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Brookline Preservation Commission
MINUTES OF THE April 23, 2019 MEETING
Brookline Town Hall, 5th Floor Hearing Room, 333 Washington Street

Commissioners Present

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

Commissioners Absent:

David Jack
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 November 6, 2018 meeting minutes. Mr. Elperin made a motion to approve the draft minutes with revisions. Ms. Ecker seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

The Commission reviewed the draft November 8, 2018 meeting minutes. Mr. Elperin made a motion to approve the draft minutes with revisions. Mr. Batchelor seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

The Commission reviewed the draft February 19, 2019 meeting minutes. Mr. King made a motion to approve the draft minutes as submitted. Mr. Batchelor seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Public Comment (for items not on the agenda)

No public comment.

PUBLIC HEARINGS – LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS

17 Hawthorn Road (Pill Hill LHD) – Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to install new fencing and gates, new retaining walls, new stairs with surrounding walls, new a/c condensers with screening, a pergola, and a bench (M. Nucci and B. Moody, applicants).

Ms. Kritzer presented the case.

Ms. Armstrong asked about the proposed metal fence in relation to the existing tree across from the entrance of the house. Timothy Burke, architect for the project, replied that the tree would not be touched.

49 Ms. Kritzer read a letter of support submitted by Mark and Lisel Macenka, 41 Allerton Street.
50
51 Mr. Burke introduced the homeowners and went over with the Commission work that has already
52 been completed on the house, and stated that the landscaping is the final part of the project. Mr.
53 Burke went over the proposal and remarked that many of the existing issues are related to safety.
54 Issues included the steepness and materials of the walkway and driveway, trespassing, and the front
55 stairs and railing not complying with building code. Mr. Burke continued to go over the project in
56 regards to the AC condensers and screening, rear fencing, front walkway steps and cheek wall
57 lighting, and front entry. Lastly, Mr. Burke commented that the proposed grade changes are as
58 minimal as possible, and that the location of the AC condensers appeared to be the best option.
59
60 Diana Post, rear abutter at 76 High Street, commented that in regards to the proposed rear yard
61 fence she reviewed the proposal with the owners and is fine with that specific fence.
62
63 Eric Schwarz, abutter at 21 Hawthorn Road, provided a letter from residents of Pill Hill. Ms.
64 Kritzer read the letter, which noted concerns of the proposal and stated that the proposal is not
65 consistent with the Design Guidelines for Local Historic Districts and character of the
66 neighborhood.
67
68 Mr. Schwarz remarked about the visibility of the proposed side yard fence behind the entry
69 landing, as well as the closeness of the fence to his property and existing trees. Mr. Schwarz
70 continued to state that the proposed front property line fence would require cutting the existing
71 trees. Further, Mr. Schwarz stated that he had three main concerns of the proposal. The concerns
72 included the alteration of the symmetry between the two properties (17 and 21 Hawthorn Rd); the
73 installation of the proposed wall and fence intended to screen the ac condensers which would block
74 the house's foundation and require the removal of vegetation, and the alteration to the symmetrical
75 front entry and landing. Lastly, Mr. Schwarz commented that he was open to work with the
76 applicants, that the openness of the neighborhood added to its appeal, and that he did not feel many
77 of the proposed changes were consistent with the neighborhood.
78
79 Maureen Coffey, abutter at 21 Hawthorn Road, commented that the proposal goes against the
80 Design Guidelines, and that given the amount of proposed changes she felt that the neighborhood
81 was not provided with enough time to review the entire proposal. Ms. Coffey requested that a site
82 visit be conducted at the site. Additionally, Ms. Coffey requested that drawings be provided that
83 show the existing and proposed walkways and driveways in regards to a decrease or increase of
84 pavement and open space; and expressed concern about the proposed parking of cars and driveway.
85 Furthermore, Ms. Coffey stated additional concerns in regards to the proposed ac condensers and
86 screening, the walkway, the amount of proposed styles and materials, the treatment of the existing
87 trees. Ms. Coffey commented that the proposal was a radical response to safety concerns. Ms.
88 Coffey stated that trespassing is not under the purview of the Preservation Commission as it is a
89 police issue, and that historically the neighborhood has used the central walkway and stairs as a
90 heritage use.
91
92 Cornelia McMurtrie, 35 Hawthorn Road, stated that she was deeply concerned with the proposal,
93 and that it was not reflective of the character of the neighborhood; in addition, Ms. McMurtrie
94 commented she was stunned with the amount of proposed materials. Further, Ms. McMurtrie
95 expressed concerns that the proposal is inappropriate, intrusive, and would change the use of the
96 central walkways; in addition to the plans being complicated to read for nonprofessionals. Ms.

