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Brookline Preservation Commission
MINUTES OF THE MARCH 22, 2022 MEETING
Held Virtually using Zoom Online Software

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Commissioners Present:

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

Commissioners Absent:

Alex Villanueva, Alternate
Jim Batchelor

Staff: Tina McCarthy, Jake Collins

Mr. Panciera opened the meeting at 6:33pm with a roll call. He asked Ms. Armstrong to vote for Ms. Ecker and Mr. Spiers to vote for Mr. Batchelor.

Approval of Minutes:

No minutes were reviewed or approved at this meeting.

Public Comment:

Mr. Panciera opened and closed the public comment portion of the meeting without any comments.

PUBLIC HEARINGS – LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS

253 Kent Street (Lawrence LHD) –Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish the existing garage (Samuel Solish, applicant). **Precinct 3**

Mr. Collins presented the case.

Mr. King recused himself from the case, as he is the architect for the project.

Samuel Solish, applicant, noted that the garage was damaged in a storm five years ago and has not been used to store cars since.

Public Comment:

47 Mr. Panciera opened and closed public comment without any comments.

48

49 Commissioner Comments:

50

51 Mr. Jack stated that the garage is minimally visible and in poor collection and mentioned has no
52 objection to approving demolition.

53

54 Mr. Spiers noted that he is supportive of the request for demolition.

55

56 Mr. Kleiner asked to see the visibility again, as it is as much a consideration as the condition of
57 the structure.

58

59 Mr. Panciera stated that some structures are beyond being saved and remarked that this is the
60 worst Brooks-Skinner Co. garage he has seen as a Commissioner.

61

62 Mr. Jack made a motion to accept the proposal to demolish the garage. Mr. Spiers seconded the
63 motion.

64

65 David King – recused, Peter Kleiner – yes, Richard Panciera – yes, David Jack – yes, John Spiers - yes ,
66 Elizabeth Armstrong (for Elton Elperin) - yes, Wendy Ecker-- yes

67

68 **50 Spooner Road (Chestnut Hill North LHD)** –Application for a Retroactive Certificate of
69 Appropriateness to replace gutters & downspouts (RLAW PC, applicant). **Precinct 13**

70

71 Ms. McCarthy presented the case.

72

73 Mr. Elperin joined the meeting.

74

75 Jennifer Dopazo Gilbert, attorney, noted that the couple has resided in the house since 2011 and
76 received approval for work at the rear of the property that approved aluminum downspouts. She
77 mentioned that the work was done in the midst of Covid and the homeowners had concerns
78 about potential water damage if the gutters and downspouts were not replaced immediately.

79

80 Michael Wexler, owner, noted that he went into project with misguided belief that the
81 downspouts should be painted aluminum to match the house and stated that he used what the
82 contractor recommended for historically appropriate gutters.

83

84 Public Comment:

85

86 No public comment, but staff mentioned a letter of support in case report that was provided to
87 the Commissioners.

88

89 Commissioner Comments:

90

91 Mr. Elperin stated that he had visited the site and was impressed by the gutter replacement,
92 although he would prefer the downspouts be round.

