

WELLESLEY HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
CALLED MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING
JANUARY 26TH, 2016, 6:30 PM
GREAT HALL, WELLESLEY TOWN HALL

Members Present: David Giangrasso, Lisa Abeles, Edwina McCarthy, Barry Friedman, and David Smith
Members Absent: Eric Cohen
Staff: Imaikalani Aiu and Heather Lamplough
Also Present: Jeffrey and Catherine Cerio, 19 Abbott Street
Brian Alim, Architect for 19 Abbott Street
Daniel Bernstein and Ellen Watts, 25 Weston Road
Thaddeus Heuer and Shannon Monaghan, 17 Abbott Street
Catherine Clark, 16 Abbott Street

Chairperson David Giangrasso called the meeting to order at 6:40pm.

Certificate of Appropriateness: 19 Abbott Street HDC 16-01:

Documents:

1. *Staff Report, dated 1/20/2016*
2. *Site Visit Photographs, taken 1/7/2016 and 1/19/2016*
3. *MACRIS Inventory Form for 19 Abbott Street (WEL.196)*
4. *19 Abbott Street Project Narrative, dated 12/22/2015*
5. *19 Abbott Street Project Plans, dated 12/22/2015*
 - A-0. *Ext./New House Survey*
 - A-1. *New L-Side Elevation and New Front Elevation*
 - A-2. *New R-Side Elevation and New Rear Elevation*
 - A-3. *Existing L-Side Elevation and Existing Front Elevation*
 - A-4. *Existing R-Side Elevation and Existing Rear Elevation*
 - A-5. *Proposed First Floor Plan*
 - A-6. *Proposed Second Floor Plan*
 - A-7. *Proposed Basement Plan*
 - A-8. *Existing First Floor Plan*
 - A-9. *Existing Second Floor Plan*
 - A-10. *Existing Basement/Foundation Plan*
 - GSF-1. *Ext./New GSF Calculations*
6. *Photographs of 19 Abbott Street and surrounding neighborhood (provided by architect)*
7. *Email from HDC Member Eric Cohen, dated 1/16/2016 regarding 19 Abbott Street*
8. *Anonymous letter from neighbor regarding 19 Abbott Street, dated 1/24/2016*

Discussion:

Project architect, Brian Alim introduced the proposed project at 19 Abbott Street to the Commission. Jeffrey and Catherine Cerio, the owners of the property, hired Mr. Alim to renovate the entire interior of the house (currently 1500 sq ft) with a galley kitchen, basement stairs are located in a bathroom, so there are a few things on the interior of the house that are just not working for the owners. They are looking to do a modest mudroom and a kitchen expansion off the left side of the house, and on the second floor of the addition would be a master bathroom. The total square footage of the new addition is 477 sq ft. Mr. Alim pointed out that the total square footage of the house after the proposed addition would make the house in line with the other houses in the neighborhood. There is a farmer's porch that leads into the

WELLESLEY HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
CALLED MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING
JANUARY 26TH, 2016, 6:30 PM
GREAT HALL, WELLESLEY TOWN HALL

mudroom on the first floor, and then above steps back for the master bath. Existing house is a brick colonial, with a portico and the proposed addition is 1x6 wood siding, as they feel the existing brick on the house is weathered and it would be hard to match. Applicant is proposing to reuse the existing Pella windows in the new addition. The house is 90 years old, and had previously been used as a rental property before it was purchased by the current homeowners (family of 4). The proposed addition and other changes to the house are in an effort to make the home more livable for this family, and to bring the house up to the standards of the surrounding neighborhood and increase the value.

Ms. Abeles stated that in the project that Mr. Alim was involved with as the architect before (on Cottage Street), she felt that there was a real effort made to keep the addition in keeping with the house, and that in her opinion, she does not feel like that is happening with this proposal. Ms. Abeles stated that she feels that this addition does not look like it belongs on this house, that it looks like a totally different style and has different materials. Details in the original house [like corbelling] were not carried over to this addition, and that it looks like it was just stuck on there, and has nothing to do with the original house.

Mr. Alim asked if the addition were to be brick (instead of the proposed clapboard), if that would improve the addition. Ms. Abeles said that she believes that that would help, and that in terms of matching brick, that it is always possible.

