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Brookline Preservation Commission
MINUTES OF THE May 13, 2020 MEETING
Held Virtually using Webex Events Online Software

Commissioners Present:

Elton Elperin, Chair
Richard Panciera, Vice Chair
David King
Wendy Ecker
David Jack
Peter Kleiner
Elizabeth Armstrong, Alternate

Commissioners Absent:

Jim Batchelor

Staff: Valerie Birmingham, Tina McCarthy

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

Approval of Minutes

There were no minutes for the Commission to review.

Public Comment (for items not on the agenda)

No public comment.

PUBLIC HEARINGS – LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS

261 Walnut Street (Pill Hill LHD) – Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to install vents, sprinklers and fire beacons. (Patrick Mcdevitt, applicant).

Ms. McCarthy presented the case report.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Elperin asked for clarification about the specifications and dimensions of the proposal. Ben Atlas, Gable Studio, remarked that they were only doing what was required by code and that they had tried to minimize required exterior changes.

Ms. Ecker inquired about the sprinklers on the balcony. Mr. Atlas stated that the sprinklers would protect the balcony, and that they were required by code. Mr. Panciera asked if the piping for the sprinkler head could be painted. Mr. Atlas remarked that was possible.

45 Mr. Jack thanked the applicant for working with staff, and looking for compromises. Mr. Jack
46 asked if the roof vents would be painted. Mr. Atlas stated that they could do that. Jaime McDevitt,
47 owner, remarked that they could paint the vents to match the color of the roof.
48

49 Mr. Elperin moved to approve the application as submitted with the requirement that the piping and
50 vents be painted. Mr. Jack seconded the motion. The Commission voted all in favor.
51

52 **92 High Street (Pill Hill LHD)** – Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to install a 48”
53 high fence around rear property perimeter to serve as a dog enclosure. (Rebecca Locke, applicant).
54

55 Ms. McCarthy presented the case report.
56

57 There was no public comment.
58

59 Rebecca Locke, owner, remarked that the photograph presented was not as polished as what was
60 actually proposed, and that the goal of the photograph was to show how invisible the fence is. Ms.
61 Locke continued to explain that the proposed fence is more refined and ornate.
62

63 Ms. Ecker asked if the fence would accomplish the owner’s goal of keeping in the owner’s dog.
64 Ms. Locke answered that it would.
65

66 Mr. King asked how the mesh would be attached to the post. Dominic Sousa, contractor for the
67 proposal, answered how he intended to accomplish the proposal.
68

69 Mr. King remarked that it was an unorthodox fence in a local historic district, and that the idea of
70 the fence could be nice but he wanted to see it more developed.
71

72 The Commission discussed the posts and if a subcommittee should be set up to review details. Mr.
73 Elperin asked that the posts be somewhat more formal than the 4’x4’s shown; and suggested that
74 they could be wood, shaped with some minimal design, or even steel. Mr. Jack remarked that more
75 developed drawings were needed and commented on the design of the posts.
76

77 Ms. Locke commented that her family adored the house, and that the idea of the fence was to have
78 it be invisible so that it did not compete with the house. Ms. Locke continued to state that her
79 neighbors also wanted the fence to appear invisible.
80

81 Mr. Kleiner commented that he was reluctant to overthink the design of the fence, and that he
82 would not characterize the proposal as a modern fence.
83

84 Mr. King moved to continue the application to an empowered subcommittee. Mr. Jack seconded
85 the motion. The empowered subcommittee would consist of Mr. Jack and Mr. Panciera. The
86 Commission voted, six in favor and one abstention.
87

88
89 **62 Circuit Road (Chestnut Hill North LHD)** – Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness
90 to replace the front steps (Jonathan Cluett, applicant).
91

92 Ms. Birmingham presented the case report.

93
94 There was no public comment.

95
96 Mr. Elperin asked about the bottom piece. Jonathan Cluett, owner, remarked that it would be stone
97 to match the walkway. Mr. Elperin commented that the proposal seemed appropriate, but asked if
98 more detailed drawings were necessary.

99
100 Mr. King remarked that he had no objection to the proposal and a more detailed drawing could be
101 reviewed by staff if the Commission agreed.

102
103 Mr. Panciera moved to approve the application with a final drawing to be submitted and reviewed
104 by staff. Mr. Elperin seconded the motion. The Commission voted all in favor.

105
106 **PUBLIC HEARINGS – DEMOLITION**

107
108 **111 Jordan Road** – Application for the partial demolition of the house (Charles Silbert, applicant).

109
110 Ms. Birmingham presented the case report.

111
112 There was no public comment.

113
114 Charles Silbert, owner, remarked that he did not consider the structure to be a significant example
115 of the Tudor Revival style. Mr. Silbert commented on the architecture and details of the house and
116 garage.

117
118 Mr. King remarked that the design was a little Disney, but what was significant was that the street
119 is comprised of brick houses of a similar scale. Mr. Jack agreed, and remarked that he thought the
120 house was significant because of its context. Mr. Elperin also agreed, but stated that he
121 sympathized with the owner. Mr. Kleiner remarked that as a resident of Jordan Road, the house
122 was characteristic of many on the street which have been maintained.

123
124 Mr. Kleiner moved to uphold staff’s initial determination of significance and implement a one year
125 stay of demolition which would expire on May 13, 2021. Mr. Elperin seconded the motion. The
126 Commission voted all in favor.

127
128 **31 Stetson Street** – Application for the partial demolition of the house (Chadi Kawkabani,
129 applicant).

130
131 Ms. McCarthy presented the case report.

132
133 There was no public comment.

134
135 Barath Sankaran, owner, remarked that he and his wife love the neighborhood and that their goal
136 was to remain in their home and create a more livable space. Mr. Elperin commented that the
137 Commission could not discuss the proposal at this time.

138
139 Ms. Ecker stated that she was familiar with the street, and that the house blended in nicely.

140

141 Mr. Jack remarked that he agreed, and that the structure was constructed as a group of middle class
142 housing; further Mr. Jack stated he could understand why the owner loved the structure.

143
144 Chadi Kawkabani, stated that he lives on Stetson Street and commented there are structures on the
145 street that are multistory and multi-unit, and that not all are single and two family structures.

146
147 Mr. Jack stated that the street was fragile, and that poorly done renovations had been constructed in
148 the past and he would like to make sure that future changes are sensitive to the street. Mr. Sankaran
149 remarked that he was as vested as possible to ensure the proposal would be done as quickly and
150 best as possible.

151
152 Mr. King moved to uphold staff's initial determination of significance and implement a one year
153 stay of demolition which would expire on May 13, 2020. Mr. Jack seconded the motion. The
154 Commission voted all in favor.

155
156 **NEW BUSINESS AND UPDATES**

157
158 There was no new business at this time.

159
160 The meeting was adjourned.