

**Meeting of the
Wellesley Historical Commission
8 March 2021 19:00**

**Meeting Convened via Zoom Video Conference in Accordance with the
Emergency Orders of the Governor of the Commonwealth in Response to
The COVID-19 Pandemic**

1. Call to Order:

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order at 19:05.

Brown designated Paine to serve in place of Schauffler for tonight's meeting.

Members Present: Brown, Greco, Lilley, McNally, Paine (for Schauffler), Shepsle, Shlala

Alternate Members Present: Charney, Racette

Advisory Member Present: Dorin

Also Present: McCauley (Planning Department)

2. Citizen Speak

None.

3. Public Hearings on Applications for Demolition

3a. DR-2021-05; 24 Durant Road

The Applicant, Daniel Madden, gave a brief introduction of the planned partial demolition and renovation.

No neighbors or citizens asked to speak.

McCauley (Planning Department) summarized the Planning Department's research on the subject property, which is more fully described in the Planning Department's Staff Report for the subject property. The Planning Department Staff is of the opinion that the subject building at 24 Durant Road is (i) importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the Town, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or the United States of America, and is (ii) historically or architecturally important by reason of period, style, method of building construction or association with a particular architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of Buildings. McCauley stressed how well the existing home fits in with the unique character of the neighborhood.

Dorin echoed McCauley's sentiments and agreed with the Planning Department's report on the subject property.

Brown noted that the Applicant did not submit drawings depicting the planned renovation. Brown encouraged future applicants whose plans were for a planned renovation of more than 50% of the building to include the plans with the preservation application, because the Commission is able to review them at the same meeting, saving the applicant time. Brown asked the Applicant about the plans for the renovation. The Applicant reported that they are nearly complete with the architectural plans. Two of the four exterior walls would remain. The contemplated house will resemble a center entrance colonial rather than the current box colonial. The Applicant stated that the intent is to work within the spirit of the neighborhood.

Shepsle noted the presence of mature trees on the property.

McNally moved that based on at least the fact that the Subject house is historically or architecturally important by reason of period, style, method of building construction or association with a particular architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of Buildings, that the building be deemed preferably preserved. Shepsle seconded.

Roll-call vote because of remote participation under applicable law and the emergency orders:

Brown: Yes.

Greco: absent from voice vote due to technical difficulties.

Lilley: Yes.

McNally: Yes.

Paine: Yes.

Shepsle: Yes.

Shlala: Yes.

The motion was approved unanimously, 6-0.

DR-2021-05 was closed.

3b. DR-2021-08; 10 Park Avenue

David Himmelberger, Esq. appeared on behalf of the Applicant. Mr. Himmelberger noted that there are newer houses nearby. On its own, the existing house is not architecturally notable.

Park Avenue may have been laid out at the same time as the historic subdivision, but it is not noted in the MACRIS report, he said. Therefore, he argued, it is not part of that historical subdivision.

McCauley (Planning Department) summarized the Planning Department's research on the subject property, which is more fully described in the Planning Department's Staff Report for the subject property. The Planning Department Staff is of the opinion that the subject building at 10 Park Avenue is (i) importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the Town, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or the United States of America, is (ii) historically or architecturally important by reason of period, style, method of building construction or association with a particular architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of Buildings. With respect to standard (i), 10 Park Avenue is associated with the architectural history and planning of the town because it is within the Uplands Subdivision a major development in the 1920's and 30s. With respect to standard (ii), the subject building appears to

represent an important stage in the evolution of home design incorporating a multi-level design with colonial features and excellent materials.

McCauley commented that the subject house is intriguing. It is a predecessor of many architectural styles that followed World War II. It also serves as a nice “bridge” into the Uplands Subdivision. On its own, the house is worthy of attention. Although Park Avenue was not listed in the MACRIS report, Park Avenue was plotted as part of the original subdivision.

Dorin echoed McCauley’s sentiments. The house is significant, on its own. Further back in time, he noted, this parcel had been part of the Luther Kingsbury Estate. The Kingsbury School is named after him. Although the character of Park Avenue is distinct, the house’s individual architecture is the most important aspect of this property.

