

Historic District Commission  
Town Hall, Room 126  
Final Meeting Minutes, January 14, 2014

Meeting called to order at 7:30 PM. Attending: Pamela Lynn (PL, chairing this meeting), David Honn (DH), Ron Regan (RR), Anita Rogers (AR), and David Shoemaker (DS). Mike Gowing (MG) as BofS rep.

7:30pm **Citizen's Questions/Comments**  
MG notes an interesting article on historic house types in the Boston Globe, 27 Oct 2013 issue. PL notes that the Historical Society will host a talk by Anne Forbes on John Hoar, Architect, on 19 Jan 2014 at 2:30pm

7:34 **Minutes for December 10, 2014 approved by consent.**

7:35 **542 Mass Ave. Signage**  
AR comments that lessees at 542 Mass Ave are interested in discussing signage with the HDC, and that an early visit from HDC would be welcome

7:36 **470 Main St.** Discussion about the Appearance of the Access Elevator.  
DS: would be nice to put siding on the surface, and looks like there is place to put it there without difficulty.  
RR: Agrees it is quite visible and likes also doing something about it.  
PL: hard to see, but there is place to the south on Main St., where it is quite visible; alternative to siding could be to paint the metal red.  
The consensus is that those of the HDC who took a look all felt it would be appropriate to look at a mitigation. HDC will invite Dean Charter to discuss.

7:40 **102 Main St.** Discussion on Remediation of Stairs, Door, Windows  
1) HDC had worked with the applicants on an egress stairway design, but the realization is not as we agreed. The contractor installed a different railing; it uses a 2x4 construction, looking more contemporary than the agreed design. The certificate named parts to be used that were not

employed. The Contractor's sketch, which did not conform to the HDC certificate, was approved by the Building Department.

2) The door that we agreed upon was not the one used. A simple wood door rather than a 9 panel door was used, also a difference from the agreed design.

3) At some point windows were replaced with vinyl windows (a separate issue from the recent HDC certificate, but still a violation). Windows on a Google Earth photo are different than the present windows; the Google windows are wood and the current windows are vinyl. The HDC does not approve vinyl windows for use in the Historic Districts.

AR: Applicant will come to discuss with us. HDC to take a look before then. Consider if there are mitigations to the current design. Some concerns about meeting code on the railing may have led to elements of the current design, but was not a problem with the agreed upon design.

**7:45 PL Describes Public hearing procedures**

7:54 Brief recess

**8:00 504 Main St.** Addition to Acton Women's Club, #1340

AR recuses herself from the HDC for this issue

DH is the liaison

Anita Rogers to represent the AWC

PL reads the public ad in entirety

AR supplies photographs and sketches for all present. The AWC must add an access elevator, and this requires a change to the exterior envelope of the building. Only one approach seems viable: to add a square shaft at the southwest of the building. No additional design work has been done since last meeting. AR describes the funding situation: CPC with possibly augmentation from other resources. PL notes that the HDC is operating on an extension kindly agreed to by the AWC. AR says that a further extension may be appropriate.

AR walks the HDC through the distributed images. The two designs

under consideration are for a flat roof vs. a continuation of the roof at shallower slope for the addition to contain the access elevator; what might help minimize the visual impact? Also, can consider some changes in the materials, and windows, but better if the same materials are used; it tends to make the addition less visible.

AR likes the flat roof for both aesthetic and functional reasons. At a CPC meeting, there was some concern about the technical difficulties with a flat roof.

DH: continues to prefer the flat roof, to reduce the mass of the South face. The symmetry and brick face is a nice form. A straight sloped roof tends to compete with a nicely proportioned building. Building is from 1829 – would be good to do some research to see what would be consistent. Strong limitations on the space to be inventive. Consider ways to make the flat roof more of a 'cap'.

DS expresses a preference for the flat roof; or potentially adding a real or non-functional window on that façade to break up the visual impression of an expanse of clapboard

RR: Not sure if the façades are so visible that it matters very much for the passerby. Has seen examples of the flat roof working. Also has a mild preference for the flat roof.

8:20

### **Citizens questions/comments**

Head Trustee Lori Lewis: In general, no very strong feeling, but preferred flat roof rather generally. The understanding was that the CPC person questioning flat roof was about Snow or water infiltration; answer is that there is a slight slope to shed water. AR does not feel there is a functional problem.

Carolyn Kilpatrick: Concern that the more attractive rear windows might not have room for two shutters.

Head Trustee: Consensus would be to have no shutters on some windows; consistent with older houses. The kitchen has only one shutter on some

windows. DH and AR agree that no slavish uniform use of shutters needed.

