

**Town of Brookline
Preservation Commission
Subcommittee for Local Historic District Design Guidelines**

Minutes of the November 15, 2019 Meeting
Town Hall, Room 111, 8:15 am

Attendees

David King (chair), Elton Elperin (vice-chair), Wendy Ecker, Jim Batchelor, David Jack

Staff: Valerie Birmingham, Lara Kritzer
Public: Carrie Worn

Major Themes of the Discussion

The first meeting of the subcommittee served to discuss how much of the Local Historic District Design Guidelines that the subcommittee wanted to discuss and propose edits for. The subcommittee agreed that the entire document should be looked at and discussed. Additionally, the subcommittee discussed topics that are missing from the Design Guidelines which should be written and included as part of this process.

The subcommittee discussed:

1. Edits to the wording of the Acknowledgements
2. Edits to the Design Review Principles (page 10)
3. Edits to the wording of the of the first paragraph of What Does and Does Not Require Review (page 11)
4. Edits to Walls and Trim: specifically shutters and staining (page 15)
5. Windows: general discussion as the subcommittee felt the window section in the Design Guidelines should be worked on as a whole Commission, consensus that a new paragraph should be written and included that focuses on new openings of existing buildings and additions

Goals for December 6 Meeting:

- Discuss the creation of a new section for exterior lighting
- Discuss the creation of a new section for landscape features
- Set date for next subcommittee meeting

**Town of Brookline
Preservation Commission
Subcommittee for Local Historic District Design Guidelines**

Minutes of the December 6, 2019 Meeting
Town Hall, Room 111, 8:15 am

Attendees

Elton Elperin (vice-chair), Elizabeth Armstrong, Jim Batchelor, Wendy Ecker, David Jack, Rick Panciera

Staff: Valerie Birmingham, Lara Kritzer, Tina McCarthy

Public: Dennis DeWitt, John Carpenter

Major Themes of the Discussion – Exterior Lighting and Landscape Fixtures

Lighting

- The Concord Local Historic District Design Guideline section on Lighting was used as an example of how lighting is reviewed in other local historic districts which could be revised and focused for Brookline's districts. The illustration on Page 40 was referenced as a possible example to include in the guidelines.
- 22 Irving Street was listed as an example of a residence with too many fixtures throwing out too much light.
- Members generally supported developing design guidelines that addressed the fixtures to be used and not the type or color of the light itself.
- Mr. De Witt stated that gas lights were installed in Brookline by 1850. There are early photos of this public lighting available.
- There was discussion as to whether the historic districts, or Brookline as a whole, have a dedicated interest in remaining darker.
- Members discussed the need for driveway lighting, how much was necessary and how driveways should be lit.
- Members would like to see the design guidelines outline the principles that the Commission would like to see promoted within the historic districts.
- The question was raised as to whether the Commission would ever approve lighting fixtures that did not look old/historic.

Landscape Fixtures

- Recent trends have led to new applications for exterior kitchens and permanent outdoor landscape fixtures. There is a question as to whether the design guidelines should directly address these elements.
- It was suggested that built in exterior appliances should be discouraged, particularly those encased in stone surrounds
- The question was raised as to whether these elements should be discouraged or banned in the historic districts, where the line would be drawn and could there be areas where these items could be installed and not be intrusive to the neighborhood.
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General Design Guidelines

- Mr. De Witt stated that illustrations had been eliminated from the design guidelines in the past due to an issue with applicants fixating on replicating the illustrations too closely.

- Members agreed that the purpose of the design guidelines is to explain the principles behind these elements and how they should emphasize the historic aspects of the house.
- Members considered developing a checklist for applicants to use when considering large projects to make sure that elements such as condensers, electric and gas meters, vents, etc. are considered and applied for.
- Before passing any changes, Members agreed that these sections should be reviewed by Town Counsel.

Additional Research Requested:

- History of exterior lighting – what did early lighting look like and when did it become common on residential structures?
- What are the specifications that the Town uses to relamp/replace fixtures
- Question to MHC – are there any other regulations on permanent exterior landscape fixtures that they know of?
- Are Cambridge and Boston lhds also experiencing these types of applications? It was noted that South Boston is having a similar issue with roof decks.
- Staff asked to develop a general list of criteria for review of these elements from other communities if possible.
- What exterior lighting is required/allowed in Cambridge?

Goals for December 20 Meeting:

- Window discussion
- Scheduled for Room 111 at 8:15 AM.

