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STAFF MEMORANDUM

Meeting Date: November 12, 2024
DATE: November 1, 2024
TO: Auburndale Historic District Commission
FROM: Barbara Kurze, Senior Preservation Planner
SUBJECT: **Additional Review Information**

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the members of the Auburndale Historic District Commission (Auburndale HDC) with information about the significance of the properties being reviewed and the application process, which may be useful in the review and decision-making process of the Auburndale HDC. Additional information may be presented at the meeting that the Auburndale HDC can take into consideration when discussing a Local Historic District Review application.

Dear Auburndale HDC Members,

The following is additional information for the review of the Local Historic District Review applications.

Applications

348 Central Street – Certificate of Appropriateness

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE: The 1912 Craftsman house was first occupied by James Strong. The lot was originally part of a larger estate, the Hardy Estate, which was subdivided prior to World War I.

APPLICATION PROCESS: The owner wants to replace the concrete driveway area on the left side of the house with asphalt; the driveway is accessed from Leighton Road. The driveway configuration and size will not change.

Note: Most driveways in the district are asphalt.

MATERIALS PROVIDED:

APPLICATION LINK: <https://newtonma.viewpointcloud.com/records/845227>

Pdf: Compiled 348 Central

Assessors database map

Photos

Sketch of driveway configuration and dimensions
MHC Form B

120 Woodland Road – Certificate of Appropriateness

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE: The circa 1849 Italianate house may have been built by noted Auburndale builder Abijah S. Johnson. Johnson played an important role in the suburban development of Auburndale; he purchased land in South Auburndale in the 1840s and laid out today's Grove, Hancock and Maple streets. By 1850, Deacon Samuel Barrett was living in the house with his family. That same year, Barrett and other neighbors organized the Congregational Church of Auburndale. Barrett was a principal for several grammar schools in South Boston until 1865, when he resigned to take a position in the U.S. Patent Office in Washington, D.C. By 1873, the property was owned by Boston tea and tobacco dealer Loring B. Burnes until his death in 1891 when the property was sold to Lasell Junior College, which used the house as a dormitory for the next 83 years.

APPLICATION PROCESS: The owner wants to replace the asphalt driveway in-kind and add cobblestone aprons and borders. The aprons will be added at each end of the circular driveway and at the front entry stairs.

Note: The commission has approved cobblestone aprons and borders that are appropriately designed and appropriate to the property.

MATERIALS PROVIDED:

APPLICATION LINK: <https://newtonma.viewpointcloud.com/records/847398>

Pdf: Compiled 120 Woodland

Assessors database map

Photos

Sketch with dimensions

Photo of the proposed cobblestone

MHC Form B

225 Grove Street – Certificate of Appropriateness

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE: The Victorian house was built circa 1882.

APPLICATION PROCESS: The owners want to demolish three chimneys. One chimney is on the back addition and is not visible from a public way; the other two are visible from Grove Street. They want to replace the roof in-kind and replace three skylights on the right side of the back addition; the skylights are not visible from a public way. They also want to install two new skylights – one on the left side of the back addition and one on the front gable end roof on the right roof face where the existing chimney is. The new skylight on the back addition might be minimally visible; the one at the front would be visible. New roof vents will be installed at the back and will be a dark color to blend with the roof surface.

Note: The replacement of the roof and the existing three skylights, and the demolition of the back chimney can be administratively approved and do not require commission review.

The two chimneys that are visible are in bad shape; the question for the commission is if they contribute to the architecture of the house.

Commissions typically have not approved skylights that are at the front of the house.

MATERIALS PROVIDED:

APPLICATION LINK: <https://newtonma.viewpointcloud.com/records/845497>

Pdf: Compiled 225 Grove

Assessors database map

Photos

Aerial photo marked to show locations of chimneys and skylights

Product information

MHC Form B

99 Hancock Street – Certificate of Appropriateness

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE: The circa 1912 stucco Craftsman house was designed by John J. McCarthy of Dorchester and built by Charles S. Blair of Auburndale. The first owner was Harry W. Greenleaf.

