

**Town of Milton
Historic Preservation Board
Milton Public Library
June 5, 2008**

Members Present:

Michael Ostinato Jack Vessels Amy Kratz
Gwen Foehner Richard Greig

Members Absent:

Brenda Burns Sally Harkins

Jack Vessels called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

Item 1 – Additions or Corrections to the Agenda

Jack Vessels: Are there any additions or corrections to the Agenda?

Michael Ostinato: I move that we approve it as presented.

Richard Greig: Second.

Jack Vessels: All in favor – “Aye”. Opposed – None. Motion Carried.

Item 2 – Approval of the May 1, 2008 Minutes.

Jack Vessels: Do I have a motion to accept the minutes as presented or do we need any changes?

Amy Krantz: I make a motion to approve the minutes, as presented.

Michael Ostinato: Second.

Jack Vessels: All in favor – “Aye”. Oppose – None. Motion Carried.

Item 3 – Business Portion

- a. The applicant, Dan Copans, is requesting approval for exterior renovations to his home at 205 Federal Street further identified by Sussex County Tax Map and Parcel # 2-35-20.07-98.00.

Jack Vessels: Mr. Copans, do you want to explain what you are asking for? We have all received a packet. Hopefully, you have all looked it over.

Dan Copans: Initially, I wanted to get a permit to do some repairs on one elevation of the house. Then I thought I would really like to get a general sense of what the Historical Society is looking for and then sort of my own master plan. I want to do sort of an ongoing renovation of the place. The pictures that I sent represent the specific work that I want to do right now, which is repairing the north facing wall next to the driveway. In the future, I want to work my way around the house, restoring what I call the cornice,

which is that soffit, the fascia decorative band that wraps around the house. It is in extreme disrepair. I visited the Town Hall and talked to Lendon back in, I think, March or April, and told him that in the course of taking off a section of siding I found some pretty extensive rot to the siding and to the framing behind it. I want to repair, actually, shore the structure; move the bad framing; reinstall it; sheathe it with an OSB Board and give it some shear value; and, then propose to use a Hardi plank which is cement based siding. That's really what triggered the involvement of the Historic Society, repairing something with a non-identical material. When we got into a discussion of what that meant, I wanted to learn more about what the parameters were. One of the things that I want to do, for example, is on the soffits that wrap around the house, as I repair those soffits I intend to use plywood on the underside, rather than 1"X which is a modern material that resembles but is not identical to. I want to use copper flashing on the top of the gutter, which is representative of the period, but probably not there in the first place. That's the reason those gutters rotted out. It's kind of like a slate roof is a 100 year roof, but the sheet metal below it is a 25 year sheet metal. Something had to give over the last 130 years. So I want to go back as I repair around the house I want to really not just match these pieces, but upgrade as much as is appropriate and with the materials that make the most sense. Looking around the neighborhood, the house across the street, the old Draper house, has a copper cap on the dormers and so on, so I think it is pretty appropriate during the period to go back with copper, but I don't think it was used on this particular house. Part of what I'm doing now is just to introduce myself and tell you about my interest in the house and really restoring it and caring for the place, and also to find out what your parameters are for what is and isn't acceptable. Just to give some history of the place, I don't know who knows my family, but my folks bought the house in 1970 from Mrs. Hopkins, who is the widow of probably the second owner of the house, Dr. Hopkins, so there were very few owners in the whole history of the place and my folks bought it because I'm the oldest of 7 kids and it was the nearest they could get to the beach and find a house to bring 7 kids up here. My Mom found this place, loved the town, loved the house; and talked my Dad into buying it; but, my Dad was always considered the king of duct tape and bubble gum type repairs. In the year 2000, I took over care and payment for the house. About a year and a half ago, I bought the place from Dad. He passed away this past September of 2007. The house to us is really a kind of family memorial because my Mom has passed away, now my Dad, my late wife, who really loved the house, died in 2003 and spent four months convalescing here, before I brought her back to California. There have been a lot of family love, and also a lot of family turmoil, associated with the place; just the history of our family residing in the house. My kids love the place; all my brothers and sisters love the place. If I could get them to come up with a hammer and nails and paint brush, the house would be pristine.

Michael Ostinato: Is that your kids that are... I live right behind you. Is that your kids that sometimes are back there? Sometimes I don't know.

