

1 *Town of Brookline Preservation Commission*  
2 **MINUTES OF THE April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023 MEETING**  
3 **Held Virtually using Zoom Online Software**  
4

5 **Commissioners Present:**

6 David Jack, Chair  
7 Elton Elperin  
8 David King  
9 Richard Panciera, Vice Chair

10  
11 John Spiers, Alternate

12  
13 **Staff:** Jake Collins, Tina McCarthy, Victoria Pardo  
14

---

**Commissioners Absent:**

James Batchelor  
Elizabeth Armstrong  
Peter Kleiner

15  
16 Mr. Jack opened the meeting at 6:36 PM.

17 Mr. Spiers to vote in lieu of Peter Kleiner.  
18

19 **Approval of Minutes**

20  
21 The Commission reviewed the minutes from the following hearings:  
22

23 **4/11/2023**

24  
25 Mr. Panciera suggested to eliminate “at this time” on line 292.  
26

27 Mr. Panciera made a motion to accept the minutes with the correction on line 291. Mr. Spiers seconded  
28 the motion.  
29

30 David Jack- yes, Elton Elperin- yes, David King- yes, Richard Panciera-yes, John Spiers-yes  
31

32 **Public Comment:**

33  
34 None  
35

36 **PUBLIC HEARING – DEMOLITION**

37  
38 **41 Codman Road** – Application for full demolition of the single-family dwelling  
39 (Jeff Birnbaum, applicant). **Precinct 5A**  
40

41 Mr. Collins presented the case report.  
42

43 **Applicant Comment:**  
44

45 Ms. Jennifer Dopazo Gilbert stated there were new owners and they want to work with the Commission.  
46 She stated this is why the case came back to the Commission. Their intent is to save the original home

47 and demo the garage. She stated a special permit had been issued for the demo of the house and new  
48 addition and garage. She stated the interior work is proceeding. They are hoping to get the relief to keep  
49 the house and to move forward with the zoning board of appeals and planning board.

50 **Public Comment:**

51  
52 Mr. Neal Glick lives at 60 Walnut Street in Wellesley and represents the neighbors next door to the  
53 project. He stated his clients are concerned about the demolition process as well as a tree protection plan.  
54 They are particularly concerned about the edge and boundary conditions around the garage. They would  
55 like to know what is happening in this process. He urged the Commission to find the property significant.  
56

57 Mr. Jack reminded Mr. Glick that this hearing is for determining the significance of the structure.  
58

59 **Commission Comment:**

60  
61 Mr. King stated the Commission should find the property significant. He explained to Mr. Glick that the  
62 Commission does not enforce significance, and that the Building Commission is the proper venue for  
63 overseeing that process.  
64

65 Mr. Elperin agreed with Mr. King on finding the property significant. He asked about the chimney  
66 removal.  
67

68 Ms. Gilbert stated the chimney was repaired due to safety reasons, but it was not considered demolition.  
69

70 **Mr. King voted to uphold the staff determination of significance. Mr. Elperin seconded the motion.**  
71

72 **David Jack- yes, Elton Elperin- yes, David King- yes, Richard Panciera-yes, John Spiers-yes**  
73

74 **41 Codman Road was found significant.**  
75  
76

77 **101-103 University Road** – Application for full demolition of the two-family dwelling (Michael  
78 Sellers, applicant). **Precinct 12**  
79

80 Ms. Pardo presented the case report.  
81

82 **Applicant Comment:**

83  
84 None

85 **Public Comment:**

86  
87 None  
88

89 **Commission Comment:**

90  
91 Mr. Jack stated he believes that the house is significant. He understands it has undergone a large amount  
92 of renovation but thinks the house is a strong contributor to the streetscape on University Road. He stated  
93 residents on University Road are concerned about the changing character of the neighborhood.

94  
95 Mr. Elperin agreed and stated the house still has significant integrity and a pleasing shape. He thinks it  
96 adds to the variety of the houses on the street which are eclectic in style.  
97

98 **Mr. Elperin made a motion to uphold preservation planner’s finding of significance. Mr. King**  
99 **seconded the motion.**

100  
101 **David Jack- yes, Elton Elperin- yes, David King- yes, Richard Panciera-yes, John Spiers-yes**  
102

103  
104  
105 **97 University Road** – Application for full demolition of the two-family dwelling (Michael Sellers,  
106 applicant). **Precinct 12**  
107

108 Mr. Collins presented the case report.  
109

110 **Applicant Comment:**  
111

112 Ms. Gilbert asked the Commission to take into consideration that there were considerable alterations to  
113 this property. She asked the Commission to consider whether the building’s basic form and design remain  
114 intact.

