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## STAFF MEMORANDUM

Meeting Date: August 11, 2022  
DATE: August 4, 2022  
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

#### ***74-76 Rockland Place – Certificate of Appropriateness***

***Note: Rockland Place is a private way. The back and side of this property are visible from the public park and from Thurston Road.***

**HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE:** The Greek Revival house was built between 1848 and 1855 and was the second house built on Rockland Place which was laid out in 1850. Isaac Smith was the first known owner. The 1865 Massachusetts State Census lists Isaac Smith as a carpenter living with his wife Adeline C. Smith (maiden name Stoddard), two young sons, his mother Dorothy, and teamster Simeon Whitney, his wife Eliza and daughter Emma. One barn was built by 1874 and additional barns were built by 1886. Smith also owned 66 Rockland Place. Smith owned the property until his death in 1895; the 1907 Atlas shows the property was owned by the heirs of Isaac Smith. The portable Priggen Steel garage was added in 1924.

APPLICATION PROCESS: This review is continued from the July meeting. The owners want to replace the wood siding with Hardie Plank and to use AZEK flat stock for the trim details. They also plan to replace major trim such as the rakes, fascia, etc. And they may need to replace downspouts.

The commission was concerned with the proposal to replace the existing shingle siding with clapboard and concerned with the quality and appropriateness of the Hardie shingle siding. **The owners removed sections of the shingle siding and determined that there is clapboard siding underneath.**

**Notes: The owners were approved administratively to replace the gutters with fiberglass gutters with the historic profile, to replace windows and window trim with the requirement that the windows and window trim will match what was approved in 2018 and 2019, and to replace the downspouts in-kind. The windows approved in 2018 were Marvin Integrity Traditional Double Hung Wood Ultrex two-over-two 7/8" SDLs with spacer bars and Stone White exterior color. The casing was approved as flat stock PVC with band molding, to match existing.**

**The commission should consider approving Staff to administratively approve Hardie clapboard siding and AZEK flat stock trim for future projects where the existing siding or historic siding is clapboard.**

MATERIALS PROVIDED:

Assessors database map

Staff update

Siding information from owners

Project descriptions

Photographs

Material list

Product information

Photographs

Approval of fiberglass gutters, replacement of windows and trim to match 2018 approved work

MHC Form B

***109 High Street – Certificate of Appropriateness (Violation)***

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE: The Greek Revival house was probably built by Oren Colburn circa 1840 shortly before he died. His widow Mary Colburn and son William H. Colburn lived in the house at least until the 1870s. William H. Colburn, and later his son William O. Colburn, maintained a dry goods store on Chestnut Street near Winter Street. The house is distinguished by the heavy Greek Revival columns and wide entablature on the front porch.

APPLICATION PROCESS: The owners want to repair the front entry porch, replace the wood decking with composite, and re-install the existing columns. Work was started to remove and replace the existing decking, which was failing, and the columns were temporarily removed.

**Notes: ISD determined that the front porch structure was unsafe. Staff approved the work to rebuild the structure pending the commission approval of the composite decking. The commission has approved composite decking for other projects with the requirement that it be a dark brown or gray color. The commission should consider approving Staff to administratively approve composite decking in an appropriate color for future projects where the existing decking is wood.**

**MATERIALS PROVIDED:**

Assessors database map

Photographs

Azek decking specs

MHC Form B

***1276-1278 Boylston Street – Certificate of Appropriateness (Violation)***

**HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE:** The circa 1870 building was much smaller and once housed the grocery store of Luther T. Cunningham (1821-1898) who lived next door at 1272 Boylston Street. After his death in 1898, his son Martin Luther Cunningham took over the business. The second floor of the building was used by the Church of Yahweh from the late 1800s into the early 1900s; Luther Cunningham was a member and served as a preacher. The house was expanded to its present form between 1907 and 1917.

**APPLICATION PROCESS:** The owners want to repair the front entry, rebuild the stairs, replace the decking, and replace the railing system and posts. The previous porch structure, stairs, railing systems with posts, and decking appear to have been built in 2008. We don't have an application on file for that project.

Work was started to remove the railings and to replace the stair treads with pressure treated wood.

The owner is proposing to wrap the PT posts with PVC and install post caps, to change the stair treads to Azek or Trex, reattach or replace the risers, and replace the railing system. The decking may be replaced with Azek or Trex decking.

