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Brookline Preservation Commission
MINUTES OF THE May 27, 2020 MEETING
Held virtually via Webex Events

Commissioners Present:

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

Commissioners Absent:

Staff: Valerie Birmingham, Tina McCarthy

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

Public Comment (for items not on the agenda)

No public comment.

PUBLIC HEARINGS – Demolition

11 Chestnut Place– Application for the demolition of the carriage house. (Bryce Klempner & Julia Africa, applicants)

Ms. Birmingham presented the case report.

The Commissioners discussed the significance of the carriage house. Mr. Batchelor noted that there are many incompatible building elements indicating changes from the original design. Mr. Elperin raised the previous determination of significance for this structure and stated that he is inclined to follow this. Mr. Kleiner agreed that there have been changes made but pointed out that three bays are a characteristic of carriage house design. Mr. Jack stated that he thinks the structure is significant in spite of the changes. Mr. King agreed with Mr. Jack and added that not much has changed since the Commission last found the structure significant 10 years ago.

Mr. Jack motioned to find the carriage house significant. Mr. Kleiner seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

92 Sewall Avenue– Application for the full demolition of the building. (Bryan Austin, applicant)

Ms. Birmingham presented the case report.

47 Mr. Elperin opened the discussion to comments from the public.
48
49 Alex & Stephanie, neighbors of the Inn, spoke in favor of finding the building significant.
50
51 Lauren, neighbor across the street, also spoke in favor of significance.
52
53 Ms. Ecker stated that she had never seen a stucco house built in Brookline after 1910, this is rare
54 example. Mr. Batchelor, Mr. Elperin & Mr. Jack agreed that the house is worth preserving.
55 Mr. King motioned to uphold the initial determination of significance and Mr. Elperin seconded the
56 motion. All voted in favor.
57
58 **106 Sargent Road** - Application for the full demolition of the building. (Sargent Road 106 Realty
59 LLC, applicant)
60
61 Ms. McCarthy presented the case report.
62
63 Ms. Gilbert introduced herself as the lawyer for the case and stated that she disagreed with the
64 initial finding of significance.
65
66 Mr. Russ, architect for the project, stated that the building is abandoned and gutted and that the
67 design does not have the signature features Anderson & Beckwith were known for.
68
69 The Commissioners discussed the significance of the building. Mr. Batchelor stated that the
70 architects are significant and this is their work; he also noted that reserved is a design approach.
71 Mr. Jack recalled similar buildings on Reservoir Road, modern architecture without mimicking
72 colonial revival forms. He added that the building is very well sited and significant. Mr. King
73 agreed and noted that the exterior condition of the building is good. Mr. Elperin stated that it is an
74 intriguing building with graceful details and that he would uphold the determination of
75 significance.
76
77 Mr. Elperin motioned to uphold the initial determination of significance. Mr. Panciera seconded
78 the motion. All voted in favor.
79
80 **16 Hawes Street**- Application for the partial demolition of the house. (Platform 9 ¾ Trust,
81 applicant)
82
83 Ms. Birmingham presented the case report.
84
85 Ms. Gilbert introduced herself as the lawyer for the case and stated that the applicant will be
86 requesting a lift.
87
88 Mr. King inquired about the enclosed arches, asking if they use to be a porch. Ms. Birmingham
89 replied that yes, they use to be open.
90
91 Mr. King motioned to uphold the initial determination of significance. Mr. Elperin seconded the
92 motion. All voted in favor.
93

94 **40 Center Street-** Request to extend the time to obtain a demolition permit. (Robert Roth/40
95 Center St. LLC, applicant)
96

97 Ms. Birmingham presented the case and explained that the only item up for discussion is the
98 extension of the time period, not the case itself.
99

100 Mr. Roth stated that he thought the demo process was a part of the Comp Permit and that he didn't
101 want to move forward with the demolition before the project had completed the appeal process. He
102 explained that his expected time to move from planning to beginning construction is a year and a
103 half at minimum.
104

105 Ms. Armstrong asked who the plaintiff in the case is. Mr. Roth stated that 19 Winchester St, the 9
106 story building to the rear of the property is the plaintiff. He added that the State protects
107 defendants by using tolling.
108

109 Ms. Armstrong asked if the appeals are exhausted in this case. Mr. Roth stated that they are not,
110 the case is presently in Land Court and could be appealed all the way up to the Supreme Court.
111

112 Mr. Elperin opened the discussion to comments from the public.
113

114 Ms. Baptista introduced herself as the lawyer for 19 Winchester St. She stated that Mr. Roth chose
115 not to request a waiver from the demolition process and questioned the assumption that the ZBA
116 would grant the waiver.
117

118 Ms. Morelli, Zoning Planner, stated that when the plans were approved the waiver was implied.
119 She explained that the demolition permit was conditioned on documentation of the building. MHC
120 was asked to comment on the ZBA case. They responded that the applicant must file a P & F once
121 the Comp Permit is issued.
122

123 Ms. Baptista stated that the applicant should request the waiver from the ZBA.
124

125 Mr. Elperin explained that Jothathan Simpson, Town Council, indicated that the Preservation
126 Commission could extend the demolition time. He stated his inclination to take this approach and
127 not take advantage of the situation. Ms. Birmingham clarified that Mr. Simpson did not give a
128 recommendation about what the Preservation Commission should do, only found that they could
129 extend the time.
130

131 Mr. King stated that the building is beautiful and noted that the applicant had the right to demolish
132 it, yet didn't. He agreed with Mr. Elperin's intention to avoid taking advantage of the situation.
133 Ms. Ecker agreed and suggested a 2 year extension. Ms. Armstrong agreed with this suggestion.
134

135 Mr. Bachelor asked if documentation was required. Ms. Morelli read condition #65 in the ZBA
136 decision requiring documentation. Mr. Bachelor stated that he was in favor of the extension, given
137 that condition. He made a motion to extend the demolition period for two years conditioned on the
138 applicant's compliance with condition #65 of the ZBA decision. Ms. Birmingham asked for
139 clarification on the start of the 2 year period. Mr. King offered an amendment that would begin the
140 2 year extension at the date of the court decision. Ms. Armstrong clarified that it should be the end

141 of litigation. Mr. Elperin & Mr. Batchelor agreed with the amendment. Mr. Elperin seconded the
142 motion, all voted in favor.

