



*** AGENDA ***

Date: January 28, 2021

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Place: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83712586158> or
+13017158592,,83712586158#

1. Presentation on draft revisions to Demolition Delay Ordinance

Andrew Lee, Newton Law Department

After approximately 50 weeks of meetings held on Friday mornings, the Working Group, comprised of city-councilors Albright, Crossley, Kelley, and Baker, attorney Andrew Lee, NHC member Doug Cornelius, and Planning Director Barney Heath have produced a draft revision to the Demolition Delay ordinance. Prior to this review, the Working Group completed a review of the Local Landmark ordinance, a revised version of which was adopted by the full council in July 2020. The Working Group is interested in received NHC feedback prior to presenting of a set of proposed revisions to a future meeting of the Zoning and Planning Committee of the city council. A clean copy of the draft ordinance is provided in your packets. Andrew Lee will make the presentation.

Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

Barney S. Heath
Director
Planning & Development

Members

Doug Cornelius, Chair
Mark Armstrong
Nancy Grissom
Peter Dimond
Katie Kubie
Alan Mayer
Amanda Stauffer Park
Deborah Budd, Alternate
Jennifer Bentley-Houston, Alt.

2. 52 Aberdeen Street – Demolition Review (Ward 6)

Request to demolish buildings

Built in 1923 by Harry Beaton, this house was designed by F. Gowing of Tremont Street, Boston. The house appears to have had one occupant the entire time, Mikhail (scientist) and Simone Ioffe, though banks and individuals appear variously in the deeds as occasional owners. This house was built as a center-entrance Dutch Colonial in a neighborhood of other post-1900 homes just north of Route 9 in Newton Highlands. Loss of original historic material is evident, though its scale and massing are intact. In 1923, a one-car garage was constructed. In 1930, a detached metal garage was added to the lot. In 1931, bay for second car was added to first garage. A rear sun deck was added in 1994. This house was constructed later than some of the surrounding homes and is not a notable example of Dutch Colonial architecture or contextual significance. Staff recommends not preferably preserving this property.

3. 192 Evelyn Road – Demolition Review (Ward 5)

Request to demolish buildings

Developed as a neighborhood between 1950 and 1954, Mary Ellen Road and Evelyn Road were noted in a survey for their cohesive post-war Traditional Style housing. This surveyed district is also reportedly the largest collection of brick veneer ranches with exposed rafters in the city. The example at 192 Evelyn Road was not called out in the survey as representing architectural design elements that were either unique or emblematic of the Ranch style aesthetic in the neighborhood. Joseph B. and Ida Sampson, president of Harvard Metal Products, bought the property from Merrill Nutting, who worked in real estate, in 1951. The most recent long-time owners, Helene and Murray Aisenburg,

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salesman, bought the property in 1963. There has been some transitional development at the northern end of this district, which has compromised the context of this property somewhat. As it is not a representative example of Traditional Style housing in the district and its immediate context has been altered, staff recommends not preferably preserving this property.

4. **17 Washington Terrace, 21 Washington Terrace – Demolition Review**
Request to demolish buildings

This and the house next door at 21 Washington Terrace have construction dates listed in GIS as 1880 and 1900, respectively. On historic atlases, neither house was standing in 1886, nor has either been previously surveyed. City directories suggest an 1895 construction date for both. By 1895, the houses at #17 and #21 were owned by Fitzhugh S. Rollins, a long-time member of the militia and a paperhanger who lived on Walnut Street. Rollins was likely responsible for the construction of both homes on land he purchased in 1887 from Catherine K. Simmons. Mary A.B. Allen, widow and Clara Allen were listed that same year as owners and occupants of the house at #17. Both were musicians and taught music from this address. In 1927, dormers were added to the north and south sides of the roof under the ownership of Clara Allen, and at that time the house was described as a single-family dwelling. Her husband Walter C. was a policeman. A detached garage was permitted in 1987. Ownership of the property did not change until 1945. None of the subsequent owners were noted names in Newton history.

In 1895, #21 was owned by Mary A.B. Allen. It is clear both houses were built in the exact same style and layout, with gambrel-ends facing the street, side-mounted turrets, deep overhanging front porches, and side dormers. In 1936, under the ownership of Abbie Fiske, a rear addition was constructed at this address, and the house was described as a two-family. A year later, another small addition was constructed at the rear, and in 1938 Albert Kreider designed an enlarged kitchen and additional bedroom over an existing bedroom. A piazza was added in 1939 but appears to have been removed in 2007. Subsequent owners and occupants of this house were not noted names in Newton history.