APPLICATION PROCESS: The owner wants to replace several sections of the cedar fencing along the right property line in-kind. The front walkway would be replaced with Unilock concrete pavers. The driveway would be expanded from 12-feet wide to 18-feet wide so that the right-side lines up with the side of the garage, and the asphalt would be replaced with Unilock concrete pavers. A drain would be installed by the garage. The flagstone front walk would be replaced with Unilock concrete pavers; the dimensions will stay the same and there are no proposed changes to the steps and entry. Decorative masonry columns with stone caps would be installed along the front property line and connected with iron fencing. The fencing would be painted either matte or glossy black.

Note: The in-kind fence replacement can be administratively approved.

The applicant submitted several colors (Granite Mist, Limestone, etc.) and textures (smooth and tumbled) for the pavers and would like approval for the appropriate options.

Two iron fencing options were submitted, one with a flat bottom and top rail and the second with “pickets” and would like approval for the appropriate options.

If there is not enough information to understand the proposed masonry columns with the stone caps and iron fencing, commissioners should provide feedback as to whether this concept could be appropriate and direction as to what information would be required.

MATERIALS PROVIDED:

APPLICATION LINK: <https://newtonma.viewpointcloud.com/records/846907>

Pdf: Compiled 99 Hancock

Assessors database map

Photo

Assessors database map marked to show location of fence panels

Photos marked up to show fence panels and proposed replacements

Assessors database map marked to show driveway and front walk existing and proposed dimensions

Photos of the house, driveway and front walk

Photo with dimensions of front walk

Additional photos of the driveway, front walk and front entrance

Proposed paver pattern

3 paver color options

Information about smooth and tumbled pavers

Additional information about Unilock pavers

Assessors database map marked to show location of masonry posts

Photos marked to show location of masonry posts

Detail sketches of posts, caps and fencing

Photos of stone caps

2 wrought iron fence designs

Information about iron fence paint options

MHC Form B

This Old House information about metal fences

256 Woodland Road – Certificate of Appropriateness

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE: The circa 1926 Colonial Revival house was first owned by William and Grace Tenney. William worked as an insurance agent in Boston.

APPLICATION PROCESS: The owner wants to change the front walk and entry landing. The brick walkway would be replaced with a cobblestone walkway with a cobblestone border and will be widened from four feet to five-and-a-half feet at the entry and will flare out to about eight-and-a-half feet as it approaches the metal posts near the sidewalk.

The entry landing and riser will be replaced with a two-inch granite landing cobblestone riser. The current landing is 30 inches deep; the proposed will be four feet deep.

The driveway will have a cobblestone apron next to the sidewalk. The owner will confirm the dimensions.

Note: Commissions have sometimes approved a flare out in walkways at the entry stairs and landing but not a flare out at the sidewalk. Cobblestone is also not a typical material for a front walkway.

The commission has approved cobblestone aprons that are appropriately designed and appropriate to the property.

The owner needs to confirm the dimensions of the proposed cobblestone apron.

MATERIALS PROVIDED:

APPLICATION LINK: <https://newtonma.viewpointcloud.com/records/846539>

Pdf: Compiled 256 Woodland

Assessors database map

Photo

Detailed project description

Photos of existing driveway and walkway

Renderings of proposed walkway

Photo of proposed entryway design

Photo of cobblestone paver

Photo of proposed driveway apron layout

MHC Form B

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

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE: The circa 1860 Italianate style house at 24 Robin Dell appears to have first been owned by farmer Nelson Clark. In the 1874 City Atlas, Mary F. Clark is shown as the owner. The house is an example of properties that were built during the period that Auburndale was transitioning from a rural agricultural community to a suburban streetcar suburb. The property is listed as a contributing property to the National Register district and the local historic district under its earlier address of 113 Seminary Avenue. 120 Seminary Avenue was built in 2000.

APPLICATION PROCESS: The applicants want to amend the plans that the commission approved for 24 Robin Dell and 120 Seminary Avenue.

