



TOWN OF CONCORD
HISTORIC DISTRICTS COMMISSION
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 23, 2023

Pursuant to notice duly filed with the Town Clerk's office, the Town of Concord Historic Districts Commission held a virtual public meeting via Zoom on Thursday, February 23, 2023, at 7:00PM.

Members Present: Luis Berrizbeitia, Katharine Mast
Associate Members Present: Walter Clay, Dennis Fiori, Henry Moss, Timothy Whitney
Absent: Kate Chartener, William Huyett, Melinda Shumway, Paul Ware
Staff Present: Ann Clifford, Senior Planner

Chair Luis Berrizbeitia called the meeting to order at 7:00PM. Voting Members for the meeting were Mr. Berrizbeitia, Ms. Mast, Mr. Moss, Mr. Whitney, and Mr. Fiori.

NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

2-6 Lexington Road – American Mile Historic District: to construct an accessible entry addition to the Wright Tavern, pocket park and other associated landscape changes.

Tom Wilson, Chair of the Wright Legacy Trust Board appeared in front of the Commission to give updates on the renewal and redevelopment of Wright Tavern. Mr. Wilson reported that the Wright Legacy Trust Board has approved a schematic design for the building. The approved design includes a new entrance on Main Street and also provides for handicap access. The Wright Legacy Trust Board has been working with the Historical Commission on finalizing a preservation restriction to identify approximately 150 different elements of the tavern identified specifically for preservation.

Peter Nobile, Vice Chair of the Wright Legacy Trust Board, appeared in front of the HDC to introduce the design team and speak to the next steps in proper stewardship of the building to ensure that it largely remains intact. Lynne Spencer of Spencer Preservation Group gave a presentation of the work being done by the design team to adapt the building to serve as its next iteration the center for the exploration and renewal of democracy. The presentation detailed how the purpose of the project is to create a new entrance that is inviting to the public, offer full accessibility, and link the Tavern to Monument Square. Doug Manley of Spencer Preservation Group presented the proposed changes and renderings. Lynne Spencer spoke to the proposed modifications to the landscape as a part of the entrance redevelopment (creation of "pocket parks").

Walter Clay commented that he was delighted that trees would not be lost as a part of the project. Mr. Clay asked if it might make more sense to break up the seating wall to help create space for egress.

Dennis Fiori disclosed that he sits on an advisory committee for this project. He commented that landscape modifications reflect the park on the other side of the street and agreed with Mr. Clay's recommendation to break up the seating wall.

Katharine Mast stated that she believed the transformation of the entrance would create a more welcoming presence for the Tavern.

Henry Moss commented on several items that could enrich the project, such as increasing the height of the addition's sill, which could be granite. He suggested breaking up the seating wall into three-foot intervals allowing people to face one another. He stated that the large triangular area between the fence and the proposed bench could accept another deciduous tree. The scale of the glazed panels appears quite large, overpowering the historic windows. He would like to see less glass and also commented that the removal of the yew would expose the foundation of the sunroom.

Timothy Whitney stated that what fundamentally caught his attention was the glass facade. He thought it presents as a store front and an uninteresting modern addition inappropriate for an extraordinary building. He thought that the site plan was reasonable and suggested considering more intimate spaces and less paving.

Chair Luis Berrizbeitia commented that one of the most important responsibilities of the HDC is to keep the Wright Tavern as true to its legacy as possible. The architectural design project provides two significant elements: one element is structural and the second element comes from a place of inspiration, which is very consistent with the center for the preservation and the creation of democracy. Chair Berrizbeitia suggested that the new structure be entirely separate and different from the Tavern, detached from the historic structure.

Chair Berrizbeitia opened the hearing for public comments.

Melissa Saalfield, Chair of the Concord Historical Commission asked how that whole operation is going to function and voiced that she had many more questions. She praised the applicants for hiring professional preservation consultants and reminded the HDC and the public of the national importance of the Wright Tavern, a recognized National Historic Landmark. If the addition were proposed for some other building at some other location, perhaps it could work, but this proposal for an addition to a National Historical Landmark seems inappropriate not only for the Tavern but for downtown Concord.

