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City of Newton, Massachusetts

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Department of Planning and Development

Barney S. Heath
Director

Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, Massachusetts 02459

Date: December 19th, 2024

Place/Time: Zoom, at 7:00 PM

Attending: Doug Cornelius, Chair; Mark Armstrong, Member; Harvey Schorr, Member; Nancy Grissom, Member; Anne Marie Stein, Member; David Lewis, Staff

The meeting was called to order via Zoom at 7:00 p.m. with Doug Cornelius serving as Chair. Voting permanent members were Mark Armstrong, Harvey Schorr, Nancy Grissom, and Anne Marie Stein. David Lewis acted as Zoom host and the meeting was digitally recorded on the Zoom device.

1. 235 California Street – Violation

Violation of Demolition Delay Ordinance

Staff Reported that this Queen Anne style house was built ca. 1880 for original owner Samuel Fletcher. Fletcher was a grocer who owned a store nearby on Bridge Street. The house features typical Queen Anne details including a porch and a bay window on the front elevation, additional bay windows on the right and left elevations, cross-gabled roofs, and a brick chimney. One of the bay windows was added in 1947, and a sunporch was added on the left side of the house in 1950. The house is individually inventoried on MACRIS, as are many of the nearby houses on California Street, many of which were built in a similar style also in the late 1890s. In January 2024, NHC approved plans for partial demolition at this property. During construction, the building was damaged, leading to a partial collapse.

Andrew Lee, of the City's Law Department spoke to explain the process and that a settlement had been reached. Ben Stevens was present to represent the application.

There was no public comment.

Ms. Grissom made a motion to approve the settlement agreement and authorize the chair to sign the agreement. Ms. Stein seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on December 19th, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 5-0:

RESOLVED to approve the settlement agreement and authorize the chair to sign the agreement.

Voting in the Affirmative:	**Voting in the Negative:**	**Abstained/Recused:**
MA		
AMS		
HS		
NG		
DC		

2. 30 Dorr Road – Request for Demolition

Request for Total Demolition

Staff Reported that this is a 1951 Contemporary style house designed by architect Hugh Stubbins in an inventoried neighborhood that retains historic context. Staff recommends finding the property preferably preserved.

Trevor O'Leary was present to represent the application. Mr. O'Leary gave a presentation using the

share screen function, first showing a map of the neighborhood before showing photographs of the home and describing the property. Mr. O'Leary then showed some photographs of the neighborhood.

Ms. Stein commented that she thought that it would be nice to see the property preserved, especially as it had ties to a noted architect. Mr. Schorr commented that he agreed with Ms. Stein, and argued that changes in the neighborhood warrant preservation of this remaining original structure. Ms. Grissom commented that she thought that the neighborhood still had historic context.

Amy Golahny commented that other houses in the neighborhood had been added on to in ways that still retained the original architecture. She also noted that the landscaping was important to the historic feel of the neighborhood. Zach Bianchi inquired about what would be built in its place. Mr. Cornelius clarified the purview of the commission.

Mr. Cornelius commented that he thought there was enough context to warrant finding the property preferably preserved. Ms. Stein also commented on the unique landscaping of the property.

Ms. Stein made a motion to find the property preferably preserved. Ms. Grissom seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on December 19th, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 5-0:

RESOLVED to find the property preferably preserved.

Voting in the Affirmative:	Voting in the Negative:	Abstained/Recused:
MA		
AMS		
HS		
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3. 44 Erie Avenue – Request for Demolition

Request for Total Demolition of Carriage House

Staff Reported that this is a ca. 1890 Carriage House in a National Register historic district. Staff welcomes discussion of the historical significance of this property.

Melissa Beecy was present to represent the application. Ms. Beecy gave a presentation using the share screen function, showing photographs of the carriage house and explaining the condition of the property and where it sits on the lot.

Mr. Armstrong commented that he thought the carriage house was integral to the house. Ms. Stein commented that she agreed, and it was important how the two buildings worked together.

There was no public comment.

Ms. Grissom made a motion to find the property preferably preserved. Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on December 19th, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 4-1:

RESOLVED to find the property preferably preserved.

Voting in the Affirmative:	Voting in the Negative:	Abstained/Recused:
MA	DC	
AMS		
HS		
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4. 3 Newland Street – Request for Demolition

Request for Total Demolition of House and Shed

Staff Reported that this is a well-preserved, inventoried ca. 1863 Colonial Revival house. Staff recommends finding the property preferably preserved.

Laurance Lee was present to represent the application. Mr. Lee gave a presentation using the share screen function, showing photographs of the existing house and neighborhood.

Ms. Stein commented that she thought the neighborhood was interesting. Ms. Grissom commented that this was an older area with many examples of worker housing.

Nathan Phillips commented that he believed the property should be preserved.

Ms. Grissom made a motion to find the property preferably preserved. Ms. Stein seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on December 19th, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 5-0:

RESOLVED to find the property preferably preserved.

Voting in the Affirmative:	Voting in the Negative:	Abstained/Recused:
MA		
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5. 1381-1389 Washington Street – Request for Demolition

Request for Total Demolition

Staff Reported that 1381-1389 Washington Street is a pair of ca. 1860s commercial buildings located in a National Register listed historic district. Staff recommends finding the properties preferably preserved.

