



**PATRICK J. SULLIVAN**  
DIRECTOR

# City of New Bedford

## Department of Planning, Housing & Community Development

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## STAFF REPORT

### NEW BEDFORD HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING

November 1, 2017

**Case #2017.20: CERTIFICATE OF APROPRIATENESS**

24 Centre Street  
(Map 53, Lot 28)

**Applicant:** Robert Duff  
24 Centre Street  
New Bedford, MA 02740

**Owner:** Richard Limeburner  
P O BOX 553  
Woods Hole, MA 02543

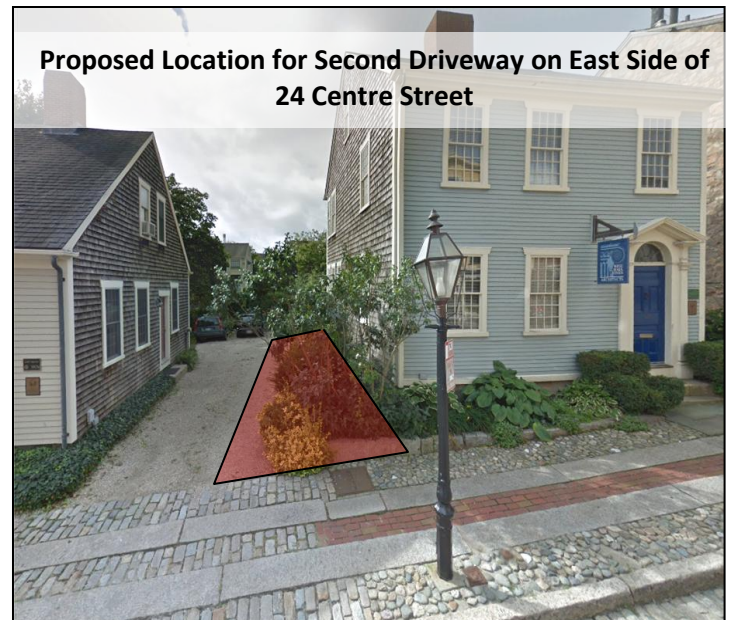


24 Centre Street

**OVERVIEW:** The applicant is seeking to develop a second driveway on the east side of the property. This would require the removal of a granite stone retaining wall on the property as well as sidewalk alterations and the relocation of a streetlight on the public way.

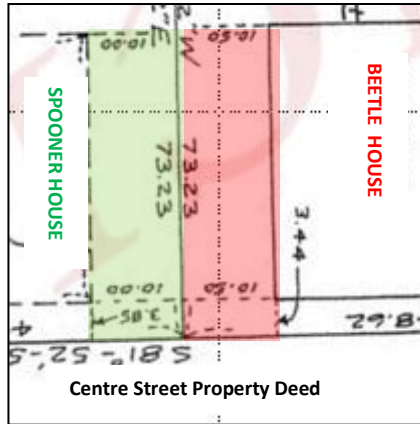
**EXISTING CONDITIONS:** The Henry Beetle House is a two-story Federal-style building constructed circa 1804 at the corner of North Second and High Streets. The building was moved to its current location on the south side of Centre Street by WHALE in 1972 to save it from demolition during the expansion of Route 18. The property has had commercial uses and currently houses an art gallery.

The building fronts the sidewalk, and due to the street slope, there exists a granite retaining wall on the front facade which wraps around and runs along the entire east facade of the structure. The approximate 5' wide retaining wall currently serves as a planting bed. A pea stone driveway exists on the west side of the property.