AR: the CPC was concerned if the HDC would approve the project.  
CK: would like a letter of approval in a timely way for CPC.

Mike Gowing: Appears the new corner board is smaller than others. AR notes that a smaller one was chosen. MG asks if in the case of the straight sloped roof, is there any functional advantage (space etc.)? AR: The flat roof is a more functional solution.

CK: If the HDC is not able to approve, what happens? PL: the question is just how to proceed, not go/no go.

DH: A letter of support was written by the HDC in December, 2013 but has not been received by the CPC; HDC to track down.

AR: could HDC approved a phased project – say build the shell and the following year do the installation of the hardware and interiors? PL: Yes.

Head Trustee: March 7 and 14 are opportunities for funding, but with constraints; Mass Historical Preservation Society may be a resource, but many conditions.

MG: Glenn Berger for Exchange hall had a range of resources; AWC good to contact him for more details

8:34 PL closes public hearing.

PL: our question: are we ready for a motion? If no, then an extension would be requested of applicants; do not know when the CPC needs to know of the HDC process outcome.

DH: will write a recommendation that there will be some remaining review but the general direction is clear. He asks if there are questions about windows, or if there should be more study of the surface treatment that unites the two windows. DH indicates it would be good to learn a bit more about the difficulty in installing the elevator after the construction of the exterior shell.

DS says that a change in the south wall windows only felt necessary in the case of a straight sloped roof

RR: Does the HDC express an opinion on the surface treatment around the back windows? Consensus is no.

**DH makes a motion:**

The HDC moves to approve the flat roof, scheme 1 on the package of drawings dated the 14 Jan 2014. Identified as sheets 1-6 in plan and elevation, and a photo.

**Finding:** Main St. is the governing view. Block of the existing building is symmetrical and a unified volume; the addition should be subordinate to the main house. Landscaping shall remain as is.

**Conditions:** We wish to see the final design of the top of the flat roof cornice in detail as needed to pass judgment. There shall be corner trim boards and matching water table. Clapboard exposure shall match the existing house. The applicant is to submit window specification for approval. Trim, historic sill and profile to match existing windows. Shutters may be omitted on new windows.

**Recommendations:** Save adjacent tree (minimal excavation). Elevator could be added in a second phase (and at a later time) to aid in obtaining funding.

PL notes that unanimous vote is needed; the HDC members present vote unanimously in favor.

HDC will pursue the question of the lost letter.

Head Trustee: CPC has more projects than money, and may not be eligible. If they apply for Mass Historic, then a letter tuned to this need from the HDC may be helpful.

8:59 AR rejoins the HDC

9:00 **615 Mass Ave** Request for demolition of a garage; #1355

Robena Reid, Applicant, joins via telephone from Virginia as she could not be present at the public hearing as she lives out of state.

PL reads the ad in its entirety, and determines that no citizens have chosen to attend the Public Hearing. PL notes that demolitions are taken very seriously.

DS describes the situation: the Garage is more modern than the remaining structures, and is a poor design in very poor condition. There will be no loss to the house value in removing it.

Robena Reid notes that none of the older foundation would be removed in the demolition.

PL: is something likely to replace it? Robena Reid: Nothing will replace it.

The HDC looked at the Inventory form, and no mention of the garage is there.

DH: We wish that the foundation be preserved if it is of value. AR concurs that the means of demolition should not destroy the foundation. RR: need to ensure that it does not become a new safety issue

HDC looks at detailed photos of the foundation and it appears to be of historical interest. We will want to recommend a gentle demolition.

Robena Reid states that a gentle demolition is intended and the foundations are to be preserved in the measure reasonably possible. Frank Ramsbottom is familiar with the approach to be taken.

9:31 The Public Hearing is Closed.

DH: If take down the wood structure, does this create a safety problem? The HDC yields to the Building Dept. on any safety concerns.

DH: we should stress that the fieldstone is an historical structure and shall not be destroyed. If a problem arises during demolition the applicant is to return to the HDC before any destruction is done.

**DS makes a motion:**

Mass Ave is the governing view. The HDC moves to approve the request for demolition of the wood frame down to the sill of the garage as requested. The stone foundation appears to be an historical structure and must remain intact in its entirety. If a problem arises during demolition, the applicant is to return to the HDC before any destruction is done.

**Finding:** the garage is not an historical structure; the Mass Historic Commission inventory does not record the garage.

**Recommendations:** Appropriate care should be taken that no new safety issue arises due to the removed garage structure; HDC defers to the Building Dept. on any safety concerns. The applicant should consider removing the window sashes for reuse or resale.

Unanimous vote in favor of allowing the demolition.

9:45                   PL adjourns the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

David Shoemaker, Acting Secretary