

# Arlington Historic District Commissions

December 20, 2018  
Whittemore Robbins House

**Commissioners Present:** M. Audin, D. Baldwin, C. Barry, M. Bush, B. Cohen, C. Hamilton, C. Tee, S. Lipp, S. Makowka, J. Worden

**Commissioners Not Present:** N. Aikenhead

**Guests:** J. Swedes, N. Frye, E. Frye, M. Silverman, T. Smurzynski, R. Smurzynski, D. Caradimitropoulo, V. Robinson, J. Leone, A. Macks, J. Raitt, S. Kirby, B. Sterling, S. Shaloo, K. Lubar, J. Becker, E. Bing, H. Colquhoun, J. Miller, S. Bataya, G. Wolf, A. Gamble, D. Green, R. Taketomo, D. Tee, T. Taketomo

## Approved Minutes 8:00pm

1. **AHDC Meeting Opens**
2. **Appointment of alternate Commissioners – Pleasant St – C. Barry, Mt Gilboa – C. Hamilton; Russell Street – C. Hamilton; Jason/Gray – B. Cohen**
3. **Approval of draft minutes from November 15, 2018; S. Makowka moved to table, seconded by D. Baldwin, tabled until January meeting**
4. **Communications**
  - a. **Call and email with applicant at 12 Elder Terrace for garage demo – COA submitted**
  - b. **Call re: AHC demolition permit sign-off – referred back to AHC**
  - c. **Application for 10 Oak Knoll for window changes – reviewed by Chair and determined to qualify for CONA which was issued**
  - d. **See Separate Email Correspondence Log for Email Info**
5. **Other Business**
  - a. Central Street and Avon Place Historic District vacant commissioner seat. D. Baldwin has potential candidate.
  - b. Discussion on Guidelines – S. Makowka circulated revision and with Town Counsel's guidance has asked for final review of these revised guidelines. He will update online.
  - c. Report from Streetscape sub-committee – meeting again with Town Manager and Director of DPW in mid-January. D. Baldwin is in process of updating documentation.
  - d. Request for letter of support for CPA Application from J. Raitt – S. Makowka brought plans and asked for Commissions' permission to send letter of support emphasizing preservation of historical elements of the park including building and railroad tracks with original fabric and contemplates working with various historical markers on site to consolidate together in one place and making more definitive narrative for understanding connections to park history. Stone marker at entrance and railroad ties will stay at the original location. This is for the first phase and there will be subsequent phase. J. Worden asked about tree loss in the area. There are a number of trees for safety reasons that need to be taken down, but with the feedback received there were

plans to maintain trees on right hand side of park but there is a loss of some trees to put some path in front. C. Barry moved and B. Cohen seconded for S. Makowka to write a letter of support.

## 6. New Business

8:20pm

- a. **Formal Hearing Presentation for 27 Maple Street (aka 20 Academy St) (Town of Arlington) regarding ongoing renovations.** J. Raitt (Dir. Planning Dept.) said that they were in midst of looking for capitol money to do renovations to renew the senior center space. As part of that renovation, some changes to exterior are planned. S. Kirby (project Manager) and Bill Sterling (architect) gave info as well. Site plan shown – proposed 2 options for canopy design at reworked Maple Street entrance. The Applicant noted concerns many had about the depth of canopy off the wall – the depth has been reduced. Also, canopy will be real copper, 20 oz weight. Also, the roofline of canopy is located low enough that it does not touch stone belt course running around building. The included section of detail shows how it will be fastened in such a way so as not to disturb the stone. Flashing in mortar piece below stone and now does not affect the stone and there will be a through bolting of the wall.

On the doors at that entrance, the plans show beefed up, heavier doors. They looked at various options and there is a Pella aluminum clad wood door that meets requirements. The Commissioners stressed no cladding of wood doors. The applicant stressed that solid wood doors possible but exposed oak would not hold up to weather. It either would have to be mahogany or teak and even this would not be good with a clear finish so it would have to be a painted wood. There would be some ongoing maintenance cost. There are hundreds of people going through the door every day. In response to a question, the Applicant clarified that the extension of canopy is 7'6" and it will be oxidized copper with a pre-weathered finish. Also, the Applicant pointed out something new in the ceiling plan of canopy which will have recessed lights inside to make it code compliant. Applicant also clarified that the poles shown coming down on the plan are drains and confirmed that they will be installed close against the wall and will tie into perimeter drain.