Dan Copans: No, but I'm glad you mentioned that. My son, they are a little older now, my son is stationed at Dover Air Base. He's a load master for the C-17 – C-5 program, so he comes down, in fact, that's him in these photos helping me with the siding. He flies into Iraq and Afghanistan, when I'm back here; he comes in and helps me do some of the work. He's a terrific kid. My daughter lives with me out in California. She's a student at Laney College. You're probably seeing nieces and nephews. My twin sisters, the babies of the family, have kids who are 8, 10, and 12 – in that range. So it really is a family congregation place, almost even more so with my Dad having passed away. Everybody loved the place, but the key is to get people to sort of participate in the cleaning up. It's like a wood hulled boat in the water. Just like an old time wood boat that needs its seams caulked, and the ropes repaired constantly. It's just a big effort. I'm just sort of pecking away at it. What I try to do is, when I do something; really bring it up to standard and a little beyond. That's why I want to use certain materials that ultimately may not be what was on the house on 1868, but I think they are appropriate for the period and they are going to be exactly in keeping appearance wise. Everything I have done is shown in some of these pictures. I built a little addition on the back of the house, which has a couple of bathrooms, a laundry room and so on. I actually dismantled and reassembled the dormers and saved all the windows and doors, and just that little 10' X 10' X 2-story addition, I ended up revamping 13 doors and windows that came and went to various parts of the house. My intent is absolute to preserve historic accuracy and construction accuracy. If I'm going to do something, I want to take it a little beyond.

Michael Ostinato: From start to finish it would look like this house.

Dan Copans: Yes. When my folks bought that house, Jack and Betty White's house (203), was abandoned and there were trees growing through the roof.

Our house was owned by Mrs. Hopkins. The house next to them, which I actually bought and renovated, was condemned by Sussex County. I bought it for \$1,000 in 1975. So the whole neighborhood was in pretty bad repair back in that era and people probably don't remember that. The intent is to get back to the ... Actually, Mrs. Hopkins had that house in very good repair. She was an old Scandinavian woman and when I first met her she was on a 36' ladder cleaning leaves out of her gutters. She was amazing. She really maintained the place. I think we can get it back there, but it's just going to take some time. I want to get a feel for how to present my permit application in a way that captures as much of the work, but just doesn't leave it open-ended. I'm not sure how to do that. That's really my point. What do you really want to see and how do you like to break up a project or renovation like this?

Amy Krantz: To be honest with you, in my opinion, based on what standards that I'm reading. This is just my opinion based on what I have read. If you want to do something to the house, you could do just what you did. Then you might be sent to us. We do exactly what we're doing here. We go step-by-step through every process of how you are renovating the house. From what I can understand, from the standards I am reading, Standard 4.9.9, it seems like

it says you're talking about roof pitch, dormer types. It says: "Modern variations of living styles which clearly bare no resemblance to traditional and historic styles will not be permitted". You are sticking within the historic, whatever it looks like now, right?

Dan Copans: Yes, in fact, I actually got slates to match the existing slate where I need to remove and replace that roof for counter-flashing purposes.

Amy Krantz: Then it says roofing materials and siding materials. Under the materials, it says: "All materials will be consistent; will be appropriate in design; texture and other visual qualities to the style period of the structure and in keeping with the general appearance of the other structures in the neighborhood. Siding including brick, stucco, wood, cement and vinyl can all be considered; but you should have a traditional appearance and profile that fits both the style and the structure in the neighborhood."

Dan Copans: I think that's what I have demonstrated. I don't know if you guys want to see it, but I did bring some samples of material. I brought 3 or 4 pieces of board here. This piece is actually from the side that is under work right now. So that's the driveway side. This is probably the oldest part of the house and you'll notice it is a little bit taller dimension than this, which is typical of almost all the other sides of the house. One of the problems with this is that it's near impossible to find this dimension without a custom order. It cups, as you can see, just in terms of wear and tear. And that particular side of the house does not hold paint. The White's have a big magnolia tree that keeps the moisture in and I think that's why they rotted out so badly.

Richard Greig: Is it cypress wood?

Jack Vessels: No. I think its local pine.

