



April 29, 2021

Mr. Steve Kleppin, Planning & Zoning Director
City of Norwalk
125 East Avenue
Room 223
Norwalk, CT 06856-5125

**RE: Architectural Narrative
132 Flax Hill
Norwalk, CT 06854**

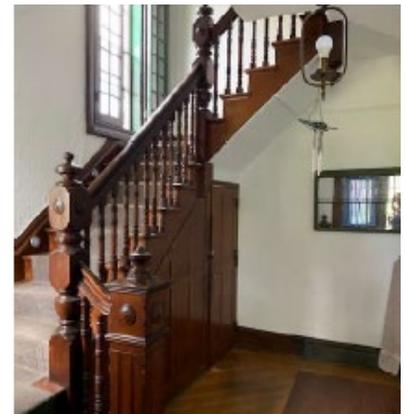
Dear Mr. Kleppin,

Crosskey Architects, LLC has been engaged by 132 Flax Hill, LLC, a company affiliated with Workforce Partners for a renovation project at 132 Flax Hill Road. The existing house is one Norwalk's surviving examples of a modest Queen Anne style American home. The building was recently added to the Towns Historic Resource Inventory making it eligible to utilize the preservation incentives as outlined in Section 118-360 - D Residence Zone of the Norwalk Building Zone Regulations. Currently there are two structures that sit on the 9,460 SF parcel, the most prominent being a two and a half story Queen Anne style house and the other being a contemporary two-car garage. The house has many of the style's identifying features, including symmetrical cross gable massing, a steeply pitched roof and a front porch. Porches are one of the most important character defining features of the Queen Anne style. The existing porch however has been drastically altered and is in poor condition.



Street Elevation

When originally constructed, the house was owned by Edward F. Knapp a prominent local business man who owned the Knapp Box company along with his brother. At an undetermined point in time, the house was reconfigured into a three-family home with separate apartments on each of the three floors of the structure. A fire escape was added to the south elevation off one of the third-floor bedrooms. Despite the conversion the highly detailed staircase in the front entryway has been maintained in its original condition.



Main Entry Staircase

The goal of the renovation project is to increase the number of apartments from three to five by converting the existing first floor 3-bedroom unit into two 1-bedroom units and by converting the second floor 2-bedroom unit into two 1-bedroom units. The third-floor unit will remain as the only 2-bedroom unit in the building. Due to the extent of the renovations, the two first-floor units are required to be handicap accessible and an automatic fire sprinkler system will be added to structure, which will also facilitate the removal of the fire escape. To accommodate access to the first floor, the existing front porch will be reconstructed in its entirety with period-appropriate posts, brackets and railings painted in a manner that is representative of the Queen Anne style. An ADA compliant ramp will harmonize with the new historically-inspired design. The other first floor unit will be accessed via a new handicap lift attached to a new rear porch.



Proposed Street Elevation

If not for the recently adopted historic preservation incentives, a project of this type would have never considered rebuilding the front porch to include Queen Anne detailing, which will greatly enhance the structures aesthetics while improving the look of the entire streetscape in the area. And with the installation of fire sprinklers facilitating the removal of the fire escape, the exterior will be further enhanced. We hope that you and both the Historical and Zoning Commissions see the care, detail and expense that the Owners of 132 Flax Hill are willing to undertake to provide affordable housing options to the residents of Norwalk while also maintaining its historic fabric.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark A. Hopper".

Mark A. Hopper, AIA
Principal