

HARVARD HISTORICAL COMMISSION

13 AYER ROAD • HARVARD, MASSACHUSETTS 01451



The Harvard Historical Commission is chartered "...to preserve and protect the historic assets of Harvard, its buildings, structures, places, sites, and surrounding settings of historical or architectural significance."

Those wishing to record any or all of the meeting must, prior to the meeting's start, alert the chair to such and the chair will announce the fact, in accordance with The Massachusetts Open Meeting Law.

Following are the **minutes** of a public hearing and regular meeting of the Harvard Historical Commission, held via Zoom, on **Wednesday, November 4, 2020 at 7 pm.**

Submitted by George Triantaris, Secretary.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Pam Marston (Chair)
Steve Nigzus (Vice Chair)
George Triantaris (Secretary)
Emanuel Lindo
Richard Cabelus
Brandon Loughery
Matthew McRae

MEMBERS IN ABSENTIA: None

AUDIENCE:

Carl Sciple, Lucas Thayer, Olivia MacClean, Stephen Morris, Peter Warren, Alice Thayer, Seth Trotz, Tim Schmoyer, Karen Levitt, Elisa Stroh and presenters and others noted below.

TOPICS:

CALL TO ORDER:

7:01 pm

REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES OF LAST MEETING:

The minutes of the October 7 and October 13, 2020 meetings were approved unanimously with Manny abstaining from the October 7 vote as he did not attend that meeting.

ONGOING APPLICATION:

PUBLIC HEARING:

1. 20 Fairbank – Matthew McRae – removal of chimney and porch rail

Public Hearing opened at 7:30

Presentation opened

Presentation of application

Matthew McRae presented

Matt presented his application which had been reviewed at the last meeting. He proposes to remove the chimney located at the rear of the structure (not currently functional), restore the principal chimney located at the division between the two structures, and remove the balustrade and railings on the porch (returning the porch to its original 19th century design as documented in an historic photograph).

Presentation closed

Public Presentation opened

Public comments in favor:

Carl Sciple, Peter Morrison, Brandon Smithwood and Seth Trotz all supported the project, commending Matt on his efforts to restore the house.

Public comments against:

No member of the public appeared

Public Participation closed

Commissioners' Deliberation and Vote

The commissioners discussed the changes and pointed out that Matt was working very hard to restore a structure that had been neglected for many years. The commissioners voted unanimously to approve the

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application as appropriate (Matt abstained).

Public Hearing closed

2. HHC Design Guidelines

Public Hearing opened at 7:48

Presentation opened

Presentation of application

Manny Lindo Presented

Pam mentioned that the application was filed by the HHC to consider revisions to the Design Guidelines, a project that has been underway for a year. Manny presented the document noting examples of the changes that were made. The Guidelines have been available for review by the public on the website.

Presentation closed

Public Presentation opened

Public comments in favor:

No member of the public appeared

Public comments against:

Paul Green commented that he was concerned by word choices, such as “preferred” and “must” and felt the changes could be clearer. Brandon Smithwood raised concerns about the guidelines for solar installations and wondered about the difference between “historic structures” and “primary structures”.

Public Participation closed

Commissioners’ Deliberation and Vote

Richard pointed out, in answer to the objections, that the Guidelines were intended to be guidelines and not rules and that they are designed to help both residents and commissioners in making informed decisions. The commissioners are not, nor are they intended to be, experts on every issue that may come before them, rather they are meant to apply guidelines in a way that will both allow changes to structures where possible and preserve the integrity of the districts. The homeowner has the burden to provide any additional information that might help with the decision. Manny noted that the document addressed updates and changes in technology. George stressed that the guidelines are not meant to be rules, rather they provide guidance but leave flexibility to address individual situations. The revised Design Guidelines were approved by unanimous vote.

Public Hearing closed 8:05

NEW APPLICATIONS:

1. 92 South Shaker Road – Alice Thayer – fence

Alice presented her application for a fence around her garden. It is about 500 feet in total. Lucas Thayer noted that the fence is made of metal sections about 6 feet tall and 10 feet wide and secured with “T” posts. In answer to a question from commissioners Lucas stated that the fence is meant to be permanent. There was a unanimous vote that this is a substantial change requiring a public hearing.

2. 3 Fairbank Street – Pat Hatch – generator

Pat was unable to join the meeting due to technical challenges. Pam presented her application for a generator to be placed near the house and obscured as much as possible. Richard acted as her advocate and stated that there was no other location available due to the constraints of the property. Pat selected a smaller generator to make it less visible. Richard pointed out that it would not be attached to the house and could be removed later if desired. There was a unanimous vote to treat this as an insubstantial change (George and Steve abstained due to a possible conflict).

