



CITY OF WATERTOWN
Historical Commission
Administration Building
149 Main Street
WATERTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS 02472

Elise Loukas, Chair
Susan Steele, Member
Marilynne K. Roach, Member
Joseph Panto, Member
Matthew Walter, Member
Richard Glenn, Member
Edward G. McCourt, Member

Minutes: Thursday, July 11, 2024, Remote Meeting 7:00 p.m.

Historical Commission Members Present: Elise Loukas, Marilynne Roach, Edward McCourt, Richard Glenn, Matthew Walter.

Member(s) Absent: Susan Steele, Joseph Panto

Public Present: G. Maros, N.D. Garcia

Staff Present: Gideon Schreiber, Senior Planner, Susan C. Jenness, Assistant

1. **Acceptance of Minutes-** May 9, 2024, Historical Commission Meeting were continued to the September 12, 2024 meeting.
2. **Acceptance of Minutes-** June 13, 2024, Historical Commission Meeting.

A modification was suggested to the minutes and a motion was made to accept the minutes as modified.

Motion- A motion was made by McCourt to accept the minutes of the June 13, 2024, Historical Commission meeting. The motion was seconded by Roach.

Roll Call- members were polled and all agreed with the motion made by McCourt to approve the minutes from the June meeting as modified.

3. Public Hearing-

a. THIS APPLICATION IS ON HOLD AT THIS TIME AND WILL NOT BE HEARD AT THIS MEETING. To determine if the house and garage at **20 Keith St.** is preferably preserved and if a delay will be imposed. Ari Koufos, Owner/Applicant

b. To determine if the house at **100 Beechwood Ave.** is preferably preserved and if a demolition delay will be imposed. Naomi DePina, Applicant/Owner

Naomi DePina and Ash Nagpal were present to review the proposal with the Historical Commission. DePina has lived in Watertown the last five years and will make this city home for her family. DePina and Nagpal will marry this summer. Both members of the couple have family on the street and strong ties to the community.

DePina's research uncovered that the house was designed by Don Kingston a prominent architect known for designing two story bungalow homes back in early 1900's. She discussed the numerous limitations they are facing to make this a habitable space to bring up her family in the future. She discussed the falling debris from the old roof and siding which has been a hardship on her neighbors. She intends to hold on to as much of the authenticity of the original style as possible, demolishing as little of the main structure as possible. DePina stated when the project is complete, it will harmonize nicely with the well-maintained houses to the right and left of 100 Beechwood.

Inside the structure at 100 Beechwood, the neglect is apparent, with falling ceilings, and significant water damage. Her plan is to remove the existing roof, add 1/2 story to create an attic space, and retain the front porch, The proposal brings the house back to one story, following the zoning and accentuating the cottage style appeal character, maintaining the footprint of the current house.

HC Questions

Walter had none. McCourt questioned why they would buy a two-family house if they intended to do this. DePina said she made an offer to an architect who had bought the house himself because she loved the neighborhood and character of the house. Glenn had no questions. Loukas said Kingston was a nationally recognized figure. He was an immigrant who came from New Brunswick, Canada and worked as a carpenter. He designed a lot of houses in Worcester, including Tiffany Black House in Webster, and some classic Revival Style houses in Boston, and was known for creating elegant style homes for working class people. Loukas said she wondered if they could work with their architect to preserve the existing roofline. DePina said there was no way to raise some sections of the roofline as they would end up with four or five dormers due to limitations.

Public Comments

Kevin McDonald of 82 Beechwood Ave. stated he supported the proposed design to replace this current eyesore of a house in great disrepair. He said he was deeply appreciative of the job the new owner's relatives had done next door.

Shin Nagpal of 96 Beechwood Ave. had submitted an email to the Office of Historic Preservation that was read into the record by Loukas, indicating the couple had chosen a design that had many elements of the original design,

Harry and Jon Stoddard, who is a real estate lawyer, of 90 Beechwood Ave. said the neighbors have watched the house decline and deteriorate from the outside. They had seen the inside of the house, which is very chopped up, with a lot in bad shape too. Stoddard said he wanted to vouch for the dramatic improvement these changes would make to the whole neighborhood.

Commission Discussion

Loukas stated she understood the current condition of the property but emphasized the types of issues in existence can be fixed. Loukas focused the conversation on this house being designed by Kingston, a noted architect.

Walter commented this was a significant architect who designed the house but questioned how significant a bungalow design this house was. He pointed out the dormer on the left added in the 1940's. He said while we are discussing taking away a bungalow, the pitch of the roof is to the street, and he saw the house as " *bungalow-ish*" but would not declare it classic bungalow. McCourt said in July 1941, the house was categorized as a *dwelling*, and he could see Walter's point. Schreiber shared his understanding that the left dormer could not be seen from the street, and he pointed out the addition to the rear of the house. Roach pointed out it is the roof that makes a house a bungalow and she added that more of this house is being preserved in the character of the original structure. Roach said she felt the developers clearly appreciate the value of preservation.

Glenn said he was impressed they were maintaining the foundation and working stylistically with the character of the house. He said he would like to know what Kingston would think about restructuring this home now. McCourt said he would like to know more extensively about the bungalow design history of Kingston. Loukas cautioned that they were here to focus on the present situation, although she appreciated what Glenn had just asked.

Motion- Walter made a motion the house at 100 Beechmont Ave is not preferably preserved. Glenn seconded the motion.

Roll Call- Roach against, Loukas against, Glenn in favor, Walter in favor, Mc Court in favor. The motion passed and the house at 100 Beechmont Ave was found not preferably preserved.

CPC Update by Walter- Walter had nothing new to report. He said there is a few weeks left to apply for the CPC money and clarified there is a lot of money and lots of different needs.

Agent Report- delivered by Jenness in the absence of Field. The city selected John Clemson and Claire Dempsey to conduct the historical property survey and stated that they have done surveys for other municipalities and are well up to the challenge. Clemson and Dempsey have been hired multiple times by the same municipality, particularly ones that are surveying parts of their community on an installment basis (one part each year). Jenness reported Field hopes they will be able to complete the contracting process and that work on the project will commence in the next couple of weeks.

Motion - Roach made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 pm. Walter seconded the motion.

Roll Call- Members were polled and all agreed with the motion made by Roach to adjourn.