Concord Historical Commission member, Nancy Nelson, voiced concern that the proposed project obscures the evolution of the fabric and use of the Wright Tavern over time. At the very least, it removes and alters three windows of the main mass of the 18th-century structure. Ms.

Nelson encouraged a more simple and respectful approach to working on the building. She highlighted the importance of adhering to national standards, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, and to considering the impact of the project on irreplaceable archaeological resources.

Nick Pappas commented that the fundamental question the group should be asking itself is what programming is happening to get more people to visit the Tavern.

Chair Berrizbeitia stated that it would be crucial for the HDC to organize a site visit and set a date for March 21, 2023. The applicant was agreeable to that day.

Katharine Mast moved to continue the application of Peter Nobile of the Wright Legacy Trust Board, American Mile Historic District, to construct an accessible entry addition to the Wright Tavern, pocket park and other associated landscape changes, preceded by a site visit to be scheduled for March 21st, 2023. Mr. Whitney seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0) by a roll call vote.

CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

19 Main Street – Main Street Historic District: to install new signage.

Bill Crosby appeared in front of the Commission to represent applicant David Levy (Stretch Concord) and to speak about the signage installation project at 19 Main Street. He updated the Commission that the typography and colors had been adjusted slightly to maximize readability.

Walter Clay had no comments. Dennis Fiori commented that he did not have any issues with the signage during their previous presentation and agreed with Mr. Clay that the proposed signage design looked good.

Katharine Mast pointed out that although subtle, the changes made to the deeper softer red are significant and serve as a great improvement.

Timothy Whitney asked for clarification on how the letters would be treated. Mr. Crosby clarified that the word Stretch would be in raised letters and Concord would be carved into the board. Mr. Whitney also had a concern about the sign's z-clip hangar style design, commenting that it would look better if it were floating about a ½" or so instead of being fastened tightly.

Chair Berrizbeitia opened the hearing for public comments and there were none.

Ms. Mast moved to approve the application of David Levy of Stretch Concord, Main Street Historic District, to install new signage at 19 Main Street, on the condition the signage matches the details of the new application. Mr. Whitney seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0) by a roll call vote.

Walden Street and Main Street – Main Street Historic District: perform various intersection modifications including sidewalk extensions, bumpouts, and shade trees at the intersection.

Erin Stevens, Senior Planner for the Town of Concord made a presentation on the plan for the [Shared Streets and Spaces Grant Project: Main and Walden Intersection](#). Ms. Stevens acknowledged that the Commission had seen the presentation previously and recently made a site visit, so she would not repeat the full presentation, but would take time to outline the major intersection improvements. Ms. Stevens detailed some of the pavement options and showed the HDC several street-view samples. Chair Berrizbeitia asked Ms. Stevens to tell the Commission about some of the concerns and limitations of the improvements. Ms Stevens brought up some concerns about the steep grading of the street, and recognized the solutions that needed to be implemented to make the curb cuts low-profile and ADA accessible.

Timothy Whitney commented that he had a few concerns about the curbing featured in the north side of the plan. Mr. Whitney pointed out that there are many design elements on both sides which create tripping hazards and clutter including: the tree grates, the raised sidewalks, and the raised curves at the ends of the parallel parking. These factors made Mr. Whitney question whether it would be better to simplify and focus on concrete and sidewalk.

Henry Moss shared that this project is an affirmation of the “pedestrian heart” of Concord Center, and he voiced that removing parking and framing a view of the 1830 bank is an excellent outcome.

Katharine Mast commented that over the course of several months, very thoughtful deliberations had occurred, and she was excited about the solutions planned to take place in the project area.

Dennis Fiori commented that he had no issues with where the project is headed. He felt very confident about the other boards and commissions which had already vetted the plans for Walden Street and Main Street.

Walter Clay voiced his concerns about drainage on the north side of the project area and asked why the pedestrian walkway is such a minor part of the project. He was not sure that the painted lines would be sufficient, especially in snowy conditions. Mr. Clay stated that he thought removing some of the parking would be an excellent idea, and that planting more trees might mitigate some of the drainage issues.

