

TOWN OF WELLESLEY



MASSACHUSETTS

## ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

888 WORCESTER STREET • SUITE 160 • WELLESLEY, MA 02482

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ZBA 2025-58

Petition of Wellesley Historical Society, Inc.  
323 Washington Street

Pursuant to due notice, the Special Permit Granting Authority held a Remote Public Hearing on Thursday, October 9, 2025, at 7:30 pm, on the petition of Wellesley Historical Society, Inc. requesting a Special Permit pursuant to the provisions of Section 5.18 and Section 6.3 of the Zoning Bylaw for installation of an externally illuminated standing sign and a wall sign that is interchangeable for every new exhibit, that will exceed the number of signs, the maximum total area of signs, the maximum area of a standing sign, the maximum area and maximum height of a wall sign that is allowed by right, in a General Residence District, at 323 Washington Street.

On September 4, 2025, the Petitioner filed a request for a hearing before this Authority, and thereafter, due notice of the hearing was given by mailing and publication.

Present at the public hearing were Bill Mordan, William and Faith Ellis, Wellesley Historical Society.

Mr. Mordan said that the request is for two signs, a standing sign in the front of Wellesley Historical Society's new History and Exhibit Center at 323 Washington Street and a special permit for use of banners for exhibits four times a year. He said that the History and Exhibit Center opened at the end of September of 2025.

Mr. Mordan said that the intent for the standing sign is to reflect the sign that is directly across the street at the Phillips Park apartment complex, with similar dimensions and matching the color scheme of the Historical Society. He said that the Design Review Board requested that they change the proposed brick foundation to granite. A Board member said that he agreed with the recommendation because the granite base will reduce the number of colors.

Mr. Mordan said that the request is also for temporary banners to go on the building four times a year to advertise exhibits that are inside the building. He said that the purpose of the building is not only for the Historical Society but to allow other organizations, such as schools and nonprofit organizations, to use the exhibit facility and galleries for their own presentations. He said that the wall sign will only be used when there are exhibits in place, which is not necessarily continuous. A Board member confirmed that when there are no exhibits in place, there will be no wall sign.

The Chairman said that the proposed wall sign doesn't fit neatly into the Zoning Bylaw. He said that the Board recently approved interchangeable banners at the Unitarian Church and Babson College.

No member of the public wished to speak to the petition.

#### Statement of Facts

The subject property is located at 323 Washington Street, in a General Residence District.

The Petitioner is requesting a Special Permit pursuant to the provisions of Section 5.18 and Section 6.3 of the Zoning Bylaw for installation of an externally illuminated standing sign and a wall sign that is interchangeable for every new exhibit, that will exceed the number of signs, the maximum total area of signs, the maximum area of a standing sign, the maximum area and maximum height of a wall sign that is allowed by right.

Sign Information, original and revised Presentation to the Wellesley Zoning Board of Appeals, dated October 9, 2025, and photographs were submitted.

On August 21, 2025, the Design Review Board voted unanimously to accept the application as presented, subject to a recommendation.

On October 7, 2025, the Planning Board reviewed the petition and recommended approval of a special permit.

#### Decision

This Authority has made a careful study of the materials submitted and the information presented at the hearing.

It is the opinion of this Authority that installation of an externally illuminated standing sign and a wall sign that is interchangeable for every new exhibit, that will exceed the number of signs, the maximum total area of signs, the maximum area of a standing sign, the maximum area and maximum height of a wall sign that is allowed by right will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of Section 5.18 of the Zoning Bylaw, as the sign scales will be in reasonable relation to development scale, viewer distance and travel speed, and sign sizes on nearby structures; sign size, shape, and placement will serve to define or enhance architectural elements of the building and will not unreasonably interrupt, obscure or hide them; sign designs will be in reasonable continuity with the mounting location, height, proportions and materials of other signage on the same or adjacent structures; sign materials, colors, lettering style, illumination and form are reasonably compatible with building design, neighborhood context and use; and sign size, location design and illumination are not judged to present a safety hazard to vehicular or pedestrian traffic.

Therefore, a Special Permit is granted for installation of an externally illuminated standing sign and a wall sign that is interchangeable for every new exhibit, that will exceed the number of signs, the maximum total area of signs, the maximum area of a standing sign, the maximum area and maximum height of a wall sign that is allowed by right, subject to the following condition:

- The base of the standing sign shall be granite.