Dan Copans: Here's what I propose to use. The Hardi plank is pretty much the same. It will be the exact same reveal, which I think is key, 5-3/4, 5-1/2 or thereabouts. It will be thinner than this stuff. I'm sure you have seen it around town. In fact, it's on the Town Hall and it's a great product, if it is installed properly. I used it on the addition. I put it up 8 years ago.

Jack Vessels: I've used it on my house. It holds paint beautifully.

Dan Copans: It has the same weather face, but it has not lost anything. I think if you keep the reveal consistent; you use the same dimension of trim board and fascia; you see all those decorative large boards, I'll repair or replace all of them; then I think that's the key. The siding is that lineal effect. If it matches up around the corners and the large boards butt up, I think that's important.

Jack Vessels: Your shadow line is a little lighter.

Dan Copans: A little thinner. Yes, I know. You can see it in the photos where this is the old siding and this is not. You do lose a little depth. I don't know why they don't make it thicker.

Jack Vessels: Weight, I think, probably more than anything.

Dan Copans: Yes, that's true.

Michael Ostinato: When it's on the wall, you really can't tell anyway.

Jack Vessels: From across the street, you're not going to even question it.

Dan Copans: The proof is in the pudding, in terms of performance. This stuff

has been great. The front of the house, the street facade, is always going to be wood. There is not that much siding on the house; it's all dormers, windows and mansards, not a lot of siding.

Jack Vessels: It's a beautiful house.

Amy Kratz: It is a beautiful house.

Dan Copans: It just needs to be brought back to how it should look.

Jack Vessels: I'm glad to see you're getting around to the back, because it's...

Dan Copans: I've spent the last couple of years just pecking away at getting the front stripped, primed and getting it ready to get an undercoat and a topcoat on. I think that's going to look pretty good. The real key now is to bring these eaves and these cornices around and that's why I didn't want to apply for a permit for every side, the front, this side, etc. I don't know how much we can incorporate in one application.

Amy Kratz: I don't know what the answer to that question is.

Dan Copans: Well, we don't have to answer that question this minute.

Richard Greig: I have a thought for you. It seems to me that in retrospect, 2 or 3 years ago, the town reached a position where if you were going to restore an older house, the footprint had to stay the same; the front of the house had to use the same material, or as close to it as possible. But after that...

Jack Vessels: They're talking streetscape, what you see from the street. That includes your side, particularly your driveway side.

Dan Copans: In other words, you can't extend or heighten the façade, but you can... Do you mean the footprint of the whole property?

Richard Greig: The part of the house being, whatever that space the house took up. Two doors down from our house, a house was done that way and it was in really bad shape. They basically tore down the whole building, except for the front. The front was rebuilt with older style material that was still on the marketplace. The sides of the house and the back are all plastic and you can't tell that from the street. It looks a lot better than the old house did, prior to that, but it looks like it probably would have looked years and years ago. I think that is sort of the standard I thought we were operating under in the town.

Robin Davis: I was trying to explain to Dan on the phone, the reason for the siding issue coming before the Commission, is because he is changing the material. The new ordinance, as the old ordinance said, is for like or similar use. Now they went to same. If you were using Hardi plank, because that was like or similar, this would not have been an issue before the board. It's the same thing with painting and replacing with the same material, there would not have been an issue. Now that the siding is going to be a different material with the Hardi plank, you have to come before the board just to hear that. As far as some of the other repairs that he's doing, if he has to pull something out of one of those soffits, and is replacing it with the same type of material, that wouldn't even come before the board. Because the ordinance says he doesn't have to. This is going to be an ongoing process, but I didn't want him to get a whole bunch of things before the board, that might be a year and a half down the road. We tried to make it into a group, if you think you

can do this in a year time frame, let's do this. Save him from once a month having to come back from California. Coming here, we know that the process is going to be several things, and some of it he might be doing that you will not see as a board, because it fits within the category of things that you don't have to come, anyway. There might be a lot of things done to the house but you might only see and vote on one or two of them and the siding is definitely one of them.

Amy Kratz: So, basically, that ordinance that I just read is accurate.

Robin Davis: Yes. You still want whatever he is doing to keep in the character of what's going on. As long as it saves the applicant from having to keep coming back. If he was able to find the same type of material for siding, he wouldn't have to come in. But, it's just being replaced.

Jack Vessels: Are you going to replace some of the soffit boards with plywood?

