

Comment about 60 High Street (August 10 hearing)

Rob Daves <robdaves@rcn.com>

Tue 8/10/2021 7:50 AM

To: Tina McCarthy <tmccarthy@brooklinema.gov>

Dear Preservation Commissioners,

I would like to register my opposition to the proposal to create a large window well on the Allerton Street side of 60 High Street.

The PC's Guidelines state:

"There should be no new openings on the principal facades, except to restore original or pre-existing openings."

I believe that there is no precedent for window wells over 4 feet in width anywhere in our LHD and this proposal seems to invent a novel building component or form that doesn't exist in the neighborhood. Such a modification should not be allowed especially on a front-facing facade. Alterations can be allowed but they should resemble existing recessed window wells in neighborhood as per the Commission's written guidelines.

Thank you for your time and dedication in support of our Local Historic Districts.

Rob Daves
9 Upland Road
Precinct 5 TMM
617-285-1113

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Preservation Commission: 60 High Street Comments

Tom Elwertowski <telwertowski@comcast.net>

Tue 8/10/2021 10:01 AM

To: Tina McCarthy <tmccarthy@brooklinema.gov>

Cc: eelperin@gmail.com <eelperin@gmail.com>

Preservation Commission:

The revised plan for the below-grade garden on the Allerton Street side of 60 High Street is undesirable. Due to size, it is much more than a window well.

The original plan was better because it included a stone wall to obscure the depression and partial exposure of the basement façade. If a depression which extends almost ten feet away from the house is allowed, the basement façade becomes viewable from the sidewalk and should be finished like the other stories with clapboard and windows with muntins and shutters.

I find the proposed modernist large glass surfaces incongruent with the colonial revival style. A stone wall is congruent and allows but conceals the modernist addition. A stone wall, unlike a fence or shrubbery, is also permanent so the modernist addition will remain concealed.

Another alternative for connecting the basement to the outdoors is a (30" width) stairwell. The width of the well is not an issue but a true well should not extend outward so far as to expose the basement façade.

Tom Elwertowski
97 Highland Rd

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Fw: Re 60 High Street

Tina McCarthy <tmccarthy@brooklinema.gov>

Mon 8/9/2021 1:41 PM

To: BPC <bpc@brooklinema.gov>; wh-ecker@earthlink.net <wh-ecker@earthlink.net>; John Spiers <john.h.spiers@gmail.com>; Alex Villanueva <villanueva.alexj@gmail.com>

Commissioners,

Please see the comments below regarding 60 High Street.

Best,

Tina

Tina McCarthy

Preservation Planner

Town of Brookline

333 Washington St.

Brookline, MA 02445

(617)730-2612

tmccarthy@brooklinema.gov

From: Frances Shedd-Fisher <fsheddfisher@aol.com>**Sent:** Monday, August 9, 2021 1:26 PM**To:** Tina McCarthy <tmccarthy@brooklinema.gov>**Subject:** Re 60 High Street

Dear Tina,

Hope you had a good vacation and aren't too over-whelmed with Valerie's move to Newton.

I cannot see 60 High from my house on Walnut but agree with my neighbors John Carpenter and Tom Michie at 68 High that the architect's proposed wide and deep window well on the front of the house is an unattractive solution to the owner's desired change. Particularly with lights on in the evening, the design calls too much attention to a functional (rather than aesthetic) design element. Doesn't seem appropriate in a historic neighborhood.

I hope they can find a better solution.

Thank you.

Frances Shedd-Fisher

149 Walnut Street

[Sent from the all new AOL app for iOS](#)

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60 High Street--August 10 hearing

thosstu <thosstu@yahoo.com>

Mon 8/9/2021 11:13 AM

To: Tina McCarthy <tmccarthy@brooklinema.gov>

 2 attachments (446 KB)

DC40A3F4-4982-4BAC-967E-889D4E0C2198_1_201_a.jpeg; 5408AC0E-6CC3-4ACF-AF7A-200CD45FCBBE.jpeg;

Hi, Tina,

Below is a letter I would like you to forward to members of the Commission. If you could let me know you have received it, I would be grateful. I see that the email contact address in the calendar listing for the hearing lists Valerie, even though she has left for Newton. I hope this isn't a problem.

Regards,

Tom Michie

Dear Members of the Preservation Commission,

I received notification for this hearing from the town via US Mail. I own 68 High Street, the house after 60 High Street, and have participated in two zoom meetings regarding the architectural changes the owner wishes to make. At the subcommittee meeting held on July 8th, there was no discussion of pedestrian sight lines and the proposed "Terrace Window Well" from Allerton Street.

I do not understand why the subcommittee thinks that creating a **12' - 7 1/2"** wide "Terraced Window Well" that projects **9' - 8"** from the house would have "minimal impact" with its widest side left open to a public way. Did subcommittee members stand on the Allerton Street sidewalk to consider what the public would see after that much earth is taken away from the foundation?

