

**Minutes**  
**Watertown Historical Commission**  
**Thursday, October 14, 2010**  
**Lower Hearing Room**  
**7:00pm**  
*Adopted November 10, 2010*

**Historical Commission Members Present:** David J. Russo, Jr., Thomas P. Melone, J. B. Jones, Marilynne K. Roach, Elizabeth H. Loukas

**Staff Present:** Christopher J. Hayward, Daphne M. Collins

**Public Present:** See attached Sign-In Form

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Russo chaired. The meeting opened at 7:00p.m.

- 1) **Public Hearing – Demolition Permit - 8 Cottage Lane** to demolish a single family structure to be replaced with a single-family structure. Edward and Barbara Demore, applicant/owner.

Barbara Demore, owner, informed that the property has been in her family since 1882. The Demores had recently purchased the property, to restore and rebuild the back addition along the previous footprint, for their primary residence. When the addition was removed the foundation crumbled and was found unable to safely support the restoration/addition. The demolition and rebuild option is substantiated by Wayne Pelletier, the project designer from Construction Design Services (attached letter of October 1, 2010). The redesign, according to Demore, will maintain the street appearance of the existing building in design and elevation.

Russo informed that the building was built in 1854 owned by Thomas Cox and sold in 1882 to the Demore's ancestors. He identified the structure as an example of a plain, utilitarian cottage-style built for the local laborer market. The house is valuable as an example of a laborer style house.

Jones agreed that the structure had a ring of history. He noted it was built by a carpenter. He agreed it could not be saved and its demolition was a loss. He thought it should be preferably preserved.

Based on a site visit inspection, Melone informed that the small structure's two rooms and middle staircase were all that remained. He thought the proposed replacement reflected the existing rooflines and scale of the neighborhood.

Loukas thought the structure should be preferably preserved. She thought the replacement respected the existing structure's style.

**Vote:** Jones moved that the 8 Cottage Lane be considered as preferably preserved. Melone seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Discussion for a preservation option followed. Jones thought that a delay was not an option. Though a humble structure, he considered the structure worthy of preservation which the applicant explored but is unable to accomplish. He thought the replacement was sensitive to the scale of the neighborhood. Russo agreed that the original style was evident in the proposed replacement.

**Vote:** Jones moved that no delay be imposed for 8 Cottage Lane. Melone seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously **approved**.

- 2) **Public Hearing – 94 Grove Street**, to demolish a wood frame single family structure and greenhouse to be replaced by a new greenhouse. Mount Auburn Cemetery, applicant/owner.

Bill Barry, President of Facilities at Mount Auburn Cemetery, informed that Mt. Auburn Cemetery is a National Historic Landmark and that the proposed project is part of the institution's Master Plan for the Grove Street-Meadow Expansion Project which is sensitive to the historic context of Mt. Auburn Cemetery.

Candace Currie, Director of Planning and Cemetery Development, reported that the need for new greenhouse was identified in 1998. She noted that the Cemetery consists of 175 acres. The 2 acres where the greenhouse and residential structure are located are in the non-burial area of the cemetery. She indicated that the green house and residential structure were identified as non-contributing in the land marking application report. She noted that greenhouses have a lifespan of approximately 30 years. She explained that the 1971 greenhouse was overdue for a replacement.

Currie presented the proposed greenhouse replacement plans. With the removal of the existing greenhouse and residential structure, a 2 story modern, state-of- the-arts horticulture structure would be installed. The glass structure massing would be modulated to be sensitive to the abutting neighborhood. She said that the new greenhouse would be built closer to the street.

Barry asserted that the two existing buildings were not contributing to the cemetery and the replacement would be of high quality,

Jones inquired what was being proposed for the back open space of the property. Currie replied that a Family Celebration Center, a new statement entrance, burials, a recycling center, a retaining wall and tree plantings were planned there in the next 10 to 15 year period. She noted that it is part of their mission to better serve their clients.

Jones was concerned about the abutters.

Russo reported that the greenhouse, built in 1971, is under 50 years but it is being reviewed by the HC because of its location on a Landmark property. Russo noted that the Mt. Auburn Cemetery is one of the most important historic properties in Watertown and one of the most significant burial grounds in the US, on par with Arlington Cemetery. He instructed the HC to review the proposal based on its impact to the historic site.

Jones did not think that what was proposed was deleterious to Mt. Auburn cemetery. He thought the design for the greenhouse was credible. However he was concerned by the possible glow and transparency of the future greenhouse on the abutting neighborhood. Melone agreed with Jones. He reported that the present greenhouse was not visible from the street and the proposed one would be.

Russo observed that proposed structures for demolition were far from the historic core of Mt. Auburn Cemetery.

