

TOWN OF WELLESLEY



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WELLESLEY

BOARD OF APPEAL

THEODORE C. MERLO
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WILLIAM O. HEWETT

15 JUN 28 1974

KATHARINE E. TOY
Administrative Secretary
Telephone
235-1664

Petition of Wellesley College

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 8:15 p.m. on June 27, 1974, on the petition of Wellesley College, requesting permission to use the dwelling at 828 Washington Street, (formerly known as the Cheever Estate) as a college or institute of an educational character and such accessory uses as are customary in connection with such use.

The petitioner was represented at the hearing by Joseph Kiebala, Jr., Vice President for Business Affairs, who outlined in detail the petitioner's request and the needs for it.

On June 5, 1974, the petitioner filed its request for a hearing before this Board and thereafter due notice of the hearing was given by mailing and publication.

Dorothy S. Hunnewell, 866R Washington Street, stated that she had no objection to the proposed use of the house, but felt that something should be done to provide a better and safer entrance from Washington Street; at present it is partially obstructed and could be dangerous.

Felix Juliani, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, stated that the Board favored the proposed request and that the Town will benefit generally from the proposed use of the property as the present tax basis will remain.

Letters favoring the request were received from: Minna L. Hunnewell and Louisa Hunnewell, both abutting property owners.

The Planning Board in its report offered no objection to the change in use requested, but suggested that vegetation be selectively cleared at the driveway entrance, and on college property generally in the area.

Statement of Facts

The property involved, which contains approximately 21 acres, is located within a Single-residence District requiring a minimum lot area of 40,000 square feet. On the premises there is a large wood-frame mansion, formerly the Cheever Estate, built about 1894, which has thirty-seven rooms on four floors and basement. There is also a three-car garage, barn and chauffeur's day room area. The property surrounding consists of woodland, open field and swamp land.

The petitioner seeks permission to convert and use the house involved for educational purposes. The principal use is to provide twenty-five offices for a maximum of 35 to 50 people, plus meeting rooms and a seven-room apartment for either a caretaker or a director who will be responsible and associated with the programs of the facility. The maximum occupancy would be four persons. It is felt that this will provide needed security for the property. At some future time, the petitioner may desire to use the building as a center for an

educational institute, with the third floor of the building to be used as lodging space for 10 to 12 people for the center.

It is now contemplated, it was stated, that the various offices to be provided would be used by scholars carrying on research in education, faculty members on sabbatical carrying on independent research, faculty emeriti formerly associated with the College and visiting scholars who may wish to avail themselves of Wellesley College library and other campus facilities. Some administrative offices of the College might also be shifted to the building. The operating schedule will be a normal 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. work day. It was stated that the proposed activities of the facility are not expected to generate significant increase in traffic, and that the off-street parking area to be provided for 31 cars will adequately accommodate the possible number of cars expected.

It is the belief of the petitioner after conferring with the Department of Public Works and the Board of Health, that there will be little impact upon public utility systems, due to the proposed use of the house and the limited daily schedule from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. It appears that the water requirements can be provided, electric power requirements are adequate to serve the increased loads, sewage disposal is now provided by an on-site septic disposal system which appears to be adequate for the proposed use. If additional disposal capacity is necessary, it will be built in accordance with the requirements of the Wellesley Board of Health, it was stated.

The petitioner believes that the proposed use of the property will not reduce substantially the value of any property within the adjoining single-residence district and will not otherwise be injurious, obnoxious or offensive to the neighborhood.

Decision

The Board has given careful consideration to this petition and finds that there is at least a temporary need for the proposed use of the property.

While the Board is reluctant to authorize encroachments into a restricted district, if this petition is denied, the result may well be a deterioration of the property which ultimately will depreciate the value of surrounding properties. In the opinion of this Board, the use of the premises as described, to provide offices for a maximum of 35 to 50 people, plus an apartment to be occupied by not more than four people, is not likely to prove detrimental to the neighborhood, and in this case, it appears that a literal enforcement of the provisions of the By-law at this time, would involve substantial hardship to the petitioner and the property. It further appears that desirable relief may be granted without any substantial detriment to the public good and without nullifying or substantially derogating from the intent or purpose of the by-law.

The house involved is on a parcel containing approximately 2 1/2 acres. It has been unoccupied for a number of years and is deteriorating both on its interior and exterior. Prior to being acquired by the petitioner in 1970, it was occupied as a private home with domestic help since the time it was built in 1894. It is the belief of this Board that by the present-day standards, a demand for its use as single occupancy is limited at this time, and, therefore, it is the opinion of the Board, that subject to the conditions hereinafter set forth, the proposed use will not only prove beneficial to the petitioner but to the Town generally.

Accordingly, it is the unanimous opinion of the Board that permission to use said dwelling as requested can be granted for a period of one year from the effective date of this decision and the Inspector of Buildings is authorized to issue a permit for the interior alterations of said building in accordance with the plans submitted and in file with this Board subject to the following conditions:

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1. That all applicable local and State By-laws shall be complied with, with the exception herein granted.
2. That not more than twenty-five offices shall be provided and occupied.
3. That not more than fifty people shall occupy the building at any one time.
4. That not more than a four-room apartment may be provided which may be occupied by not more than four persons.
5. That, except for ordinary maintenance and repairs, no alterations or additions shall be made to the house unless permission is obtained from the Board of Appeal.
6. That the petitioner shall comply with all requirements and recommendations of the Board of Public Works and the Chief Engineer of the Fire Department.
7. That a plan shall be submitted to this Board showing alterations to the entrance onto Washington Street so as to provide safe entrance and exiting from the premises; said plan to be approved in writing by the Board of Appeal prior to occupancy of the building.
8. That the above-mentioned approved use of the property, except for the apartment, shall be in session only during the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., daily and shall not be used evenings.
9. That no signs shall be erected unless approved by the Board of Appeal.
10. That except in the kitchen of the proposed apartment, there shall be no hot plates used or food prepared or served, except for daily snacks which may be consumed in the offices.
11. That said permission shall expire one year from the effective date of this decision or may be revoked for violation of any condition hereof.

Theodore C. Merri
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F. Lester Fraser
 F. Lester Fraser

William O. Hewett
 William O. Hewett