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Brookline Preservation Commission
MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 8, 2019 MEETING
Brookline Town Hall, 5th Floor Hearing Room, 333 Washington Street

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Commissioners Present

David King, Chair
Elton Elperin, Vice Chair
Jim Batchelor
Wendy Ecker
David Jack
Richard Panciera
Elizabeth Armstrong

Commissioners Absent:

Peter Kleiner

Staff: Valerie Birmingham, Lara Kritzer

Members of the Public: See list

Mr. King called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Approval of Minutes

The Commission reviewed the draft minutes for the September 25, 2018. Mr. Elperin moved to approve the minutes as revised. Mr. Panciera seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Public Comment (for items not on the agenda)

No public comment.

PUBLIC HEARINGS – LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS

15 Adams Street (Crowninshield LHD) – Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace front entry door (Saraswathi Mandapati, applicant).

This application was withdrawn by the Applicant prior to the meeting.

71 Carlton Street (Cottage Farm LHD) – Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to install two AC condenser units in the rear of the property (Paul Warren and Amy Evenson, applicants).

Ms. Birmingham presented the case. The application proposes to install two Lenox Air Conditioning condenser units to the rear of the porch on the left façade of the house with screening to be determined.

46 Owner Paul Warren explained that they are in the process of restoring the house to its original
47 appearance and are open to installing whatever screening would be acceptable to the
48 Commission.

49
50 Jordana Shief Needle, 1024-1032 Beacon Street, expressed concern that the condensers would
51 be visible from farther down the street and asked for a more definitive answer on the screening
52 to be used to confirm that the condensers would not be visible.

53
54 Mr. Elperin asked about the planting plans for the screening. Mr. Warren thought that he would
55 install arborvitaes to block the view from Carlton Road. The new plantings would be trimmed
56 so as not to block the windows above the condensers. Commission members discussed the
57 placement of the new plantings and their distance from the condensers. Mr. Warren noted that
58 the temporary pipe shown in the photos had been installed to correct an existing drainage issue
59 and that new gutters would be installed next year.

60
61 Mr. Jack reviewed the site plan and asked if the Owner had considered installing the
62 condensers behind the deck where it would not be visible from the street.

63
64 Contractor Tim Woods, Atlantic Heating, explained that this location was within the rear
65 setback and that the space between the deck and rear fence was too narrow for the condensers.

66
67 Mr. Elperin thought that it was reasonable to install the condensers along the left façade of the
68 house as they would not be visible if well screened. Mr. Warren stated that if arborvitaes were
69 not acceptable, he was willing to consider holly or another planting, or to install fencing in its
70 place.

71
72 Mr. King expressed concern that the Commission does not usually approve vegetation as
73 screening. Other options including fencing, lattice, or a mix of fencing and vegetation were
74 discussed. It was agreed that a lattice or other vertical style board fence should be installed to
75 screen the new condenser units with any vegetative screening left to the owner's discretion.

76
77 Mr. Elperin moved to approve the installation of two new Lenox air conditioning condensers
78 along the left façade of the building as proposed and to accept the use of a fence as screening
79 with the exact spacing and design of the vertical wood fence to be approved by staff. Ms.
80 Ecker seconded the motion.

81
82 The Commission voted 7-0. The motion passed.

83
84 **PUBLIC HEARINGS – DEMOLITION**

85
86 **76 Buckminster Road – Request to lift the stay of partial demolition of the house (David**
87 **Eisenberg, applicant).**

88
89 The eighteen month demolition delay on the rear slope of the slate roof was initiated in
90 December 2018. Ms. Birmingham reviewed the case. The request before the Commission is to
91 allow the slate on the rear roof slope to be replaced with new GIF slateline asphalt shingles.

92 Owner David Eisenberg explained that the roof had developed leaks after the solar panels were
93 installed on the rear slope. He had repaired the roof twice since that work was done but the
94 leaks persist. He believed that replacing the slate shingles with asphalt shingles would correct
95 the problem. He noted that the solar panels already covered much of the rear roof slope and
96 that other properties in the area had already had their slate roofs replaced.

97

98 The Chair opened the discussion to public comment. There were no comments at this time.

99

100 Mr. Elperin questioned how the solar panels had been installed on the roof. Mr. Eisenberg
101 explained the installation and repair processes to date. It was noted that the leaks in the slate
102 roof began after the solar panels were installed and that the slate and panels had been removed
103 for repairs once before.