**Note: Staff advised that pressure-treated wood could be used for the structure but was not appropriate for visible exterior architectural elements. Pressure-treated wood (PT) is not appropriate as a finish material for railings and decking because it is all construction grade lumber that does not take paint well and is a poor substitute for the materials used historically for railings and decking that we are trying to emulate in the district. It easily splits, warps and checks.**

**MATERIALS PROVIDED:**

Assessors database map

Project description

Azek and Trex information

Photographs

MHC Form B

***36 Linden Street – Certificate of Appropriateness***

**HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE:** The circa 1865 Italianate style house originally faced Cheney Street and was first owned by machinist Joseph F. Brown.

**APPLICATION PROCESS:** The owners want to install solar panels on the back roof and roof of the ell, and to install the disconnect system on the front next to the existing electric meter.

**Notes: The disconnect system on the front would be visible and the panels would be minimally visible from Cheney Court and Cheney Street.**

**The proposed panels have visible grid lines; Staff advised that the commission has approved all black panels as appropriate.**

**Commission members can view similar installations at 50 Aberdeen Street, Newton Highlands. The installation at 29 Great Meadow is on the back of the house and not visible from a public way.**

**MATERIALS PROVIDED:**

Assessors database map

Project description

Aerial view

Aerial views with renderings

Photographs with renderings

Solar panel product sheet

Photos of installations at 50 Aberdeen Street and 29 Great Meadow

Plans

Section view

Mounting assembly details

MHC Form B

***277 Elliot Street, The Stone Institute – Certificate of Appropriateness***

**HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE:** Otis Pettee built the 1828 house several years before he established his Pettee Machine Shop. He came to Upper Falls in 1819 and worked for the Elliot Mills until 1831 when he opened his own shop. He was one of the most important people associated with the development of Upper Falls and built and owned many of the surrounding mill houses. After his death in 1853, his son Otis Pettee Junior inherited the house. In 1899, the house was purchased with funds from philanthropist Joseph L. Stone and converted into a home for the aged. The institution was expanded in 1914 with the building of a large brick addition.

**APPLICATION PROCESS:** The owners want to install four arrays of solar panels on the area of the property facing Elliot Street and a cogeneration unit (CHP) at the basement level of the 1914 addition.

**Note: Staff spoke with the applicants about providing other options for the location of the solar panels such as the building roofs or the parking areas. The application has information about the issues with those locations.**

**MATERIALS PROVIDED:**

Assessors database map  
Aerial view  
Information about the Stone Institute  
Project description with financials  
Section drawing  
Description of proposed  
Historic photographs  
Photographs  
Aerial view with solar panel rendering  
Cut sheet for CHP unit  
Additional project information  
Cut sheets for solar panels  
MHC Form B

***277 Elliot Street, The Stone Institute – Certificate of Appropriateness***

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE: See above.

APPLICATION PROCESS: The owners want to replace windows on the 1914 brick addition with Jeld-Wen wood inserts with dark spacer bars which may be clad with aluminum; the frame, sill and head will not be changed. Grill patterns will match existing (per the elevation drawings). Many of the existing windows have already been replaced with Jeld-Wen inserts.

**MATERIALS PROVIDED:**

Assessors database map  
Project description  
Additional project information  
Photographs  
Elevations and plans showing windows which will be replaced  
Information about the proposed Jeld-Wen windows  
MHC Form B

***14 Summer Street – Working Session***

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE: The circa 1840 Greek Revival/Gothic Revival house may have been built at the same time as 6 Summer Street which has some of the same Gothic Revival details. The house is unique because of the Gothic Revival details and because of the incorporated recessed porch. Whipple Freeman, a farmer, lived in the house in the mid- to late 1800s, and probably owned the house during that period.

APPLICATION PROCESS: This review is continued from a previous meeting. The owner wants feedback on a project to renovate the existing house and build an addition with an attached garage which would be accessed from Summer Street. He also wants to build a new unit with an attached garage that would be accessed from Spring Street.

**MATERIALS PROVIDED:**

Assessors database map

Aerial view

Photographs

Site plan

Elevations

Plans

MHC Form B

**Administrative discussion:**

Meeting minutes: The January 2022 draft minutes are ready for review.