

# Brookline Preservation Commission

## Local Historic District Report

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**Local Historic District:** Chestnut Hill

**Applicant:** Fairway- Boylston LLC

**Address:** Boylston Street Lot # 5 (between 1033 Boylston St. and 76 Norfolk Road)



**Proposed work:** Construct new house in wooded area (lot 5) on Boylston Street.

### Statement of Applicable Guidelines:

- The Commission will review all proposed alterations of, and additions to, existing structures and all new construction.
- New construction should respect the existing historic streetscape. The historic relationship of buildings to the street, including setbacks and open spaces, should be maintained.
- In areas where historic garages are generally detached, new garages should be detached. Attached garages should be located behind the main mass of the house and/or not facing the street, if possible. Garages with three or more bays are not historically appropriate except on large estates.
- The Commission will consider the appropriateness of the size and shape of the building or structure in relation to both the land area upon which the building or structure is situated and to buildings and structures in the vicinity. The Commission may impose dimensional and setback requirements more restrictive than those required by the Zoning By-law.
- The Commission will consider discrete additions and new buildings incorporating non-historical design vocabularies and materials, as long as they are otherwise consistent with the intent of these Guidelines.

**Statement of Significance:** The houses at 192 Fairway Road and 1033 Boylston Street are among the most significant examples of mid-century modern architecture in Brookline. Joseph and Dorothy Edinburg hired Walter Bogner, Dean of the School of Architecture at Harvard University and a colleague of Walter Gropius, to design their house in 1952. In 1960 a swimming pool and guest house (1033 Boylston Street) were built behind the main house in a wooded setting. The so-called poolhouse was designed by the firm of Saltonstall and Morton in the International style. Like the main house, its setting is an integral part of its design. This small house is built into the gentle slope of the hill, and its one-story height and flat roof contribute its sense of blending into the woodland. Both the main house and the poolhouse, as well as the outdoor areas, were used to display the Edinburgs extensive art collection. A metal fence at the perimeter of the pool area was designed by sculptor Kahlil Gibran.

**Preliminary Findings:** The current subdivision plan would create five or six new house lots within an area defined by Fairway Road, Boylston Street, Norfolk Road and a section of Crafts Road. The house 1039 Boylston Street may again be proposed to be demolished (the commission denied an application in April 2013) and replaced with a new house. Three of the new lots face Boylston Street and the remaining lots are set behind these with no street frontage except for driveway access from Boylston Street, Fairway Road or Crafts Road. Therefore the orientations of the proposed houses would not relate in any way to each other, nor to the surrounding homes. The two proposed 'pork-chop' lots are not consistent with the historic streetscape and would create an unfortunate settlement pattern inappropriate to the Chestnut Hill district and neighborhood, including the All-gas Colony area to the east. The proposal would not adhere to the guideline that new construction ought to relate to the existing streetscape. Further, the settings and relatively low heights of the two mid-twentieth century modernist houses built by the Edinburgs should be taken into account in the siting, massing and height of any new construction, and should not be overshadowed by the size or height of buildings adjacent to or behind them. It appears from the subdivision plan, as presented, that the proposed new house sites would be incongruous with the historic development pattern of the area and with the architectural characteristics of the surrounding houses.

The setting of the house proposed on lot 5 is sensitive neither to the contour of the land, which slopes gently downward from the street (a state highway) nor to the adjacent modernist house at 1033 Boylston Street. The lot, in fact, encroaches on the terrace and sculpture garden of the historic pool/guesthouse and its low retaining walls.

The massing and scale of the proposed house are incongruous with the character of the nearby houses on Boylston Street and Crafts and Fairway Road, which have less complex masses and rooflines, as well as generally lower heights. The proportions of the house do not correspond to those of the surrounding historic houses. While the south (front) facade presents a Colonial Revival feeling, the side and rear elevations as designed do not relate to it in any consistent way. The oversized attached garage, with awkward proportions, faces the street, which the Guidelines state should be avoided. The east (right) side elevation of the garage would adversely impact the architectural style of the adjacent modernist style house, set low and molded into the landscape. The size and configuration of the fenestration, moreover, are not harmonious with the Colonial Revival stylistic character of the rest of the design. In summary, the proposed house design is not contextually sensitive to the land or to the other buildings and structures in the vicinity.



Approximate location of lot 5

October 2013 subdivision plan



lot 5



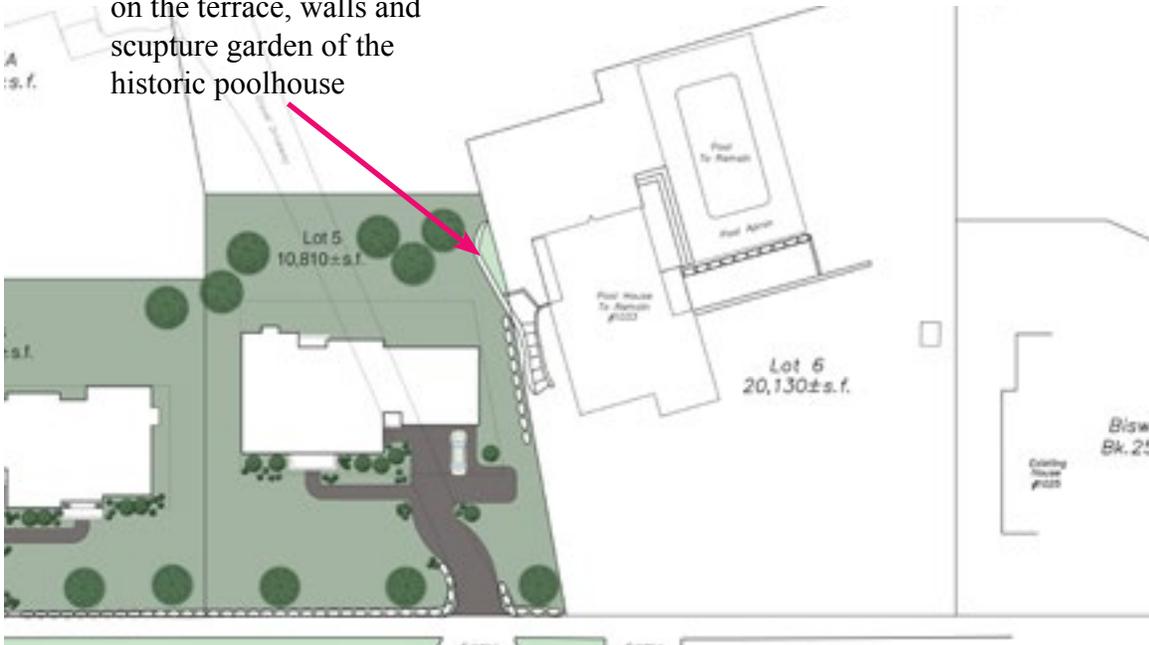


Lot 5, RGFA	
Lot Size	10,810±s.f.
Allowable RGFA	3,243 sf
House RGFA	3,236 sf

Floor plans



The lot as shown encroaches on the terrace, walls and sculpture garden of the historic poolhouse





1033 Boylston Street:

Facade and terrace with sculpture garden



Renderings of proposed house design

