in the zoning ordinance was 2 and 1/2 stories. Not 3 stories.

This project looks more like a house for a wealthy suburban development.

I am concerned that the character of the street and this historic district are not being understood.

And while a contemporary house within the historic district could be beautiful, there are few examples of successes within the Eastside. It is a very difficult thing to achieve.

I am also concerned about the (attached) two car garage. Again, not needed when this neighborhood was developed. If the HDC decides to approve it, the site plan no longer illustrates how it might work. The last site plan indicated a lot of maneuvering to access and leave the garage. If that is still the case, currently there is nothing to protect the residences below and to the west from car headlights.

The existing conditions photograph of the site is wildly misleading. There are basically no mature trees left on the site. Actually not much vegetation at all.

While early to be considering materials, the PVC and cementitious clapboard siding are not appropriate materials for the historic district.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter.

Sincerely,

Susan

Martin, Jason

From: Judyth VanAmringe [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, January 22, 2022 10:16 PM
To: Martin, Jason
Subject: 67 Williams St.

Letter to the HDC for Monday Meeting

Dear Members:

I appreciate that the owner included my home in his limited photo montage of grand houses on Williams St. However, his plan does not reflect mine nor any other house on Williams St. The drawings have exaggerated elevations, haphazardly placed rectangular windows are neither thoughtful NeoClassical architecture or modern elegance. The street is already undergoing a massive change in density with the removal of its primary landscape and this tower of a house will be the first and largest southern impression one encounters from Benefit St.

The window placements seem very clumsyan unspoken rule of the HDC frequently enforces when an owner attempts to change a window without matching others. Exterior walls are very large blank spaces without consideration for detail or attractive breaks. The HDC has pared down the multitude of unsightly decks and bannisters yet the owner has not eliminated the decks which are offensive to the privacy of neighbors and especially the residents of the cottage, Carrington House and also those of private houses on John St. The HDC has helped with the ugly porte cochere but this house still continues to look like a two or more family condominium. The constant references to the grand historic houses in the neighborhood are tired just an excuse for wanting

a large house (condominium) which will deny the elegance of the cottage next door and many of the other houses on the street which are smaller and beautiful. His plan will deny the neighborhood an uncompromising view of these extraordinary houses from every angle. There has been only one new house approved by the HDC and one need only reference a book of providence architecture to know how that turned out. Please, we would like better.

Nothing suggests to date that the owner is willing to spend the resources required to equal the most exquisite houses in our neighborhood that he keeps referring to. We keep our houses up as caretakers proudly. Don't let this neighborhood get swallowed up by a suburban frontier from what is presently an intact historic district that represents we, the people.

Yours sincerely,
Judyth vanAmringe

Martin, Jason

From: Lily Bogosian [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, January 22, 2022 3:26 PM
To: Martin, Jason
Subject: 67 Williams Street

Dear Chairman Marino and Members of the Commission,

At the conclusion of the 12/20 meeting the application was continued for several reasons, including dimensional relief from Zoning for the front yard setback. The applicant asked for a parallel zoning and HDC approval process to quicken the pace of progress. Chair Marino and the staff reject this request, citing the importance of the review process. Therefore, the plans were to be reviewed after the applicant met with zoning.

According to the Zoning Board of Review, dimensional relief has not been granted nor has the applicant appeared before their board. Nevertheless, HDC staff reports that the application is complete.

With all due respect, would the HDC kindly clarify the process to me and my neighbors so that we may understand why the application is considered complete in spite of the rules set forth by the commission? Thank you.

Comments pertaining to the plans:

On the North facing elevation, the roofline of the Porte Cochere is indeed better than the previous submission; but the existence of an asphalt roofline spanning the entire structure of the house detracts from its architecture. Porte Cocheres typically lead to courtyards and are large enough to comfortably dispatch passengers with baggage, but the columns are esthetically insufficient so it presents more as an add-on to the balcony than a place to dispatch packages or provide protection from the weather.

The PVC railings and deck in the front of the house might be reduced to accommodate decorative objects such as potted plants, but a "patio" in the front of the house is historically out of character in this neighborhood.

There are two issues that have been voiced most commonly in emails from the neighbors. I agree with the neighbors in both regards.