97 McMurtrie asked the application be continued to provide the neighborhood with additional time to
98 review and comment on the radical plans. Further, McMurtrie stated that the neighborhood had
99 used the area as a cut through.

100
101 Len Weiss, 46 Hawthorn Road, commented that he was concerned that the neighbors had not been
102 provided enough time to review and comment on the plans as the proposal appeared to include
103 significant changes to the property. Additionally, Mr. Weiss expressed concern over the
104 presentation that there is a trespassing issue, and that the separation between the driveway and
105 walkway would improve safety.

106
107 Ms. Ecker commented that a site visit was needed.

108
109 Ms. Armstrong asked staff to look into the heritage walkway comment raised by the neighbors. Ms.
110 Armstrong stated that it was an unusual case due to the sister house and symmetrical front lawn;
111 however the homeowner does have property rights. Further, Ms. Armstrong commented that she
112 could understand the neighbor's concerns.

113
114 Mr. King made a motion to continue the application to a subcommittee which would conduct a site
115 visit and report back to the full Commission. The subcommittee would consist of Mr. King, Ms.
116 Ecker, and Ms. Armstrong. Ms. Ecker seconded the motion.

117
118 The Commission VOTED: 6-0-0
119 6 in favor, 0 against and 0 abstained from voting.

120
121 **79-83 Harvard Avenue (Harvard Avenue LHD) – Application for a Certificate of**
122 **Appropriateness to install a new light fixture in the courtyard (Harvard Park Condominium**
123 **Association, applicant).**

124
125 Ms. Kritzer presented the case.

126
127 Ms. Ecker commented that the light should be sturdy.

128
129 Mr. King asked about the color of the light. Mr. Batchelor commented that a softer light would be
130 nicer. Arthur Pinkham, representative from the Condominium Association, stated that he would be
131 fine with a softer light.

132
133 Mr. Panciera commented that the proposed light would look better than the existing light, and that
134 lighting should just be where it is needed. Mr. Pinkham remarked that the light would only be
135 directed into the corners by the entrances.

136
137 The Commission discussed concerns in regards to different light levels and their intensities.

138
139 Mr. Batchelor made a motion approve the application with the request that the applicant talk to the
140 supplier to identify a lens that will make the light as soft as possible, and that the color be warm.
141 Mr. Panciera seconded the motion.

142
143 The Commission VOTED: 6-0-0
144 6 in favor, 0 against and 0 abstained from voting.

145
146 **268 Walnut Street (Pill Hill LHD) – Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to**
147 **replace the front steps and risers with granite steps, relocate and rebuild the existing front**
148 **and driveway puddingstone retaining wall and redirect the existing downspout on front**
149 **façade 4’ (Fershid and Hiroko Aspi, applicants).**

150
151 Ms. Birmingham presented the case.

152
153 The Commissioners asked about the existing foundation. Mr. and Mrs. Aspi replied that they will
154 know more once it is exposed, and that they will do their best to match the existing. Mr. King
155 asked about the location of the downspout. Mr. Aspi replied how it would be redirected.

