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**STAFF MEMORANDUM**

Meeting Date: May 4, 2023  
 DATE: April 27, 2023  
 TO: Newtonville 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 Newtonville Historic District Commission (Newtonville 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 Newtonville HDC. Additional information may be presented at the meeting that the Newtonville HDC can take into consideration when discussing a Local Historic District Review application.

Dear Newtonville HDC Members,

The following is additional information for the Local Historic District Review applications that you should have received in your meeting packet.

**Applications**

***58 Page Road – Certificate of Appropriateness***

**HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE:** The first recorded occupants of the circa 1891 Queen Anne house were Francis C. Greenwood, a clerk at 85 Water Street in Boston, his wife, and daughter Henrietta Greenwood. They previously lived at 122 Walnut Street. Mr. Greenwood died sometime before 1901 and his wife and daughter took in Mr. and Mrs. Paul Knight as boarders. After Mrs. Greenwood’s death in 1907, Henrietta Greenwood continued to take in boarders until the 1920s; most of the boarders were nurses and teachers.

**APPLICATION PROCESS:** The owners want to install a low-profile Velux skylight on the left side of the house.

**MATERIALS PROVIDED:**

**APPLICATION LINK:** <https://newtonma.viewpointcloud.com/records/786407>

**PDF File: Compiled 58 Page**

- Assessors database map
- Skylight product specs
- Aerial view and photos showing location of proposed skylight
- Floor plan
- Section and detail drawings
- MHC Form B

**218 Walnut Street – Certificate of Appropriateness**

**Note: the back of the church is visible from Chesley Avenue which is a public way.**

**HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE:** The 1895 Romanesque Revival dressed granite church was designed by Hartwell and Richardson for the Congregational Society in Newtonville and is a testament to the importance and prosperity of that community in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The church is the only example of this type of building in Newton and is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C as a major example of the American late 19<sup>th</sup>-century Romanesque Revival style of architecture designed by a prominent Boston architectural firm.

The Congregational Society in Newtonville was organized in 1868 at a time when many ecclesiastical groups and civic organizations were organizing to meet the needs of the growing Newton suburban population. The Society replaced an existing wooden church at the cost of more than \$100,000 which would be around \$3.5 million today. William C. Richardson (1845-1935), one of the principals of Hartwell and Richardson, lived in Newtonville and may have been a church member. His firm designed over 75 buildings in Massachusetts, and 21 of those are individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The firm also designed additions for some significant earlier homes, such as a bowed extension to the west side of the Charles Bulfinch designed Second Harrison Gray Otis House (circa 1802) on Beacon Hill in Boston. Hartwell and Richardson designed at least four other institutional buildings in Newton: the 1895 Hyde Grammar School (68-76 Lincoln St), 1896 Masonic Building (456-460 Newtonville Ave), 1922 Davis School (492 Waltham St), and the 1894 Pratt-Converse Nurses Home (2014 Washington St).

**APPLICATION PROCESS:** The Boston Chinese Evangelical Church is renovating the kitchen to bring it up to code; the renovation includes a commercial hood which requires a makeup air unit on the exterior. The project includes venting the hood through an existing opening to a unit which will sit on an open grating platform supported by stainless steel supports to allow continued access through the stairs to the basement. A board and batten box structure will be built around the unit to screen it. The applicants have proposed larger panels which need a batten over the seam; this could be changed to large boards with a batten at the seam if required by the commission. The basement stair area will have new custom handrails/guard rails. The supports, structure and railings will be painted flat gray to blend in.

**MATERIALS PROVIDED:**

**APPLICATION LINK fence:** <https://newtonma.viewpointcloud.com/records/788106>

**PDF File: Compiled 218 Walnut**

Assessors database map

Aerial view and Aerial view showing project area

Photos of the back of the church

Rendering (note that the vertical exhaust duct has been removed from the design)

Drawings

Technical HVAC drawings

HardiePlank product cut sheet

In-line fan technical specs

MHC Form B

**Notes:**

**An earlier version of the design had a tall vertical exhaust duct projecting from the top of the box structure; the new design has an in-line fan. The architectural drawings reflect this change, but the rendering still shows the vertical duct pipe.**

**The project work is at the back of the building and is not visible from Walnut Street. The project work does not appear to remove or alter any of the historic fabric and the structure could be considered temporary as it could be easily removed if the exhaust is not required in the future. There are probably not many options to do this project that are not more visible from Walnut Street and that do not alter or remove any of the historic material.**

**Staff and the chair and commission architect worked with the applicants to minimize the obtrusiveness of the project. We explored covering the “box structure” with shingles, but the existing shingle siding is slate (which is expensive), the color of the slate varies, and the corners would be noticeable, so it did not seem practical to use slate. The applicants did change the exhaust fan to an in-line fan to eliminate a vertical exhaust duct. The box structure, stainless-steel supports, ducts and custom railings will all be painted flat gray to match the existing porch trim.**

**Administrative discussion:**

Minutes: The February draft meeting minutes are included for review.

Remote meeting update: The order allowing remote public meetings was extended to March 31, 2025.