The most common objection is the elevation of the structure. The plans afford generous opportunity to relocate the third-floor square footage by extending the second floor which currently terminates before the garages (last page of updated design). This might help to alleviate the awkwardness of the balcony and deck on the Southern second and third floors. Also in the South elevation, the deck on the first floor (see site plan C1.1) cuts into the building. By extending it to meet the garages it will provide additional interior space, and again, a more seamless appearance.

Finally, the garages detract from the appearance of the house, and they will be highly visible approaching the property from Benefit Street. The neighbors are adamantly opposed to the trend of multiple attached garages in our neighborhood where presently there are none visible (aside from the recently approved carriage house garages). We urge the commission to reflect on the result this change will have on the historic presence of our neighborhood.

Finally, concerns regarding the elevation and massing of these plans might be diminished if the applicant were requested to include realistic contextual drawings of the surrounding properties.

Thank you for your attention to the issues presented herein.

Sincerely
Lily

Martin, Jason

From: Lorne Adrain [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 24, 2022 12:23 PM
To: Martin, Jason
Cc: Lily Bogosian; Victoria Huijie Zhu; Sue Costello
Subject: [Possible SPAM] 67 Williams Street

Dear Jason and PHDC Board members,

Thank you, once again, for all you do to protect and preserve the extraordinary and unique history and beauty of Providence. Your efforts to inform and guide each of us enables the preservation of an attractive and respectful community that can endure far beyond our time of stewardship.

I and my successor owners of 66 Williams Street will be directly across the street from the proposed project. My comments reflect my personal interests and my looking out for the interests of the next few hundred years of 66 owners.

It is with the above in mind that I appreciate your careful continuance of this mission as it relates to development at 67 Williams Street (and soon 6 John Street).

With respect to plans for 67 Williams Street, I have several comments/questions:

- First, I must say that I find the latest, revised design to be headed in a pleasing direction. That being said, I share my neighbors concerns about elevation, the placement of garages and the many porches and decks that give the structure a bit of a "Rube Goldberg" look from several angles. It appears that the view of the building when approaching from Benefit Street will be quite busy, distracting. I and subsequent owners of 66 Williams Street will be directly across the street from the proposed project.
- Second, I am quite concerned about material choices. Inserting a home with multiple forms of plastic and polymer in its exterior seems inappropriate, given the majesty of surrounding homes, including National Historic Landmarks across the street. As I read it, the plan calls for multiple uses of PVC for railings, cornices and elsewhere; concrete-based "cementious" siding that reminds one of the widespread use of asbestos siding; polymer and ash-based "Boral" products and uncertain brick material for chimney (veneer?).

I believe we all agree that whatever lands on these lots should stand the test of time. What will they look like and how will they endure the next 100 years? I think that is the purview and responsibility of us all in our roles as stewards of this historic neighborhood.

Thank you,
Lorne

Lorne A Adrain
66 Williams Street
Providence, RI 02906

[REDACTED]

Sent from my iphone

Martin, Jason

From: Marion Mariner [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 24, 2022 1:20 PM
To: Martin, Jason
Subject: Williams Street Developmet

Good Morning to the Historic District Commission,

I am writing to object most strenuously to the development proposed on my street in Providence. As a lifelong resident of both John and Williams Street, I can honestly say that I am shocked and disappointed to see the building that is proposed for #67 Williams Street moving forward in spite of the many, many objections from neighbors and other residents of the East Side and College Hill who recognize that the proposal is completely out of character and frankly will really detract from one of the prettiest streets in the city.

I think you should throw these plans out and start over again, after a long slow walk to look at the fabulous 18th & 19th century buildings within hailing distance of this project. Start with the Carrington House.

