

## Weston Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

4/1/19 – Town Hall – 7:00 pm

Members present: Henry Stone (HS), Phyllis Halpern (PH), Steve Wagner (SW), Alicia Primer (AP), Al Aydelott (AA)

Associate member present; Adrienne Giske (AG)

Also present: John Field (JF), Neil Levitt, Paul Penfield, Tony (Yungwen) Yuan, Lingyun Rui, Charles Kraus (Architect), Alex Zhu, Terrence McDonogh, Mark Schwarz, Jessica Clarke, Gabe Smallman, Jeff David, Mainie & Asa Phillips, Wayne Caruso Sr, Gus Miragias, Philip Hresko (Architect)

Public Comment: none

### Demolition Bylaw Activity

**Public Hearing 36 Church Street-** Application for Total demolition.

1804 Greek Revival, originally the George Smith store on site of what is currently the Old Library in town center, moved across the street 1816, then back to original site in 1852 where GW Cutting used it as store until 1867. Due to construction in 1899 of the Old Library, a preservationist lawyer named Charles Fiske, Jr saved it and moved it to 36 Church St. where it is now. WHC voted it Significant at previous meeting. Now owned by Yungwen Yuan & Lingyun Rui. Brought their architect, Charles Kraus.

AP states it is worth saving as important to Weston history. HS says the main block can be easily saved. Discussion (HS, AP, PH, SW) from site visit that it appears to be more than one building put together. WHC encourages owners to work with existing Greek Revival main body of house. Not so concerned with the wings. Inside preservation not necessary. Exterior preservation should include existing door and window openings and materials replaced in kind to match existing. Owner argues that the house was not well maintained. AG talks of living in her Greek Revival old home, but with modern amenities. Neighbors asked for comment. Neil Levitt says he hadn't heard until that day of the hearing. Comments that living in an old house with modern amenities is not a problem. Neil Levitt is concerned about the neighborhood itself. Architect is told of the Demo Delay procedure.

(Discussion of whether neighbor notification letters are sent out. JF says no, only in newspaper.)

Former potential buyer, Alex Zhu, shares his observations. Feels it is in fine condition considering its age. Comments on mix of wings.

PH speaks to the quality of the old materials which give the existing house value.

AP moves to impose the one-year delay. HS seconds. Voted unanimously that the house is preferably preserved. If owners wish to work with WHC, (and come back with a design that keeps the main block of the house,) AP and others offer WHC help going forward. In that case it may be possible for WHC to lift the delay before 12 months.

**Initial Determination 241 Glen Road** - Application for total demolition.

Built in 1923, the house was a gambrel roofed cottage associated with the former Glen House Hotel and did contribute to the Glen Road Historic District. The building is now in bad repair.

At table are Mark Schwarz (builder), Terrence McDonogh (architect) and Jessica Clarke representing the owner, BA 241 Glen Rd, LLC.

(Was part of the former "12 Tribes" property). PH reviews that in April 2017 when the previous owner sought to demolish the structure, the WHC voted it as significant, though voted to "reluctantly" allow demolition based on neighbors' concerns about site conditions. AP reiterated that its significance not affected by condition. (Neighbor asks about original use of the house.)

AP moves to vote it as significant (again) because of its date and contribution to the Glen Road Historic District. HS seconds, voted unanimously. AA asks if we can't stay with WHC original vote to allow demo. It is pretty much condemned. Neighbor comments on the dangerous conditions and encourages demolition. AP argues for calling another Hearing because many neighbors are new. Architect argues that original demo conditions persist. AA comments that Planning will look at it going forward. He asks why we would repeat the whole procedure to end up in the same place. WHC already found that it can't be saved. SW argues for proceeding as was originally decided. Architect argues that existing condition is dangerous. Neighbor comments on Police needing to patrol for trespassing. JF says we could waive the Hearing. Architect comments that even with permit to demo, it is a difficult process. HS moves that WHC waive the requirement for a hearing and allow demo to proceed. AA seconds. Voted in favor of allowing demo, 4 to 1. (Architect shows proposed renderings showing a gambrel style house, much larger than the existing house....Discussed.)

**Initial Determination 22 Bemis Street:** partial demolition application to repair or replace windows. Owners Asa and Margaret Phillips at table.

House is 1915 Queen Ann style. AP moves to find it significant for its date, style and architectural integrity. AA seconds, all vote aye.

Owner states that the 6 windows are original double-hung style and deteriorating, letting in cold etc. No plans to replace any others.

