

**Meeting of the
Wellesley Historical Commission
19 November 2018 | 7pm
Kingsbury Room, Wellesley Police Station
Wellesley, Massachusetts**

1. Call to Order: Vice Chairman McNally called the meeting to order 19:12.

Commissioners:

Voting Members Goins, Lilley, McNally (Vice Chair), Gleysteen, Alternate Member Shlala (sitting for Member Brown by designation of the Vice Chairman), Alternate Member Loccisano (sitting for Member Shepsle by designation of the Vice Chairman), Alternate Member Maitin (Sitting for Member Schauffler by designation of the Vice Chairman; Alternate Member Fergusson, Alternate Member Carley.

2. Public Hearings - Demolition Review Bylaw

2a. **DR 2018-46: 8 Riverdale Road**

Ms. Zarazua presented the staff report. Mr. Gleysteen indicated that the building, while not significant, did “hold the neighborhood together” and offered some additional commentary. Mr. Goins indicated that the house was of a scale appropriate to the neighborhood. Mr. Lilley asked whether the Applicant had evaluated the historical significance of the structure and tried to preserve it.

Applicant indicated that a renovation is not economically feasible.

Attorney Himmelberger commented on the enumerated criteria for review in the bylaw.

There was some discussion surrounding whether the house could be preserved in any kind of economical fashion.

Goins moved that the house be preferably preserved. Seconded Lilley. Unanimous vote that the building be preferably preserved.

2b. **DR-2018-50: 14 Wilde Road**

Ms. Zarazua presented the planning staff report on the subject property.

Owners Tara Ventura and Jerry Ventura appeared with their architect, Mr. Michael Halley. Ms. Ventura indicated that she has reached out to neighbors and they seem to like the proposed renovation. Ms. Zarazua indicated that she had received several calls in support of the proposed demolition/renovation.

Mr. Halley presented additional information concerning the architectural aspects of the proposed demolition/renovation.

Gleysteen asked some procedural questions with respect to whether suggestions to the design could be offered. Answer from Zarazua was yes, but they would not be binding.

Lilley asked some more detailed questions on the architecture and made several suggestions concerning the front entry, the shutters etc.

Gleysteen also commented on the shutters and massing with some discussion of the pitch of the roof, etc.

There was some additional discussion of the roof pitch over the garage section of the addition.

Loccisano asked a procedural questions concerning whether a preferably preserved determination would impact already received approvals from other town bodies.

Maitin asked what percentage of the house was being preserved. Zarazua indicated 41%.

Goins moved that property NOT be deemed preferably preserved. Seconded Loccisano. Lilley, McNally and Gleysteen also voted Yes. Maitin and Shlala voted NO. Motion that building NOT be deemed preferably preserved carried 5-2. No delay imposed.

2c. **DR-2018-38: 10 Livermore Road**

Petition for waiver of previous Commission vote that the building be preferably preserved. Zarazua indicated that the planning staff recommends that the waiver be granted.

Owners Mr. and Ms. Louer appeared with their attorney, David Himmelberger and architects Patrick Ahearn and Michael Tartamella.

Mr. Himmelberger provided an overview of the proposed design and indicated the owner's belief that the design warrants grant of a waiver and truncation of the previously imposed demolition delay.

Mr. Ahearn spoke on the design and the principles that led to the redesign. Indicated that everything happening in the redesign would be as-of-right and that it would not go through large house review. Indicated that the structure will go from non-conforming to conforming with the redesign.

Ahearn indicated that the original 1896 portion of the Building (a/k/a the "Hardy House") and the appended 1914 wings would be preserved, but the structure would be rotated and moved. Mr. Ahearn also went through the various architectural features of the proposed redesign and landscaping as shown in the displayed renderings.

Zarazua submitted a letter from Ms. Caren Parker in support of the project.