The following neighbors asked to speak:

Mike Nilles, 9 Whiting Road (abutter directly behind the subject property.) Mr. Nilles stated that he is interested in what might replace the current house, if the house is not deemed to be Preferably Preserved. Mr. Nilles stated that he believes that an historic characteristic of the building is its scale.

Alan and Pamela Hendrickson, 77 Forest Street. The Hendricksons are long-time abutters. Mr. Hendrickson stated that they are interested in what might replace the current house, if the house is not deemed to be Preferably Preserved. Mr. Hendrickson said that he feels that the current house is a distinctive house from a distinctive time.

Jordan Franceschini, 5 Park Ave (almost directly across the street.) Mr. Franceschini stated that he is interested in what might replace the current house, if the house is not deemed to be Preferably Preserved. He asked questions about the Demolition Delay Bylaw process, and Brown provided information about that process. Mr. Himmelberger pointed out that because the house is located on a non-conforming lot, any razing and rebuilding would require ZBA approval of a special permit.

Vita Weir, 81 Forest Street, asked to speak. Ms. Weir expressed concern for the preservation of the trees in the neighborhood, should a demolition occur.

Mr. Greco commented that this is a very attractive neighborhood.

Shepsle stated that the uniqueness of the existing house on its own, rather than how it fits into the neighborhood, is most important. She stated that near Clovelly Road, there are other homes that seem to be of the same period and style as the subject house.

Charney stated that the impact on trees is not within the Commission’s purview. Other boards and the Tree Bylaw will govern the issue of trees.

Brown commented that the garage detracts from the house.

Lilley pointed out that the street has a vast cornucopia of styles of houses. It is very diverse. He wondered whether the garage was an addition to the original house. The garage dominates the appearance of the house, contrary to the features he likes to see preserved in the town.

Mr. Himmelberger stated that the garage is original to the house. He suggested that if the current house design were submitted to the Commission in a waiver application, the Commission would reject it.

McNally moved, that insofar as the subject property failed to meet any of the three criteria set forth in the Bylaw, that it be deemed not preferably preserved. Brown seconded.

Roll-call vote because of remote participation under applicable law and the emergency orders:

Brown: Yes.
Greco: Yes.
Lilley: Yes.
McNally: Yes.
Paine: Yes.
Shepsle: Yes.
Shlala: Yes.

The motion was approved unanimously, 7-0.

Brown requested that the owners be sensitive to the concerns of the neighbors.

DR-2021-08 was closed.

4. Public Hearings - Waiver

4a. DR-2020-52 – 32 Boulder Brook

Mr. Himmelberger appeared on behalf of the Applicant. Mr. Himmelberger requested a continuance.

Brown moved to continue the waiver application to the Commission's next meeting, on April 12, 2021. Paine seconded.

Roll-call vote because of remote participation under applicable law and the emergency orders:

Brown: Yes.
Greco: Yes.
Lilley: Yes.
McNally: Yes.
Paine: Yes.
Shepsle: Yes.
Shlala: Yes.

The motion was approved unanimously, 7-0.

4b. DR-2020-57 – 9 Wilde Road.

Mr. Himmelberger appeared on behalf of the Applicant. The Applicant seeks a waiver of the delay previously imposed. Mr. Himmelberger stated that the proposed design is complementary to the

neighborhood, and it takes a lot of cues from the new house located 375 Linden Street, the plans of which the Commission previously approved. He addressed some of the comments or concerns raised before the hearing by neighbors. He stated that in the Wilde Road, Brookfield Road neighborhood, slightly less than two-thirds have 2-car garages. He stated that although the widths of the body of house and of the garage are similar, viewed in three dimensions, the garage is subservient to the house, because it is stepped back, just like 375 Linden Street. The proposed house is similar in size to some of the existing homes in the neighborhood. Setbacks, lot coverage, and other zoning restrictions exist for a reason, he argued. Owners should be able to conform to the zoning requirements when designing a home.

The following neighbors asked to speak:

Lynne and Gary Smith, 19 Brookfield Road. Ms. Smith stated that she feels that the proposed house, with a two-car garage, does not fit in well with the existing neighborhood. She would like the owner to keep the existing footprint. Ms. Smith said that Wilde Road is a “neighborhood,” where the houses are similar, and kids can ride bicycles down the middle of the street—unlike Linden Street. Mr. Himmelberger argued that the proposed house would not change that fact.

