



NEWTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION

* AGENDA *

Date: August 2, 2022

Time: 7:00 p.m.

ZOOM Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82812409368>
or +13017158592,,82812409368#

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1. 156 Oak Street and 55 Tower Road, Saco-Pettee Machine Shops Memorandum of Agreement (Ward 5)

Review of plans by Northland Development to address requirements of MHC MOA for the development of the historic mill site

Northland Development is preparing to start work at the former Saco-Pettee Machine Shop site and have asked to meet with the Commission to review their progress to date on the stipulations in their Memorandum of Agreement with the Massachusetts Historical Commission, dated September 21, 2018. The MOA requires that Northland Development complete the following tasks:

- 1) **Fully document the seven buildings to be demolished** - This work has been completed and hard copies of the photography and documentation have been submitted to the City as required. The Commission needs to confirm whether the documentation is to be stored in the City's historic material archives at the Jackson Homestead or at another location.
- 2) **Complete an Interpretive Program for the site to provide information about the history and use of the Saco-Pettee Machine Shops complex** – The packet materials include a copy of their current plans for the branding and interpretation of the site and information on how they plan to implement the interpretive program.
- 3) **Consider daylighting the Mill Race Feature** – This was not a requirement of the MOA, but Northland was asked to look into the feasibility of exposing the South Meadow Brook which runs under the project and formed part of the former mill race. The packet materials include updated plans for the site and the Applicant will be present to explain their work in this area.
- 4) **Create a site plan with landscape improvements that include greenspace and pedestrian ways which are designed to enhance views of the existing historic buildings, and install site improvements which incorporate historic markers and salvaged architectural elements** – The packet includes updated site plans for the property and renderings of the historic buildings to show how new elements will be introduced and elevation changes addressed.

Kent Gonzales from Northland Development will have a presentation on these items for the Commission's review and comment at the meeting.

2. 29 Greenwood Street, Local Landmark—Request to Remediate Violation (Ward 8)

Review of proposed plans to remediate violation

The NHC last reviewed this project in April 2022. At that time, the Applicant presented a plan to reconstruct the former structure which included the rear eaves, restoring the windows that remained on site, and installing a new cedar shake roof. Members continued the discussion and requested that the Applicant submit a checklist of the research which the Applicant used to determine the period of significance as well as additional plans and details on the proposed reconstruction.

Since that meeting, the Applicant has made two new submissions of materials – on May 27, they submitted updated plans and specifications for the new building and on June 23, they submitted a list of the resources used and the archives which were reviewed to develop their plans and determine the period of significance for the structure. Both sets of submission materials are included in the meeting packet, along with a comment letter from a member of the public.

During a previous discussion, the question of whether this project is rehabilitation or reconstruction was also raised. [The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties](#) encourages all projects to begin by determining the appropriate treatment for the site. Rehabilitation “acknowledges the need to alter or add to a historic property to meet continuing or changing uses while retaining the property's historic character” while Reconstruction “re-creates vanished or non-surviving portions of a property for interpretive purposes.” The intent of the project is what makes the determination in either case and is what should be considered here as well. Rehabilitation is based on an understanding that existing structures may need to be altered and adapted over time, while reconstruction is more focused on correctly recreating a lost structure. If the intent of the project at this time is to recognize that the site needs to be altered to continue its usability while still retaining its historic character, then the appropriate treatment is Rehabilitation. However, if the intent of the project is to recreate the non-surviving elements of the original historic site, then Reconstruction would be the most appropriate treatment for the site.

The [Standards for Reconstruction](#) include the following:

1. Reconstruction will be used to depict vanished or non-surviving portions of a property when documentary and physical evidence is available to permit accurate reconstruction with minimal conjecture, and such reconstruction is essential to the public understanding of the property.
2. Reconstruction of a landscape, building, structure or object in its historic location will be preceded by a thorough archeological investigation to identify and evaluate those features and artifacts that are essential to an accurate reconstruction. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
3. Reconstruction will include measures to preserve any remaining historic materials, features and spatial relationships.
4. Reconstruction will be based on the accurate duplication of historic features and elements substantiated by documentary or physical evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different features from other historic properties. A reconstructed property will re-create the appearance of the non-surviving historic property in materials, design, color and texture.
5. A reconstruction will be clearly identified as a contemporary re-creation.
6. Designs that were never executed historically will not be constructed.

3. 58 Cherry Place (Ward 3)

Request to Demolish House and Garage

The Vernacular farmhouse is a simply designed gable end roofed structure with a smaller gable roofed ell projecting from the rear right corner of the house and a one-story, flat roofed porch behind the rear right corner of the house which was enclosed in 1929. The house was vinyl sided at an unknown date and the front porch enclosed, probably early in the 20th century. The original details now visible include its form, close proximity to the street, and wood molding surrounding the gable ends. The windows are a mix of older and newer examples but none appear to be original to the house.