**Town of Brookline
Preservation Commission
Subcommittee for Local Historic District Design Guidelines**

Minutes of the December 20, 2019 Meeting
Town Hall, Room 111, 8:15 am

Attendees

David King (chair), Elton Elperin (vice-chair), Elizabeth Armstrong, Jim Batchelor, Wendy Ecker, David Jack

Staff: Valerie Birmingham, Lara Kritzer, Tina McCarthy

Public: Dennis DeWitt, John Carpenter, Diana Post

Major Themes of the Discussion – Windows

- A question was raised as to whether the Commission wanted to consider allowing double-pane windows to be installed on homes within the Districts. The recent application at the corner of Cypress and Walnut was reviewed – in this case, the Commission did allow double pane windows on the rear façade of a one-story ell in place of ca. 1990 double-pane windows.
- General agreement of those present that single-pane windows should be required for windows in the original/main body of the house, but that later addition could have the option to use double-pane windows.
- Members discussed the decisions made at 11 Copley Road and 51 Abbottsford. In both cases, existing double-pane replacement windows were proposed to be replaced with new double-pane windows. The windows were approved for Abbottsford but not for Copley, where the dimensions of the windows were also proposed to be altered.
- In general, the Commission still prefers to see single pane windows used with a storm window.
- The logic behind this requirement is to encourage the preservation/retention of original historic fabric. Members discussed the merits of requiring homeowners to maintain the original design of windows when the original fabric is missing or too damaged to be repaired, particularly in those cases where homeowners were proposing to replace an inappropriate vinyl window with a more appropriate wood window. Members agreed that
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Additional Research Requested:

Goals for January 3 Meeting:

- Continue Window discussion
- Scheduled for Room 111 at 8:15 AM.

**Town of Brookline
Preservation Commission
Subcommittee for Local Historic District Design Guidelines**

Minutes of the January 3, 2020 Meeting
Town Hall, Room 111, 8:15 am

Attendees

David King (chair), Elton Elperin (vice-chair), Wendy Ecker, David Jack, Richard Panciera

Staff: Valerie Birmingham, Lara Kritzer, Tina McCarthy

Public:

Major Themes of the Discussion – Steel Windows

- The Commissioners discussed alternative materials to steel windows including Hope, Tempest, Marvin and Graham, specifically aluminum. If aluminum was considered the dimensions should be reviewed to ensure a match.
- The Commissioners discussed single pane versus insulated, as well as issues with interior storm panels that were seen in Cottage Farm
- Mr. King suggested the Commission allow double pane for steel windows, but the widths need to be decided upon. A recommendation was for applicants to submit photographs of their current steel windows with dimensions shown (by holding tape measure), in order to compare to proposed.
- The Commissioners discussed that there should be no changes for wood windows.

Additional Research Requested:

- How well can the dimensions of replacement windows match original steel windows
- Look into the thickness of the replacement glass

Goals for January 17 Meeting:

- Gutters
- Scheduled for Room 111 at 8:15 AM.

**Town of Brookline
Preservation Commission
Subcommittee for Local Historic District Design Guidelines**

Minutes of the January 17, 2020 Meeting
Town Hall, Room 111, 8:15 am

Major Themes of the Discussion – Stucco, lighting, and gutters

- Discussion that a new section should be added in the guidelines specifically for lighting
- The Commissioners thought that when mortar repairs are requested with a Non App application, a mock up should be requested on a case by case basis
- Discussion of allowing fiberglass or composite gutters, and a sample should be requested
- New guideline specific to masonry should be that chimneys should be rebuilt with full dimensional brick and not with veneer
- New guideline regarding walls that they should be appropriate and not capped

Goals for January 31 Meeting:

- Gutters and fences/walls
- Scheduled for Room 111 at 8:15 AM.

**Town of Brookline
Preservation Commission
Subcommittee for Local Historic District Design Guidelines**

Minutes of the January 31, 2020 Meeting
Town Hall, Room 111, 8:15 am

Major Themes of the Discussion – gutters, fences and walls

- Discussion of allowing fiberglass or composite gutters: question about the cornice and how it will work at the corners. Applicants should be asked
- Suggestion to add a guideline stating that alternatives to wood would be reviewed on a case by case basis; further guidance that the Commission can ask for samples to demonstrate how the proposal would be indistinguishable from the existing gutters
- Conversation about stone walls and what should be allowed: suggestions include not allowing thin stone depending on visibility; reference to the context, modern walls for brand new similar to how the Commission handles additions, and preference to natural materials. Suggestion to include that veneer should not be allowed and that stone should be at least 4” thick.

Goals for January 31 Meeting:

- Sustainability
- Scheduled for Room 111 at 8:15 AM.

**Town of Brookline
Preservation Commission
Subcommittee for Local Historic District Design Guidelines**

Minutes of the February 21, 2020 Meeting
Town Hall, Room 111, 8:15 am

Major Themes of the Discussion – Sustainability

- Suggestion to have a handout for applicants regarding the Commission's stance on sustainability
- Discussion about windows and energy efficiency – suggestion to have link on website to refer to the Commission's stance on windows and energy efficiency with an executive summary, and research backing it
- Conversation about embodied carbon, and the breakdown of sustainability and energy efficiency
- Discussion about circular economy and deconstruction
- New guideline would be in reference to EV chargers

Goals for ____ Meeting: (never happened due to COVID 19)

- Review Brookline Climate Action Plan 2018
- Next steps
- Scheduled for Room 111 at 8:15 AM.