93
94 Mr. Elperin made a motion to accept the gutters and downspouts as installed. Mr. Jack seconded
95 the motion.
96
97 David King – yes, Peter Kleiner – yes, Richard Panciera – yes, David Jack – yes, John Spiers - yes,
98 Elton Elperin- yes, Wendy Ecker- yes
99
100
101 **195 Babcock Street (Graffam-McKay LHD)** –Application for a Retroactive Certificate of
102 Appropriateness to install a generator on the property (James Miczek, applicant). **Precinct 2**
103
104 Mr. Collins presented the case.
105
106 James Miczek, applicant, noted that the property had multiple power outages in 2021, and he
107 purchased generator to support medical equipment in case of a power outage.
108
109 Mr. Elperin asked if the applicant if he was aware that his contractor did not apply for a Local
110 Historic District permit.
111
112 Lynn Miczek, applicant’s wife, said she sent a very detailed medical analysis to the contractor,
113 who she believes did not submit it with the application. She argued that the proposed location
114 for the generator, as other areas are grassy and the opposite side of the building has two AC
115 condensers and a fire escape. This location allows the owner access to the generator.
116
117 Mr. Miczek stated that he will fence the generator and is soliciting a quote from a reliable fence
118 contractor.
119
120 Public Comment:
121
122 James Lee, Chair of the Brookline Commission on Disability, noted while this is not an ADA
123 compliance issue, he hopes that the fencing will be sufficient mitigation.
124
125 Saralynn Allaire, former Chair of the Brookline Commission on Disability, urged approval of
126 the application.
127
128 Commissioner Comments:
129
130 Mr. King requested additional information on the proposed fencing.
131
132 Mr. Miczek stated that it would span the two posts adjacent to the driveway.
133
134 Mr. Spiers asked if the Commission has seen specifications of the fence.
135
136 Mr. Miczek answered that the fence would be six feet wide and three feet high.
137

138 Mr. Spiers mentioned that those specifications seemed appropriate and noted that he was
139 comfortable with a staff approval of the fence.

140
141 Mr. Elperin noted that he was invited on the site by the applicant and that the rear is a deck and
142 parking. Stated that while he would prefer the generator be installed on the opposite side of the
143 house, it would not be accessible for the owner.

144
145 Mr. King made a motion to accept the generator as proposed along with the proposed fence,
146 details of which will be reviewed by staff. Mr. Elperin seconded the motion.

147
148 David King – yes, Peter Kleiner – yes, Richard Panciera – yes, David Jack – yes, Wendy Ecker – yes,
149 Elton Elperin – yes, John Spiers - yes

150
151 **PUBLIC HEARINGS – DEMOLITION**

152
153 **50 Vernon Street –Application for the partial demolition of the house & full demolition of**
154 **garage (RLAW PC, applicant). Precinct 7**

155
156 Jennifer Dopazo Gilbert, attorney, stated that while the discussion was to focus on the historic
157 significance of the building, she wanted to let the Commissioners know that demolition was
158 triggered due to the removal of the decks at the rear of the building.

159
160 Public Comment:

161
162 Mr. Elperin opened and closed public comment without any comments.

163
164 Commissioner Comments:

165
166 Mr. Elperin noted that the agenda listed the demolition of the garage in addition to the partial
167 demolition of the house and asks if the agenda is incorrect.

168
169 Ms. McCarthy responded that the garage was found not significant by staff.

170
171 Mr. Jack stated that the building is part of an ensemble and that is reason enough for it be found
172 significant.

173
174 Mr. King agreed and made a motion to uphold staff’s initial determination of significance. Mr.
175 Jack seconded the motion

176
177 David King – yes, Peter Kleiner – yes, Richard Panciera – yes, David Jack – yes, Wendy Ecker – yes,
178 Elton Elperin – yes, John Spiers- yes

179
180
181 **25 Cottage Street & 222 Warren Street**– continued request to lift the stay of demolition, review of
182 new location for 25 Cottage Street (Jeff Birnbaum, applicant) **Precinct 14**

183

184 Ms. McCarthy presented the application.
185

186 Jennifer Dopazo Gilbert, attorney, thanked the Commission for their work on the project. She explained
187 that refining the design requires confidence in the relocation spot and reviewed the mitigation package
188 with the Commission.
189

190 Troy Sober, landscape architect, reviewed the site plans. He explained the effort to visually separate and
191 provide more space between 222 Warren Street and 25 Cottage Street. He mentioned that the changes to
192 site plan reduced the square footage of the empty building lots, shifted 25 Cottage Street 25 feet, and
193 saved 3 additional mature trees.
194

195 Tony Filardo, architect, explained the impact of the move on the architectural design of 25 Cottage. He
196 noted that the second story from the left ell and the blank wall with flat roof at Richardson bedroom were
197 removed.
198