115 **Public Comment:**  
116

117 Caroline Houde at 98 University Road (across the street), posed that both properties (103 and 97) are a  
118 part of the streetscape. She believes the eclectic mix is a part of the charm of the neighborhood. She  
119 believed their location on the hill and their positioning is unique. She is sad to see such properties be  
120 demolished.  
121

122 **Commission Comment:**  
123

124 Mr. King asked why the staff determined significance.  
125

126 Mr. Collins replied he thought this was a great resource contribution of a particular period to the  
127 neighborhood.  
128

129 Mr. King believed the position of the house had a nice quality. However, he didn’t feel the house was  
130 cohesive, especially with the changes to the front of the house.  
131

132 Ms. Pardo stated she believed that the two properties were significant due to the feeling and association  
133 they contribute to the neighborhood.  
134

135 Mr. Panciera believed there were a lot of similarities between 97 University Road and its neighbors when  
136 looking from an aerial view. He thought there were similar characteristics amongst the buildings. He  
137 thought this house reinforces the character of homes in the immediate vicinity. He believed the building  
138 was part of the identity of the surrounding streetscape, and that together they tell the history and story of  
139 Aspinwall Hill.  
140

141 Mr. Elperin agreed the aerial views reinforce the similarities in shape between the row of houses on the  
142 street.

143  
144 **Mr. Jack made a motion to find 97 University Road significant. Mr. Elperin seconded the motion.**  
145

146  
147 **David Jack- yes, Elton Elperin- yes, David King- abstain, Richard Panciera-yes, John Spiers-no**  
148

149 **Mr. Jack stated the motion was approved and the house was found significant.**  
150

151

## 152 **PUBLIC HEARING – LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS**

153  
154

155 **27 Chilton Street (Cottage Farm LHD)** – Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace  
156 existing garage doors (Dolphia and Matthew Arnstein, applicants). **Precinct 1**  
157

158

Ms. Pardo presented the case report.

159  
160

### **Applicant Comment:**

161

162 Ms. Dolphia Arnstein stated that to put in a wooden door would be very expensive. She also stated that  
163 the longevity of wood is less than that of steel. She tried to match the other doors in the neighborhood.  
164

165

### **Public Comment:**

166  
167

None.

168  
169

### **Commission Comment:**

170

171 Mr. Elperin believed the Commission has been standing by their guidelines regarding the steel doors. He  
172 didn't see a reason why they shouldn't abide by the guidelines.  
173

174

Mr. King agreed, and stated he had garage wooden doors for 20 years.

175  
176

Ms. Arnstein replied the price is too high, and that they were worried about the electric bill.

177  
178

Mr. Jack asked the staff if the applicant can apply for certificates of hardship.

179  
180

Mr. Collins explained there are specific rules to apply, and that he did not think there would be a  
181 certificate of hardship available based on financial need for this work.  
182

183

Mr. King asked if the existing doors work. Ms. Arnstein stated they are broken and won't open. She  
184 stated the electric bills are high. She stated the garage was heated.  
185

186

Mr. Panciera stated that the Commission doesn't usually have cases with garage doors that are involved in  
187 the envelope of the house. He brought up 96 Carlton Street. He argued the garage doors on 27 Chilton  
188 Street are off to the side, and not on the front façade. He stated the wooden doors of today are not those of

189 1935. He stated they can be insulated but are limited in design. He thought if they were solid color, and  
190 not wood grained, they would be sufficient in this neighborhood.

191  
192 Mr. King stated usually the garage is not an insulated space. He stated the Commission typically asked  
193 that the doors be wood.

194  
195 Mr. Spiers asked if they were changing the dimensions. Ms. Arnstein responded the dimensions and  
196 window placement will be the same.

197  
198 **Mr. Elperin made a motion to reject the application to install metal doors where there are now**  
199 **wooden doors.**

200  
201 **Mr. Spiers seconded the motion.**

202  
203 **David Jack- yes, Elton Elperin- yes, David King- yes, Richard Panciera-no, John Spiers-yes**

204  
205 **Mr. Jack stated Elton's motion passed and the application was rejected.**

206  
207 Mr. Collins reiterated that the staff does not see evidence of hardship but encourages the applicant to  
208 contact staff if they wish to pursue that.