Don Kelley, 8 Brookfield Road (abutter.) Mr. Kelley expressed concerned that the patio shown on the plan is only seven feet from his lot line. Mr. Himmelberger stated that the proposed house would be 24 ft 4 inches from the lot line, even though zoning would allow it to be 10 feet from the lot line. Mr. Himmelberger stated that zoning would allow a patio to be built right up to the lot line. He also pointed out that the existing house violates the setback on one side, and the proposed house would be farther away from the rear property line. Mr. Himmelberger stated that the house has side-facing gables rather than front-facing, so that it respects the neighborhood. Brown commented that even when builders build out to the maximum allowable footprint, neighbors naturally express concern if the surrounding homes generally do not maximize the allowable footprint on their properties.

Robert W. Spalding, 4 Brookfield Rd. Mr. Spalding stated that the propose house is a massive house in terms of coverage, when compared to neighboring houses, even if it conforms to zoning. The house in the neighborhood “fit” with their lots. The proposed house does not. Also, the garage is just as wide as the house,

Tracy Krechevsky, 5 Wilde Rd (abutter.) She and her husband have lived there for more than 30 years. Ms. Krechevsky pointed out that two-thirds of the houses in the neighborhood have a 1-car garages. Many of the 2-car garage houses sit on larger, 10,000 sq. ft lots. The proposed house is “squeezed” onto the lot, and it looks like a townhouse.

Mr. Dorin suggested thinking of the proposed house in three dimensions.

Mr. Lilley stated that this issue arises when developers seek to develop undersized lots. Sometimes they need to be creative to make it blend in with the existing neighborhood.

Mr. Himmelberger responded, though, that most of the houses on the street have side-facing gables, and the architect sought to mimic that look.

Brown noted that the proposed house does not fit, visually, with the neighborhood. He further noted that in the case of 375 Linden Street, the neighbors supported the proposed plan. In this case, the

neighbors do not support the proposed plan. Brown asked Mr. Himmelberger to take that into account. Mr. Himmelberger responded, that the Applicant had spoken to neighbors who supported his proposed plan.

Charney asked whether there is a possibility of a side-facing garage. Himmelberger stated that this was not possible, given the 30-foot setback. Charney acknowledged the strong desire for 2-car garages in current times. He noted that under the Bylaw, the Commission only has authority to approve or disapprove house plans for one year, after which the Applicant would be free to propose different plans, without review by the Commission. He also noted that any house must meet all zoning requirements.

John Peterson, 11 Wilde Road (abutter.) Mr. Peterson stated that the ridge lines of most homes in the neighborhood are much lower than the ridge line of the proposed house. He does not think that the house is attractive.

Shepsle discussed the Commission's mission to "protect" the neighborhoods, and the neighbors have spoken and voiced, in her opinion, reasonable objections. Brown agreed. He stated that the vast majority of the neighboring homes have smaller, one-car garages, and fit together well in terms of setbacks and openness to each other. If the Commission is to grant a waiver, it must feel that the proposed plan satisfies enough of the Commission's concerns. He encouraged the Applicant to agree continue the waiver hearing and take tonight's comments into mind and return with a different proposal.

Charney noted that the existing house is non-conforming, sitting 11 feet from its neighbor. He wondered whether the ZBA might allow the new house to remain non-conforming, if that would allow a 2-car garage to be built. Mr. Peterson stated that he likely would oppose any such effort, because it would increase the nonconformity by replacing what is currently a one-story non-conformity with a two-story one.

Kathy Kelley suggested that the market might reward a one-car garage. Many remodeled 1930's homes with one-car garages sell for \$1,500,000.

Himmelberger requested a continuance.

Brown moved to continue the waiver application to the Commission's next meeting, on April 12, 2021. Greco seconded.

Roll-call vote because of remote participation under applicable law and the emergency orders:

Brown: Yes.
Greco: Yes.
Lilley: Yes.
McNally: Yes.
Paine: Yes.
Shepsle: Yes.
Shlala: Yes.

The motion was approved unanimously, 7-0.