199 Public Comment:
200

201 Jim Hertzog stated that the traffic on Cottage and Warren is dangerous with daily accidents and has no
202 sidewalks. He expressed support for Mr. Birnbaum but noted that a large amount of dirt is piled in the
203 yard of 222 and is shaking our house and causing damage. Just a peculiarity of traffic and the ledge
204 beneath the property. Concerned about the seismological aspects.
205

206 Mr. Elperin asked if there is work going on at the site. Mr. Birnbaum stated that the soil is for 25
207 Cottage Street's grading, which they are temporarily storing on the site.
208

209 Dennis Dewitt believed that the views from Warren Street to the Richardson House is better than it is
210 from Cottage Street. He asked that it be rotated to face Warren Street. He stressed the importance of
211 continuing to show accurate existing and proposed elevations. He questioned the removal of the
212 diagonal chimney in the Richardson Bedroom and the height of the rear wing and asked if the
213 building had been drawn accurately.
214

215 Ms. Dopazo Gilbert stated that the applicant will address these issues with the subcommittee once the
216 location is confirmed.
217

218 Mr. Elperin asked Mr. Dewitt if he had comments on the current location. Mr. Dewitt stated that it is
219 minimal from Cottage, but that the distance from Warren was a meaningful shift. He noted that he is not
220 opposed to moving the building but urged the applicants to consider rotating the building.
221

222 Commissioner Comments:
223

224 Mr. King stated that the landscape schemes have not changed and they are very formal and
225 inappropriate. He reiterated there was too much paving and the proposed attached three car garage was
226 contrary to the guidelines. He expressed strong reservations about the overall design but was comfortable
227 with exploring rotating the building.
228

229 Ms. Ecker stated that three car garage is was too much like a large stable and not appropriate for the
230 building. She went on to express support for the proposed location of 25 Cottage Street.
231

232 Ms. Armstrong spoke to the safety issue and updated the community on the progress made by the sign
233 writing subcommittee.
234
235 Ms. Dopazo Gilbert suggested reaching out to the Transportation Director Todd Kirrane.
236
237 Mr. Jack did not object to moving the house.
238
239 Mr. Elperin stated that he was pleased that it had been relocated, but wished it could be relocated farther.
240
241 Mr. Elperin and Ms. Dopazo Gilbert discussed the rotated plan, which was presented during a
242 subcommittee meeting.
243
244 Ms. Dopazo Gilbert asked for a vote to commit to the proposed location of 25 Cottage Street.
245
246 Ms. Armstrong discussed the conditions that would be attached, primarily the design revisions.
247
248 Mr. Panciera asked if the building could still be rotated after the approval to move the building is
249 granted.
250
251 Ms. Dopazo Gilbert responded that it would be possible.
252
253 Mr. Elperin motioned to accept the location proposed. Mr. Jack seconded the motion.
254
255 Mr. Spiers asked if it was the general location not including the orientation and requested a more specific
256 motion.
257
258 Mr. Elperin accepted the amendment to the motion. Ms. Armstrong suggested making an amendment to
259 the motion that approves the location subject to further approval on design, orientation, and landscaping.
260 Mr. Elperin accepted the amendment.
261
262 Mr. Elperin made a motion to approve the relocation of the house subject to the adjustment of the
263 orientation of the building and approval of all other aspects of the design. Mr. Jack seconded the new
264 motion.
265
266 David King – yes, Peter Kleiner – yes, Richard Panciera – yes, David Jack – yes, Wendy Ecker – yes, Elton
267 Elperin – yes, John Spiers- yes
268
269 **OTHER BUSINESS**
270
271 Ms. Ecker stated that she had sold her house and that she was moving to Maine in April and so would
272 be resigning from the Commission. Commissioners thank Ms. Ecker for her service (since the 80's!).
273
274 Mr. Elperin adjourned the meeting at 8:30 PM.