104

105 Mr. Elperin noted that the Commission supported the use of solar panels and their installation
106 on slate roofs, but had a commitment to keeping slate roofs which are original to a house.
107 Commission members reviewed the location of the slate roof on the rear slope of the house, the
108 impact of its removal, and potential options for its repair. Ms. Ecker noted that only half of the
109 roof would be replaced at this time. Mr. Panciera expressed concern with the incremental
110 disappearance of slate roofs due to solar panels. It was noted that it was the under sheathing of
111 the slate roofs and not the slate itself which wore out and not the slates themselves. He
112 empathized with the owners but felt that there must be a solution for repairing the slate roof
113 and felt that it would be unfortunate to lose it.

114

115 Mr. Elperin stated that the underlying principle in allowing solar panels on slate roofs was that
116 the panels were removable so that the slate would remain in place. Looking long term,
117 technology could change but the historic slate roofs should persist.

118

119 Mr. King thought that the installation of asphalt shingles would cause a real injury to the house
120 and that the existing slate was a nobler and better material. He thought that the leaks were the
121 result of a bad contracting job rather than a problem with the slates themselves.

122

123 Mr. Jack noted that there was a lot of color in slate shingles and that they added to the
124 character of the house. The installation of asphalt shingles would eliminate that feature. Mr.
125 Jack also expressed concern that the new shingles would not fix the underlying problem.
126 Commission Members urged the owner to consider repairing the under sheathing before taking
127 any action to replace the shingles.

128

129 Mr. King moved not to lift the stay of demolition on the slate shingles on the rear roof slope.

130 Mr. Jack seconded the motion.

131

132 Mr. Eisenberg stated that the appearance of the slate roof did not exist because it was covered
133 with the solar panels and noted that neighboring homes had asphalt shingles. He thought that
134 solar panels had a community and personal benefit and asked the Commission to reconsider
135 their motion.

136

137 The Motion passed with a vote of 4-3 with Mr. Elperin, Mr. Jack, and Mr. Batchelor voting in
138 the negative. The eighteen month stay of demolition remains in place.

139
140 **654 Chestnut Hill Avenue – Request to lift the stay of partial demolition of the house**
141 **(Siew Tin Gan and Edwin Barbarin, applicants)**
142

143 The twelve month demolition delay on the roof was initiated in November 2018. Ms.
144 Birmingham reviewed the case. The request before the Commission is to allow the removal
145 and replacement of the roof, the installation of a new entrance porch, and the construction of a
146 new addition to the rear façade.

147
148 Architect Andrea Morton explained that they had revised the plans after meeting with the
149 Planning Board. She had struggled to find a balance between the existing house and the new
150 addition by keeping the existing roof pitch and referencing the clipped gable roof with the
151 vertical detailing in the gable end. They had considered using dormers in the existing roof as
152 well but felt that it made the building appear too cluttered and preferred the simpler roof form.

153
154 The Chair opened the discussion to public comment. There were no comments at this time.

155
156 Mr. Elperin asked the Ms. Morton if they had considered keeping the clipped roof. She
157 explained that the clipped gable impacted the interior and reviewed the floorplans with the
158 Commission. The clipped gable is currently a Plexiglas panel. Ms. Morton explained that the
159 size of the lot limited their ability to add on to the house elsewhere. The Commission and
160 Applicants discussed reintroducing the clipped gable into the new addition and how it would
161 impact the overall design.

162
163 Mr. Batchelor asked if the clipped gable was original to the house. Ms. Morton confirmed that
164 it was. Mr. Batchelor thought that the clipped gable added visual interest and character to the
165 design of the house. Ms. Ecker agreed and noted that each of the houses in this row had a
166 feature that made it a little different.

167
168 Mr. Panciera discussed his review of the dimensions of the building and expressed concern that
169 raising the roof was stretching the proportions of the front façade. He felt that the additional
170 space above the second floor windows created the impression that something was missing and
171 threw off the design. A discussion followed as to how to address this space and whether taller
172 windows on the second floor would help. It was noted that the rear gable end had a round
173 window but members agreed that it worked well on the rear façade but might be less successful
174 on the front façade. Ms. Morton suggested adding a pair of windows in the gable end as an
175 alternative.

176
177 Mr. King agreed that this design was preferable to dormers on the existing roof.

