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**MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARINGS
AUBURNDALE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**

DATE: March 14, 2023

PLACE/TIME: Fully Remote
7:00 p.m.

ATTENDING: Dante Capasso, Chair
Paul Dudek, Member
Nancy Grissom, Member
Joel Shames, Member
Richard Alfred, Alternate
Josh Markette, Alternate
Barbara Kurze, Staff

ABSENT: David Kayserman, Member
Martin Smargiassi, Alternate

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. with Dante Capasso presiding as Chair. Voting permanent member were P. Dudek and N. Grissom. R. Alfred, J. Markette, and J. Shames were appointed to vote as full members. B. Kurze acted as recording secretary and the meeting was recorded on Zoom.

120 Seminary Avenue and 24 Robin Dell, Lasell Village – Certificate of Appropriateness

This review was continued from previous meetings. Steve Buchbinder, Katherine Adams, Michael Alexander, Philippe Saad, and Ben Bailey presented an application to relocate 24 Robin Dell and connect it to the new building. The new building would have approximately 42 independent living units. P. Saad presented aerial views that showed the district boundaries and larger institutional buildings, views from Grove Street and section drawings. He explained that the differences in grade meant that the new building would be lower than 24 Robin Dell and adjacent properties on Grove Street. S. Buchbinder said the applicants were asking for conceptual approval of the new construction.

Materials Reviewed:

APPLICATION LINK: <https://newtonma.viewpointcloud.com/records/779651>

3 PDF Files:

Part 1 of 3.7.23 Submission

Part 2 of 3.7.23 Submission

Part 3 of 3.7.23 Submission

Part 1 of 3.7.23 Submission.pdf:

Aerial view with district boundaries, proposed project, and other contemporary buildings
Photos of contemporary buildings in the district
Comparison of footprint of first proposal and current proposal
Existing and proposed site plan
Existing and proposed site sections looking North
Proposed landscape plan
Landscape precedent images
Landscape precedent images
Gabion wall detail
Square footage calculations before and after lowering the roof design

Part 2 of 3.7.23 Submission.pdf:

3D renderings and perspectives
Proposed 24 Robin Dell south elevation with height dimensions
West elevation (looking from Grove Street) showing Dec 15 building roofline, roof height, and height differential from 24 Robin Dell
West elevation (looking from Grove Street) showing Feb 14 lower building roofline, roof height, and height differential from 24 Robin Dell and Dec 15 roofline, roof height, and height differential from 24 Robin Dell
West elevation (looking through the 24 Robin Dell connector) showing Feb 14 lower building roofline, roof height, and height differential from 24 Robin Dell and Dec 15 roofline, roof height, and height differential from 24 Robin Dell
East elevation showing Feb 14 lower building roofline, roof height, and height differential from 24 Robin Dell and Dec 15 roofline, roof height, and height differential from 24 Robin Dell
North elevation showing Feb 14 lower building roofline, roof height, and height differential from 24 Robin Dell and Dec 15 roofline, roof height, and height differential from 24 Robin Dell
South elevation showing Feb 14 lower building roofline, roof height, and height differential from 24 Robin Dell and Dec 15 roofline, roof height, and height differential from 24 Robin Dell
New building proposed materials
Renderings

Part 3 of 3.7.23 Submission.pdf (Appendix of previously submitted materials):

Survey
24 Robin Dell photographs
24 Robin Dell existing elevations and roof plan with proposed changes called out
Aerial view
Existing views from Grove Street
24 Robin Dell proposed elevations and roof plan
24 Robin Dell photographs

24 Robin Dell window detail drawings
Proposed site section looking south
Context analysis – building form
Context analysis – surrounding buildings

P. Dudek commented that he had worked on similar projects in historic districts where historic structures were moved, and new construction was approved; he was fine with what was proposed. He said that the roof with dormers reduced the height and scale, the new building was set back quite a distance from Grove Street, and the views would be limited by the existing houses on Grove Street and the relocated 24 Robin Dell house. The project was appropriate, and the integrity of the district was maintained. J. Marquette asked about the height of the new building relative to 24 Robin Dell; the new building was seven feet taller.

Ewen Cameron (248 Grove St) was concerned about the proposed size of the new building and asked the applicants to consider other alternatives. Steve Weiss (210 Grove St) asked why the project could not be built somewhere else. He was concerned about moving 24 Robin Dell, potential set back and zoning issues and the agreement between Lasell University and the City of Newton. Iraida Alvarez (210 Grove St) thought that relocating 24 Robin Dell and the new building were major changes to the district and was concerned that the process was not transparent and was not following the agreement with the City of Newton. S. Buchbinder explained that the process started with the Historic District Commission, and they would also review the agreement with the City. Bryan Gary (81 Old Orchard Rd) asked if the Chair had a conflict of interest. D. Capasso said he was well aware of the conflict-of-interest law and he did not have a conflict of interest. B. Gary thought the Historic District Commission mandate was to limit Lasell University and was concerned that the project did not fit in the district. Trevor Mack (197 Grove St) did not believe the public's comments were appropriately addressed; he said there was no precedent to have a building that in and out of the district boundaries and was concerned about losing the old growth and natural buffer.

D. Capasso stated that the project was consistent with the ordinance requirements to preserve and protect buildings and characteristics, to maintain and improve the properties, and to allow for compatible new construction and design. The design of the new building was sympathetic to the character of the district; he did not think that a "faux-historical" building would be appropriate. P. Dudek said that modern buildings constructed in historic districts should be a record of the time, place; it would not be appropriate to tack on historical architectural elements. The new building should have architectural integrity. J. Shames was inclined to approve the project; it met the criteria for incorporating new construction. N. Grissom also supported the project and stated that most of the new building would not be visible from Grove Street and she did not think the massing was an issue. R. Alfred was concerned with the height and massing of the new building and thought the design could be more sympathetic to the district architecture. J. Markette shared R. Alfred's concerns about the size of the new building; he preferred a lower roof and more historic looking design. He was also concerned that the project would be a dramatic change that did not fit in with the neighboring houses on Grove Street.

D. Capasso said the commission could take a non-binding straw poll to see which commissioners supported the proposed project. The vote was 4-2 with R. Alfred and J. Markette voting in the negative. S. Buchbinder said that the next step was to meet with the City about the agreement and then they would come back to the commission with a full submission for review. The applicants agreed in writing to continue the review to a future regularly scheduled meeting.

Administrative discussion

Minutes: the February meeting minutes were approved.

Remote meetings: The order to allow remote meetings would probably be extended past March 31st.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Recorded by Barbara Kurze, Senior Preservation Planner