4c. DR-2021-03 - 86 Mayo Road

Mr. Himmelberger appeared on behalf of the Applicant. Fernando Dalfior, of Dalfior Development, Inc. (Owner) also appeared and addressed the Commission. The Applicant seeks a waiver of the delay previously imposed. Mr. Himmelberger stated the proposed house is remarkably similar to the existing house that it hopes to replace. Like the existing home, the proposed house has a Hip roof. The garage is in the rear of the structure. The volume of the house is less than 3600 TLAG, with much of that volume in the rear of the property, away from the street.

The following neighbors asked to speak:

Curt Hunnewell, 84 Mayo Road (abutter.) Mr. Hunnewell asked what is the height of the existing house compared to the proposed house? Mr. Dalfior stated that it is 27.5 feet from grade, which is very close to the existing house. Mr. Hunnewell asked what is the distance from the back of the garage to the rear lot? Mr. Dalfior stated that it is 30 feet.

Amy Novick, 15 Marigold Avenue (overlooks Mayo Road.) She has lived there for more than 30 years. She expressed concern that the pine trees in the back would have to be taken down to accommodate the driveway. She also thinks that the copper roof elements on the front façade do not fit in with the neighborhood.

Mr. Dorin commented that the proposed house looks similar to homes that were built in the 1990's. He questioned whether the plans accurately depicted the façade. He also voiced his opinion that the right-side elevation has a "canyon wall" blank surface. Mr. Dalfior addressed Mr. Dorin's comments.

Brown observed that placing the garage behind the house, and tucked inside from the side of the house, helps hide the garage from the street view. Brown agreed with Mr. Dorin's comments about the right-side elevation.

Lilley felt that the proposed house is "off to a good start," and is grounded to the neighborhood, especially in light of an adjacent house. He agreed with the neighbor's concern about the copper elements on the front facade. He suggested that the shutters should be carried around to the side elevation, at least towards the front. On the right-side elevation, he suggested moving the corner of the wall back six inches into the kitchen, to take a small chunk out of the corner of the kitchen, so that it matches the location of the wall on the left side. He thinks that the garage doors are too simple. He suggested adding details to the shutters. On front, put a small pocket between each window on each bay, to make the windows appear thinner.

Lilley suggested that, as in similar prior waiver applications, that the Commission approve the waiver, subject to the drafting of a list of items to be changed in a manner consistent with tonight's discussion, with Lilley confirm those items.

McNally moved that, in accordance with the changes to the plans discussed at tonight's meeting, to be later reviewed and approved by Lilley, that the delay period be shortened to the time of the final sign off, and that the Chair be empowered to sign off on those terms on behalf of the Commission. Shlala seconded.

Roll-call vote because of remote participation under applicable law and the emergency orders:

Brown: Yes.
Greco: Yes.
Lilley: Yes.
McNally: Yes.
Paine: Yes.
Shepsle: Yes.
Shlala: Yes.

The motion was approved unanimously, 7-0.

5. Extension of Demolition Delay period for 42 Earle Road

Kevin Lynch (Owner) appeared.

Brown stated that as he understands that the Commonwealth's emergency COVID orders have extended the period granted under the previous waiver of the demolition delay that had earlier been imposed on this property.

6. Washington Street Sidewalk Expansion Project.

Steve Park, and Joan Gaughan, of the Wellesley Trails Committee, appeared.

Brown stated that the Commission is concerned that the sidewalk plans consider and respect the fact that this is the most rural part of town, and that the WTC communicate with the Hunnewell Farm property owner.

Mr. Park stated that the WTC desires to provide greater and safe pedestrian and bicyclist access to Elm Bank and the historic area/Natick Waterfall. Currently, the area is not safe for pedestrians and cyclists.

Mr. Park stated that the proposal envisions a sidewalk starting at 845 Washington Street on the North side of the street and ending at the Natick town line, where it will connect to the existing sidewalk on the Natick side. The WTC has also asked the DPW to place a cross walk at the entrance to Elm Bank, and the DPW agreed. WTC has solicited opinions and input around town, and the feedback has been very supportive. Mr. Park and Ms. Gaughan each stated that the DPW representative said that conversations with the neighbors--including the Hunnewell family--should only be done by the Town (not by the WTC,) and only after the DPW finalizes the plans. Brown strongly suggested that it would be best to engage with the Hunnewell family now—not later.