Proposed banners shown. Per Applicant, the proposed banners will better define nature of new occupants of the building: Council on Aging, Senior Center and ACA. D. Baldwin said flag on pole would not be inappropriate, but the banners seem slightly tacky and don't go with the building. M. Audin said he understands that the goal is to advertise the new tenants. Suggestion to check out signage options as well as banners. Applicant agreed that signage was not on critical path and this treatment could be deferred until they had more time to consider options. Would submit supplemental application in future but not necessary now.

West entry steps (Academy St. side), they have made lots of progress refining this aspect of the project. They were able to get sample of the actual stone on the steps right now and a pre-cast concrete stone to show how well they can match the stone. So are proposing cast stone steps which will be a full replacement not a veneer. Clarified that the material is pre-cast concrete. Proposing the landings themselves which are in good shape will be kept and steps only will be replaced. Chinese brownstone wouldn't match and would be very pricey. Also looked into the bluestone and veneer but this matches so much better prefer to keep with original color and texture. S. Makowka asked

for detail on proposed railing – on page 14. Middle rail currently a bronze railing falling apart. Proposing what would have been appropriate for era which is wrought iron railing. S. Makowka said that the plan looks like a modern interpretation, he would want something different and more traditional. They can look further – suggested more traditional design. J. Worden said the same architect designed his house and the school building and he has a wrought iron railing that is a tradition period railing that they might want to look at (27 Jason). The Applicant clarified that the lower rails on either cheek wall are required for handicap regulations and that they would go 18” beyond the bottom step. There will be 3 separate railings as required by code.

Also, Applicant stated that the #20 street address is not visible and they are suggesting applied letters to face of elevation (shown on page 7 on left) be added – required by post office and fire dept. Bronze letters to match chimney cap. Concern that dark finish might not be visible enough and suggested revisiting material with monitor. Regarding the entry doors on east side (page 7) they are proposing a centered door. It will be in exact style of original door but centered in the opening; will be oak door with solid wood panels on either side.

Proposing to add chimney caps which will be metal, a finish preferred with the brick. Weathered copper too costly so they proposed metal which is stainless steel which has been blasted and then stained so it has a flat patina which will age nicely over time. (Pg. 19). Alternative finish is a bead blasted stainless steel (lighter gray look). Tapered because it looked too boxy as originally conceived, will be a more graceful way to finish off top of chimney. This is only on top of the 2 of the 4. The Commissioners noted their preference for the bead-blasted finish which will disappear.

Cooling tower relocation (Pg. 5) – currently located at back of building and will leave closer to building rather than across the parking lot. Found different size and shape unit that fits in that location as shown. Unit is about 6’ tall – much smaller than existing one. B. Cohen said fencing it will just make it look bigger. Proposed kitchen intake and exhaust materials: dark anodized aluminum – everyone seemed fine.

Site plan (5A) – they are concerned about site lighting and proposing new bollards to follow arc of driveway area. M. Audin said be careful of them causing glare. Bollards are low and would providing lighting on sidewalk. Ones on front are more traditional. Commissioners suggested a more industrial/institutional style than the than craftsman style shown. The 1<sup>st</sup> option liked the most. 34” to light and 10” above – cast aluminum material (black). S. Makowka asked for clarification on the doors for main entrance under canopy at Maple Street: mahogany painted was preference.

B. Cohen moved approval of proposal with conditions including the entrance doors on Maples street shall be painted solid mahogany wood; Academy Street steps to be monolithic (not veneer); chimney caps to be light, bead blasted finish; banners and signage not approved at this time (to be discussed per a subsequent application); exterior lights shall be gooseneck design proffered at the hearing; and railing on academy street stairs shall be appropriate historical design. All modifications and final material choices and finishes to be approved by monitor prior to installation. Seconded by D. Baldwin. Unanimous approval. B. Cohen appointed monitor.