Bruce Linsky and Mark Blotner were present to represent the application. Mr. Blotner commented that he thought that the buildings were an eyesore and that they hoped to build something better.

Mr. Armstrong commented that he believed the property should not be preferably preserved. Mr. Cornelius commented that he did not see much of the original material remaining in the property.

Zach Bianchi commented that he would support finding the property not preferably preserved.

Ms. Stein made a motion to find the property preferably preserved. Ms. Grissom seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on December 19th, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 1-4:

RESOLVED to find the property preferably preserved. The motion failed.

Voting in the Affirmative:	Voting in the Negative:	Abstained/Recused:
NG	MA	
	AMS	
	HS	
	DC	

6. 60 Audubon Drive – Request for Demolition

Request for Total Demolition

Staff Reported that this is a 1956 split-level house in a neighborhood with some historic context. Staff welcomes discussion of its historic significance.

No one was present to represent the application. Mr. Cornelius shared photos of the house using the share screen function.

Ms. Stein commented that she was unsure about this style of architecture. Mr. Armstrong agreed and commented that the neighborhood was mixed.

Dan Wu commented that the neighborhood was mixed in historic context, and that she knew the owners and they were unable to attend.

Mr. Armstrong made a motion to find the property preferably preserved. Ms. Grissom seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on December 19th, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 0-5:

RESOLVED to find the property preferably preserved. The motion failed.

Voting in the Affirmative:	**Voting in the Negative:**	**Abstained/Recused:**
	MA	
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	DC	

7. 31 Emerald Street – Request for Demolition

Request for Total Demolition

Staff Reported that this is an inventoried ca. 1890 vernacular Colonial Revival style house. Staff recommends finding the property preferably preserved.

Kyle Xue was present to represent the application. Mr. Xue gave a presentation using the share screen function, showing photos of other houses in Newton and around the neighborhood, before showing photos of the house and explaining his reasons for wanting to demolish the property.

Ms. Grissom commented that she thought that the property was nice and could be preferably preserved. Mr. Schorr commented that there were other properties in this style nearby, and that he did not think that concerns raised by Mr. Xue warranted demolition of the property.

MaryLee Belleville commented that she did not find the arguments presented by Mr. Xue to provide enough reasoning for demolition. Zach Bianchi commented that he lived next door, and that he did not think that there was any historic significance to the property and that it should not be preferably preserved. Ms. Stein commented that she thought an addition could be explored further.

Mr. Schorr made a motion to find the property preferably preserved. Ms. Grissom seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on December 19th, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 3-1-1:

RESOLVED to find the property preferably preserved.

Voting in the Affirmative:	Voting in the Negative:	Abstained/Recused:
HS	MA	AMS
NG		
DC		

8. 17 Caldon Path – Request for Demolition

Request for Total Demolition

Staff Reported that this is a 1948 Postwar Traditional ranch style house located in Oak Hill Park. Staff welcomes discussion of the historical significance of this property.

Carmine Petruzziello was present to represent the application. Mr. Petruzziello gave a presentation using the share screen function, showing photographs of the house and neighborhood and describing the surrounding neighborhood.

Mr. Schorr commented that he thought the property could be renovated or added on to. Ms. Stein commented that she did not think the property was worth being found preferably preserved.

There was no public comment.

Commission Comment

Ms. Stein made a motion to find the property preferably preserved. Ms. Grissom seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on December 19th, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 0-4-1:

RESOLVED to find the property preferably preserved. The motion failed.

Voting in the Affirmative:	Voting in the Negative:	Abstained/Recused:
	MA	HS
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	NG	
	DC	

9. 34 West Street – Request for Demolition

Request for Total Demolition

Staff Reported that this is an inventoried, ca. 1869 vernacular Colonial Revival style house in a well-preserved neighborhood with many inventoried houses. Staff recommends finding the property preferably preserved.

Jason Graca was present to represent the application. Mr. Graca gave a presentation using the share screen function, showing photographs of the house and others in the surrounding neighborhood.

Ms. Stein commented that she thought this was a nice older house and that she would prefer to see it preferred. Mr. Cornelius commented that this was a good example of vernacular housing from this era.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Armstrong made a motion to find the property preferably preserved. Ms. Grissom seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on December 19th, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 5-0:

RESOLVED to find the property preferably preserved.

Voting in the Affirmative:	**Voting in the Negative:**	**Abstained/Recused:**
MA		
AMS		
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10. 38 Park Lane – Request for Demolition Waiver

Request for Waiver of Demolition Delay

Staff Reported that this is a 1939 Colonial Revival style house in an inventoried neighborhood.

Nir Maimon and Charles Navratil were present to represent the application. They gave a presentation using the share screen function, showing photographs of the existing house and neighborhood before presenting the design for new construction.

