

JOSEF CHALAT
MAINE REGISTERED ARCHITECT

May 17, 2023

Yarmouth Planning Board, Yarmouth, Maine

RE: Gensheimer Residence, 45 Center Street, Proposed Renovations and Additions

Dear Members of the Yarmouth Planning Board,

I am writing to introduce you to the proposed modifications to the existing house located at 45 Center Street, recently purchased by Jim and Sarah Gensheimer. I believe that these modifications will preserve the historical significance of the property while also making it more suitable for the young family who will be living there. This proposal constitutes a substantial modification of a contributing structure to the Upper Village Historic District and will require Planning Board approval

According to the YP 2018 Architectural Survey, the existing house is a vernacular style structure with a brick foundation in front and a fieldstone foundation in the rear ell. The estimated date of construction is 1880-1920, however, the 1903 Sanborn map shows the entire footprint of the house and detached barn to be in place. The separate barn on the property is an Italianate/Greek Revival structure built in 1848 and is in good condition, retaining many original details on the exterior.

The house's floor plan has been modified multiple times over the years, resulting in a disconnected series of rooms with no real center and bedrooms that are not easily accessible. The existing floor plan and presence of (2) electrical meters is consistent with the use of the house as (2) living units. The proposed modifications aim to address these issues and enhance the overall aesthetic appeal of the property, ensuring its longevity and functionality for the next 20-30 years. The design team has considered the historical context of the property and taken great care to ensure that the modifications will not alter the original character or detract from its historical significance.

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The design approach for this project has been to use the existing elements and architectural vocabulary to create a "context-sensitive" design. It aims to build a harmonious and seamless integration between the old and the new, rather than create a stark contrast. This approach is often favored in preserving the character and history of traditional or historic buildings, as well as maintaining the visual continuity of the surrounding area.

We met with the Historic Preservation Committee on April 24 for conceptual design review prior to submitting the design to the planning board. The review was generally favorable. The changes to the design have been mostly fine tuning and clarifying the documents.

I am confident that these modifications will not only enhance the value of this historic property but also contribute to the preservation of our local history and heritage. I look forward to presenting this design proposal to the committee in person and answering any questions you may have.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Chalata', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Josef Chalata, Architect
Cape Elizabeth, Maine

Exhibit 1: Materials:

Roofing Shingles:

The existing shingles are in good shape and we can work with the color. The addition will use shingles that match the existing for color and type.

Windows:

The existing windows are a hodge podge of vinyl replacement windows and very old wood windows which are at near the end of their useful life. We are calling for all new windows. Based on the existing windows we presented a design to the HPC that included 2 over 1 windows. These are present in the 1947 photo. However, one of HPC members strongly believed that the original building would have used 2 over 2 windows. The client and the rest of the design team prefer 2 over 2 windows, we are proposing that all the windows be 2 over 2.

Trim:

The addition will create (2) gable ends visible from the street that are similar in size and proportion to the front gable end facing the street. The existing trim, including supporting and terminating moldings, will be emulated and applied to the new structure. The new window heads, jambs and sill trim pieces will emulate the existing molding.

Railings and balusters:

The existing exterior railings are in poor shape or missing. Photos indicate that simple painted balusters and railings with rectangular cross sections were used.

Foundation Finish:

The front portion of the house has a brick foundation bearing on a rubble wall. The rear portion appears to be rubble faced with fieldstone. The fieldstone is covered by the porch skirt on the driveway (south) side and will be covered by the new deck on the north side. We would like the gable ends of the addition that are visible from the street (north and south elevations) to be faced with brick to visually tie into the front of the house.