The Inspector of Buildings is hereby authorized to issue a permit for the signs upon receipt and approval of a sign application and any other materials he may require. No sign shall be installed until said permit has been issued.

ZBA 2025-58  
Petition of Wellesley Historical Society, Inc.  
323 Washington Street

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APPEALS FROM THIS DECISION,  
IF ANY, SHALL BE MADE PURSUANT  
TO GENERAL LAWS, CHAPTER 40A,  
SECTION 17, AND SHALL BE FILED  
WITHIN 20 DAYS AFTER THE DATE  
OF FILING OF THIS DECISION IN THE  
OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK.

J. Randolph Becker (cm)  
J. Randolph Becker, Chairman

David G. Sheffield (cm)  
David G. Sheffield

Peter Covo (cm)  
Peter Covo

ZBA 2025-58  
Applicant Wellesley Historical Society, Inc.  
Address 323 Washington Street

NOT VALID FOR RECORDING UNTIL CERTIFIED BY TOWN CLERK

RECEIVED  
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE  
WELLESLEY MA 02482  
2025 OCT 23 PM 12:15

In accordance with Section 11 of Chapter 40A of the Massachusetts General Laws, I hereby certify that twenty (20) days have elapsed after the within decision was filed in the office of the Town Clerk for the Town of Wellesley, and that no appeal has been filed, or that if such appeal has been filed, that it has been dismissed or denied.

Date:

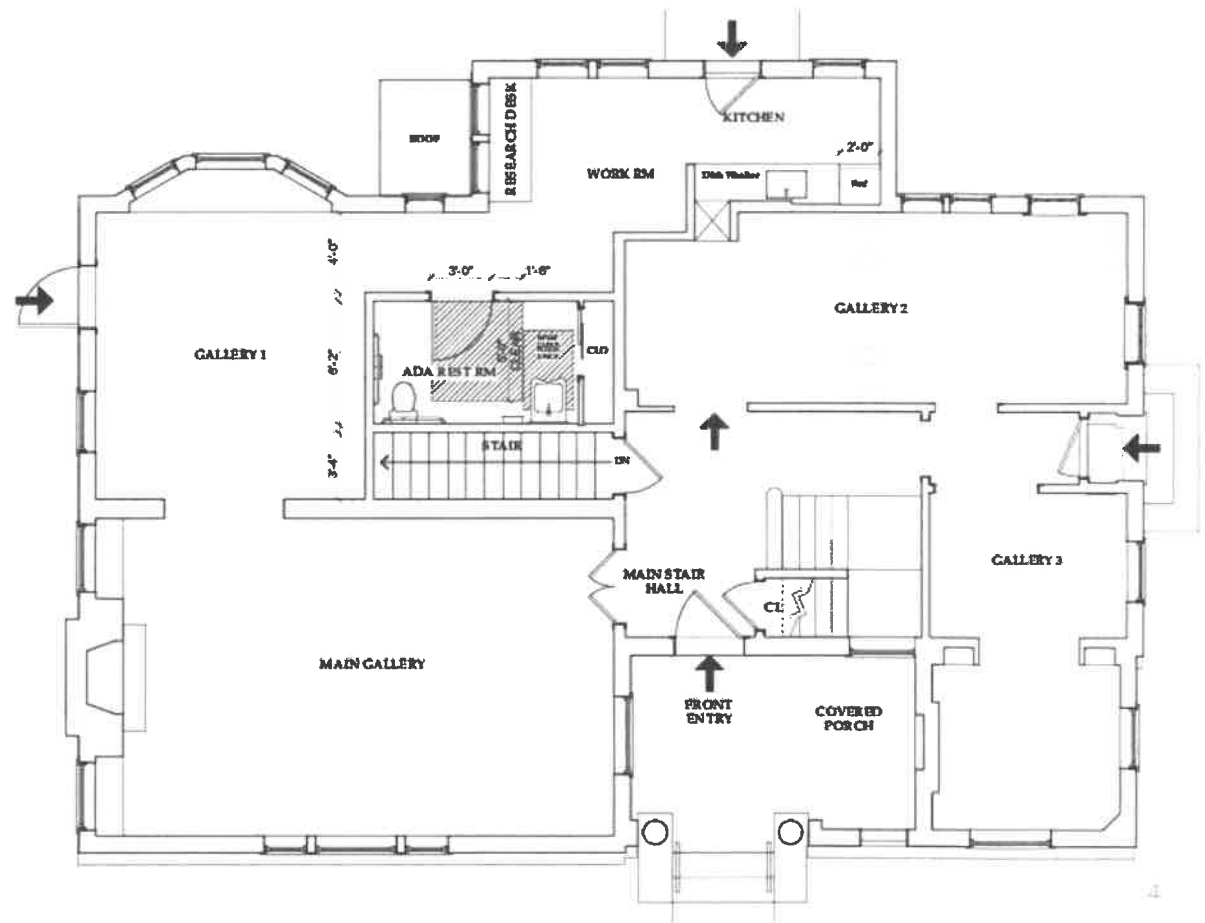
Attest:

