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STAFF MEMORANDUM

Meeting Date: March 8, 2022
DATE: March 1, 2022
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 Local Historic District Review applications that you should have received in your meeting packet.

Applications

20 Fern Street – Certificate of Appropriateness

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE: The circa 1876 Italianate house was first owned by Henry Snow. Snow was a stair builder and moved to 20 Fern Street from 197 Grove Street.

APPLICATION PROCESS: The owners want to remove the bulkhead at the back of the house and install a new bulkhead on the left side in front of the side entry steps. A basement walkout with Pella French doors, stone retaining walls, a bluestone concrete paver walk, and bluestone steps would be built on the left side behind the side entry. One egress window and window well would be installed on the right side of the house, and one at the back.

Notes:

The Pella Architect Series doors and windows are consistent with the windows previously approved for the house.

The window wells below grade will be constructed of concrete masonry blocks (Versa-Lok or similar) and will have bluestone caps at grade. No railings are required, or planned, for the window wells and the basement walkout retaining walls.

MATERIALS PROVIDED:

MHC Form B

Assessors database map

Photographs

Site plan

Plans

Elevations

Perspectives

Products and materials

Additional information about window well construction

136-144 Hancock Street and 169 Grove Street, Walker Center – Approval of Design Concept

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE: The wood 1860 Colonial Revival house at 138 Hancock Street was built in 1860 by Congregationalist minister Sewall Harding and sold in October 1861 to master mariner Charles T. Haskell of Boston. The Haskells left Auburndale in 1893, at which time Walker Home founder Eliza Harding Walker began raising funds to purchase the property to create an annex to her parents' home at 144 Hancock Street. She bought the property to house the growing number of missionary children that she cared for and named it Walker Cottage. The building has gone through a series of alterations over the years. The building was converted to dormitories and the front façade was redesigned to conform to the Colonial Revival taste in 1911. A two-story brick annex was added in the back in 1933. Shed dormers, sun porches and vinyl siding were also added.

The 1913 brick Colonial Revival house at 144 Hancock Street was designed by local architects Coolidge and Carlson and built to replace an earlier building destroyed by fire in 1912. It was the main building for the Walker Missionary Home, Inc.

The 1955 Cape House at 169 Grove Street was designed by Albert W. Kreider for the Walker Missionary Home as an accessible house for Mrs. Masters and her son, who contracted polio while serving as missionaries in Southern Rhodesia.

APPLICATION PROCESS: The applicants want approval of the high-level design concept of the project to renovate 136-144 Hancock Street and build an addition to the 1913 brick building, to demolish the 1955 Cape house at 169 Grove Street, and build two duplexes along Grove Street. The applicants are asking for approval of the high-level design concept to move forward with developing the detailed plans and materials for commission review and approval.

The final plans should meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for **Rehabilitation and Newton's Historic Preservation Design Guidelines for Additions and New Construction, including appropriate scale, form, massing, materials, and architectural details.**

The City of Newton Historic Preservation Guidelines for Additions and New Construction are included for reference, as is an article by architect and preservationist Eleanor Gorski which discusses the interpretation of the Secretary of the Interior's Standard 9 regarding new construction. The article was excerpted from a 2009 publication of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

An addition to a historic building should be subordinate to the historic building and read clearly as an addition. There is no development as of right in the local historic districts; scale, form, and massing must be appropriate for the historic building.

Demolition of all or portions of resources on properties or within a historic area is considered a drastic action since it alters the character of the streetscape, surrounding buildings and the demolition site. Demolition of significant buildings within a historic area is rarely considered to be an appropriate option.

New construction must be well-designed and sympathetic to its distinctive surroundings. Proposals for new construction must take into account how the design and materials will appear within the streetscape and surrounding neighborhood context.

The HDCs encourage:

- Preservation of the cohesive ambiance of historic properties and neighborhoods with **compatible and sympathetic contemporary construction that is not visually overwhelming**
- Matching setbacks (distances to property lines) of adjacent buildings on a streetscape
- Compatible siting, proportion, scale, form, materials, fenestration, roof configuration, details and finishes to adjacent and nearby properties
- Reference to the related Guidelines to better understand the historic context and appropriate design and materials within a historic context

MATERIALS PROVIDED:

Photographs

Site plans

Renderings

View corridors

Arguments for demolition of 169 Grove Street

Changes from previous design

Precedent for duplex units

Regulating New Construction in Historic Districts: Contemporary Design

Newton Historic Preservation Guidelines for Additions and New Construction

MHC Form B for 138 and 144 Hancock Street, and 169 Grove Street

Administrative Discussion

Minutes: Review the draft February meeting minutes.