- b. **Continuation of Formal Hearing on 180-182 Pleasant Street for exterior renovations.** The Applicant summarized changes from initial submission. On front porch, round columns changed to square; they tightened baluster spacing and beefed up horizontal top rail; and they modified entry doors on 1<sup>st</sup> floor to be clearer on what is wood and what is glass. Also, the size of the front dormer inconsistency/error noted at first hearing has been corrected. Moving to south side – they have reconfigured the stair and done away with new, larger dormer. As shown, the dormer on left is smaller than one on right and has stair -- they realized they can play inside and get to come up inside existing dormer. They took out a bedroom on that top floor to work with existing dormers. They had inadvertently taken out square stained glass window and they put that back in to plans. Did not have windows aligned originally but have now aligned the windows. There are 4 or 5 that are new vinyl windows – either relocated or new openings but all existing are non-original windows which are vinyl and maybe 5 years old. They are planning to match existing windows. On the rear – balusters, post rails same vocabulary as front. Pergola/covered roof deck added. Commissioners noted Inconsistency on page 2.2 and rear elevation on 2.3 on rear dormer roof. It was suggested that if the roof is pulled in a bit, the hip can run through (like a front dormer) just enough to clear the hip which will allow you to simplify everything. On right hand side where there was a screen porch, discussion about keeping windows referencing screen porch – they have opted to go with new windows to match windows in occupied space and work better with program behind it – also have aligned windows. The upper left on second floor is more or less centered on the door and window below. Lastly, the east elevation label has been corrected. New windows on upper left hand corner aligned. Kept the larger window in the turret (emergency escape rescue window – casement).

C. Barry asked about column details – answer: proposing 10” column and 8” wood cap. C. Barry noted that the bottom plinth should be taller than the trim at the top to match traditional proportions. More classic to have bottom stronger than the top – will seem anchored. Top trim should be 6” and bottom 10”. Applicant noted that they are using quarter rounds at top and bottom as well. S. Makowka asked about front doors – taking out existing units and there will be slightly reconfigured new solid wood doors. He noted that the existing wood doors are very traditional and have stained glass panels on either side – would like to see that original fabric kept. He can live with the change of doors to an appropriate alternative but the stained glass he really would like saved. He clarified that the propose reconfiguration is fine but the new outside panels should reuse the stained glass sidelights. The doors should be all wood and matching the design of the existing door.

C. Barry moved to accept proposed plans and design with the conditions that (1) stained glass units be reused in sidelights; (2) columns have 1 x 10 plinth and 1 x 6 capital (3) rear dormer be recessed from the hips similar to front dormer, and 4) doors to have large glass pane, be all wood with no clad, to match existing doors. Seconded by D. Baldwin. Unanimous approval. Monitor – C. Barry

- c. **Formal Hearing re: 12 Elder Terrace for demolition of an existing garage.** M. Silverman gave presentation. Garage has not been addressed by prior owners. The condition is that it needs to be demolished but the family has needs to store bikes, strollers, etc. so he was curious whether there is an economical solution to a storage space. Would like to install a storage shed. All wood, moved back away from street would probably work. If not on a concrete pad that will help get approval. Would request it be painted to blend in with house. Suggest a verbal conversation with building dept. Plan to demo garage and make parking pad at grade, maybe with crushed stone. Retaining wall with concrete blocks will require some grading

investigation. Suggested talking with engineer and monitor approve final finish before installation or finishing of retaining wall. Discussion on by right to demolish but clock starts ticking – might want to wait until has made final determination on whether truly desiring demolition or maybe rebuilding structure. Applicant will send email withdrawing the application.

- d. **Formal Hearing re: 21-23 Russell Terrace for ramp and foundation work.** J. Nyberg gave presentation. There are serious structural issues on the property. The rear structural foundation wall issues are most pressing -- the wall is bowing out. The engineers came and presented options – options to put new foundation in for \$150k, but he would like to propose shoring up the corner and most of the back wall – under pin it, jack it up and pour new foundation wall. Want to put 10” foundation wall and leaving shelf to fill in with veneer stone. Natural fieldstone veneer is proposed since putting back painted stone not desired. From the grade it is a fairly good drop down to the yard so challenging to get equipment back there to do work. Neighbors decided that it didn’t work for them to grant access directly to back yard so the need a temporary ramp off parking lot to get machinery down there. Will remove ramp after work completed. Dirt ramp will be used and removed after construction completed with site to be remediated.