Yours truly,

Marion H Mariner

Resident of:
87 Willams Street (1977-present)
14 John Street (1969-1977)
31 John Street (1959-1969)

John M. Woolsey
27 John Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02906

January 28, 2022

Re: Design of Hirsch Residence at 67 Williams Street, Providence
For hand or electronic delivery by Jason Martin, HDC Staff

Dear Chairman Marino and Members of the Commission,


I would like to second the points in Lily Begosian's letter to you about this project. She has explained them well, so I will not repeat her letter. I would like to emphasize a few aspects:

- The front porch is not appropriate for this size house on this street. The older houses here present a consistent plane to the street elevation. The kind of porch shown for this house is suitable for a suburban house with a large lot and setbacks.
- The placement and visibility of the garage in this design is again more suburban than is consistent with this neighborhood. The applicant might consider that the south exposure in this climate is by far the most desirable one during long cold winter months. This design throws away much of the opportunity for capturing winter sunlight, both with the placement of the garage and the awkward projections and recesses of the rear elevation.
- The detailing throughout all the elevations does not inspire confidence that the finished product will be anything other than the most banal, 'suburban subdivision' type of PVC / Home Depot-quality trim details. The HDC should insist on full details that show molding profiles, materials and intersections of railings, posts, balusters, cornices & friezes, columns & capitals, cornerboards, pilasters, etc. in appropriate materials.

Beginning with the first design submission to you that did not bother to indicate windows, this applicant has been seeking to gain your approval for an inappropriate design with the least amount of information possible. Critical details are missing, materials are left vague, major components (such as windows and doors and railings) are not specified, as a good faith application might be expected to provide. The slick, small-scale CADD drawings are uninformative if not just plain deceptive. I think the HDC should assert itself now, in a situation that the Commission was intended to address, by insisting on a better configuration, clearer detailing and more appropriate materials as suggested here and in other correspondence from abutters.

Sincerely,

John M. Woolsey
27 John Street



Martin, Jason

Exhibit 2 12/20/21

From: Bettina Rounds [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, December 20, 2021 1:51 PM
To: Martin, Jason
Subject: December 20, 2021 PHDC Meeting-67 Williams Street

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Jason,

Would you please include my email in the packet for today's PHDC meeting on 67 Williams Street.

Dear Members of the PHDC:

Thank you for allowing those of us who live in the neighborhood to comment on the proposed design for the house on 67 Williams Street. My comments about this new design follow:

-I think Mr. Hirsch agreed, at the recommendation of the PHDC members, to eliminate the Porte Cochere, but it seems to still be in all of the currently submitted drawings.

-While I understand that preserving the cottage is considered by some members as a "one off," as was suggested at the previous meeting, I don't think that that is completely accurate. I fully understand that the property that had existed for decades was recently divided and sold as 3 discrete parcels, so that development of each is required to be addressed individually by the PHDC. The reality, however, when put into historical perspective, is that these 3 plots were for decades one property. Since historically they had been one property, regardless of today's "rules and regulations," the interrelationship of the development of each parcel does mean that whatever happens on one ideally should at least complement the one visibly, from the street, adjacent to the other. The two parcels facing Williams Street consisted of the cottage (and the unfortunate garages which have now-thanks to the Committee-been torn down,) and the beautiful, natural landscape that was its garden and yard, which is now being developed by Mr. Hirsch.

The scale of the proposed house- 3 stories with surrounding decks and Porte Cochere-- does not complement either the cottage or the house on its other side, which is surrounded by considerably more land and has no balconies or Porte Cochere. This proposed structure is extraordinarily large for a relatively small parcel.

-I believe the argument made that new constructions will last well into the future and most likely bring architectural value is a specious one. Throughout historic cities in the country, there were many homes torn down and properties developed in the 1950s into the present that arguably have absolutely no architectural value and, in fact, are problematic. At the PHDC's November meeting, a great deal of discussion was given to the need to have solar panels,

invisible from the street, to protect what might become historically important neighborhoods. In the case of 67 Williams, an argument can be made that the impact of such an extremely new, large house—highly visible from the street--on a plot that historically would not have accommodated such scale, is more concerning. To justify the scale of this proposed structure by comparing it to the Corliss-Carrington house, which was built in a manner, scale and grandeur that would be prohibitive were it to be built in Providence today, seems artificial.

I hope the membership will review the incongruity of the scale and the decks as it considers this proposal.

My husband and I moved to Providence in 2018. We bought our home on Williams Street because we loved the historic architecture of Williams Street and the Fox Point and College Hill historic district. In the brief time we have lived here, this district has come architecturally under siege. We are grateful and impressed with the efforts the PHDC has made and continues to make—against some daunting challenges—to preserve the historic district of Providence. Thank you.

Elizabeth (Bettina) Rounds
109 Williams Street