Dan Copans: Yes, the underside.

Jack Vessels: Is that going to paint up good? Plywood when it is painted, it always looks like plywood painted.

Dan Copans: I use an AC grade, like a finished grade on the exposed side. It looks great. It's a 14" deep...

Jack Vessels: I know. You can't get a piece of wood like that anymore.

Dan Copans: Exactly. They had it in the old days, when they had stands of pine.

Jack Vessels: They had bigger trees then.

Dan Copans: It came laminated and had a little finger joint in it.

Jack Vessels: That comes apart pretty quick out in the weather.

Dan Copans: What I have been using is a 3/4" C-plywood on the underside and everything else is 1"X. There's a lumberyard I've been using down in Virginia, that has the 5/4 depth on the big corner boards and the large boards, and stuff. I'm sure I can find something local, but I haven't really researched it yet.

Jack Vessels: A lot of times, your yellow pine step tread material is 5/4 and works well on that.

Dan Copans: The stuff I bought and used on the addition on those corner boards and such, is a 5/4 primed hemlock and it's a beautiful, really nice stable material and I must say it would be hard to beat. For example, with the copper on the top of the gutters instead of the sheet metal, it's more logical. Right now, it's much more money, because of the price of pure copper. I'm in the demolition business and we have people climbing our fences to get on our projects to strip out the wire, they don't care if it's still hot wired.

Richard Greig: I think you'll find that most, if not all of us here, really like the old houses. That's the reason why I moved here. I don't know about everybody else. This is a gorgeous old house and it deserves your attention.

Gwen Foehner: I would like to commend you for the work you are doing on it and the way you are doing it and the fact that you are restoring it and not doing what your own business is and demolishing it.

Dan Copans: A lot of the work we do is in the San Francisco Bay Area in

historic renovation. A lot of it is what they call “façade renovation” and they save just the façade of these big buildings and they demolish everything behind it and then you build a structure to it. We get a lot of really gigantic purges like this.

Richard Greig: Then you have a modern building.

Dan Copans: Yes, exactly. That’s a fun part of the business. I drag a lot of little knick knacks back here from job sites: cobblestones, windows, everything. I live in a condo up there, so I take out all my home improvement directions out here.

Gwen Foehner: Good, so we have no competition.

Michael Ostinato: I would like to see that.

Dan Copans: Are you right behind me?

Michael Ostinato: Right behind you. Your stable, I guess, I don’t know if it’s a stable or a barn.

Dan Copans: They call it a carriage house. It was a carriage house.

Michael Ostinato: That’s obviously original. I don’t know what you plan on doing about that. I think a board hit me in the head once while I was pulling weeds. I think the weeds are holding it up.

Dan Copans: The ivy might be.

Michael Ostinato: The ivy I mean.

Dan Copans: I actually have shoring inside of the building.

Michael Ostinato: Oh good. I like it. I think it’s really neat.

Dan Copans: I want to catch it before it does get too far beyond.

Michael Ostinato: It’s not leaning.

Dan Copans: No. As I said, that shoring post runs underneath that second floor.

Michael Ostinato: One of our cats got out once and we went in there. It’s kind of neat in there.

Dan Copans: Don’t go up the stairs.

Michael Ostinato: My wife did and the cat came down.

Dan Copans: In fact, in that regard, I’ve got to stake it off as sort of a . . .

Michael Ostinato: You have a wire fence across it.

Dan Copans: One of the twins may have put it up. It’s a labor of love and a huge challenge and it’s a financial challenge. One of the big problems is not having a local person I can call for the other-hand type of function: painter helper, carpenter helper, laborer, yard work, that sort of thing. I need to get a little more contact with who is available now. I think with construction being quiet now, there might be more people around. That’s what I’m looking to do right now, get the side shored up and repaired and go on from there and kind of work down the street façade and then down the south façade. I call this end facing downtown the North and not the West, with Federal Street being the West. It’s not exactly accurate. The Town looks great. Every time I come back here I see more improvement and upgrades.

Jack Vessels: What you need from us is approval for what you’ve asked for, basically, at this point.

Dan Copans: I don’t want to sound stupid; I’m not sure what I’ve asked for

exactly.

Jack Vessels: I think the use of the Hardi plank, in place of the wood; the copper soffit is a good move; and, I think the Hardi pine is a good move.