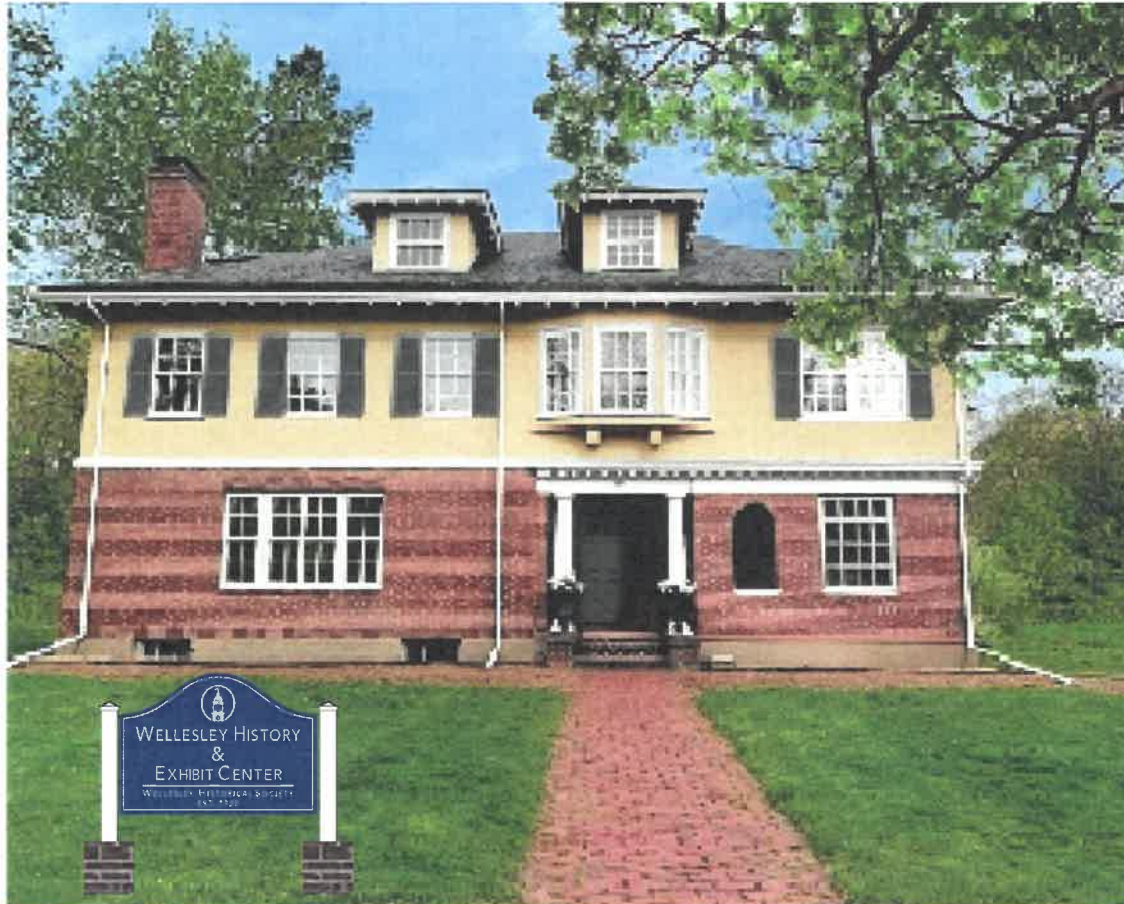
\_\_\_\_\_  
Cathryn Jane Kato  
Town Clerk