The changes are listed in the October 22, 2024, letter from Schlesinger and Buchbinder in the compiled pdf file. The changes to 24 Robin Dell include: changing the width of the connector and the rear elevation; changing the design of the front entry porch; changing the 6-over-6 window at the front to 2-over-2 to be consistent with the other windows; adding four inches of insulation to the exterior side of the existing walls; and extending the roof eaves.

The changes to 120 Seminary Avenue include: adding an accessible ramp; standardizing the width of the projecting bays; increasing the width of dormers and brick façade; moving the mechanical screen and first-floor patio doors; changing window sizes and configurations; adding balcony lights; and keeping the Fiber Cement shingles with texture.

Notes: Staff looked at the National Park Service literature on weatherizing historic buildings. The most current Technical Preservation Services bulletin identified two potential issues when insulation is installed on the exterior of a historic building: loss of historic fabric, and insulation that “may alter the proportion and relationship of the wall to the historic windows and trim.” <https://www.nps.gov/crps/tps/sustainability-guidelines/insulation.htm>

If the exterior insulation for 24 Robin Dell is denied, Staff can request a Historic exemption for any energy code requirements.

MATERIALS PROVIDED:

APPLICATION LINK: <https://newtonma.viewpointcloud.com/records/847436>

Pdf: Compiled 120 Seminary

Assessors database map
Letter from Schlesinger and Buchbinder listing proposed changes
Photos
Timeline
Site plan changes
Elevation changes to 120 Seminary
Elevation changes to 24 Robin Dell
Street views
Section drawing of proposed wall insulation for 24 Robin Dell
List of proposed changes
MHC Form B

Violation of the Historic District Ordinance at 71 Studio Road

Request for Certificate of Appropriateness to Remediate Violation at 71 Studio Road

Note: Studio Road is a private way.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE: There are two houses on this property. The larger house closer to Aspen Avenue was built in 1991 and first owned by Dr. David Sacks, a professor of surgery at Harvard Medical School. The smaller house on Studio Road was built circa 1885 and served as the quarters for the coachman of the H.A. Priest estate at 74 Vista Avenue. At that time, Studio Road was named Oakland Avenue.

APPLICATION PROCESS: The owners replaced the existing fence with a 6-foot-tall, closed board fence along the property line between 71 Studio Road and 84 Aspen Avenue, along Aspen Avenue, and along Studio Road. The fence was not reviewed or approved by the commission.

The fence that was replaced was a taller, somewhat open picket fence between 71 Studio Road and 84 Aspen Avenue and along Aspen Avenue which transitioned to a shorter, more open picket fence along Studio Road.

The commission needs to vote to confirm that there is a violation. And then needs to vote on the application for the fence that was built. If the commission denies the as-built fence, commissioners should give feedback to the owners about possible remediation plans.

Note: The Auburndale Historic District is characterized by open streetscapes and Aspen Avenue is no exception. There are several properties with plantings, low open picket fences, or low retaining walls, but except for a few “green walls”, these do not take away from the open character. The Historic District Commissions are tasked with keeping views of buildings open to the street and not diminishing the streetscape; this commission has not approved fences that block the view of buildings from the public way. Here is the link to the City Historic Preservation Design Guidelines that covers site elements, including fences: <https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/41361/637411402961000000>

MATERIALS PROVIDED:

APPLICATION LINK: <https://newtonma.viewpointcloud.com/records/844680>

Pdf: Compiled 71 Studio

Assessors database map

Staff screenshots of the original fence from Google Street View

Staff photos of the new fence and sections of the original fence that were not replaced

Letter from the owner

Photos from the owner

MHC Form B

Administrative Discussion

Minutes: Review October 2024 minutes

Gas lamps: The City will be disconnecting all gas streetlights in Newton. There are several gas streetlights on Vista Avenue that will be affected. The proposal is to keep the lamp posts but change out the lamps for solar powered lamps. The City will submit an application for these changes, but this is an opportunity for commissioners to ask questions and provide feedback. Staff will send out photos of the existing gas streetlights and information about what is proposed.