This house was one of the earlier houses in this section of West Newton, first appearing on the 1886 Beers atlas as the house of Mrs. A. Welch. The house at that time included both the existing main body of the house and the rear ell. By the 1895 Atlas, the house was owned by Ellen and Charles McGourty, a carpenter, and remained in their family through the 1930s. An earlier three car garage was located behind the house for most of the twentieth century but was demolished in 1983. The current one-car garage/barn style building was built in 1991. The house has retained its original form and architectural characteristics and is recommended to be found preferably preserved as one of the earliest homes in this area. Staff recommends that the later garage be found not preferably preserved.

4. 112 Harvard Street (Ward 2)

Request to Demolish House

The ca. 1887 Queen Anne style house is the second of three nearly identical buildings known by local neighbors as the "Three Sisters." The houses are all asymmetrical in design with a rectangular corner bay in the front right corner topped with an open third story balcony below a tall, steeped roof and a rounded tower in the rear right corner under a lower conical roof. This house has been vinyl sided but has retained much of its original detailing including the decorative railings on the first and second floors of the front porch, the trim and detailing of the third floor balcony, and original two-over two double hung and decorative windows. The house was converted from a one to two family home in 1947 but does not otherwise appear to have been altered over time and is entirely consistent with the period and varied styles of the surrounding neighborhood.

No information is available at this time about the architect of this property, but its Historic Resource Inventory form mentions that the house was built as a spec house by a local developer. The 1886 Beers Atlas shows the neighborhood half developed, with 112 Harvard Street still a vacant lot owned by M.N. Deland at the time. By the 1895 Bromley Atlas, the existing house was in place and owned by T.O. Tuttle, who would continue to own the house through at least 1907 and then by Lewis Belcher and M.R. and D.H. Rodney. However, there is no record of any of these owners living in Newtonville at that time, suggesting that the house may have been a rental property from an early date. Staff recommends that this house be preferably preserved as it is an excellent and intact example of Queen Anne architecture which has retained not only its original form and features but also its setting and context.

5. 21 Whitlowe Road (Ward 4)

Request to Demolish House

The ca. 1922 Craftsman style Bungalow has retained its original one-story form under a low hip roof with a hip dormer centered on the front façade. The roof projects out over the facades below and is decorated with exposed raftertails on all facades and the dormer. The house has also retained its original front entry detailing and windows. The land falls away at the rear of the house and a one-car garage is located in the basement. The house has had one addition – a one-story extension to the first floor that projects out over the garage which was constructed in 1973.

This house is a good example of its style and period. While the overall streetscape is varied, it is consistently early twentieth century in its period of development and this house is one of several bungalow style houses constructed on the south side of the street. For these reasons, staff recommends that the house be preferably preserved.

6. 172 Harvard Circle (Ward 2)

Request to Demolish House

This house is one of only a few Tudor style houses in a neighborhood of one and two family Craftsman and Colonial Revival homes. Although it is not typical of its immediate area, the ca. 1922 house is an excellent example of the style which has retained its original stucco façade and half-timber detailing in the gable ends and surrounding the bay window on the front facade. The house has also retained its original trim and detailing, including the heavy brackets which decorate the lower edge of the projecting gable end and the underside of the arched roof that extends out over the original front door and entry.

The house was designed by Maurice Salomonson, a prominent Boston architect who specialized in Gothic architecture. Salomonson built the house for his family and continued to live here until his death in 1932. Aside from the later addition of a detached garage to the site in 1927, there have been no additions or alterations to the original design of the Tudor style house. The house is not included on the Historic Resource Survey. Staff recommends that this house be preferably preserved due to the quality of its original design and its retention of its original details and materials.

7. 9 The Ledges – Waiver of Demolition Delay (Ward 7)

Request to revise approved plans for new addition

This ca. 1915 Colonial Revival style home is included on the National Register as part of the Gray Cliff Historic District and was originally reviewed by the Commission on November 4, 2021 for partial demolition. At that time, the Commission waived the delay based on the plans for the new additions to the house. Since that time, the applicants have made some changes to the design, in part to address zoning concerns, and the updated plans now need to be approved before they can move forward with construction. The project packet includes both the current plans and the originally approved plans (November 2021) for comparison. Changes include the following:

North Elevation:

- New double header detail surrounding the garage doors
- Smaller (four over four instead of six over six window as approved) window on second floor to left of side entrance
- New copper downspouts on garage

East Elevation:

- New garage addition has been shifted back from the street and now covers more of the original east façade than originally proposed. This change both alters the dimensions of the garage on this façade and the window pattern of the original east façade on both the first and second floors.

South Elevation:

- Glass doors with flanking windows to either side of terrace stairs replaced with single storage area door
- New arched brick design on face of terrace wall at center of building

West Elevation:

- The originally enclosed addition below the semi-circular terrace has been replaced with an open portico supported by columns.