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STAFF MEMORANDUM

Meeting Date: April 8, 2021
DATE: March 31, 2021
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

216 Elliot Street – Certificate of Appropriateness

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE: The circa 1845 Federal/Greek Revival house was one of many mill worker houses built by Otis Pettee along Elliot Street. This property is different from the others in that it is deeper and has a larger roof. Otis Pettee (1795-1853) came to Upper Falls in 1819, eventually became supervisor of the Elliot Manufacturing Company, and started his first mill in 1831.

APPLICATION PROCESS: The owners of the front unit facing Elliot Street want to install solar panels on the roof.

MATERIALS PROVIDED:

Plans

Product specifications

Detail and section drawings

Photos

14 Ellis Street – Certificate of Appropriateness

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE: The modest circa 1870 house was originally sited on the road edge near the Charles River and probably served as housing for local millworkers. The house was moved after the Commonwealth of Massachusetts formed the Hemlock Gorge park in 1895; various records indicate that it was moved sometime between 1896 and 1907. Several other houses and structures were either moved or removed from the Hemlock Gorge park.

APPLICATION PROCESS:

The owners want to replace the contemporary front door with a wood door.

The owners want to install a condenser on the right side of the house in front of the bulkhead. They were granted a Certificate of Non-Applicability to install a condenser at the back of the house where it would not be visible.

MATERIALS PROVIDED:

Photographs

Site plan

959 Chestnut Street – Certificate of Appropriateness

APPLICATION PROCESS: This is continued from previous meetings. The owners want to resolve the following violations: #1 basement windows and exposed foundation; #2 garage left-side window program; #3 main house frieze board; #4 location of garage lights; #5 grade and exposure along foundations; and #7 retaining walls. The application also includes information about the proposed grading and contours.

The Commission made the following decisions for the above violations.

#1 basement windows and exposed foundation. As-installed windows and exposed foundation condition as of January determined to be inappropriate and denied; January 14, 2021 meeting.

#2 garage left-side window program. As-built determined to be inappropriate because of the large expanse of blank wall and the lack of window in the gable end and denied; January 14, 2021 meeting.

#3 main house frieze board. As-built condition with the space between the window header and frieze board was denied because of existing violations; January 14, 2021 meeting.

#4 location of garage lights. As-built conditions with the change to the light locations and the dropped garage floor were denied because of existing violations; January 14, 2021 meeting.

#5 grade and exposure along foundations. The grade changes, exposed basement wall, exterior walls, stairs, and windows on the rear gable end were denied because of existing violations; January 14, 2021 meeting.

#7 retaining walls. As-built new retaining walls denied because the cast masonry block material is not appropriate, and the construction of new walls stacked on or intersecting the existing walls

is not appropriate. Appropriate walls would not be stacked on or intersect the existing walls and would be built like historic dry stack walls with rough, rustic-looking stones. The Commission required that the new walls ; January 14, 2021 meeting.

Note: the applications for the March meeting, which included some of the above items, were denied because of unremediated existing violations and the determination in the February meeting that the building height was in violation.

MATERIALS PROVIDED:

Photographs
Plans
Product information
Decisions

300 Elliot Street – Working Session

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE: The original house was built circa 1840 and owned by Charles Winslow. Charles Winslow may have been related to Samuel Winslow who lived at 23 High Street in the mid-1800s. A later owner was David L. Jewell who was an agent at the Newton Mills on the corner of Elliot and Chestnut Streets. In 1882, the house was remodeled in the Stick Style for Richard T. Sullivan. Sullivan owned wool extract mills in Lower Falls and owned the land between Oak Street and the house lot, and a large lot behind the property.

APPLICATION PROCESS: The owners want feedback on the proposed renovation of the house and carriage house and the demolition of the rear one-story addition.

MATERIALS PROVIDED:

Maps
Historic information
Photographs
Neighboring properties
Plot Plan
3-D views
Site plan
MHC Form B

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: This working session is continued from previous working sessions. The owner wants feedback on the latest proposal after the Commission site visit. The proposed work includes demolishing the rear ell, moving the house forward and to the left, building a new rear addition, extending the driveway, and building garages under the house.

MATERIALS PROVIDED:

Renderings
Site plan
Photographs

16 Sullivan Avenue – Certificate of Hardship

Note: Sullivan Avenue is a private way; the applicants are entitled to a Certificate of Non-Applicability for project features that are not visible from Chestnut or Elliot Street.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE: The 1916 house was probably built for a mill worker or tradesman in Upper Falls.

APPLICATION PROCESS: The owners were denied a Certificate of Appropriateness in the March meeting. The Commission stated that there was no case for hardship but did not vote on a Certificate of Hardship. The Commission needs to vote on a Certificate of Hardship.

MATERIALS PROVIDED:

Plans
Assessors map
Aerial view
Photos
Product information

Administrative discussion:

Minutes: Review draft December minutes.