

## BELMONT HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Town Hall

November 5, 2003

Meeting Minutes

Commission Members Attending: Co-chair Richard Cheek, Paul Bell, Richard Pichette, Nancy Richards, Michael Smith, Sharon Vanderslice (second half). Associate Members: Caroline Darbyshire, Matthew Genta, and Lisa Harrington. Absent: Linn Hobbs, Arleyn Levee, Lydia Ogilby, Jonathan Treat.

### MCLEAN COTTAGES

Richard Cheek displayed the written and photographic documentation of the North and Ledge Cottages at McLean Hospital, as submitted by the Northland Residential Corporation in accordance with Section 8 of the Historic Preservation Agreement attached to the Memorandum of Agreement for the Redevelopment of McLean Hospital. The HDC reviewed the documentation and found it to be in compliance with the historical and archival requirements for recording the buildings prior to their demolition. This archival record will be kept on file at the Selectmen's Office, where it will be available for public examination. A letter confirming receipt and approval of the documents will be sent to Mr. Bradford Soule, Senior Project Manager of Northland Residential Corporation.

### 624 PLEASANT STREET

Laura Irwin, caretaker of this Victorian house owned by the estate of Barbara Jack, had previously submitted a written request for permission to repave the existing gravel driveway with concrete. The Commission suggested that the drive be repaved in asphalt rather than concrete, that it be made shorter (i.e. set back from the front wall of the house), and that room be allowed on the left side for plantings. These plantings would serve as a buffer between 624 and the house next door, 618 Pleasant Street. A motion was unanimously approved to convey these suggestions to Ms. Irwin.

### 585 PLEASANT STREET

Attending: Glenn Herosian, owner; Norman Kherlop, architect.

Mr. Herosian presented a revised proposal for an addition to this 1950s ranch house in the Pleasant Street Historic District. He showed drawings and slides of a first floor breakfast room and family room and a second story master bedroom and office. The overall dimensions were smaller than those proposed at the October meeting. An abutter, Maggy Gorrill of 20 Somerset Street, spoke against the revised addition, saying that she thought

the size and height were inappropriate for the neighborhood. Commission members asked that Mr. Herosian supply them with the exact square footage of both the present and the proposed house. They also wanted to get a better idea of how the addition would look from Somerset Street. Mr. Herosian volunteered to temporarily erect wooden poles to show the size and location of the addition as proposed. Richard Cheek, with Commission architects Michael Smith, Paul Bell, and Matthew Genta agreed to meet the owner at the site on Sunday, November 9 at 1 p.m. to examine this “skeleton” from various points in the neighborhood.

## TRAPELO ROAD REZONING

Attending: William Engstrom, 17 Willow Street

Mr. Engstrom expressed a concern that the a proposal to change existing building setback requirements along Trapelo Road, a zoning change being discussed by the Belmont Planning Board, would endanger certain historic buildings, specifically the W.T. Phelan Insurance building in Cushing Square and the residence behind it at 6 Willow Street, by encouraging the owners to tear them down and construct larger buildings in their place. He asked the Commission to do what it could to prevent the loss of these buildings.

## 25 SOMERSET STREET

Attending: Joseph DeStefano, owner; Peter Dimeo, architect

Mr. DeStefano returned to the Commission with revised drawings of a proposed family room addition to the east side of this 1855 Italianate house. It was suggested that he move the addition approximately one foot further back so that it would not conflict with an adjacent first floor window on the original house. Mr. DeStefano agreed to make this change, show the revised drawings to Michael Smith, and then apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness at a future meeting.

## TRAPELO ROAD PLANNING

Attending: Sue Bass, Vice President of a local citizens group, the Belmont Citizens Forum

Ms. Bass made a presentation to the Commission of photographic documentation of buildings along the Trapelo Road corridor. She advocated that several of these buildings, such as the Waverley Fire Station and the First Congregational Church, be put on the National Register of Historic Places. She also said that when the town rezones this area, there should be a built-in disincentive to tear down historically significant structures. In Arlington, she noted, several buildings along Massachusetts Avenue were preserved because of zoning regulations stating that any replacement structure must be smaller than

the than the original. She encouraged the Commission to take an active role in the planning process for this corridor.

Associate Commission member Caroline Darbyshire said she would continue to attend Planning Board meetings on this subject. She said that one of the planning goals was to reinforce neighborhood “nodes” so that the street is not just a conduit for traffic. Other members suggested that we look into Boston’s Main Street Program for ideas on how to preserve significant buildings. Boston University graduate students may also be available to work on this project.

## FIRE STATIONS

Richard Cheek reported that Belmont’s Office of Community Development is submitting an application to the state for a \$50,000 grant to plan the reuse of the Waverley fire station, which was vacated by the Belmont Fire Department this fall. The planning process would involve lots of input from the surrounding community and would encourage a use that supports economic development in the area.

## 504 CONCORD AVENUE

Richard Cheek reported that prospective buyers of this property had phoned him with questions for the Historic District Commission: (1) Must they come before the commission for approval to tear down a greenhouse? Answer: Yes. (2) Could they install a circular driveway? Answer: Probably not if it would require a second driveway entrance to be cut through the existing historic stone wall. (3) Could they remove the studio space on top of the garage? Answer: Yes, if they could obtain sufficient documentation to prove that the original garage did not have a studio and to allow them to accurately restore the structure to an earlier period.

## BELMONT HILL CLUB TELECOMMUNICATIONS TOWER

A discussion of a proposed telecommunications tower to be erected at the Belmont Hill Club, 825 Concord Avenue, after notification of the project from the Massachusetts Historical Commission, was not necessary because the Club’s board decided not to approve the tower, as reported by Nancy Richards.

## PLEASANT STREET RECONSTRUCTION

Richard Cheek distributed an October 28 letter from Thomas G. Gatzunis, Director of Community Development, written in response to the Commission’s request that the Pleasant Street reconstruction be done according to guidelines set forth in the state’s Footprint Roads Program. Mr. Gatzunis wrote that the Board of Selectmen voted not to

pursue funding through this program because it would delay the rebuilding of the road by three years.

Richard Pichette then presented a draft of a letter to the Board of Selectmen regarding a federal law that may apply to this project: Title 49, Section 303. The Commission members agreed that a revised version of this letter should be sent by one of the co-chairs. Sharon Vanderslice will make revisions to the draft and forward them to Richard Cheek.

## MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the October meeting will be reviewed and approved at the next meeting, Thursday, December 4, at 7 p.m. in Town Hall.

*Minutes recorded by Nancy Richards and Sharon Vanderslice.*