Property owner, Catherine Cerio stated that she drove around town and photographed brick houses that have clapboard additions off of the side of the house. Ms. Abeles stated that those additions/appendages to the houses have more of a sunroom feel, and that these examples have more painted wood trim that helps to tie the addition into the main house. Ms. Cerio stated that their house does have trim that they do plan on painting. Ms. Cerio stated that they are trying to strike a balance with this proposed addition between being historically appropriate and functional for a family of four. Mr. Alim stated that they could clean the existing brick, in an effort to better match it to the addition, should the addition be brick instead of clapboard.

Mr. Alim asked the Commission that he is interested in hearing their opinions on the addition off the left side and the overall massing of the addition. Ms. Abeles stated that she believes that it looks like the “tail is wagging the dog”. She stated that in the examples provided the proportion of the addition to the main house is much smaller than what is being proposed here. In this proposal, the addition is more than a third of the existing house. Ms. Abeles stated that the fact that the addition and the porch are projecting forward is a big problem, and that may be even more important than a change in the material.

Mr. Giangrasso pointed out that in the examples provided by Ms. Cerio; the proportions of the additions are much smaller in comparison to this proposed addition (especially the height of it). Mr. Alim stated that they did meet for awhile, and it was difficult trying to make a kitchen work within the existing space. They looked at three different scenarios to try to keep the addition smaller, but for the investment that they are going to make in the house, it wasn't worth it to not have the expansion. Mr. Alim asked the Commission is the second story on the addition was an issue. Ms. Abeles said that the second story is less of the issue, and that the materials and the projecting porch are more of the issue, because the addition is supposed to be secondary to the main structure.

Ms. Abeles asked where the driveway is located on the site, and asked whether it would be possible to have the entry to the addition off the side instead of on the front. She stated that if the porch was not on there at all, that it would help enormously. She stated that in the current proposal, the porch is competing with the

WELLESLEY HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
CALLED MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING
JANUARY 26TH, 2016, 6:30 PM
GREAT HALL, WELLESLEY TOWN HALL

main house's front door. Ms. Abeles inquired if the project was going to require a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals, and Mr. Alim stated that it would. Ms. Abeles suggested that the applicant and/or the architect speak with someone about the required variances and special permits, to see what the odds are of them being granted. Mr. Alim stated that the existing house is well within the front and rear setbacks, so they would never be able to meet either of those setbacks, but they could try to adjust the width of the addition to meet the left side-yard setback requirement.

Mr. Smith stated that the proposed front porch is competing with the existing front entry, and they are two completely different styles; so it's like comparing apples and oranges. Ms. Abeles asked if they could see the elevations that show the addition with brick. She stated that it appears to compete much less, when it is brick instead of clapboard. Mr. Smith stated that the dormer on the second story of the addition is not really in keeping with the house, and that they should try to tie that into the house better. Ms. Cerio asked if possibly changing the shape of the dormer to reflect the swooped entryway would help to tie it in better, and Mr. Smith agreed that it would. He stated that the house has some very prominent architectural features, and that the addition as proposed is just not keeping with any of that.

Ms. Abeles stated that while she understands that the interior changes on the house are not under their purview, but she would like to make a recommendation that may help to reduce the size of the extension. She stated that there appears to be some floating space on the right side of the house, on either side of the dining room. She suggested exploring locating both the dining room and the family room on the right side of the house, and then being able to place the kitchen and the mudroom space on the left side of the house. Mr. Alim stated that the goal was to link the kitchen and the family room together, and that's why they chose the proposal with this addition. Ms. Abeles stated that by rearranging the interior of the house, and shrinking the size of the addition, that the applicant would be more likely to have the project approved by the ZBA and it would coincidentally help with their approval from the HDC.

Mr. Alim stated that they are planning to strip the brick off of the left side of the house for the addition, so they could possibly use all of that brick for the addition, or use it to blend in any needed new brick material.

Mr. Smith asked if the architect could talk about the right side of the house, due to an abutter concern. Mr. Alim stated that the plan was to replace the two existing windows, with a double doorway to that yard space, which is the only real yard space that they have. Mr. Smith asked if there were to be stairs leading from this doorway, and Mr. Alim stated that it would be one step. Mr. Smith asked where this doorway was going to lead to, and Mr. Alim stated that it was a hallway. Mr. Alim stated that this could change, due to the changes they may need to make to the interior layout to make the proposed addition smaller.

Mr. Alim and Ms. Abeles discussed some more proposed layout changes. Ms. Abeles stated that everyone here understands making an old house more functional, and that everyone is on the same page with that. Mr. Alim stated that there have been a lot of hurdles with this project and that he is going to go back and speak with his clients, and hopefully be able to come back with a proposal that is a better fit, and that he will also look further into the Special Permits required from the Zoning Board of Appeals for the setbacks.