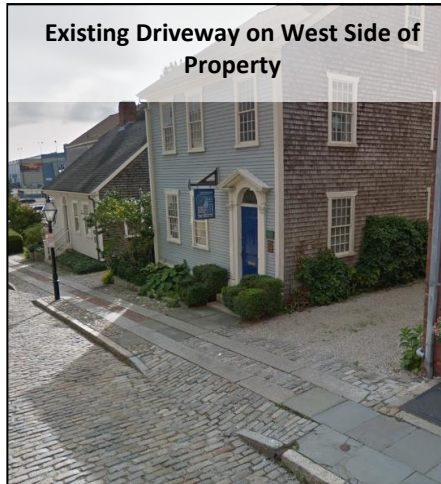


Proposed Location for Second Driveway on East Side of  
24 Centre Street

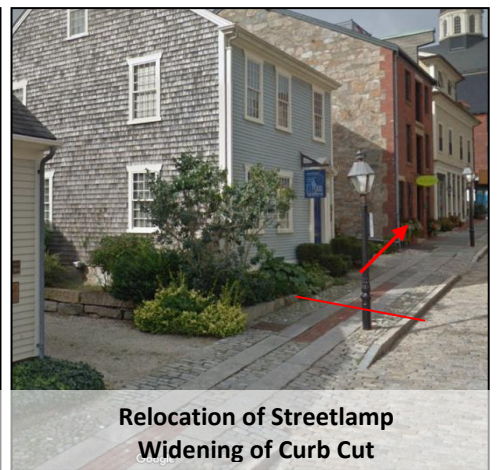
The adjacent Caleb Spooner House, located to the east, has a pea stone driveway which abuts the Beetle House's granite retaining wall. This driveway is approximately 15' wide, however only approximately 10' of that driveway is part of the Spooner property. The other 5' of pea stone driveway and the retaining wall comprises approximately 10.5' of the Beetle property. The current width of the curb cut is 10' and the narrow width of the driveway makes it difficult to share between the two properties.



The Beetle House has an existing driveway on the west side of the property allowing room for two off street parking places. The City's Traffic Commission has prohibited parking on the south side of Centre Street between the hours of 8:00AM to 6:00PM due to the narrow width of the street and the difficulty for delivery trucks to navigate with two sided parking.



**PROPOSAL:** The applicant proposes the removal of the granite retaining wall on the east side of the property in order to develop the driveway. This also requires alterations in the public way which will include the widening of the driveway curb cut, alterations to the existing sidewalk paving materials and the relocation of a streetlamp. The applicant mentioned the possibility of constructing a fence along the property line, but did not formerly include fence information within the application.



**STATEMENT OF APPLICABLE GUIDELINES:** *The Bedford Landing District Design Guidelines* state the following relative to this proposal:

DRIVEWAYS AND PARKING LOTS: Driveways in the District are currently constructed of asphalt or gravel. Repairs to driveways should duplicate the existing, using the same materials, colors, textures and designs. New driveways should be in keeping with adjacent properties and appropriate both to the District and to the style of the principle structure on the property. New paved areas should not be paved in asphalt, but rather in crushed stone, cobbles or pavers. Off-street parking lots tend to break the rhythm and consistency of a streetscape, and they should therefore be placed at the rear (or side) of a building or lot whenever possible and should be screened from view. The design and materials for parking lots must be approved by the Commission prior to construction.

FENCES/GATES AND WALLS: The few fences/gates and site retaining walls in the District are significant architectural features and should be repaired or replaced whenever possible with new materials that duplicate the original. Cast iron fences/gates shall be preserved. New fences and site walls should not prevent or restrict views of buildings from a public way. The design should be appropriate in scale, materials, and architectural style to the building, its site and the surrounding properties.

LANDSCAPING (HARDSCAPE): Retain historic hardscape features including, walkways, steps and sidewalks, in their original locations. When deteriorated, repair with materials that match or are compatible to the original. New hardscape elements including walkways, terraces and patios require review and approval by the Commission. In all cases, the material, design and location(s) of such elements shall complement and not obscure historically or architecturally significant buildings or structures.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE: The City's Department of Infrastructure (DPI) has reviewed the proposal and conducted a site visit. DPI recommends widening the shared driveway apron between the two properties from the current 10' width to a maximum of 18'. DPI will be responsible for the relocation of the streetlamp a few feet westerly of its current location to accommodate the driveway apron widening and has provided the applicant with the cost estimate for this service. The property owner is responsible for the curb widening, and in this case the sidewalk material alterations. The City requires the property owner to provide a City approved bonded contractor to perform this work and the contractor is required to work closely with the DPI's engineers.

TRAFFIC COMMISSION: The property at 24 Centre Street is a Commercial Use in an Industrial Zone. Therefore according to City Code, the petition for removal of curbing in connection with driveways or entrances to commercial and industrial properties shall be made to the Traffic Commission, which is empowered to grant, modify or deny the request after a public hearing has been held. The proposed driveway widening will require a hearing at the Traffic Commission and this body may wish to consider that any modification arising from a future Traffic Commission action shall be reviewed by staff to determine whether a modification of the Certificate of Appropriateness is necessitated.

The proposed removal of the retaining wall and widening of the driveway apron will not greatly impact the visual aesthetic of the property or the District. Staff recommends the approval of the request, however acute care is required in the execution of the work to ensure that the original sidewalk materials are retained and altered correctly to continue the appropriate sidewalk design of granite runners, cobblestones, bricks and Belgian blocks.

The applicant verbally referenced the possibility of installing a wood fence along the property boundary of the driveway. If the applicant seeks this approval, staff recommends the Commission consider that the fence model the typical District approved wood planked fence which is 3' high with a cap moulding and square posts.

Utility boxes exist in this location and may require the use of enhanced cement pads. Additionally, the relocated streetlamp will utilize a cement base and cement mortar is necessary for setting the sidewalk paving materials. Based on the use of cement, this project may not be able to be executed until the spring of 2018 due to temperature conditions.