

TOWN OF WELLESLEY



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MASSACHUSETTS

BOARD OF APPEAL

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Petition of Wellesley Historical Society

Pursuant to due notice the Board of Appeal held a public hearing in the hearing room on the second floor of the Town Hall at 8:00 p.m. on January 23, 1975, on the petition of the Wellesley Historical Society requesting permission to move the building, then located at 871 Worcester Street, onto the rear of the premises owned by the Wellesley Friendly Aid Association, which property was to be numbered 229 Washington Street, and to construct an addition on the rear of said building. The petitioner further requested permission to use said building and addition as a semi-public institution of a philanthropic character as provided under Section II, paragraph 8(c) and Section XXIV of the Zoning By-Law.

Mr. Harry L. Linnell, President of the Wellesley Historical Society, spoke on behalf of the petitioner. He stated that the premises would be used for the Wellesley Historical Society's offices and museum and for the storage of valuable antiques and collections presently located in the basement of the Wellesley Hills Branch of the Public Library.

Various persons either spoke in opposition to the petition or expressed reservations concerning it. Among these persons were: Mr. William Murphy of 15 Chapel Place, who stated that by allowing the Historical Society to locate its house on the subject land along with the proposed Wellesley Center, the unresolved problems involved in the location of the Center would be compounded; and Mr. Laurence H.

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Stone of the Wellesley Red Cross, who suggested that the Board should take a broad view of the entire affected area having in mind that a decision favorable to the petitioner might well raise planning problems in the future.

Statement of Facts

The property involved is in the "vee" between Town of Wellesley land (Department of Public Works) and the one-way ramp leading from Washington Street down to the westbound lanes of Worcester Street. It is located in a single residence district which requires a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet. It is presently a portion of the Friendly Aid lot numbered 219 Washington Street. The Friendly Aid Association has filed with the Board its letter of intent to lease to the Wellesley Historical Society for a term of 99 years 23,598 square feet of the 219 Washington Street parcel situated in the above described "vee".

The leased parcel would have access to and from the one way ramp from Washington Street to Worcester Street. Evidence was offered at the hearing that it was anticipated that permission could be obtained from other owners so that the Historical Society's premises would also have access to and from Washington Street. For the purposes of the present petition, however, the Board has assumed that the only available access will be to and from the ramp road.

The petitioner indicated that an old house (built in about 1824) was to be moved from a site at 871 Worcester Street and placed on the

23,598 square foot lot, that an addition was to be built on the rear of the 1824 house, and that parking was to be provided. A plot plan filed with the application for building permit indicated setbacks from lot lines sufficient under the Zoning By-Law.

There is a deteriorated structure in the nature of a tool house or accessory building on the premises which, according to the petitioner, is to be removed.

The Board has viewed the premises and has observed the following conditions:

By reason of its location in the "vee" it is somewhat isolated from any nearby residences. The land features on three of four sides are the Friendly Aid building, the Worcester Street ramp, and the Public Works yard. Traffic down the ramp to Worcester Street, while not bumper-to-bumper, is continuous since the controlling traffic signal displays a right turn green arrow even when through traffic (in the left westbound lane) on Washington Street is stopped by a red signal. On the other hand, the visibility from the petitioner's premises at the present point of exit to the right hand Washington Street lane is good since it lies across the Friendly Aid Association's lawn.

For the purposes of this decision the Board will consider that the 99 year lease of the premises creates a separate lot.

Decision

In order to grant the permit sought by petitioner the Board must find as follows (Zoning By-Law; Section II, paragraph 8(c) and Section

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XXIV, paragraph D):

1. that the use is that of a semi-public institution of a philanthropic character,
2. that the use will not substantially reduce the value of any property within the district, and
3. that the use will not otherwise be injurious, obnoxious, or offensive to the neighborhood.

The Board finds that the petitioner is a semi-public institution in that so far as the Board is aware the only requirement for membership is the payment of annual dues. As for its philanthropic quality, the Board finds the following definitions of philanthropy, among others:

1. "goodwill to fellow men; especially active effort to promote human welfare" (Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, G & C Merriam Company, 1963)
2. "an action or institution designed to promote human welfare" (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1969)

The Board finds that the purposes of the Wellesley Historical Society, namely, the study, research and collecting of history, writing, and artifacts relating to the Town of Wellesley promotes the welfare of the Town's inhabitants and are, therefore, philanthropic.

The Board finds that the petitioner's proposed use will not substantially reduce the value of any property within the zoning district.

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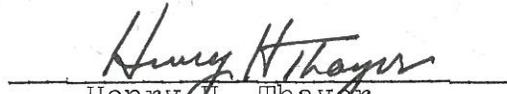
1. that the premises (in substantially the dimensions presented to the Board) shall be leased by the Wellesley Friendly Aid Association to the Wellesley Historical Society for a period of not less than 99 years and that an "as-signed" copy of the lease attested by a notary public shall be filed with the Board of Appeal;
2. that the premises shall only be used for the purposes customary for an historical society;
3. that no annual meetings or other large gatherings of the Society's membership or other persons shall be held on the premises; and
4. that there be maintained adequate visibility between Washington Street and the point at which the Society's present or future driveway exits onto the ramp road, the maintenance of such visibility to require the clearing of brush and bushes but not the felling of mature trees.



 F. Lester Fraser



 William O. Hewett



 Henry H. Thayer

Filed on 3/1, 1975
 with the Town Clerk

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