Mr. Giangrosso asked the audience if anyone was there for this public hearing, and that if anyone has anything that they would like to add, to please first introduce themselves.

WELLESLEY HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
CALLED MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING
JANUARY 26TH, 2016, 6:30 PM
GREAT HALL, WELLESLEY TOWN HALL

Tad Heuer of 17 Abbott Street, the abutter on the right side of the house, stated that he has concerns about the proposed door on the right side of the house. Mr. Heuer stated that the house at 19 Abbott Street is 12 feet from the property line, and that their house at 17 Abbott Street is 7 feet from the property line, so there is a total of 19 feet between the two structures, which is less than the normally required setback for a house from a lot line. He stated that he is concerned that their house (and dining room window) will be less than 20 feet away from this door that leads to the yard space that they use frequently. He stated that 19 Abbott Street was built after his house was, and one of the reasons that it was built with the layout that it has is that the houses were built so that one person's kitchen faced towards the neighboring house's dining room. Mr. Heuer stated that he is concerned about the noise that will be created by this change. Mr. Heuer stated that the house have been here for 90 years, and that it will be here for a lot longer as well, and he asked that the Commission remember that the changes that are being made in the present are not just for the family that currently lives in the house, but for the district as it continues on long after.

Mr. Smith asked Mr. Alim if it was possible to do a single door instead of the double door. Mr. Alim stated that the proposed doors are wood paneling on the both half, with windows on the upper half; which is roughly the same amount of glass that currently exists in the two windows. Mr. Alim stated that they have spoken with the abutters and have offered to install some sort of screening or fence that would be allowed within the historic district. Ms. Monaghan of 17 Abbott Street stated that a wall outside of her window is not what she would like to see either. Mr. Alim stated that they could also do some sort of pergola with plantings.

Catherine Clark of 16 Abbott Street stated that she believes the architectural style of the house is Tudor, not a colonial, and that she is concerned about the misclassification. Ms. Cerio stated that she has done research on the house and that it is not a Tudor, and that it is a center entry colonial house. Ms. Clark asked about the step that will be needed on the right side of the house from the doorway, and stated that the applicants will also need a variance for that as it would extend further into the right side-yard setback. Mr. Alim stated that the step would not require approval from the ZBA because it is not a structure (with a foundation). Mr. Giangrasso clarified that whether or not something would or would not require a variance or other approval from Town Boards is not within the HDC's purview. They only have purview over anything with some sort of elevation.

Ellen Watts of 25 Weston Road stated that she had some concerns regarding the setbacks for the proposed addition, and some concerns as others do that there should be more of an attempt to make the addition appear more of a subsidiary element of the structure. Ms. Watts stated that she would like more attention paid to the corbelling on the existing house, and that she would like to see more detailed plans that show flashing, any guttering that will be added, the location of the vent stacks and the kitchen vent.

Daniel Bernstein of 25 Weston Road stated that where they will need to patch the brick will be really critical.

The applicant, Ms. Cerio presented an email to the Commission from an abutter directly across the street at 18 Abbott Street, in support of the project.

Mr. Bernstein asked whether it is a public hearing in which they will receive notification of when the applicant presents to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Miss Lamplough stated that indeed it was, and that they will get notification.

WELLESLEY HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
CALLED MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING
JANUARY 26TH, 2016, 6:30 PM
GREAT HALL, WELLESLEY TOWN HALL

Mr. Heuer asked where the driveway was. Mr. Alim stated that it was to the left of the house. Mr. Giangrasso stated that they don't actually have to show the driveway on the plans for this type of review. Mr. Alim stated that the driveway as is (and would remain this way), you have to pull in as a single car and then it opens up to fit two cars side by side. Ms. Cerio confirmed that it is exactly how they park now. Ms. Abeles stated the driveway is not part of the HDC's review.

Mr. Giangrasso asked if any Commission members would like to make a motion. Miss Lamplough asked if the applicant would like to continue to a specific date, or if they would just like to let her know when they are prepared to resubmit plans. If the Commission does not continue to a specific date, the public hearing will have to be re-advertised and re-noticed.