D. Baldwin moved to accept proposal to replace rear foundation wall and to allow temporary ramp as part of the construction. Seconded by M. Audin. Unanimous approval. Monitor appointed S. Lipp

- e. **Formal Hearing re: 0 Ravine Street for new construction.** Step 1 to consider whether development is appropriate to the District and everything attached to that – November guidelines revised and in effect. Per revised guidelines, the hearing will be stopped after tonight’s input--we will just be gathering information tonight--with no decision either to move forward or not to move forward to Step 2.

J. Leone gave opening presentation on behalf of owners Doug and Rebecca Perlo and potential new owners (V. Robinson) and XXX. Also present for Applicant was Gary Olsen, architect. Reminded Commission that there had been an earlier application taken to Stage 1 to determine if it was a buildable lot but at that time no real vote was taken and the application was withdrawn. Tonight, they have essentially the same presentation as last time. This is an R1 zoned, buildable 8,058sf lot. The lot has existed since 1887 and has been in its current configuration since 1919 with easement running between lot 0 and the house in back. Maps show location in the District and how it fits into the district – not as large a lot as some others in the district but a buildable lot.

S Makowka clarified that we are at step 1 and determining whether anything is appropriate to this site so there will not be a focus on design details and overall massing to be discussed. S. Makowka said the guidelines talk about how this affects the streetscape and the other buildings in the district. Focus on that existing condition as an open lot and focus on that and do we see anything moving forward. Vicki and Dina, proposed new owners, introduced themselves and said they are looking to age in place and making this their new home. Diagram showing district and house location shown. Most relevant in perspective to the site – B5 drawings represent properties hatched where they are the size of the proposed property or less. Houses in purple are houses larger than the house proposed on sites smaller than this lot. Drawing B3 represents, in dark green, buildings that currently violate setbacks required in current zoning. This proposed construction meets the current zoning setbacks and in fact exceeds setback requirements.

M. Audin said you're making an argument that it is still buildable – what are design issues that need to be accounted for on this site. Is it compatible to District? The Applicant stated that it is not incongruous with setting and district. Further that the size, massing, height, shape and materials meet all of those standards. A Commissioner stated that we have a requirement that structures in the district are not blocked by structures in front of it. The house behind it will be blocked. The Applicant responded that the house in question has a shared entrance with 2 other pieces of property. House can be set back further away to not block view of back of this house. Less of an imposing mass. Also, Applicant stated that the house behind does not have any frontage on Ravine street and has an Irving Street address. We're not supposed to be talking about trees but it's a vacant lot now, has been and neighbor looks at that as a feature of the neighborhood and the tree is something that is important. Applicant is trying to dodge blocking the view and is trying to site the house so as to keep the tree specimen on the lot.

S. Makowka read for the record an excerpt from the District study relevant to the issue: "Of all the streetscapes in the proposed district, the "L" formed by Ravine and Irving Streets is perhaps the best preserved, insofar as there have been no major structures added to or removed from its surroundings since the early 1900's. Ravine Street offers a compelling panorama of architectural style and history. " He stated that this streetscape is important and that the fact that there is a large apartment block closer to Mass. Ave. (as highlighted in Applicant's presentation) is not meaningful to the setting of this particular property. In his perspective, 24 Irving Street is seen from Ravine Street regardless of their disagreement. B. Cohen said discussion of Jason Court and non-conforming structures is irrelevant because once zoning went in that would never have been built. One characteristic of Pleasant and Jason/Gray for the town is large variety of characteristics. Not unified but there is a coherence. C. Barry echoed that rather than the District as a whole, the setting needs to be considering the micro-setting of this property. D. Baldwin said it was the establishing study for Jason/Gray that was voted on by Town Meeting and part of that charge was to preserve the existing streetscapes. C. Hamilton said just because you can doesn't mean you should. C. Tee is very concerned by change of the streetscape by putting in a building at this location. S. Lipp said 24 Irving Street was noticed more by him from Irving since he frequents building across Irving Street and trees have been removed but asked if there was any access from Irving Street up to house or from Ravine. J. Worden said the blocking of the house is a problem and the Ravine side is a functional front of the house. What also needs to be considered in this particular context is the spacing of the large and substantial houses. Can't see how you can build anything but the smallest replica of a garage that would not block the view and maintain the ample and gracious spacing on both sides of Ravine Street.