209  
210  
211 **14 Amory Street (Cottage Farm LHD) – Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to add an**  
212 **addition to the first-floor rear elevation (Lawson & Weitzen LLP, applicant). Precinct**

213 **1**  
214 Ms. Pardo presented the case report.

215  
216 **Applicant Comment:**

217  
218 Mr. Don Gentile (RLAW) stated this was approved by the planning board and ZBA. He stated the  
219 applicant wants to get a dog for their family and have a dog washing station.

220  
221 **Public Comment:**

222  
223 None

224  
225 **Commission Comment**

226  
227 Mr. Elperin thinks the application is ok. He asked about the roof material. He asked about the roof pitch  
228 on the addition and if it was shown correctly on the elevation.

229  
230 He believed the windows on the addition would be of better design if they went closer up to the eaves and  
231 had muntins.

232  
233 Mr. King asked about the visibility and if this factored into the appropriateness of the addition.

234  
235 Ms. Pardo responded that it was minimally visible.

236

237 Mr. Jack believed it was not visible, and also thought the applicant would benefit from hearing the  
238 Commission’s discussion on the design.

239  
240 Mr. Spiers stated he had no concerns. Mr. Panciera agreed.

241  
242 **Mr. King moved to accept the application as submitted. Mr. Panciera seconded the motion.**

243  
244  
245 **David Jack- yes, Elton Elperin- yes, David King- yes, Richard Panciera-yes, John Spiers-abstain**

246  
247 **Mr. Jack stated the motion was approved.**

248  
249  
250  
251 **32 Manchester Road (Graffam-Mckay LHD) –Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to**  
252 **construct a replacement front porch (Lee Goodman, applicant). Precinct 8**

253  
254 Mr. Collins Presented the Case report.

255  
256 **Applicant Comment:**

257  
258 Mr. Lee Goodman (applicant) and Elaine Scales (architect) were present. Mr. Goodman stated they were  
259 hopeful for the Commission’s opinion on the design. He stated he believed the original porch was  
260 changed, and that they saw the original baluster pickets behind the shingle walls. He stated the earliest  
261 picture he has of the porch is 1978. He believed he was tasked with studying the other Greenleaf cob  
262 houses in the area to figure out what was there originally. He didn’t see any other porches with shingle  
263 walls.

264  
265 Ms. Scales discussed the three proposed design options.

266  
267  
268 **Public Comment:**

269  
270 Alisha Nanda at 33 Manchester Road (across the street) stated 32 Manchester has been admired on her  
271 block for a long time. It was home to 3 generations of family that cared for it. She stated it was unique in  
272 its design and smaller size. She stated the shingle porch was demolished before this came to the  
273 Commission. She stated there are a lot of shingle porches in the neighborhood. She stated the porches at  
274 23 Abbotsford and 43 Abbotsford were similar to the one demolished at 32 Manchester. She does realize  
275 the porch wasn’t original but hopes the Commission will be worked to maintain the shingle design on the  
276 porch. A neighbor had noted that the porch had been shingled as long as she lived in the house.

277  
278 **Commission Comment**

279  
280 Mr. King stated he and Mr. Jack were on the subcommittee. He agreed with Ms. Nanda that the house is  
281 smaller and a different scale and tone. He believed the porch was nice and suitable and did not see a  
282 reason why the Commission would consider a different porch for the house. He thought it was a shame  
283 the porch was ripped out before any decisions were made. He would be in favor of restoring the original  
284 porch.

286 Mr. Panciera agreed with Mr. King. He believed there were questions if the porch was original, but he did  
287 not believe they should copy a porch design of another house in the neighborhood. He didn't think that  
288 would be an honest assessment of what the house would look like. He believed based on scale, size, and  
289 simplicity that 32 Manchester is more shingle style than Queen Anne and that the skin of the house  
290 dictates that the house was more than likely shingled. He would be in favor of rebuilding the porch as it  
291 was.

292  
293 Mr. Elperin agreed, and thought that in the absence of evidence, they should assume what was  
294 demolished was original, and reconstruct it. He believed the proposed designs were fine, but in the  
295 interest of preservation, the Commission should assume it was the original porch.

296  
297 Mr. Lee Goodman believed the porch was not original. He explained his rationale for tearing down the  
298 porch.

299  
300 Mr. Jack asked how the applicant had permission to remove the porch.

301  
302 Mr. Collins stated he issued an approval for exploratory demolition to see if anything could be uncovered  
303 under the existing porch. He stated Mr. Goodman did that and found Tyvek.