Mr. Park reported that the DPW likely plans to use a bituminous concrete sidewalk (similar to the sidewalk on Weston Road.) It has to be ADA compliant.

The DPW is still at the planning stage, but a DPW representative said that they do not envision any impact on historic walls or pillars.

Ms. Gaughan stated that Horatio Hollis Hunnewell would probably want pedestrian access. She stated that a DPW representative told her that as it ages the surface of the sidewalk would blend in well with

the surrounding area. The DPW representative also said that the Brook Path material (stone dust) would not work well, considering drainage and plowing issues.

Paine noted that rural character is a precious commodity. He is concerned that there is not enough width to create a safe sidewalk. He suggested that some separation from the road is necessary to maintain the rural character. He wondered if the Hunnewell family might agree to having the sidewalk on the other side of the wall. He noted that in the Town's past, the Hunnewell family permitted public access along the shores of Lake Waban.

The WTC representatives stated that there is between 5-10 feet at every stretch of the roadway, and the DPW representative said that there is enough room to build a sidewalk without disturbing walls or posts.

Mr. Greco asked what is the speed limit on this road? Mr. Park stated that he is not sure, but traffic moves very quickly. Mr. Greco asked how long the sidewalk would be? Mr. Park stated that it would extend 5/10ths of a mile.

Brown questioned the planned sidewalk surface choice, and asked the WTC to discuss alternatives (such as aggregate, or cobbling) with the DPW, to blend into the surrounding area.

Shepsle asked who determines the width of a sidewalk. Mr. Park said he is not sure. Ms. Gaughan said that it must be ADA-compliant, which she believes is 5-foot wide.

McCauley stated that he would not like built up curbs (like Weston Road) and asked the WTC to discuss this with the DPW.

Dorin thanked the WTC for seeking the feedback from the Commission. The Commission needs to know the impact on every tree and every wall. Therefore, the Commission will want to see actual plans. The National Park Service needs to approve any proposed listing on the National Historical Register. The Hunnewell Estate is on the National Historic register, and the State Historic Register, and the WTC may need to receive review for adverse impact and approval on the state and federal level. He strongly suggested to speak to the Hunnewell family, given their role in the history of the town and because they own a lot of land adjacent to this project.

Mr. Park and Ms. Gaughan stated that they will take the Commission's input and concerns back to the DPW for further discussion.

7. Approval of Minutes

McNally moved that the draft minutes from the February 18, 2021 meeting, with edits previously suggested by Mr. McNally, be approved. Shalala seconded.

Roll-call vote because of remote participation under applicable law and the emergency orders:

Brown: Yes.
Greco: Yes.
Lilley: Yes.
McNally: Yes.
Paine: Yes.

Shepsle: Yes.
Shlala: Yes.

The motion was approved unanimously, 7-0.

McNally moved that the draft minutes from the February 8, 2021 meeting be approved.
Paine seconded.

Roll-call vote because of remote participation under applicable law and the emergency orders:

Brown: Yes.
Greco: Yes.
Lilley: Yes.
McNally: Yes.
Paine: Yes.
Shepsle: Yes.
Shlala: Yes.

The motion was approved unanimously, 7-0.

8. Project Updates.

8a. Hempel selection.

Brown forwarded to the Select Board the name of Ms. Jackie Hempel as an Alternate Member of the Commission.

8b. Plaques.

Dorin presented the research on 12 Glen Road and sought approval of plaque request.

McNally moved to approve the plaque request for 12 Glen Road. Shepsle seconded.

Roll-call vote because of remote participation under applicable law and the emergency orders:

Brown: Yes.
Greco: Yes.
Lilley: Yes.
McNally: Yes.
Paine: Yes.
Shepsle: Yes.
Shlala: Yes.

The motion was approved unanimously, 7-0.

8c. Waiver Drawing Submission Requirements

Brown will circulate Lilley's draft document in MS Word format to the entire Commission for editing suggestions.

There was discussion regarding the creation of a list of past recipients of WHC awards.

9. Adjournment

Chairman Brown adjourned the meeting at 22:23.