K. Lubar, 33 Gray Street owner, sent 2 documents for the record. Number of contextual comments – none of the single family zoned houses shown by Applicants are in the District. Many of the indicated structures are outside of district and certainly the neighborhood. Need to find comparable houses in same place. Houses mischaracterized in area. For 100 years this has been open space. Prior to that there was a small barn. Page 10 shows where HD has been preserved. Appropriate streetscape to be protecting – on page 11 he shows relevant examples. Nice neighborhood symmetry now coming across Ravine not suffering from infill properties. Barn originally part of 40 Irving – 914sf total footprint of barn. There is a historical precedence made by this barn, but not a residence being built. 24 Irving shouldn't be blocked.

R. Smurzynski, 9 Ravine Street owner, had map of the District from her father as a present. Added that this was Judge Hardy's house and in 1901 he built a house for his son and his family and it always felt like a compound, not two separate houses.

T. Smurzynski, 9 Ravine Street said that in 1977 he was chair of HD study committee that set up Broadway Historic District, the 1<sup>st</sup> District. It is important that the 1998 report setting up Jason/Gray HD pointed out the significance of the streetscape and the houses. Attention needs to be paid to the report and its emphasis to the special characteristic of the streetscape which would be ruined by the addition of the house.

S. Shaloo, 8 Ravine Street, showed map from 1884 showing Hardee Street before Ravine Street was cut. Unclear from record whether barn was moved before 24 Irving or Ravine Street cut. Easement to Gray Estate had part of the siting involved. Parcel kept being passed around to keep open space. S. Shaloo will email the map she discussed and showed at the meeting. 24 Gray faces the pond but the access is from Gray so an example about why you can't say Irving isn't the front of the house.

T. Takishmo, 48 Irving Street owner. With respect to commentary on how that lot was never intended to be built upon he disagrees. Very proud at how the streetscape is described but the guidelines on how we make a decision on grandfathering requiring to satisfy abstract notion of what is an appropriate space. He wants to separate out decision of buildability from what might be built there – he would rather decide that by zoning ordinance where there are descriptions of what's buildable with subnotes. Subnote should say that HDC authority supercedes what can be built with zoning as of right.

J. Sweeter, 24 Irving Street owner, the way the house is faced the porches are the front of the house as they use it and they have easement with back walkway down to Irving street. She personally thinks of it from Irving Street. She could care less whether her view is blocked. Her impression is that this seems like a buildable lot and at some point something will be built there – she liked the potential neighbors.

D. Green, 40 Irving Street, said some guidance on what can be built there would be valuable.

H. Kahoon, 55 Academy Street clarified that issue of blocking the house is unclear. Is it from the street to the house? The intent is for the public resource to be preserved, while the individual's view from their house to the street is less important.

J. Leone said – view of 24 Irving – there is 10 foot driveway, setback between there and 40 Irving. Setback from property line to this house. Still have 30 – 40' wide view of back of the house. Not going to be blocking view of back of 24 Irving Street. Regarding the ethereal barn – he doesn't see on the map given by K. Lubar. Separate deeded lots. The Perlos purchased as two separate deeds – always been a buildable lot. Not new configuration. What new construction is compatible with the District. He reads from 40C guide the direction of the house that is going to be built – built a house compatible to district and that fits in to the district and the vicinity. Look at whole district, not cherry pick.

M. Audin reminded everyone that this is a 3 step process with a single decision.

Hearing continued to 1/24/19

**7. OPEN FORUM**

*Ordinarily, any matter presented to the Commission under Open Forum will neither be acted upon nor a formal decision made, absent a previously noticed agenda item, but the Commission may make a decision if it deems it appropriate and necessary for the public good.*

**8. REVIEW OF PROJECTS**

**9. EXECUTIVE SESSION – To discuss ongoing litigation – NONE NEEDED – NO UPDATE**

**10. MEETING ADJOURNS 11:26pm**