Chair Luis Berrizbeitia commented that overall, this project is not a perfect solution and there are many factors that could improve the design. However, the proposed improvements were pragmatic, and would serve as an intervention that would allow further modifications in the future. Mr. Berrizbeitia voiced his hopes that the Town’s Engineering Department will address drainage issues.

Chair Berrizbeitia opened the hearing for public comments and there were none.

Henry Moss moved to approve the application of Main Street and Walden Street of the Town of Concord, Main Street Historic District, to perform various intersection improvements including sidewalk extensions, bumpouts, and shade trees at the intersection; with the condition that the tree species will be verified and confirmation of whether there is going to be high curb or a granite bench. Ms. Mast seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0) by a roll call vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

Certificate Amendment: 49 Liberty Street (COA #22-62) window and door revisions.

Chair Berrizbeitia gave background on this project, stating that the HDC had previously approved the application with some leeway to change certain design elements provided that the applicant return to the HDC for review. Jennifer Hart gave a brief presentation for the HDC to review the changes. This included reduced the glass on the mudroom hall between the house and garage by introducing a pair of casements on either side of a single door. Ms. Hart outlined some minor changes on the western elevation of the building to show the addition of two small windows. Ms. Hart also presented samples for new metal roofing (zinc-coated copper and raw copper).

Timothy Whitney had no comments on the addition of windows, but he offered a comment on the roofing, pointing out that the copper would patina to brown rather than green. Henry Moss stated that he would prefer to see zinc-coated copper utilized. Katharine Mast had no objection to any of the design changes which were being presented.

Dennis Fiori asked for clarification on the shutters which do not cover the windows and therefore are non-functioning. Since they are existing shutters, they are out of the purview of the HDC. Nonetheless, he would suggest removing them. Walter Clay agreed that the shutters look slightly inappropriate, although it would not inhibit his approval. Chair Berrizbeitia echoed the sentiment of other HDC members.

Katharine Mast moved to approve the request to amend Certificate #22-62 at 49 Liberty Street. Chair Berrizbeitia seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0) by a roll call vote.

Historic Preservation Awards: HDC Nominee - Concord Academy

Following upon an invitation from the Historical Commission to the HDC to nominate projects for Historic Preservation Awards, Chair Berrizbeitia stated that the Concord Academy has finished three projects in the appropriate time frame necessary to be considered for the Awards. The Chair recognized the very cooperative and constructive relationship that both the Academy and the and the architects that they have engaged have had with the HDC to maintain one of the most iconic streets of Concord: Main Street.

Chair Luis Berrizbeitia asked the Historic Districts Commission for a vote against or in favor of nominating the Concord Academy for the Historic Preservation Award. The motion passed in favor (5-0) by a roll call vote.

Discussion of HDC Rules and Regulations - Presentation of proposed changes to the nominating process of Commissioners of the HDC

Chair Berrizbeitia summarized that in essence, the HDC wants to allow Commissioners to be able to serve for five (5) years as an Associate Member and five years (5) as a Full Member if they wish. Chair Berrizbeitia cited that it would be helpful for Commissioners that have served for a period or several periods in the HDC to be able to return to serve on the body as Commissioners after a two (2) year waiting period.

Chair Berrizbeitia asked the Commission for approval that he approach the nominating entities (i.e. the Concord Free Public Library, the Concord Museum, the Commission for Natural Resources, the Planning Board and the Select Board) to present these changes and obtain feedback.

The Chair asked the Historic Districts Commission for a vote against or in favor of presenting proposed changes to the nominating process of Commissioners of the HDC to nominating entities. The motion passed in favor (5-0) by a roll call vote.

Update on 615 Lowell Road Litigation

The Select Board supported backing the HDC in litigation regarding 615 Lowell Road.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:04PM. The next Historic District Commission meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 21, 2023. Documents used during the meeting are on file in the Planning Division Office.

- **Meeting recording:** <https://youtu.be/3qqT1LFCRBq>
- **Meeting Agenda:** https://concordma.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/_02232023-10452
- **Walden Street and Main Street, Main Street Historic District Site Visit Notice (Thursday, February 23, 2023):**
https://concordma.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/_02232023-10451

Minutes Approved on: 5/4/23