Mr. David Freniere, 72 Abbot Road (across the street) spoke. Indicated that he was drawn to Abbot Rd for the historical significance “you feel like you’re stepping back in time when you live on Abbot Road”. He addressed the planning staff report. Indicated that the Commission voted to preferably preserve the home. Mr. Freniere indicated that by his calculations 45% of the 1896 and 1914 structure will be demolished. He also indicated that the moving/rotation of the remaining portion of the building is tantamount to a demolition and that some historical commissions consider it such. Mr. Freniere suggested further that that the moving and rotation of the building does not preserve the historical significance of the house.

Mr. Freniere also indicated that there is a movement afoot to designate the Belvedere Estates as a Historic District. He expressed a desire that that process be allowed to play out prior to a decision on this case. Mr. Freniere suggested that no action should be taken by the Historical Commission until the Historic District Commission has a chance to study the property and talk with concerned neighbors.

McNally asked about Freniere’s assertion that some historical commissions consider moving a demolition. Freniere cited a commission in Michigan.

Goins asked who has voted to get the study committee together. Maitlin indicated that the Historic District Commission did vote to act as the study group and that Ms. Amy Griffin will be the chair of that study group.

Mr. Freniere also suggested that the owners have not engaged with the neighbors. He also asked why alternatives have not been pursued.

Bill Rich (64 Abbot Rd) spoke next. Mr. Rich spoke of the need to demolish the basement, and why that was historically significant (e.g., the chimneys descend into the basement, the original fieldstones are there, etc.). Mr. Rich indicated that the foundation of the building was significant to him, as was the idea of moving the structure. He indicated that, “it can’t be 10 Livermore anymore” when the house is rotated so that its “back” faces Livermore. Indicated that right now he saw a win/lose situation, someone would win and someone would lose and expressed dismay with that binary. He suggested that the house be left where it is, the portion housing the indoor pool be demolished, and the Town allow a second house be allowed to be built on the lot and the Hardy House be established as a single-building historic district.

Mr. Ahearn spoke on his significant experience working in historic districts in Grosse Pointe, Michigan and in Edgartown on Martha’s Vineyard, and in particular, on moving houses in those places. He indicated that there is no basis for the idea that moving a home diminishes its historical significance.

Mr. Rich disagreed with Mr. Ahearn, and indicated that in his opinion it is historically significant.

Silvia Hahn (64 Abbot Rd.) spoke next and clarified that she is serving as co-chair of the historic district study group. Ms. Hahn indicated that she talked with Chris Skelley (Director of Local Government Programs, Massachusetts Historical Commission), who allegedly indicated that the rotation and/or moving of a house would be a demolition. Some discussion followed concerning the current procedural posture of this matter is.

Mike Hynes (78 Abbot Rd.) spoke next and expressed a concern that “demolition and preservation are being used interchangeably” in this discussion and that it is causing confusion. He acknowledged the level of effort that has gone into the redesign. Indicated that he thought that there was some effort to listen to the neighbors at these hearings, but stated that he thought it was disingenuous for Mr. Ahearn to characterize the redesign as a win-win when the neighbors haven’t been consulted. Indicated that more communication would be helpful and beneficial with respect to the neighborhood. He talked about a commonality of the setbacks in the neighborhood and indicated that the centering of the structure on the center of the lot was inconsistent with that and the “look and feel” of a neighborhood where people interact with each other. He encouraged the project proponents to have direct communication with the neighbors.

Diane Freniere (72 Abbot Rd.) spoke next. She indicated that she moved from Forest St. to Abbot Rd. in 2008. She indicated that she didn’t know why she did that at the time, but now realizes that it was because of the layout of the (Abbot Rd.) neighborhood. She remarked that people are out on the street regularly interacting with each other in the Abbot Rd. neighborhood.

Ms. Freniere stated that she sees it as a loss-loss if the subject project goes forward. It indicated that it would be a loss for the neighborhood and for the Owners because it has created so much angst in the neighborhood. She also remarked that the Owners’ architects need to engage with the neighbors, but also indicated that there has been a positive progression since the project was introduced.

Michael Greco (65 Livermore Rd) spoke next. Mr. Greco talked about some good change and some bad change that he has seen in Wellesley during his 41 years in town. He talked about the significance of the fact that the Hardy House has stood in its current location for nearly 123 years. He noted that the house was the anchor of the Belvedere Estates. He also opined that there is progress being made and that it should continue with the Owners engaging directly with the neighbors.