What height and at what angle did the architect use to draw the **Revised Allerton Street Perspective**? It appears to be a view from across Allerton Street. The Allerton Street front yard is raised only 15 inches by a stone retaining wall (**see attached images**), so an average-height person standing on the Allerton Street sidewalk will see a great deal more of the nine horizontal feet of modern basement windows than the architect shows in the **Revised Allerton Street Perspective**. With basement lights on at night, the new basement window wall will become even more visible from Allerton Street. The sparse privet hedge, leafless six months a year, will not screen it from view.

The location of the proposed well in the front yard will be highly visible from both High and Allerton Streets. It will look like a subway entrance or a permanently open bulkhead. *I believe it is a bad precedent to allow window wells of this size in front yards in historic districts.* It does not respect Brookline's Guidelines for Local Historic Districts:

"There should be no new openings on the principals facades, except to restore original or pre-existing openings."

"Alterations and additions should be compatible with the character of the building and earlier additions in terms of size, scale, massing, material, location and detail."

I do not object to the owner of 60 High Street having window wells for basement living, but please consider having the Terraced Window made to conform to the size you have granted to other homeowners, which project only four feet when visible from a public way.

Thank you for your consideration,

Thomas S. Michie
68 High Street

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letter to preservation commission for August 10 meeting

Post, Diana Ellen, M.D. <DPOST@PARTNERS.ORG>

Mon 8/9/2021 5:12 PM

To: Tina McCarthy <tmccarthy@brooklinema.gov>

August 9, 2021

Diana Post

76 High Street

Brookline

Dear Preservation Commission Members,

I am writing to you concerning the application to alter the house at 60 High Street. I have reviewed the original and revised application, and am concerned about one of the proposed window wells in the design.

It seems to me that a 12 ½ foot terraced window well, projecting 9 feet out from the house, does not fit the guidelines for Local Historic Districts. It seems to be a new opening on the principal façade which is not compatible with the character of the building. I think it will be visible from Allerton Street and High Street and negatively impact the visual appeal of the house. I don't understand why the sides of this well would be fenced but not the front of the well. Nor do I understand why the other wells have proposed caps but this does not. Finally, I think that the Preservation Commission has limited the size of other window wells in our district and wonder why this very large 12 x 9 foot well is being considered.

Thank you.

Diana Post

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60 High Street

Scott Scharer <sscharer@delawareladera.com>

Mon 8/9/2021 11:17 AM

To: jpb2@rcn.com <jpb2@rcn.com>

Cc: Tina McCarthy <tmccarthy@brooklinema.gov>; margaret.talcott28@gmail.com <margaret.talcott28@gmail.com>

Dear Jim

As you know on Tuesday August 10, 60 High Street will be presenting their revised plans to the Preservation Committee. My wife Margaret Talcott and I are abutters to 60 High Street. We live at 28 Allerton Street.

Although there has been a lot of discussion, we don't think that there has been sufficient modification to the proposed window wells. This is unfortunate as we thought more progress (refinement) had been made. I participated at the on-site visit and Margaret participated in the follow-up sub committee meeting. At both meetings there were significant conversations on scope/size and, we thought, revised plans would show significant compromise specifically in window well size/shape.

We do acknowledge and thank the owners of 60 High Street for modifying the placement of the exhaust vents from the original design. It was originally on the back side of the garage. Its now on the garage roof.

But back to the window wells..... Sadly, we find ourselves in the unfortunate position of having to speak out again as we're not quite seeing expected revisions. We want our neighbors to be happy and their desire to invest in their property is a good thing for everyone. At the same time, we want changes made to 60 Street to be in keeping with the neighborhood.

Upon further reflection, we think we understand why our neighbors have been resisting modifying their plans. Is it perhaps that they want to have the basement space be primary living space, as opposed to spill over living space or storage?

In addition to thinking about their plans from an architectural suitability perspective, we hope you will also think about the visual impact of their proposed plan as viewed from the street, especially at NIGHT, when the interior space is light.

- The current proposal for the window well facing Allerton Street will be extremely visible from the street. Everyone agreed that the original proposal was not appropriate for the neighborhood. The new proposal doesn't fully address the initial concerns (eg, size, visibility from the street, the fact that its not covered). It also raises other problems because there will no longer be a wall. At best at night, the opening will "glow." At worst, people will be able to look in. One of our neighbors thinks it might look like a subway stop!
- We are not seeing much modification on the window wells facing our property line at 28 Allerton Street. The onsite visit determined that the window wells would be visible from the street. Discussion at the follow-up sub-committee meeting focused on making the well glass openings as flat to the ground as possible. And yet, there has been no

modification to the drawings (that we can see). Again, please think about the view from the street at night-time. These window wells will be highly visible. The higher the tilt, the greater the visibility.

Thank you for listening. We remember that you have voiced sensitivity to the issue of window wells at the time of the initial presentation. We hope that you will speak up again on this topic.

L. Scott Scharer
Chief Investment Officer
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