178
179 Mr. Elperin liked the design of the new front porch and thought that the columns were well
180 proportioned. He suggested that the columns be round instead of square and the applicants
181 agreed. Mr. Elperin asked about the bumpout on the left façade which was noted to be a
182 fireplace.

183
184 Commission Members agreed that they were sympathetic to the design and felt that it could
185 move forward under an empowered subcommittee who could review the proposed changes to
186 the front facade.

187
188 Mr. Elperin moved to continue the discussion to an empowered subcommittee of Mr. Panciera,
189 Ms. Ecker, and Mr. Jack. Mr. Jack seconded the Motion and all voted in favor.

190
191 **95 Welland Road – Request to lift the stay of partial demolition of the house (Stephen**
192 **Whalen, applicant)**

193
194 The twelve month demolition delay on the roof was initiated in November 2018. Ms.
195 Birmingham reviewed the case. The request before the Commission is to lift the stay of
196 demolition to allow the construction of a new rear addition. It was noted that this project had
197 also been before the Planning Board which had recommended that the massing be reduced. The
198 revised plans reflect those requested changes.

199
200 Attorney Robert Allen appeared on behalf of owner Stephen Whalen. He explained the
201 owner's plans for the house and how they were working to address the concerns of the
202 Planning Board and neighbors. Architect Robert Sprague

203
204 Architect Ryan Spragg, Embarc Studios, explained that the design had been revised to reflect
205 the Planning Board's comments. The new addition was pulled back two additional feet from
206 the rear property line and would be coplanar with the existing garage and the exterior stairs
207 encapsulated in the new addition. Fieldstone and stucco are proposed to break up the façade
208 with a darker, yet to be determined material to be used on the third floor to make it visually
209 recede into the existing roof. A new entrance was also proposed adjacent to the driveway.

210
211 The Chair opened the discussion to public comment.

212
213 Carol Levin, 61 Blake Road, stated that she lives in a Royal Barry Wills home located directly
214 behind the proposed addition. She had submitted a copy of her memo to the Planning Board
215 including an analysis of the size of this house in comparison to the surrounding homes and felt
216 that the new addition would be out of scale with the neighborhood. She added that the addition
217 would negatively impact the rear yards of the neighborhood and set a precedent for new
218 construction that if continued would lead to the loss of the area's characteristic, heavily
219 landscaped lots.

220
221 Ken Goldstein, Attorney for Carol Levin and Jeffrey Maklis, expressed his client's concern
222 with the relationship of the structure to the site and surrounding properties. He noted that the
223 rear walls of the existing homes now line up and that his client's would prefer an L-shaped
224 addition that was more in keeping with the neighborhood.

225
226 Jeffrey Maklis, 61 Blake Road, stated that 95 Welland Road already had a large addition on its
227 rear façade. He thought that there were other ways to construct a new addition which did not
228 present a thirty foot wall to the rear abutters.

229 Ms. Armstrong asked for clarification on the project's progress with the Planning Board. Mr.
230 Allen stated that they believed the revisions addressed all of the Board's concerns and would
231 be going before them again on February 2.

232
233 Mr. Elperin stated that he had visited the site and had not considered impacts to rear abutters
234 due to the height of the hill behind the house. He suggested that a section showing the new
235 addition and its relationship to the hill would be helpful. Mr. Elperin also felt that the long shed
236 dormer was unfortunate and suggested that a gable style roof would help mitigate the long wall
237 of the addition from the street. He also suggested that the applicant consider using brick in
238 place of the proposed stone as it was already found on the building.

239
240 The Commission discussed the size of the proposed addition and whether it was appropriate to
241 the neighborhood. It was noted that the adjacent neighbors on both sides of the property had
242 written in support of the project after the Owner had met with them and revised the project to
243 meet their concerns.

244
245 Mr. Panciera agreed with Mr. Elperin's comments on the massing of the shed dormer and the
246 materials. He suggested using brick and slate to maintain the integrity of the existing house and
247 agreed with the use of the proposed copper and stucco. He did not think that the footprint
248 needed to change if they broke down the massing and suggested simplifying the scale and
249 design of the addition.

250
251 Mr. Batchelor supported the previous comments and agreed that the Applicant should consider
252 a gable roof. He noted that the amount of glass used can have an impact and stated that he was
253 more concerned with the massing of the third floor than the rest of the addition. He thought
254 that the footprint of the addition was close.

