

BELMONT HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

July 27, 2021

4:30 PM

Site Visit: 115 Mill Street – Chapel Building/ McLean Zone 3

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: January 28, 2022

TIME: 11:31 AM

ATTENDING:

Commission members: Seth Clarke (arrived late)

Lisa Harrington

Lauren Meier

Carol Moyles

Mike Smith

Planning Board: Thayer Donham

Staff attending: Christine Zale, OCD

Northland team: Jack Dawley, Northland Residential

Alan Aukeman, Ryan Associates, Landscape Architects

Ed Bradford, The Architectural Team

Michael Breau, The Architectural Team

Meeting began 4:40PM

Lisa Harrington and Lauren Meier welcomed everyone and noted the goal of the site visit: to orient Commission members to the proposals for Eliot Chapel, the single historic building in Zone 3. Individual participants introduced themselves.

Jack Dawley, Northland, distributed a set of handouts that showed preliminary design work for the Chapel

While the group waited for keys to access the interior of the Chapel, Mr. Dawley gave an introduction to the Eliot Chapel project, part of the Northland Residential proposed development for Mclean zone 3:

- Gave a very brief intro to the overall Northland project
- Summarized the zoning and historic preservation agreement language for the Chapel building.
- Described the general approach to the rehabilitation of the Eliot Chapel, to be converted into two units: one is a market rate condominium with 3 bedrooms; second is a affordable unit with one bedroom.

Alan Aukeman, landscape architect for Northland, explained the general landscape strategy for vehicular access to the proposed garage from Olmsted Drive, pedestrian access and parking spaces, and grading along the south end of the building.

- Commission members Carol Moyles and Lauren Meier asked for clarification regarding which trees were to be cut and how existing stone wall was to be treated along Olmsted Drive, and what was to be done with numerous volunteer trees and stumps along the south side of the Chapel. Ms. Moyles noted concern regarding the removal of large oaks at the site.

- Commission member Seth Clarke asked for clarification regarding the existing windows on the south façade.
- Commission members and the design team discussed the south entrances to both units.

Mr. Dawley, Ed Bradford and Michael Breau summarized the strategy for the proposed design of the garage. This structure provides a 2-car garage for the market rate unit. It is meant to be compatible with the design of the historic Chapel, utilizing similar materials and several design motifs visible on the historic building. Mr. Clarke noted how some aspects of the garage design were different than the existing historic building.

All present walked to the north side of the building. Mr. Aukeman and the Northland team explained the landscape treatment and how the unit will be accessed from the north side, which is now the secondary entrance for the market rate unit. Commission members and the design team discussed the challenge of re-orienting the entrance to the new units, when historically, the primary façade of the Chapel was the north side facing the Upham Bowl and the McLean campus. Ms. Moyles noted the importance of both selective screening to shield the view of non-historic structures as well as maintaining the visual relationship between the Chapel, Upham Bowl, and the McLean campus.

Inside the Chapel, the Northland team explained where primary walls will be constructed to separate the two units and create a 2nd floor of bedrooms for the market rate unit, while still maintaining a sense of the volume of the Chapel for the open living area. There was considerable discussion regarding the existing stained-glass windows, which were installed in the building over many years as funds allowed. The proposed approach is to remove the stained glass, retain the shape and form of the opening and replace with new glass. There was additional discussion about the potential to retain the colored glass in the single rose window at the south end of the building. Before departing, Ms. Harrington noted concern regarding the apparent level of mold/mildew in the building.

Ms. Harrington departed the meeting at 5:45. Upon exiting the building on the north side, several Commission members noted potential water infiltration issues in the roof at the north entrance. Ms. Moyles also asked for clarification regarding property line at the top of the slope on the east side as well as the proposed landscape treatment for the existing wall, chain-link fencing, and walkways.

Site Visit concluded at 6:00. No motions or votes were taken.
Respectfully submitted by Lauren Meier, HDC.