304  
305 Mr. Jack asked why the applicant fully removed the porch.

306  
307 Mr. Goodman stated he was trying to stabilize the porch because it was rotten and explained its current  
308 condition.

309  
310 Mr. Jack did not understand why the porch was removed in its entirety without Commission approval. He  
311 asked about the physical height of the porch from grade to the sill of the front door.

312  
313 Ms. Scales stated from the front door sill to grade, with one riser from the porch floor to the door sill is  
314 about 7 inches. From the door sill to grade is 3 feet 8 ½ inches. She stated it is just over 3 feet above  
315 grade.

316  
317 Mr. Jack asked the Commission if the original porch can be built in-kind and satisfy all the present code  
318 requirements. He raised this question because if the original porch design no longer conforms to code, it  
319 will change the appearance of what the original porch looked like. He clarified he was speaking about the  
320 railing height.

321  
322 Mr. Panciera agreed that may change the proportions of the porch.

323  
324 Mr. King believed it could, and there are ways to approach this. He mentioned shingle buildings on  
325 Walnut Hill, and Mr. Collins' presentation examples.

326  
327 Mr. Elperin asked about the height of the railings.

328  
329 Ms. Scales said she drew them to the height of the existing porch. She stated the railing height was 2 feet  
330 5 inches above the porch. She stated if they were to rebuild the original porch in-kind, they would need to  
331 take it apart, because the columns are mismatched, and the porch was collapsing on the left side.

332  
333 Mr. Jack stated he didn't know how to proceed, because the porch was removed. He also stated they  
334 cannot rebuild the porch in kind because it doesn't conform to current building codes.

335

336 Mr. Elperin stated if the railing must be 36 inches due to code, that is a separate question from the design  
337 and whether the porch is to be rebuilt in shingle or stone, for example. He believes those elements should  
338 be kept separate.

339

340 Mr. Elperin stated they could come close to rebuilding the design, but didn't think they would need to  
341 reproduce the asymmetry in the columns.

342

343 Discussion ensued over the columns, shingle and materials.

344

345 Mr. Panciera stated the intention of historic preservation is to preserve what is, or what was before it was  
346 demolished. He stated there are a lot of interpretations to make, but the only interpretation the  
347 Commission can make is that it was recently demolished.

348

349 Mr. Spiers agreed with Mr. Panciera, and stated the Commission should stick with what was known to be  
350 there most recently. If a building code needs to be met, those adjustments can be made.

351

352 Ms. Scales brought up using stone under the base of the porch.

353 Mr. Panciera asked her if there was stone originally under that porch. Ms. Scales said there was no  
354 evidence of stone under the porch.

355

356 Mr. Panciera stated it would be disingenuous to use stone.

357

358 Mr. King said it would be best to design the porch to be the same of what was there.

359

360 Ms. Scales asked about raising the porch railing up 7 inches, and thought it would be too high. She  
361 believed from the side elevation that it would be disruptive to the rest of the building. She reiterated the  
362 porch was deteriorating, and that it was covered over with the shingles that lasted for decades. To rebuild  
363 it that way, she asserted was not doing the house justice.

364

365 Mr. Jack reiterated that the Commission is following the rules for a local historic district.

366

367 Mr. King made a motion that the applicant be asked to come back with a design that is as similar as  
368 possible to the porch that was removed, taking into account what the building code requires.

369

370 Mr. Collins stated that the way to go about this would be to issue a denial. Mr. Collins advised to issue a  
371 denial for the three schemes proposed today, and the applicant return at another time.

372

373 **Mr. King moved to deny the three schemes presented today. Mr. Panciera seconded the motion.**

374

375 **David Jack- yes, Elton Elperin- yes, David King- yes, Richard Panciera-yes, John Spiers-yes**

376

377 Mr. Jack stated the motion was approved and the designs were denied.

378

379 Mr. Goodman asked how to stabilize the current porch. Mr. Collins told Mr. Goodman to consult the  
380 building department on temporary stabilizing measures with an understanding he will need to resubmit  
381 another design to the Commission.

382

383 Mr. Collins wanted to confirm there was no evidence of hardship and encouraged the applicant to speak  
384 to staff if they want to proceed with certificate of hardship.

385



386 Mr. Collins stated there would be a joint meeting between three boards to discuss warrant article 16. He  
387 stated there will be several revisions to the final draft. He stated they will take this up at the May 9<sup>th</sup>  
388 hearing.

389

390

391 Mr. Jack concluded the meeting at 9:04 PM.

392

393

394

395