Robin Davis: Like I said, I'll hear it when he talks. There is a match existing and that issue would not even come before the Board because it would not match with what if? Like I was telling Amy, when he gets a building permit, that's when I can look through the issues that he wants to do at the time, but that was something that the Commission has already addressed. There might be twenty things going on at the project, but you might only see twelve.

Gwen Foehner: I would like to make a motion that we approve Mr. Copans' request for exterior renovations at 205 Federal Street.

Richard Greig: Second.

Jack Vessels: All in favor. We better have a roll call vote.

Roll call vote:

Richard Greig	Approved
Michael Ostinato:	Approved
Jack Vessels:	Approved
Amy Kratz	Approved
Gwen Foehner:	Approved

Jack Vessels: Motion carried. I wonder if this motion should also indicate that he can do this on the remaining facades without going back each time.

Gwen Foehner: We can only deal with what is on the current building permit.

Robin Davis: Once he's got Hardi plank on the side, now that is kind of like the standard and he should not have to come back each time, because that was officially approved. If he wanted to change to vinyl siding, or whatever, he would have to come back. This is to keep him from having to come back.

Right now the North side is the issue, but maybe next year the front's going to be the issue and he might want to do the Hardi plank on the front, or the side. You can continue with the Hardi plank around, as long as you don't change from the Hardi plank

Dan Copans: Even the front is always going to be wood-sided. Because I'm saving sections, just like these pieces I've saved sections, I will be using them.

Robin Davis: So you plan on saving what you can with the wood and using it back. Basically, if you use it back, there's no issue to come before the Board, anyway. But, if there's some spot where you have to use the Hardi plank...

Jack Vessels: Well, once you've used it on one part of the façade, because of the very depth of it, you will have to carry it through.

Dan Copans: That's why that little 16X12' elevation, once you start, you might as well just do the whole thing. Thank you for your approval. I don't know if I should ask about opening another can of worms. The carriage house is almost going to be unsalvageable without dismantling and reconstruction and that's probably going to involve a separate application. Right?

Gwen Foehner: Right.

Dan Copans: That's going to be more than just shoring and patching, that's

going to be, I think, uh. I'm not sure.

Amy Kratz: Demolition?

Dan Copans: I'm pretty sure you're right. That's on the list, too. I wanted to show you, this is a house in Tiberon, California, which is about 10 miles north of the Golden Gate, about 5 minutes from where I live, which is almost a twin of that house. It was damaged in a storm and they were lucky enough to get \$400,000 in insurance money to repair the damage. But that house is the headquarters of the National Audubon Society. It was barged across San Francisco Bay from San Francisco. Somebody bought it for \$1 from a site-clearing company that did huge demolition. They were going to demolish it. The guy bought it for \$1; barged it across the Bay; it's on 11 acres in Tiberon, which is a really high dollar property; and, then the owners leased it to the Audubon Society. You can see how much the front resembles the house. It's a little different with the windows, but the era is about 4 or 5 years from this house. Thanks for bearing with me on that carriage house.

Jack Vessels: Do you have any more questions you want of the group?

Dan Copans: No, I wanted to talk about what's next or how much you wanted me to present right now. I'm kind of concerned about that footprint, because at some point, I was thinking about an enclosed porch where there's currently just an open deck. I don't know if that's expanding the footprint.

Richard Greig: No, when we bought our house, we had the same situation.

Jack Vessels: You say it's on the back side? So it's not really part of the streetscape, I don't think you have to bother us with it.

Michael Ostinato: Our house had the open porch and they put that whole front on, and that was approved in 2004, before this board was established. The guy that lived there probably didn't pay much attention to that.

Dan Copans: Do you live on the corner of Chestnut and Coulter?

Michael Ostinato: I live right across from Captain McGee's grave.

Dan Copans: Okay. My mom is buried in the cemetery, so there's a real feeling for it.

Michael Ostinato: I really enjoy it. I love the setting of it. We wanted to live in an old town, in an old home and that's why we bought here. Living across from that cemetery is very nice. I have quiet neighbors.

Jack Vessels: All we need now is a motion to adjourn.

Amy Kratz: I move we adjourn.

Richard Greig: Second.

Jack Vessels: All in favor. Opposed. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.