Mr. Armstrong commented that he thought the design was terrific. Mr. Schorr commented that he liked the elevation drawing, but not the 3D rendering as much, as he thought the scale and massing seemed more diminished in the elevation. Mr. Schorr suggested changing materials or colors used could help to break up the massing of the design. Ms. Stein commented that she would prefer to see the central gable even taller, in order to make it stand out from the garage. Mr. Armstrong commented that he liked the unity of the design. Mr. Cornelius commented that he thought the design was good and that it would mitigate the loss of the historic building.

There was no public comment.

Ms. Grissom made a motion to waive the demolition delay and approve the plans as drawn. Mr. Schorr seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on December 19th, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 5-0:

RESOLVED to waive the demolition delay and approve the plans as drawn.

Voting in the Affirmative:	Voting in the Negative:	Abstained/Recused:
MA		
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11. 454 Dudley Road – Request for Demolition Waiver

Request for Waiver of Demolition Delay

Staff Reported that this 1956 ranch style house is part of an in-tact development.

Jason Graca was present to represent the application. Mr. Graca shared the plans for new construction using the share screen function. Mr. Graca explained the changes made to the previously presented design, and showed both 2D and 3D renderings of the design.

Mr. Armstrong commented that he thought that the updated design looked good, and that he would approve it. Mr. Schorr commented that he thought the design had improved, and suggested using multiple colors in the siding materials in order to break up the visual massing of the building. Ms. Stein commented that she did not like the paneling around the windows on the left side of the front elevation.

There was no public comment.

Ms. Grissom made a motion to waive the demolition delay and approve the plans subject to review of materials by staff. Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on December 19th, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 5-0:

RESOLVED to waive the demolition delay and approve the plans subject to review of materials by staff.

Voting in the Affirmative:	Voting in the Negative:	Abstained/Recused:
MA		
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12. 208 Chapel Street – Request for Demolition Waiver

Request for Waiver of Demolition Delay

Staff Reported that this is an inventoried, ca. 1869 Classical Revival style house.

Omar Youssef was present to represent the application. Mr. Youssef gave a presentation using the share screen function to display photographs of the existing house and plans for new construction.

Mr. Youssef explained the material choices and showed the location of the proposed building on the existing lot.

Mr. Cornelius commented that he liked how the property interacted with the corner lot. Ms. Stein commented that she liked the design, but questioned the thick framing around the gables. Mr. Schorr agreed about the framing. Mr. Armstrong agreed regarding the framing.

Janet Sterman commented that she did not think the proposed design fit in stylistically with the neighborhood, and asked for clarification about the purview of the commission. MaryLee Belleville commented that she did not think the proposed design would mitigate the loss of the historic building.

Mr. Armstrong commented that he thought the design was good overall.

Mr. Armstrong made a motion to waive the demolition delay and approve the plans subject to review of roofing and siding plan. Mr. Schorr seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on December 19th, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 1-4:

RESOLVED to waive the demolition delay and approve the plans subject to review of the roofing and siding plan. The motion failed.

Voting in the Affirmative:	**Voting in the Negative:**	**Abstained/Recused:**
MA	AMS	
	HS	
	NG	
	DC	

13. 101 Alban Road – Request for Demolition Waiver

Request for Waiver of Demolition Delay

Staff Reported that this is a well preserved 1913 Colonial Revival in an inventoried neighborhood.

Michael Yankovski and Mike McKay were present to represent the application. Mr. McKay gave a presentation using the share screen function to display the plans for new construction and describe the project.

Mr. Cornelius commented that he liked the design. Mr. Schorr agreed, and commented that this is what a replacement should be. Ms. Stein also agreed and commented that she thought it fit into the neighborhood well.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Schorr made a motion to waive the demolition delay and approve the plans as drawn. Ms. Grissom seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on December 19th, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 5-0:

RESOLVED to waive the demolition delay and approve the plans as drawn.

Voting in the Affirmative:	Voting in the Negative:	Abstained/Recused:
MA		
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14. 790 Watertown Street – Request for Demolition Waiver

Request for Waiver of Demolition Delay

Staff Reported that this is a 1911 Dutch Colonial house designed by a noted architect.

Mark Sangiolo and Alexander Babushkin were present to represent the application. Mr. Sangiolo gave a presentation using the share screen function, showing the plans for new construction and describing the project.

Mr. Schorr inquired about the pitch of the hipped roof, and suggested making the pitch steeper. Mr. Sangiolo agreed. Mr. Cornelius commented that he did not like that the garage on the left side of the house projected so far forward. Ms. Stein agreed regarding the garage. Commissioners suggested changing the garage to a hipped roof.

Paulo Alves-Back commented that he did not think the design would mitigate the loss of the historic building.

Mr. Schorr suggested reevaluating the window location.

Mr. Schorr made a motion to waive the demolition delay and approve the plans subject to staff review of updated roof style and window size and location. Ms. Stein seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on December 19th, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 5-0:

RESOLVED to waive the demolition delay and approve the plans subject to staff review of updated roof style and window size and location.

Voting in the Affirmative:	Voting in the Negative:	Abstained/Recused:
MA		
AMS		
HS		
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Administrative Discussion:

a) Approval of minutes from the November 21st, 2024, meeting

Minutes from the November 21st, 2024 hearing were unanimously approved by those in attendance at the hearing.

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote.

Respectfully,

, NHC