Both houses appear to have been constructed as owner-housing, but later became rental units over time. What was once historical context across the street has been compromised by recent development. Properties from this age range and level of preserved architectural detail have been preferably preserved by this commission in the past. Staff recommends both properties preferably preserved for architectural integrity.

5. **19-21 Westchester Road – Demolition Review (Ward 2)**
Request to demolish buildings

This house shows a construction date of 1930. This house was surveyed as part of the Towle Estate area form and the following is reprinted from the form:

“The Towle Estate Subdivision is located in the western part of Newton Corner and is bounded by the open space of the Towle Estate, Edmands Park (SW), Blake Street (W), and the Laudholm, Langdon, Salisbury Road Area (all surveyed). Although the entire area was laid out in 1925, it consists of two very different sections. Rochester Road and the adjoining section of Westchester Road are characterized by modest, single family homes dating mainly from the 1940s and 1950s,

while the remainder of the area is developed with two-family homes dating from the same period on Blake Street and from the 1920s elsewhere. The area, particularly at its southern end, is enhanced by the surrounding open space. Representative dwellings, whose designs derive mainly from the Colonia I Revival style, are described below:

“In the nineteenth century the property known as the Towle Estate was part of the Shannon family estate. Loren Towle, a wealthy businessman and real estate investor acquired the land and in 1920 began building a large house near Centre Street. His untimely death several years later forced the sale of the 47-acre estate, which was subsequently purchased by developer Henry J. O’Meara, who was also developing the near-by Converse Estate. The Towle house and adjacent grounds (about 17 acres), which had been landscaped by the Olmsted Brothers of Brookline, were acquired by the Sacred Heart School from Boston and became known as Newton Country Day School of the Sacred Heart. The remainder of the property, which lay to the west along Cabot Street was subdivided in 1925. A number of local and outside builders were active in the area, including the Nardone Brothers of Newton. Local architects C. C. Crowell, Albert M. Kreider, and Walter Greymont were also active, as was architect J. Selwyn of Belmont.”

A house in this neighborhood at 31-33 Westchester was reviewed for full demo by this Commission and was preferably preserved in May 2015. Staff recommends the house preferably preserved for historic context.

6. 17 Brandeis Road – Partial Demolition Review (Ward 8)

Request to demolish attached garage and roof for second floor addition

Built by owner/builder Herbert Glazier of Newton and designed by Lester Lechter of Boston, this Contemporary Style home was constructed in 1959. Herbert Glazier was still the owner in 1962 when the existing garage was converted to a storage room, and two new garage bays were added to the right side of the house. Longtime owners Marcia P. and Melvin I. Wartel were residents here after Glazier sold. The house is of asymmetrical design located in a neighborhood of largely split-level homes, making this style stand out as somewhat unusual for its micro-neighborhood. Lechter was a prolific architect in Newton who specialized in post-war homes, including Ranch Styles, and split-levels. Lechter designed five other Newton homes in the Split-level style in the late 1950s that are included on MACRIS, and all, or were, located on Baldpate Hill Road: #178, 190, 200, 222, 236. Even when compared to these examples, this house at 17 Brandeis stands out as somewhat unusual. Evidence of the original windows and asymmetry can still be found on the façade. Staff recommends preferably preserving this house for architectural integrity.

7. 44 Byfield Road – Waiver Request (Ward 5)

Request to waive demo delay

The owners of this property plan to return to the commission with a proposed replacement plan for this house. This property was preferably preserved in September 2020 and the minimum four-month period has elapsed.

At the September 2020 hearing, staff reported that this house was owned, designed and built in 1926 in the Tudor Revival Style by Joseph R. Walker of Summer Street in Boston. There is no information on Joseph Walker, and there are no other permits in the ISD file. The house is described in the permit as ‘frame and brick veneer.’ The house was rented to Dexter H. Marsh, a bank salesman, three years later, but by 1932 the house was vacant. In 1952 the property was owned by William and Carolyn Bernhardt, who sold it to its most recent owner Mary E. Savage in 1968. This house is notable as one on a street of 1920s designs that represent a Revivalist theme in

the neighborhood. No properties on Byfield Road have been surveyed. It is likely this house was built as an investment, with no architect or resident of note associated with the property.

