

Report of the Design Review Board

During this past year the Design Review Board (DRB) held 21 regular meetings during which 98 projects were reviewed, including 4 major construction projects, 11 minor construction projects, 4 antenna applications, 7 Large House applications and 72 sign applications.

The DRB completed its review of a proposal to build a mixed-use development at 576 Washington St., which is the former Wellesley Inn site. The proposal is to build sidewalk-level retail, 19 condominium units and below-grade parking for 46 cars. As part of the proposal two affordable housing units will be created at 53 Grove St. The DRB also reviewed a proposal for a mixed-use development at 27 Washington St.

The minor construction projects reviewed include new storefronts at 10 Washington St., 84 Central St., 380 Washington St., 3-13 Washington St., 298-304 Washington St., 255 Washington St., 155-159 Linden St. and 5 Williams St. The DRB reviewed proposals for wind turbines and a new shed at Babson College and a vehicle and grounds equipment washing station at Wellesley College. The antenna reviews include installations at the Wellesley College campus and 978 Worcester St.

Town Meeting passed a new section for the Zoning Bylaw, Large House Review (LHR), in November 2007. LHR requires a DRB review process for new single-family homes and additions that exceed certain dimensional thresholds. The intent of this review process is not to mandate certain designs or restrict house size, but to ensure that a new large house or addition will be compatible with the scale and character of nearby properties, among other criteria.

The applicant must meet with the DRB for design review. The DRB does not have the authority to determine style, materials, or siting for the applicant; however, the DRB may suggest revisions to the proposal. After design review, the DRB will prepare and submit recommendations to the Planning Board.

The DRB submitted recommendations on seven (7) single-family residences that triggered the LHR between January 1, 2008 (date regulation became effective) and June 30, 2008.

Section XXII of the Zoning Bylaw, "Design Review", authorizes the Design Review Board to review and make recommendations on all applications for commercial signs and awnings, as well as all projects defined as Minor and Major Construction Projects and Projects of Significant Impact in Section XVIA (Site Plan Approval) of the Zoning Bylaw. Section XVID of the Zoning Bylaw, "Large House Review", authorizes the Design Review Board to review and make recommendations to the Planning Board on all applications that trigger the large house thresholds.

The Board continues to publish and have available its agenda, meeting minutes, sign regulations, design guidelines, project updates as well as other related matters on the town-wide web site and in the Planning Board office.

The Design Review Board's regular meetings are scheduled for the second and fourth Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. in the Planning Board office. Residents are encouraged to attend.

Membership

The Wellesley Design Review Board consists of four members appointed by the Planning Board as specified in Section XXII (Design Review) of the Zoning Bylaw and three alternate members.

Serving on the Design Review Board during 2007-2008 were:

Robert Broder, AIA, Chairman
Robert Skolnick, Vice Chairman
Ingrid Carls
Helen Robertson
Edward Hand, Alternate
Sheila Dinsmoor, Alternate
Justin Boucher, Alternate

Mr. Boucher left the Board during 2008 due to a relocation.