Mr. Freidman inquired as to whether the HDC has to grant the Certificate of Appropriateness before the applicant can apply to the ZBA. Mr. Giangrasso stated that he doesn't believe that there is a set order, but it's the general practice that the applicant receives approval from the HDC prior to other approvals. Miss Lamplough stated that it is kind of like a push and pull on which board to go to first, because if the applicant received the approvals for the project from the ZBA, and then HDC said no we can't approve this and the applicant has to do a redesign, then they will end up having to go back to the ZBA again for the redesign. Ms. Abeles suggested that the applicant/architect sit down with someone to discuss the proposed variance/special permits.

The Commission and the applicant's architect discussed potential dates for the next public hearing. Mr. Giangrasso asked if anyone would like to make a motion.

Ms. McCarthy made a motion to continue the public hearing for HDC 16-01 19 Abbott Street to Tuesday, February 23rd, 2016 at 6:45pm. Ms. Abeles seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Miss Lamplough made an announcement to the audience clarifying that they will not be receiving notification of the next public hearing because it was continued to a set date tonight.

Unified Strategic and Comprehensive Plan:

Documents:

- 1. Memorandum regarding Proposed Scope and Process for Development of Unified Strategic and Comprehensive Plan, dated 1/20/2016*

Discussion:

Mr. Aiu introduced the proposed scope and process for the development of the Unified Strategic and Comprehensive Plan. The working group is going around and presenting this to all of the Town Boards and Committees, and appreciate any comments that the Commission has on the proposed scope. They are planning on forming a steering committee that is composed of all boards and stakeholders, including a representative from the HDC. They are expecting it to be a large group of about 30 people, which is expected to be one of the challenges of the project. The hope is that each stakeholder and representative board member can come to the table, represent their interests, advocate for them, and hopefully find some synergies within those interests. Ultimately be able to, not just prioritize our goals and strategies, but to find the most effective way to implement them. The next steps in this process includes going before the

WELLESLEY HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
CALLED MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING
JANUARY 26TH, 2016, 6:30 PM
GREAT HALL, WELLESLEY TOWN HALL

upcoming Town Meeting to get the remaining funding for this project, including \$30,000 from the Capital Budget, the CPC which is \$60,000 towards the historic preservation section. Mr. Aiu stated that at this time they just want to keep every Board informed on what is happening and welcome any comments you have on how you think this should be carried out.

Ms. Abeles had a question about one of the goals at a meeting she attended to help streamline the process for applicants. Using the previous public hearing as an example, when the applicant has to go back and forth between multiple boards, not knowing if one board will approve something and the next deny it. Mr. Aiu stated that issue was one of the reasons that the Town Government Study Committee recommended the establishment of the Land Use Division, which ultimately did not get passed because Town Meeting just ran out of time.

Historic District Design Guidelines:

Documents:

1. *Memorandum regarding Historic District Design Guidelines, dated 1/20/2016*
 1. *CPC Short Form Preliminary Application, dated 11/9/2015*
 2. *Letter of Intent for MHC Survey and Planning Grant, dated 11/10/2015*
 3. *Letter from MHC, dated 12/14/2015*
 4. *Letter Requesting Increase in CPC Appropriation, dated 1/5/2016*

Discussion:

Miss Lamplough updated the Commission on the status of the development of Historic District Design Guidelines. She stated that the Wellesley Community Preservation Committee approved a request for \$10,000 towards this project on November 19, 2015, with the expectation that a grant from the state would serve as the match. Unfortunately, the town's application was not chosen to submit a full application for this grant program, so a request for an increase in the CPC appropriation for the project was submitted. On January 13, 2016, the CPC unanimously voted to grant the request to increase the appropriation from \$10,000 to the full \$20,000 project cost. This will still need to be approved at Annual Town Meeting in the spring, and then an RFP should be ready to be released around June or July.

Minutes:

Documents:

1. *Minutes from 10/20/2015 HDC Meeting*

Mr. Giangrasso asked that a clarification regarding his statement on dispositive law was made to the minutes.

Ms. McCarthy moved to approve the minutes as amended. Mr. Smith seconded. The motion Passed unanimously 4-0 (with Ms. Abeles abstaining from the vote).

Chairperson David Giangrasso adjourned the meeting at 8:00pm.

WELLESLEY HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
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JANUARY 26TH, 2016, 6:30 PM
GREAT HALL, WELLESLEY TOWN HALL

Note: A recording of this meeting is available from the Planning Department.

Minutes Approved: 2/23/2016

Respectfully submitted by:
Heather Lamplough
Planner