3. 20 Fairbank Street – Matthew McRae – add windows and new door surround

Matt presented an additional application to add a window over the front door of the older structure,

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reconfigure the door surround, add gas lights on either side of the door, add two windows on the side of the house and change the roof pitch slightly. Matt explained that some of the changes are required in order to make the rear of the saltbox structurally sound and to allow the beams on the third floor to be visible on the inside. Adding a window over the front door will make the structure more in keeping with other historic examples and will allow for a better configuration of the interior space. Two new windows would be added to the north side of the house toward the rear of the lean to. The door surround will help to shed water. He will have new wood windows built to exactly match the existing windows and will repurpose one historic window from another location to be installed on the front of the house. The application contains further details. There were a few specific questions about materials. It was voted unanimously to treat this as a substantial change (with Matt abstaining).

4. 101 South Shaker Road – Charlotte Vallaes – new fence

Charlotte presented her application to extend her wood rail fence that is reinforced with wire to protect her garden. Commissioners liked the design of the fence as it is simple, the wood components being most visible, is in keeping with the surrounding architecture and yet protects the plants from deer and other animals. There was a unanimous vote to treat this is a substantial change.

NEW APPLICATIONS APPROVED: None

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Report on discussion with building inspector regarding permitting for projects in the districts (SN)
Steve reported that he had a conversation with the building commissioner who stated that he issues no permits for any exterior work on structures within the historic districts without a certificate of appropriateness from the HHC – this includes demolition of structures.
2. Staci Donahue – Planning Board – Senior Housing and Bromfield House
Staci reported that the Planning Board wishes to be better connected to the other town boards and that she was checking in on a few topics and also to determine whether the HHC had any issues it wished to raise. The Planning Board is currently planning to present a senior housing bylaw at the spring town meeting. They will be conducting a survey on this topic as well as organizing focus groups and hope to include members of the HHC and others in town besides seniors (past surveys had focused on seniors) to learn how the community feels about senior housing.
Staci reported that the Planning Board would like input from the HHC regarding Bromfield House. Pam agreed to serve on a subcommittee to represent the HHC. It was decided that Matt would do some research on Bromfield house including the history and importance of the structure. Matt will share this information with the commissioners so that a position can be formulated on the significance of the structure.

ON-GOING BUSINESS:

1. 11 Mass Ave - Brandon Smithwood - Solar Panels – Revised Application
Brandon presented his revised application for solar panels which was identical to his prior application other than the removal of the panels on the street facing roof and the addition of one panel to the back roof. The application was unanimously approved with Matt abstaining as he is an abutter.

Steve read the following statement for the record:

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“As the advocate assigned to help with this application, I would like the meeting minutes to reflect as well as for the information of all of the Commissioners of the HHC the following items following our decision for this solar panel application:

1. Brandon contacted the Select Board, attended their meeting and spoke at the Public Commentary section;
2. He also contacted our State Senator’s office to express his displeasure with the decision and the process of this Commission.
3. Furthermore, he posted on social media about the decision.

This is perfectly within his rights however he misrepresented the facts. We have supplied copies of the application, the decision and the reasoning to the bodies listed above and wish to clarify once again, as is clear in the record, that the Harvard Historical Commission is and has been committed to solar power and has allowed panels to be utilized whenever this can be done consistent with the goals of preserving and protecting the historical assets and architectural integrity of the historic districts.”

2. Bromfield stonewall project – update (EL)
There have been some delays caused by issues with the stone cap however the project is moving forward.
3. Certificates of Appropriateness – update on uploading prior certificates on HHC website (GT) – on hold until website can be reconfigured to accommodate the scanned documents.
4. Rules and Regulations – George reported that the approved Rules and Regulations have been filed with the town clerk and are posted on the HHC website, completing the project.
5. HHC welcome packet for new homeowners – update (BL) Brochure (PM) and introduction letter to district residents (GT) – update to be given next month.
6. Historic Harvard Website (PM & BL) – update to be given next month.
7. Herb House (ML)
Manny stated that the report should be ready to be presented at the January meeting.
8. Projects for high school students (ML)
George is waiting to hear whether any high school students would like to take on the project of documenting the structures in the historic districts this winter.
9. Project currently on hold:

Demolition Delay (GT)

Town Center lighting and power lines (GT)

Harvard Narrative History – historical surveys 1993 and 1994 (GT)

CORRESPONDENCE: None

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND LIAISONS:

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Monument Committee (RC) – Work on the monument project is proceeding.

CPC (PM) – Funds will be allocated to the town hall debt.

Cemetery Commission

PUBLIC COMMENTARY: None

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

SET DATE FOR NEXT MEETING: December 2, 2020

MEETING ADJOURNED:

8:45 pm

DOCUMENTS:

Applications