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Historical Commission Minutes 12-05-2000

Arlington Historical Commission Minutes of the Meeting of Wednesday, 5 December 2000 Whittemore Robbins House, 7:30 PM

1. Call to Order: Robert Botterio, presiding; with commissioners Pamela Meister, Patrick Guthrie, and Michael Ruderman. Also attending were associate Eric Stange and secretary Lyz Carey.
2. Minutes of 8 November 2000: accepted.
3. Communications from Mr. Botterio:
 A request from the DPW to check the inventory for 88 High Heath Road-not a listed structure.
 A request from the contractor working at 4 Belknap for a determination-the project was judged not to amount to 25% of the facade.
 A request from the deputy town manager for budget projections for the next fiscal year. We will request, as in past years, an allotment of \$2400. We have expended \$1374.02 to date out of an accumulated balance on the town books of \$9406.89. Thus, we will have approximately \$10,500 for operational expenses and projects.
4. Review of Projects
 - a) 5-11 Water Street (Rowe) 8/97: Botterio-finished, and off the agenda.
 - b) 45 Fairview Avenue (Trvalik): new plans and new hearing for this evening.
 - c) 362 Mystic Street (Davidson) 4/99: Guthrie-still not painted.
 - d) 95-97 Mystic Street (Nyberg): Guthrie-finished, and off the agenda.
 - e) 125 Brattle Lane/Farmer's Lane (Colonial Ridge LLC) 11/99: no changes.
 - f) 143 Woodside (Bouvier)7/00: Guthrie-good work on the chimney; clapboardesque siding.
 - g) 23 Academy Street (Chiccarelli) 7/00: finished; Mr. Botterio to write letter commending.
 - h) 1167 Mass. Ave. (Mirak) 9/00: Guthrie-no change.
 - i) 23 Maple Street (Town of Arlington)11/00: Guthrie-short list of contractors now down to two; one's proposal to be selected next week.
5. Reports
 - a) Whittemore Robbins House: Carey-back porch and stair repairs.
 - b) Arlington Civic Block Garden: Robinson-absent.
 - c) Updates and Expansion to Inventory: Cohen, Meister, Guthrie, Hanser-Mr. Botterio has asked the committee to convene between this meeting and the next, and to present a list of proposed buildings next time.
 - d) Inventory of public buildings: Stange and Robinson-same request as above.
 - e) Inventory of significant lots: Botterio-Mary Trvalik will forward her prior research on the question of oversize houselots throughout town.
 - f) Education/Outreach: Stange, Botterio-to assist Mr. Stange's offer of a press release on the commission's activities, Mr. Ruderman will summarize the addresses and original owners of houses researched for historic markers in 2000.
 - g) 743 Massachusetts Avenue (Osco): no news on the pending Land Court decision.
 - h) Affordable Housing Task Force: Stange-tabled.
 - i) Zoning By-Law Review Committee: Meister-tabled.
 - j) Historic Districts Commission: Cohen-tabled.
 - k) Old Burying Ground survey and assessment-Robinson-tabled.
 - l) Preservation Fund-Guthrie-tabled.
6. New Business
8:00 pm: Formal Hearing: 45 Fairview Avenue

Mary Trvalik presented revised construction plans for the addition to her family's home (built in 1906 for Thérèse Bonney.) No action was taken, she explained, on the plans first approved in August 1999. The revised plans carry many of the existing details onto the addition, and work to maintain the "chunky" massing of the existing gambrel. The plans also call for single glazed, wooden storm windows, as the same will eventually be used to replace all of the triple-track aluminum storms on the existing house. On Mr. Ruderman's motion and Mr. Botterio's second, the commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the plans as presented; Mr. Botterio will monitor the work.

8:30 pm: Formal Hearing: 4 Mystic Bank

Max Johnson, of Johnson Construction, led the presentation on behalf of the petitioners and prospective purchasers (the Keanes; Mr. Keanes attending) and the designers (CCA, of 17 Mill Lane, who also sent a representative.) Neighbors had previously asked if the addition of a dormer on the upper level, street-side facade exceeded the 25% threshold which would require a formal hearing to approve. Mr. Botterio had determined that it did not. A subsequent inquiry from the builder and designer to approve additional changes brought about a second review. This time, Mr. Botterio judged the total changes to the existing structure would exceed the threshold, and would require this hearing.

The purchasers wish to increase the living space of the house. In addition to the dormer on the upper level, they wish to enclose the rear half of the 10-foot deep covered porch which, with its connecting terrace, forms the principal entrance from Mystic Bank. The openings which pierce the side walls of this porch are too low to meet current code; petitioners propose to fill or rail the remainder of the openings, after the above enclosure, to a height of 42 inches. They similarly wish to rail the front terrace, as it traverses a gap a full story high between the street line and the porch.

The commission was concerned that the porch enclosure would detract significantly from the house's unique character. The combined effect of the higher railings and smaller side openings would be to "box in" the portal of this cottage. The diminutive and predominantly horizontal "transom" window in the new dormer (where all of the other streetscape openings run vertically) aggravates this effect of the house turning its back on its street and its neighbors.

After more than two hours of discussion, the commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve this motion made by Mr. Botterio, and seconded by Ms. Meister:

to accept the proposed plans having the front entry wall moving 5 feet forward into the porch,
the side buttress openings of the terrace to remain at their present height,
black wrought iron railing to match the new one being installed (on the rear porch, outside the scope of this hearing) to rail the terrace,
the dormer window to be replaced with double-hung windows in their present spacing and with sills to match those of the original windows,
the side openings of the porch to remain at their present height and the maximum depth possible after the rear portion of the porch is enclosed,
the same black wrought iron railing to be used in the porch side openings.
Mr. Ruderman will monitor the project.

95-97 Mystic Street (Nyberg): consideration of garage relocation vs. new construction upon an inventoried lot-tabled.

The hour already being 11:00 after the second hearing above, Mr. Botterio tabled all matters which had not been discussed. This meeting adjourned at 11:05pm

For the Arlington Historical Commission,
A. Michael Ruderman, Commissioner