156
157 Mr. Elperin asked about the handrails by the front steps. Mr. Aspi replied that they were not
158 planning to touch them. Mr. Elperin remarked about the face of the stairs and commented that
159 smooth might be better. Mr. King concurred. Further, Mr. Elperin commented that this might be an
160 opportunity for the owners to replace the railings. Mr. Batchelor and Mr. Panciera commented that
161 replacing the railings at this time would be a good idea. Mr. Batchelor recommended that the
162 owners were cautious about the rise and the run of the steps, and thickness of the stair treads being
163 dead right. Further Mr. Batchelor stated that the dimensions for the steps should be carefully
164 worked out. Mr. Aspi asked if the Commission would be OK if the number of steps changed. Mr.
165 Batchelor and Mr. King replied yes. Ms. Armstrong stated that a detail of the steps and railing
166 should be submitted to staff.

167
168 Mr. Batchelor commented that adding height to the front wall was alright, but could appear visually
169 different than the original portion. Mr. Aspi clarified that they were planning to deconstruct the
170 entire wall and rebuild.

171
172 Mr. Batchelor made a motion to approve the application with a detailed drawing of the front steps
173 and railing to be reviewed and approved by staff. Mr. Elperin seconded the motion.

174
175 The Commission VOTED: 6-0-0
176 6 in favor, 0 against and 0 abstained from voting.

177
178 **36 Upland Road (Pill Hill LHD – Continuation) – Application for a Certificate of**
179 **Appropriateness to install an AC condenser and fence to screen the condenser on the**
180 **northeast side of the house (Chris Fox and Olivia Fischer, applicants).**

181
182 Ms. Kritzer presented the case.

183
184 Mr. King asked about the height of the AC unit. Ms. Fischer stated 38” which is standard.

185
186 Mr. Elperin remarked that the fence might be better without the decorative finials on the posts. Ms.
187 Fischer agreed.

188
189 Ms. Ecker remarked that she was pleased the owners were able to find a way to locate the piping
190 on the interior.

191

192 Mr. Elperin made a motion to approve the application with the exception that the owner may delete
193 the decorative finials on the screening fence. Ms. Armstrong seconded the motion.

194

195 The Commission VOTED: 6-0-0
196 6 in favor, 0 against and 0 abstained from voting.

197

198 **PUBLIC HEARINGS – DEMOLITION**

199

200 **17 Arlington Road – Request to lift the stay of partial demolition of the house (Dana Fallon,** 201 **applicant).**

202

203 Ms. Birmingham presented the case.

204

205 Shayna Duff, Offices of Robert Allen Law, introduced the applicants and remarked that the
206 applicants were considering phasing out the project. Dana Fallon, owner, commented that his
207 family was growing and that they were interested in preserving the integrity of the house.

208

209 Ms. Armstrong asked if they could replicate the existing slate. Pam Woodworth, architect for the
210 project, replied that she hoped they could. Mr. Fallon remarked that he had faith that they could.

211

212 Mr. Elperin commented that there were a lot of attractive parts of the proposal, and asked if it could
213 be simplified. Further, Mr. Elperin questioned removing the front entrance copper roof, as well as
214 the rustic board on the projecting gable. Mr. Fallon remarked that the front entrance roof is difficult
215 with snow; and that they were planning to repair the thick boards and trying to tie everything
216 together.

217

218 Mr. Elperin commented about the existing and proposed rooflines. Ms. Woodworth remarked that
219 they had tried many options.

220

221 Mr. King asked if the project had been before the Planning Board. Ms. Duff replied yes. Mr. Fallon
222 remarked that the project had been through multiple iterations with the Planning Board.

223

224 Mr. Elperin remarked about the oddness of the rear garage window. The Commission discussed
225 with the applicant the setbacks of the first and second floor in the rear left corner as they appeared
226 unusual.

227

228 Mr. King suggested that the design would be nicer without the little dormer on the left. Lauren
229 Kudisch, owner, replied that she wanted natural light in that space.