cc: Planning Board  
Inspector of Buildings  
lrn

# Wellesley History Center – 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Plans – Gallery Space

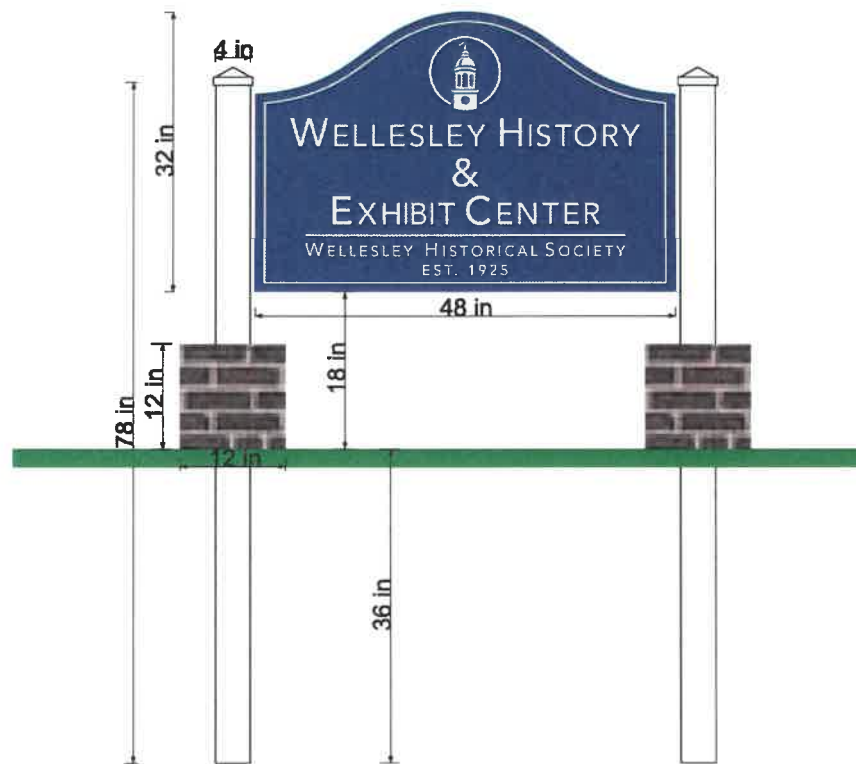
The first floor is gallery space for rotating exhibits and a public research area.





It will be 15 feet from the sidewalk, centered on the front three windows on the 1st floor. The sign will be parallel to the street. It will be to the left of the lamppost and in line of the lamppost. Ground spotlights by client.  
 SCALE OF PHOTO IS ESTIMATED FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY - ACTUAL SCALE WILL VARY.

**QTY: 2 BRICK BASES**  
**12"X12"X12"**



LED light for illumination  
Dusk to Midnight

# Wellesley History & Exhibit Center Wall/Banners Proposal



# Exhibit Schedule – 2025-2026

**Wellesley Through Time: A Walk-Through Wellesley's History -I**  
September – November - 2025

**Wellesley Society of Artists: Discover and Buy Local Artists**  
December 2025

**Wellesley Through Time: A Walk-Through Wellesley's History-II**  
January – February - 2026

**Art Wellesley: Art for You**  
March 2026

**Wellesley Through Time: A Walk-Through Wellesley's History-III**  
April – August 2026



# Wellesley History & Exhibit Center

**GENERAL NOTES:**

- EXISTING INFORMATION TAKEN FROM "PLOT PLAN" DATED 9-10-2013, DEVELOPED BY: FIELD RESOURCES, INC., LAND SURVEYORS, NEEDHAM, MA.
- ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM MARCH 2022 NEARMAP AERIAL PHOTO AND SITE VISIT (1-16-2022)

**NOTE:**

- THIS PLAN IS FOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION & COMMUNITY PRESERVATION

**49.9' from sidewalk to front of WH&EC**

# Wellesley History & Exhibit Center Wall/Banners Example