143
144 **124 Holland Road & 117 Fisher Avenue-** Request to lift the stays of demolition on the properties
145 (Welltower, Inc. applicant)

146
147 Ms. Ecker recused herself as she lives in the neighborhood.

148
149 Ms. McCarthy presented the case report.

150
151 Jennifer Gilbert introduced herself and the Project team. Mary McCarthy gave an overview of the
152 project from the architectural team.

153
154 Mr. Elperin opened the discussion to comment from the audience.

155
156 Neil Wishinsky spoke about the negotiating process with Welltower and expressed the desire for
157 the Preservation Commission to participate constructively in the process. Mr. Elperin asked if the
158 project needs further work. Mr. Wishinsky replied that it does not.

159
160 Carlos Ridruejo introduced himself as a resident of Holland Road and a part of the Architectural
161 Design Subcommittee. He mentioned reductions in the scale of the project through the process and
162 stated that the elevator shaft (on Mitton House) had not yet been looked at yet. He hoped that
163 Preservation Commission members would participate in the DAT.

164
165 Mr. Elperin asked if the design was intended to be shingle style. Ellen Ansilone, an architect on
166 the project, said that this was the intention.

167
168 Kea van der Ziel, Town Meeting Member, expressed concern about the use of fossil fuel in the
169 kitchens.

170
171 Nancy Heller stated that the neighborhood supports the project and the Neighborhood Association
172 had voted to support the East Parcel development.

173
174 Mr. King stated that it is difficult for the Preservation Commission to step in at this point in the
175 project development. He questioned the choice of Shingle Style and for the project as well as the
176 scale along Fisher Avenue. He asked why the Preservation Commission had not been involved
177 earlier in design development. Mr. Panciera and Mr. Elperin also asked for an answer to this
178 question. Ms. Heller answered that the committee was formed in a rush due to Welltower's
179 deadline requests. She explained her understanding that the demo process was separate and did not
180 know the Preservation Commission would be interested. She expressed regret at excluding the
181 Preservation Commission. Ms. Gilbert stated that there was no intention to sideline the
182 Commission.

183
184 Mr. Jack expressed frustration with the project, as the deal with the Town was essentially finalized.
185 He pointed out that the oldest building in the neighborhood was being demolished under the plan.

186 Mr. Kleiner questioned whether the design was ready for a subcommittee, noting design
187 inconsistencies.

188

189 Ms. Gilbert stated that the applicant had been expecting a subcommittee. Mr. Elperin explained
190 that subcommittees usually deal with a design in its early stages and help shape it.

191
192 Mr. Elperin expressed disappointment that the Student Center was not incorporated into the project
193 design. He noted that the size of the project is 20x the size of Mitton House and 40x the size of 73
194 Seaver St, which the architects used as inspiration. He stated that the building will be one of the
195 largest in Brookline, though the neighborhood context does have other large buildings. He stated
196 that the project is oppressively close to abutters, just 80' to 90 Holland Road and that the size at
197 this side should be dealt with. He noted that the architects have employed clever device to disguise
198 the size. Regarding the style of the building, he stated that the design is not shingle style; it evades
199 the essence of the style, which is the continuity of surface. He classified the design a pastiche of
200 styles; attractive parts on a big building presented with charming hand drawn renderings to disguise
201 its nature. He added that the mechanical wells in the rooftops are unexpressed in the drawings and
202 that the back side of the building needs further design attention.

203
204 Mr. Kleiner expressed concern with the basic materiality of the project. He asked if it would be
205 possible to use real wood or slate at all. Ms. Gilbert answered that the design process is just
206 beginning.

207
208 Mr. Panciera stated that he would like to see a subcommittee formed. Mr. Elperin agreed and
209 asked Mr. Kleiner for his thoughts. Mr. Kleiner agreed with the idea but expressed doubts about
210 the parameters for subcommittee review. Ms. Armstrong asked what the difference is between a
211 subcommittee and the DAT. Ms. McCarthy responded that the subcommittee is a regulatory
212 process while the DAT is advisory only.

213
214 Mr. Elperin motioned to continue the case to a subcommittee, unempowered, with the intention that
215 it should work with the DAT. Mr. Panciera seconded the motion. Mr. Kleiner, Mr. Jack, Ms.
216 Armstrong, Mr. Panciera, Mr. Batchelor, Mr. King & Mr. Elperin voted in favor. Ms. Eckert
217 abstained as she had recused herself from the discussion.

218
219 Mr. Elperin, Mr. Panciera & Ms. Eckert volunteered to serve on the subcommittee. Ms.
220 Birmingham asked the Commission to discuss Ms. Eckert's ability to serve as she was recused
221 from the discussion on the case. Ms. Armstrong explained that the recusal was by choice, not
222 required. Ms. Eckert stated that she would unrecuse herself. Mr. Elperin supported her
223 nomination to the subcommittee.

224
225 Mr. Jack stated that he would step down from the DAT (he was appointed in a previous hearing) in
226 favor of an architect. Mr. Panciera & Ms. Ecker were nominated to serve on the DAT.

227
228 Mr. Elperin adjourned the meeting.

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