230

231 Mr. Elperin remarked that he liked the front entrance and suggested installing snow guards. The
232 Commission further discussed proposed changes to the front entrance. Ms. Armstrong commented
233 that it was difficult to visualize the front entry being not as strong as the new design introduces a
234 lot changes and angles. Further, Ms. Armstrong asked how the Commission should be looking at
235 the proposal if it was going to be phased out. Ms. Duff replied that the owners intended to construct
236 everything in the proposal.

237

238 Mr. Batchelor stated that the address was not located in a local historic district and that the existing
239 house and proposal were both modest; Mr. Batchelor added that it would be great if the front entry

240 could be saved. Mr. Fallon replied that they would relook at the front entry. Mr. Panciera asked if
241 they could also relook at the rustic siding with half timbering.

242

243 Mr. Batchelor made a motion to lift the stay of demolition and encourage the applicant to
244 incorporate the Commission's feedback into the plans, and to review the final set of plans with
245 staff. Ms. Armstrong seconded the motion.

246

247 The Commission VOTED: 6-0-0
248 6 in favor, 0 against and 0 abstained from voting.

249

250 **5 Carlton Street – Application for the partial demolition of the house (Cameron and Nina**
251 **Pfarr, applicants).**

252

253 Ms. Birmingham presented the case.

254

255 Cameron Pfarr, owner, stated that the house was called out as an intrusion in the Longwood
256 National Register nomination form. Mr. Pfarr stated that he would like to improve the look of the
257 structure.

258

259 Ms. Armstrong asked about previous changes. Ms. Birmingham explained what had been permitted
260 since the fire.

261

262 Mr. Elperin remarked that the Commission should follow the same criteria that staff does when
263 determining significance.

264

265 Mr. King made a motion to uphold staff's initial determination of significance for 5 Carlton Street
266 and issue an eighteen month stay of demolition through October 23, 2020. Mr. Elperin seconded
267 the motion.

268

269 The Commission VOTED: 6-0-0
270 6 in favor, 0 against and 0 abstained from voting. The motion passed.

271

272 **98 Chestnut Street – Application for the partial demolition of the house (Kronick Fatigue,**
273 **applicant).**

274

275 Ms. Kritzer presented the case.

276

277 Nina Olf and Eric Johnson, abutters at 100 Chestnut Street, stated that they were concerned about
278 lighting and inquired about what the applicant was intending to do. Mr. King explained that the
279 Commission was only discussing the existing structure at this time.

280

281 Richard Cordner, 112 Chestnut Street, commented that the area had rodent issues and was
282 concerned about any construction plans.

283

284 Susan Cordner, 112 Chestnut Street, remarked that the house was in keeping with the character of
285 the neighborhood.

286

287 Mr. Elperin commented that the house was nicely shaped and still has original detailing; in addition
288 it is part of a set.

289
290 Mr. King made a motion to uphold staff's initial determination of significance for 98 Chestnut
291 Street and issue a twelve month stay of demolition through April 23, 2020. Mr. Elperin seconded
292 the motion.

293
294 The Commission VOTED: 6-0-0
295 6 in favor, 0 against and 0 abstained from voting.

296
297 **24 Kilsyth Road – Application for the partial demolition of the house (Charles Goldstone,**
298 **applicant).**

299
300 Ms. Birmingham presented the case.

301
302 Bennie Ber, architect for the project, stated that many characteristics of the house have been lost as
303 the house has been modified over the years. Mr. Ber commented that the applicant already had to
304 wait out a demolition stay once before and that he would hope that the Commission finds the
305 structure not to be significant.

306
307 Mr. King commented that the house still had a lot of original characteristics and detailing. Mr.
308 Elperin concurred that they are visible on the recently added front porch. Mr. Panciera agreed.

309
310 Mr. King made a motion to uphold staff's initial determination of significance for 24 Kilsyth Road
311 and issue a twelve month stay of demolition through April 23, 2020. Mr. Elperin seconded the
312 motion.

313
314 The Commission VOTED: 6-0-0
315 6 in favor, 0 against and 0 abstained from voting.

316
317 The meeting was adjourned.

318