PH and other WHC members make usual arguments to preserve and restore these original old-growth wood windows with addition of new storm windows. PH recommends looking at WHC web site to learn about window restoration. Back and forth... AP asks if they would be willing to

look into the approach of restoration. AA elaborates on frequent need to replace replacement windows. Owner will investigate restoration, but asked about best replacement windows. AP comments that an administrative approval from co-chairs after the owners make their decision would be fine with her. She moves to allow admin approval for restoration; HS seconds, passes unanimously.

**Initial Determination 2 Laxfield Road:** partial demolition application for removal of 80's additions and replacing a window with a door. Contractor (Wayne Caruso, Jr) at table to represent owner (Kevin Starr). PH recounts that WHC looked at this house informally last fall.

1899 brick Tudor estate house in English Revival style. Built for George and Mary Fiske, it is one of few remaining estate houses in Weston. AP moves that WHC finds the house significant because of these facts, HS seconds, voted unanimously.

Builder comments on number of 1980s additions. The plan is to remove 80s additions. Main house to stay as it is, and to add gym addition at back. Won't be particularly visible. JF states that proposed work will mainly impact the existing house where addition attaches. Will schedule a Public Hearing for April 29.

Suggested that the architect send drawings ahead of meeting.

**Public Hearing 863 Boston Post Road.** Partial Demolition application for 1827 Alpheus Bigelow Jr. House restoration/additions:

Owner Mike Myers, and architect, Philip Hresko, present at table. Update on plans for renovation and additions to convert to daycare use. Drawings explicated by architect. States that they will save mature trees. The exterior elevations of existing building will be little changed. Additions at back will keep below existing roof lines. Reviews and shows what has changed in design since last meeting: new larger glass doors and windows (in back additions) now are shown with divided lights/muntins.

Owners are willing to purchase, save and move Fiske Law office from its site across BPR (at 3 Apple Crest) to this property. They will keep it up, find a use. Owner assured by WHC that future possible work on a preservation restriction will not hold up the main project. AP moves that as the proposed work is not detrimental to the house that WHC not impose a demolition delay, HS seconds, all vote aye. WHC compliments the careful and thoughtful restoration work shown for this project.

Project updates:

**Case House;** HS reports on color choices for interior. Neil Levitt comments on desire to simplify number of colors. Still working on shingle choices.

**JST:** AG reports on progress, including good progress with Historic New England (HNE) permissions and deed restriction. Asserts that the architects are working with HNE while

making the Design/Development drawings. There will be more back and forth to reconcile the drawings with the HNE restrictions. This comes to next Fall Town Meeting.

Discussion of possible metal detector work to look for historic artifacts in JST basement. Is there a potential for problems; holding up construction? Paul Penfield comes forward and comments on how the offer by a volunteer to do this work came about. WHC worries about risk finding something that would delay the work. Table decision until later. Construction won't start for at least 6 months.

**Old Library:** Neil Levitt reports it is nearly done. Front granite porch cap will come later. There is a temporary wood platform. Town takes back possession of building in May.

Other:

**500 Wellesley land acquisition for Open Space:** Discussion of Article 24 in May Town Meeting. WHC votes to support the Conservation Commission's (and the CPC's) request to purchase 13.35 of the 15.54 acres of land at Wellington Farm for Open Space. Vote is unanimous (with one abstention). Owner still intends to place a preservation restriction on the farm house.

**Administrative Support Requirements/WHC goals:** Need discussion of what WHC needs in the way of administrative support to give to Selectman Houston.

**Signs:** Discuss need for a Town policy on signs and WHC complaint that the new signs at Case Campus and Recreation fields are knock-off of Historic District signs. Try and keep the shape, typeface and colors on WHC signs distinct for others. AA volunteers to look at sign design in a couple of months with "working group".

**Eric Dray presentation:** Put off until after Town Meeting... JF will circulate to identify date.

**De-accessioning Project:** WHC needs a separate meeting to go over town-owned objects stored in JST. Everything needs to be moved by the end of May. Meeting date to be selected.

**Historic Marker Application** received for 215 Boston Post Road: Edward and Adelaide F Fiske House, 1867 – This is a significant Stick Style house recently reviewed. WHC unanimously votes to approve this application.

**Treasurer's Report:** sign off on invoices for previous markers

**Minutes** 3/6/19 & 3/21/19 approved unanimously, with corrections

Meeting adjourned 9:38

Minutes by Henry Stone