255
256 Mr. King noted that the house had been added on to once already and asked if the
257 neighborhood could support this trend. Mr. Panciera agreed that a number of homes in the area
258 had grown incrementally. He noted that some additions were more successful than others but
259 felt that that trend needed to be tolerated.

260
261 Commission members agreed that the addition as currently designed was more than the
262 neighborhood could support. It was noted that some of the concerns raised were in the
263 jurisdiction of the Preservation Commission while others belonged to the Planning Board.
264 Members did not feel that the project was ready for a subcommittee at this time. Mr. Allen
265 agreed and stated that they would work on the section and the architectural changes as
266 discussed. Mr. King moved to continue the discussion to a future meeting to allow the
267 applicant time to revise the plans. Ms. Ecker seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

268
269 **45 Leicester Street – Application for the partial demolition of the house and demolition of**
270 **the garage (45 Leicester Street LLC, applicant).**

271
272 The eighteen month demolition delay on the house and garage was initiated in December 2018.
273 Ms. Birmingham reviewed the case. The request before the Commission is to lift the stay of

274 demolition to allow the construction of a new addition as well as changes to the front entry and
275 rear and side façade porches.

276
277 Architect Christopher Russ presented the plans for the new addition and alterations to the
278 existing house. He noted that the properties neighbor to the left had replaced their original
279 house and that the house on the right side had a major addition. Their goal was to save the
280 house and they had used the existing building to dictate the scale and design of the addition.
281 The left side addition had been stepped back from the front façade of the house and the eave
282 line of an existing addition had been integrated into the new form. Mr. Russ noted that the
283 existing house had not been well maintained and that the existing dentil and trim work would
284 be replaced. The new design will also widen the front entrance by removing the existing lattice
285 trim and installing new sidelights. Mr. Russ noted that the sidelights would replicate the
286 existing massing created by the lattice. On the rear façade, a new staircase addition would
287 replace the existing two level rounded porches. Mr. Russ explained how new windows would
288 be added to flank the staircase and showed where the first floor windows would be converted
289 into French doors.

290
291 Attorney Robert Allen noted that as much of the original building as possible would be
292 preserved and explained how the new design balanced needs of the new addition with the
293 existing structure. He also noted that all existing chimneys would remain in place.

294
295 The Chair opened the discussion to public comment. There were no comments at this time.

296
297 Ms. Ecker asked if the proposed synthetic slate would be used all over the house. Applicant
298 Jeff Birnbaum answered yes and explained that the existing roof was actually a red tile roof.
299 The proposed new roof was the same one used at a project on Craft Road.

300
301 Mr. Elperin stated that he had initially been concerned with the attached garage but appreciated
302 its detailing and how it was set back from the front façade. He was concerned that the house
303 was losing a character defining feature on the right façade, though, by filling in the open
304 second floor porch as proposed. Mr. Panciera agreed and suggested that Mr. Russ consider
305 stepping in/recessing the wall to preserve the feel of the open porch. Mr. Panciera thought that
306 the proposed window on the porch was too insubstantial and that more could be done to make
307 the addition less massive.

308
309 Ms. Ecker asked if the project needed Planning Board approval. Mr. Allen answered yes, that it
310 would need approval for FAR.

311
312 Mr. Elperin asked why the front entry needed to be made grander. Mr. Russ stated that the
313 entrance is on the north façade and that they had wanted to open it up to allow more light into
314 the building. He felt that the existing lattice already gave the porch a feeling of something
315 larger and stated that they would be rebuilding the entrance into that larger version.

316
317 Mr. Elperin thought that the elements of the project were well done but expressed concern that
318 the house was losing its quirkiness. Mr. King expressed concern with the proposed length of the

319 house and the loss of the round open porch at the center of the rear façade. Mr. Russ explained
320 how they planned to replace the porches with a similar but rectangular structure for the stairs.
321

322 Ms. Armstrong stated that she would have found the proposed plans overwhelming had she not
323 seen the site in person. She believed that the existing topography, curving roadway, and
324 shadows on the site would lessen the impact of the large house. Members discussed the
325 placement of the garage on the addition and whether its size and scale was appropriate. Mr.
326 King expressed concern that a large house was getting larger and thought that this was
327 particularly evident in the roof plan. Mr. Elperin noted that the neighborhood was one of large
328 houses and Ms. Armstrong pointed out that a number of homes in the area had unusual
329 additions. Mr. Panciera noted that the way in which the addition lowered the eaves and used
330 dormers helped to bring down its massing.
331