8. 69-71 Lincoln Street– Waiver Request (Ward 6)

Request to waive demo delay

The owner plans to return to the commission with proposed replacement plans for this house. This property was preferably preserved in September 2020 and the minimum four-month period has elapsed.

At the September hearing, staff reported that this property was in the Newton Highlands National Register Historic District, on land that was part of a subdivision plan from 1887. In the 1980s this house was not deemed a contributing element to the district, so it was excluded. The city GIS system shows a construction date of 1900, which appears to be about right because the address first appears in Newton directories in 1903. The first owner of record was Vincent M. Bowen, a ribbon merchant, who continued to own the property in 1921 when he obtained a permit to build a two-car garage on site. There was also a boarder. He continued to live here until his death in 1928. Grace H. Morrell lived at this house by at least 1923 and appears to have become the owner after Bowen died. In 1932, one way or another, this became a boarding house for professional women. There were six women living there, including Grace Morrell, that year: one was a teacher at the Hyde School, two taught at Angier, another was the executive director of the Newton District Nursing Association, one was a bookkeeper, and there was at least one widow.

By 1933, Broadway Bank came into possession of the property and sold it to Ralph D. Thompson, a dentist, who later became a renter in this house and no longer the owner by 1940. The house had different owners every ten years or so and was last sold this year. This house also appears to have been an active rental space right from the beginning. The property has a long history of serving the residential needs of the Newton work force for over 100 years, and though in somewhat deteriorated condition continues to exhibit tenets of the Colonial Revival Style.

9. 176 Highland Avenue– Waiver Request (Ward 2)

Request to waive demo delay

The owner plans to return to the commission with revised plans for a replacement house at this location. The property was preferably preserved in June 2020 and the minimum four-month waiting period has elapsed. The owner returned to the commission with revised plans in October 2020 but no waiver to the delay was approved.

At the June and October hearings, staff reported that this house was constructed in 1959 in the Mid-Century Modern Style and had one owner, the Bloom family. Paul and Phyllis Bloom bought the property in 1960. There was no garage on the property when they purchased it. This property was never historically surveyed and represents a gap in the city's documentation of resources dating from this period. Compton & Pierce of Mass. Ave. in Cambridge are listed on the permit as designers of this house, and Pinerock Corporation (Rothenberg), of 50 Valley Spring Road, was the builder and owner. The original building permit describes this house as a split-level on slab that stands 16' in height. Under the ownership of Paul Bloom, insurance agent, the two-car garage was constructed in 1960, with a decorative connector constructed the same year. The roof was stripped and re-roofed in 2002 under the same owner.

As it happened, this house-style developed a local name based on five neighborhoods and subsequent NR-listed historic districts in Lexington, MA developed on what was historically known

as Peacock Farm. This narrative comes from the National Register nomination for these districts: "The Peacock Farm Historic District is a grouping of Mid-Century Modern houses located in the southeast corner of Lexington, Massachusetts, just north of MA Route 2. Most of the houses were built from a standard split-level design by the architectural firm Compton & Pierce. Known as the "Peacock Farm House," this design is characterized by a shallow-pitched, asymmetric gable roof with wide overhangs at the gable and side eaves; large expanses of glass, including horizontal bands of windows; vertical wood siding; and a hearth-centered open plan for the living and dining areas. Generally set into modest slopes, the houses have multiple levels, but nevertheless their overall form is horizontal in appearance..."

This Mid-century modern home exhibits all the tenets of Compton & Pierce's work and the style, which tends to forego decorative detail that alludes to historic periods. Form, proportion, function and a natural setting were used here to pursue the aesthetic effect for which these architects are noted. Symmetry was anathema, and the main entry became de-emphasized in the design to take the focus away from the individual. Windows also had no muntins to create the illusion that inside was out and vice versa.

Walter S. Pierce and W. Danforth Compton were classmates at the MIT graduate program in architecture, receiving masters' degrees in Architecture in 1947 from a school that had become a hot-bed for Modernist ideas. Compton and Pierce began their work at Peacock Farm in Lexington in 1952. Compton died suddenly three years later. Though both names appear on the building permit for this property, Walter S. Pierce was the architect.

Administrative Discussion:

- a) Minutes from December hearing**
- b) Discussion of revisions to Rules and Regs**