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STAFF MEMORANDUM

Meeting Date: December 15, 2020
DATE: December 8, 2020
TO: Newton Upper Falls 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 Newton Upper Falls Historic District Commission (Newton Upper Falls 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 Newton Upper Falls HDC. Additional information may be presented at the meeting that the Newton Upper Falls HDC can take into consideration when discussing a Local Historic District Review application.

Dear Newton Upper Falls HDC Members,

The following is additional information for the Local Historic District Review applications that you should have received in your meeting packet.

Applications

Sidewalk along Oak Street at 1214-1240 Chestnut Street – Certificate of Appropriateness

APPLICATION PROCESS: The City of Newton wants to temporarily replace the brick sidewalk along Oak Street at 1214-1220 Chestnut Street with asphalt to make it more accessible. The long-term plan is to replace that area with stamped concrete. The current brick sidewalk is in disrepair and not accessible.

MATERIALS PROVIDED:

Assessors database map
Project area
Photographs

13-19 Winter Street – Working Session

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE: The circa 1840 Federal style house is one of the oldest surviving structures in Newton Upper Falls. The first owner appears to have been Elijah W.H. Trask who was a foreman at the rolling mill.

APPLICATION PROCESS: The new owner has asked for feedback options to work on the property and on the possibility of reconstructing the historic house. The previous owner submitted a request for emergency demolition, which ISD denied; and applied to the Commission for demolition, which was also denied.

Staff explained to the new owner that the Commission will require comprehensive reports and details to review any proposed demolition. The new owner has submitted a mold report but has not submitted an interior structural report. He is resubmitting the exterior report provided by the previous owner.

MATERIALS PROVIDED:

Site plan

Interior structural report

Mold inspection report

Interior photos

Board Evaluation of Emergency Demolition Request

Certificate of Hardship for Demolition – Denied

Previous owner's demolition request

MHC Form B

959 Chestnut Street – Certificate of Appropriateness (Violation)

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE: The Federal/Greek Revival style house was built circa 1825 and is located within an important cluster of early 19th century houses on Chestnut Street. (Number 954 (circa 1830), 960 (circa 1830), 965 (circa 1825), 966 (circa 1830), 969 (1843), and 970 (circa 1820). 959 Chestnut Street is representative of the housing type that was common to the period when Rufus Ellis was establishing mill buildings and factories. In 2019, the owner was approved to keep and restore the main house block, to remove and replace the front porch, demolish the rear additions, and build new additions and a garage.

APPLICATION PROCESS: Summary: the owner is in violation for the retaining walls which were built without Commission review and approval. The application for the trim details and the amendment for the change from fiberglass gutters to aluminum were denied in the November meeting because the Commission requires that outstanding violations be addressed before considering other applications. Once the violation is addressed, the Commission can take up other applications. There is a new application for a fence and gates. Details for each of these are provided as follows.

Retaining wall violation:

The owner submitted an application for the retaining walls in violation. Materials include: a landscape plan showing the new walls, a civil plan showing the previously existing walls, and a photograph showing the previously existing wall on the right side of the house and new location.

Trim details for main house block and bay:

The application was denied in the November meeting because of the outstanding retaining wall violation. The Commission may take up this application if the existing violations are addressed. Materials include: the decision denying the application, staff list of details, photos, detail drawings and elevations, drawings and materials approved in 2019.

Change from fiberglass gutters to aluminum:

The application to change the approved fiberglass gutters to black aluminum k-style gutters with black aluminum round downspouts was denied in the November meeting because of the outstanding retaining wall violation. Commission may take up this application if the existing violations are addressed. Materials include: the decision denying the application, and the product specifications.

Fence:

The owners want to install new sections of vinyl fencing to match the design of the existing wood fence which appears to be four feet of closed board and two feet of lattice topper. extend the existing six-foot closed board wood fence with the lattice topper along the side and back property lines. They also want to install a four-foot-tall steel picket fence across the front with a gate at the front entry walk and across the driveway. Materials include: a fence plan, photos of the proposed fence styles, assessors database map, fence and gate specifications, and photos of fences in the neighborhood.

Administrative discussion: Draft November minutes are not yet finalized.