

Weston Historical Commission Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 21, 2019 at 7:30 PM
In a meeting room at Town Hall

Members Present: Steven Wagner, Alicia Primer, Alan Fobes, Al Aydelott, Phyllis Halpern, Kathy Scadden (by phone)

Other Present: John Field (Weston Building Inspector), Mark Romanowicz (Salt Marsh Design), Lars Unhjem (Mill Creek Developers), Douglas Kelleher (Epsilon), Pam Fox, Paul Penfield, Nick Danforth, David Fixler

1. Public comment: none
2. 751-761 BPR – Woodleigh Farm 40B presentation with Mark Romanowicz and Lars
3. Discussion of impact to historical, cultural or architectural resources by project:

The HC prioritizes preservation of the historic complex of buildings on the site proposed for development. The buildings contribute to the Boston Post Road National Register Historic District, and they can be found in the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS), as well as the Town's Cultural Resources Inventory.

We are pleased that the project proponents plan to retain two of the most important buildings in their original locations. These are the **Mark Sibley/Mary Rice House** (WSN 157) and the **Mark Sibley Barn** ((WSN 1229). While preserving the exteriors of these buildings is important, there are many interior features of each that also worth preserving. The HC can provide to the BOS and applicant a list of these significant interior features as the project progresses.

The proponents plan to move the oldest portion of the **Mirick/Farnsworth House**, which dates from 1725 and 1735, to a location close by the Sibley House and Barn. This building has been moved at least twice before and it stood originally near the Post Road. There are important interior features of the Mirick/Farnsworth House, besides the parts that came from the George Lamson House, that are worthy of preservation and the HC will provide a list of those features.

As part of the proposed move, the project proponents plan to raze the additions to the back and sides.

It is important to note that these 1935 additions were designed by prominent architect Eleanor Raymond, using materials from the old George Lamson House. Raymond was a pioneering Modernist architect with important and unique work. The Commission considers it a very high priority to preserve her work.

Additionally, the **Apple Flats Apartments** (WSN 1228) were, according to our documentation, also designed by Eleanor Raymond. The Commission requests access to provide information on where it falls on our list of priorities.

Preserving the historic structures is consistent with the Town's Affordable Housing Policies and Preferences. It is also important to keep the embodied energy of these built structures that are still useful, as the Town grapples with issues of resiliency: "the greenest building is already built."

All the other historic structures on the site should be considered for preservation as well. There are numerous opportunities for their reuse. They could be redistributed on the site, and used for housing or ancillary structures. Perhaps one might be recycled as a “comfort station” along the rail trail. They could also be reused elsewhere in town, for example at 0 Wellesley St. or as recycled building components for a new sales shed at Land’s Sake Farm.

The proponents should donate permanent preservation deed restrictions on the preserved historic buildings. These will be approved by the Mass Historical Commission and be held by the Town. We ask the Selectmen to advocate for this.

The Commission realizes that the existing bucolic context of Woodleigh Farm will be gone forever with this proposal. Before that happens, the proponents should professionally document all existing conditions. A professional videographer and professional photographer should survey and record all the structures in their context and make this information available to the town. The proponents should consider using this documentation for educational purposes on the property in the future. Informational signs showing the history of the site will be enlightening to future users of property.

The proponents should provide site sections through the area where the historic buildings are to be located through to the Boston Post Road National Register Historic District on Rte 20. Site sections showing the relationship to the grouping of historic buildings to the rest of the project will also be helpful. Then, in order to protect the view from the National Register District area, site sections from Rte 20 through the new housing project will be needed.

Finally, the Commission recommends that the scale at the back of the 3-story buildings be softened, by terracing or another means to break it down so as not to present such a tall wall there.

For reference the historic buildings on the site are:

- The Mirick/Farnsworth House (WSN 155), Exmoor Farm – (1721) – 751 Boston Post Rd.
<http://mhc-macris.net/Details.aspx?MhcId=WSN.155>
- Exmoor Farm Barn (WSN.1226), Exmoor Farm – (c.1922) – 751 Boston Post Rd.
<http://mhc-macris.net/Details.aspx?MhcId=WSN.1226>
- The Cabin, Exmoor Farm (WSN 1227) – (1930) - 751 Boston Post Rd.
<http://mhc-macris.net/Details.aspx?MhcId=WSN.1227>
- Apple Flats Apartments, Exmoor Farm (WSN 1228) – (c. 1938) - 751 Boston Post Rd.
<http://mhc-macris.net/Details.aspx?MhcId=WSN.1228>
- Mark C. Sibley and Mary Rice House (WSN 157) – (1840) – 761 Boston Post Rd.
<http://mhc-macris.net/Details.aspx?MhcId=WSN.157>
- Mark C. Sibley Barn (WSN 1229) – 761 Boston Post Rd.
<http://mhc-macris.net/Details.aspx?MhcId=WSN.1229>

The Commission asked Mark to co-ordinate a site visit that includes the chance to see interiors of the existing buildings so that any comments on interior features can be included in our letter to the Selectmen.

Meeting adjourned at: ± 8:45 pm

Next meetings 4/1

(submitted by Phyllis Halpern)