Mr. Greco requested that if the structure is going to be moved, and it is damaged in the move, there must be a provision that the Owner rebuild the house as it currently is. Mr. Greco further indicated that should any damage occur that such damage would not result in a demolition of the entire structure.

Ms. Zarazua indicated that any waiver agreement would require Owners to build what they have presented tonight. Any changes would have to come back to the Historical Commission.

Mr. McNally asked about engineering parameters. A discussion followed. Mr. Ahearn indicated that the owners would agree to repair. There was also a discussion about trees and landscaping and to what extent the Commission could consider those factors.

Member Lilley spoke. He is a past resident of Abbot Road and indicated that he understood the concerns of the neighbors. He also indicated that while this building is important to the Town - and that the Commission strives to preserve as much as possible – the Building is not a museum. He indicated that the massing of the redesign is sensitive with respect to “putting the house on a pedestal.” He asked whether certain alternatives were considered. He indicated that the moving and rotation of the house did not necessarily bother him. He did indicate that he thought something was lost with the placement of the “auto court” at the fore and pushing the house back from the streets and Abbot Road in particular.

Member Gleysteen spoke next. He stated that he could not believe that the architects were able to convince the owners to preserve the house (“I was pleasantly shocked”). He echoed and Lilley’s concerns with respect to the relationship of the house to the streets (and again, Abbot Rd. in particular). He commented on making an effort to preserve the structure, and indicated that he did not have a problem with rotating it and moving it. He asked about the gable on the portico. Mr. Ahearn indicated that it was removed at request of owners. Gleysteen asked that it be retained if possible.

Maitin indicated that she has a difficult time discerning, in the redesign, the original Hardy House because of the carriage house garage being positioned “out front” on the Abbot Street side. She indicated that she thought that it takes away from the property.

There was a discussion in response to Lilley’s and Maitin’s comments/questions with respect to siting the auto/parking court, garage, etc.

Mr. Rich asked about constructing the driveway to the left side of the house while leaving the house on its existing foundation.

Carley commented on the context of this discussion with respect to how the bylaw, and the waiver provision in particular, came about. Zarazua commented further on how the Commission can impose conditions on the waiver.

Lilley the asked about the possibility of an underground garage that would ameliorate some of the concerns with respect to how the house relates to the street (Abbot in particular).

Maitlin asked for some changes to reflect how they might eliminate the carriage house/garage wing because it hides the original Hardy House.

Alternate Member Fergusson also asked about eliminating the carriage house/garage, as he thought that doing so might eliminate the need for the auto-court which he viewed as an anomaly on Abbot Road.

Goins thanked the Owners and their representatives for their work on the redesign.

McNally summarized that the outstanding issues to be addressed going forward were:

- Urban design/streetscape
- Gable on top portico
- Underground garage/garage-court issue
- How any damage would be dealt with in a moving

Gleysteen moved to continue the hearing to December 10th; Goins Seconded. Unanimous in favor. Waiver hearing continued until December 10, 2018.

4. Approval of minutes

Discussion/approval of the minutes of Meeting of October 15, 2018 meeting and of the October 22, 2018 retreat meeting was tabled.

5. Discussion of the house approvals were tabled.

6a. Fells Branch Library: Gleysteen attended the Fells Branch Library reception and indicated that the finished product was quite nice.

6b. HHU Update: Gleysteen gave an update on the Hunnewell School and the Commission's desire to preserve the 1938 section.

6c. Beebe Plaque: McNally gave an update on the Beebe Plaque. Estimated costs have been obtained; idea is to put the plaque on a post just behind the retaining wall so that it may be read from the sidewalk.

6d. There was no discussion of historical articles or awards.

7. New business – Goins talked about the NCD bylaw revision. Met with Town Counsel regarding same. Also looking at staffing and budget issues.

8. **Motion to adjourn by Shlala; seconded Maitin. Meeting adjourned at 22:05.**