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Brookline Preservation Commission
MINUTES OF THE MARCH 24TH, 2023 Site Visit
25 Cottage Street

Commissioners Present:

Elton Elperin
David King
Jim Batchelor
John Spiers
Peter Kleiner

Staff: Tina McCarthy, Jacob Collins & Victoria Pardo

Applicant: Jennifer Dopazo Gilbert, Jeff Birnbaum, Steve Siegel

Public: Peg Waller

Some commissioners were absent as they had attended a recent site visit to the property:
Elizabeth Armstrong, Ric Panciera, David Jack

Jennifer Dopazo Gilbert began the meeting at 11:06 AM with introductions.

Mr. Birnbaum gave an overview of progress to date- items removed to the trailer, ready for transport to the Baird Foundation.

Mr. Siegel, structural engineer spoke about the condition of the house and the work required to make it structurally sound. He noted that the main staircase was removed with the other historic items per the agreement with the Town and Baird Foundation, but that the remaining home's structural condition was deteriorating without it.

Mr. Birnbaum suggested disassembly and reconstruction as a possible method of relocating the building. He added that this work would be subcontracted to professionals in timber frame construction, and also that Steve Riley would be called to give advice on the effort.

Commissioners noted the poor conditions on the first floor, with little intact material to save. They wanted to view conditions on the second floor and climbed a ladder to access this portion of the house. Mr. King left the meeting at this time.

On the second floor, discussion and assessment continued. Mr. Batchelor thought it was important to preserve the complexity of the framing. He requested that some portion of the building be moved intact. At minimum, the roof structure, from the perimeter beam up. Mr. Elperin thought it was important to save as much of the sheathing and studs as possible. He asked that if additional exterior sheathing were added, that the window frames be moved outward to keep the relationships the same. Mr. Birnbaum thought saving the roof structure was possible, but not the floor assembly or walls.

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47 Mr. Siegel gave his opinion that disassembly would be a better strategy to preserve the framing.
48 Mr. Birnbaum stated that he could guarantee preservation with disassembly, but not for moving.
49 Ms. McCarthy & Mr. Elperin emphasized that if deconstruction were to be considered, it would
50 need to preserve all intact timbers, not just those in the roof. Ms. McCarthy explained that the
51 change in technique would mean that the home would be reconstructed, not moved, and this would
52 be reflected in the public materials for the project (sign, etc).
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54 The meeting adjourned at 12:16 PM
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