**Vote:** Melone moved that the greenhouse located at 94 Grove Street was not preferably preserved. Jones seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Currie reported that the residential structure located at 94 Grove Street was built on May 1, 1929. She described it as a 1-family kit house. She informed that a kit house is similar to a Sears' house. According to Currie, the grounds' gardener has resided in the structure providing on site security.

Russo informed that the building was a garrison colonial style structure.

Melone claimed that the structure was not significant.

Jones observed that kit houses are important. However, he did not consider the structure to contribute to Mt. Auburn Cemetery.

**Vote:** Jones moved that single-family residential structure at 94 Grove Street was not preferably preserved. Loukas seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

**3) Public Hearing – 264 Arlington,** to demolish a steel and timber commercial structure to be replaced with a new educational/commercial structure. Dafna Krouk-Gordon, President, TILL Inc., applicant/owner.

Dafna Krouk-Gordon, president of TILL, Inc., reported that the proposal was to demolish the present substandard building and replace it with a new building for a day program serving special clients. The site is close to transportation and support and will serve the residential program located on Pleasant Street. She pointed out that the present building is substandard, unattractive and an eyesore on a main thorough fare in Watertown. She noted that she held neighborhood meetings to inform the abutters of the proposed project. She expressed confidence about the experienced contractor and architect selected for the project.

Clifford Boehmer, architect of Davis Square Architects, explained that the building was built in 1951 as a tool and die manufacturing site. He noted that it was sold in 1996 for light manufacturing. He reported that the building was sided with faux stone which was delaminating. The structure was a small 2-story building made of steel and concrete, accented with glass block and concrete sealed lintels.

Krouk reported that the neighborhood was positive about the proposed replacement. In particular, its sensitive scale. Boehmer indicated that the massing along Wells Street was only one story.

Russo inquired if they were aware of the project's proximity to the Old Burial Ground, the oldest cemetery in Watertown, with markers dating back to the 1600s.

Melone reported that the photos of the poor exterior of the building was representative of its present condition.

Jones thought the proposed structure and materials were friendly to the abutters. He thought more windows could be added to lighten up the facade.

Russo thought the proposed design was thoughtful and not generic. He was concerned about the neighboring burial site and agreed that a lighter, friendlier façade to the cemetery would be positive.

Boehmer noted that the design was still under construction and that the HC concerns would be considered. He thought the materials proposed reflected the abutting residential neighborhood.

Jones thought the present building was charmless and beyond repair. He considered it to have no historic value.

Melone stated that the building had been for sale and no preservation effort presented itself during that time. He appreciated the preservation of the site's shape on the proposed new structure.

Loukas also like the shape on the site. She agreed that the new building was a positive addition to the neighborhood. She would like to see some lightness added to the façade. Boehmer agreed to investigate the design to include the suggestion.

**Vote:** Melone moved to determine 264 Arlington Street as not preferably preserved. Jones seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

**4) September Minutes – Approved.**

**5) Old Business**

**a) 8-10 Pearl Street Informational Update**

Michael Iodice, developer, indicated that he considered renovating 8-10 Pearl Street but it was too cost prohibited to renovate. Therefore, he was proposing a demolition.

Doug Agule, the applicant from Chatham Development, reported that the foundation was piecemeal and of different materials, the seals were rotten, the floors were uneven, the siding was of asbestos, and not all detail elements were original. He asserted that it was not feasible to restore.

Mike Bates, owner, informed that he was not in the position to renovate. He stated that it is unfeasible to repair and he couldn't do it.

Russo informed that the HC was awaiting information on the preservation alternatives to demolition during the six month delay period. If the property was in such unfeasible repair, Russo requested that the applicant submit an engineering report, and/or discuss the situation with the Building Inspector to condemn the property as unsafe. He deemed all that was presented as fixable.

Jones agreed that disrepair does not make a building condemnable. He suggested an engineering report be submitted if it was so far gone.

Constance Corbett, real estate agent for the owner, reported that she had shown the property 25-35 times and no one has come forward to restore the property. The interest has been for a tear down.

The applicant offered a site visit. Melone was not interested in a site visit as he did not have the technical expertise to determine whether the building should be condemned. He suggested that an independent technical engineering evaluation be undertaken.

Roach thought the building wasn't that condemnable if a day care center operated from the site.

Hayward suggested that they check with the Building Inspector.

**b) Watertown Outbuildings/Barn Initiative-Ongoing.**

**c) Schick Building Study-**Staff reported that Danielle Evans was working on the details for the Tufts proposal study.

**d) Faire on the Square-**Russo reported that 3 posters were sold at the faire.

## **6) New Business**

**a) Historic Marker Replacement-Ongoing.** HC to identify priority historic markers to replaced.

Meeting adjourned at 8:51pm.