332 Mr. Elperin expressed concern with losing the quality of the front entry. Mr. Panciera agreed
333 and expressed concern with the rounded porches on the rear façade as well. Mr. Panciera asked
334 whether these original elements really needed to change. Mr. Elperin expressed concern that
335 the rear staircase was very grand in design.
336

337 Mr. Batchelor suggested that the second floor of the addition over the garage doors be pushed
338 back to address the run-on quality of the addition. Mr. Russ explained how he had tried to
339 keep the roof ridge similar to the existing but agree to look at this option.
340

341 Mr. King suggested that the overall size of the project was fine but that there were some
342 smaller details yet to work out. It was suggested that the discussion be continued to a
343 subcommittee of one and staff to address the detailing of the enclosed porch on the right
344 façade, the roof over the garage, and the front entry. Mr. Russ and Mr. Birnbaum were also
345 encouraged to keep the rounded porch on the rear façade as it would be a shame to lose such a
346 distinctive feature of the building.
347

348 Mr. King moved to approve the general direction of the project and to empower a
349 subcommittee of one (Mr. Panciera) working with staff to approve the final details of the
350 project. Mr. Panciera seconded the motion and all voted in favor.
351

352 **25 University Road - Application for the demolition of the house (Lorraine Gleason,**
353 **applicant)**
354

355 Ms. Birmingham reviewed the case study. The request before the Commission is to initiate
356 demolition on the ca. 1897 Queen Anne Style multi-family home.
357

358 Owner John Gleason, 25 University Road, stated that his family had lived in the house for forty
359 years. The property had a steep incline and it was becoming hard for him to get in and out of
360 the house or car. In addition to the slope of the site, the house also had a lot of stairs and he
361 wanted to replace the building with something flat. There were eighteen stairs to the front door
362 and the house needed a lot of work. The driveway was very steep and was now too narrow to
363 reach the rear of the site or the garage there.
364

365 The Chair opened the discussion to public comment. There were no comments at this time.

366

367 Mr. Elperin stated that he thought that this was a fine house, noting that its massing and
368 original details were still in place and that the building held up well against the apartment
369 building to the right. Commission members noted that the house was entirely in keeping with
370 the surrounding architecture and overall neighborhood character. Mr. King agreed that the stay
371 should be upheld.

372

373 Ms. Ecker moved to uphold the staff determination of significance for 25 University Road and
374 issue a twelve-month stay on demolition through January 8, 2020. Ms. Armstrong seconded the
375 motion and all voted in favor.

376

377 **201 Summit Avenue – Application for the partial demolition of the house (Lindsey Baden,**
378 **applicant)**

379

380 Ms. Birmingham reviewed the case study. The request before the Commission is to initiate
381 demolition on the ca. 1949 Ranch style single family home.

382

383 Attorney Robert Allen was present on behalf of the owners.

384

385 The same owners had applied for demolition of the house in 2014, at which point the house
386 was found to be significant. They were unable to begin their project during the two year period
387 following the end of the stay of demolition and are now starting the process over.

388

389 The Chair opened the discussion to public comment.

390

391 Pamela Pappas, 195 Summit Avenue, stated that she had lived next door for fifty years in a
392 similar ranch home which is one of three on the top of the hill that are bookended by the Grand
393 apartment building on the left and Corey Hill Park to the right. She stated that the three ranch
394 style homes were an integral part of the neighborhood and had their own aesthetic and appeal. She
395 noted that each house was separate from one another but that all three had been well designed to
396 accommodate the close proximity of the other two homes and the steep incline of the site.

397

398 Ms. Armstrong noted that the larger area had a number of modest brick homes which were a
399 nice characteristic of the area. She did not think that the three homes on Summit Avenue were
400 significant on their own but did find them to be important as part of a larger neighborhood of
401 similar building stock. Mr. King agreed and suggested that the demolition stay should be
402 upheld. Ms. Ecker expressed her opinion that the house was not unusual or historic. Mr.
403 Elperin agreed with the initial sentiment that the house is significant as part of the larger
404 neighborhood.

405

406 Mr. Elperin moved to uphold the staff determination of significance for 201 Summit Avenue
407 and issue a twelve-month stay on demolition through January 8, 2020. Ms. Armstrong
408 seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

409

410 The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM.