

Back Bay Architectural Commission
Public Hearing Minutes
Boston City Hall, Room 900, Ninth Floor
Boston, Massachusetts, 02201

February 14, 2018

DESIGN REVIEW HEARING

Commissioners Present: John Christiansen; Jerome CooperKing; Kathleen Connor; David Eisen; Jane Moss; Patti Quinn; David Sampson; Lisa Saunders; Lex Stevens and Robert Weintraub.

Commissioners Not Present: Kenneth Tutunjian.

Staff Present: Joseph Cornish, Director of Design Review; Kristian Boschetto, Preservation Assistant

5:02 PM Commissioner Connor called the public hearing to order. Commissioner Connor reported that the public hearing is being recorded by staff and asked members of the public recording the hearing to make themselves known. There were none. Commissioner Connor explained that during public comment periods of the hearing members of the public will be limited to five minutes to make comments; and explained that motions would be made by Commission members following public comment.

**DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATIONS:
COMMERCIAL APPLICATIONS**

18.870 BB

855 Boylston Street: At Boylston Street façade replace existing curtain wall entry, install new signage, and replace sidewalk pavers.

Representative: Julio Guevara

Staff read its recommendation to approve this application as submitted. The applicant presented existing condition photographs, examples of entrances along the same street, drawings, and colored renderings. The Commission discussed the configuration of the new entryway. Some Commissioners felt it provided a brighter and more open entrance while others felt it impeded on the public right of way. The Commission also discussed the configuration of the new pavers and how it related to the new pavement plan. The applicant explained that there was a privacy line that was based on the property line since they have a larger set back.

Public testimony was called for and Sue Prindle of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay (NABB) said that the proposed pavers are an improvement to the existing brick and asked for details about the proposed spider connections at the curtain wall.

In conclusion the application was approved with the following provisos. I. Demetriades initiated the motion and J. Christiansen seconded the motion. The vote was 9-0 (JC, JCK, KC, ID, DE, JM, PQ, LS, STEVENS).

- Staff must check up on the dimensions of the public sidewalk set-back to ensure it is consistent with the set-backs along this side of Boylston Street.

RESIDENTIAL APPLICATIONS

18.858 BB 212 Commonwealth Avenue: At roof construct pent house and roof deck; at rear elevation remove fire egress stairs and balconies, and construct one-story rear addition; and at rear yard erect a garden wall and gate.

Representatives: David Freed

Staff read its recommendation to approve the application as submitted. The applicant presented photographs of the existing conditions, drawings, and sightline guides. The Commission discussed the visibility of the proposed penthouse and if there was a solution to reduce or eliminate its visibility. The applicant explained that the footprint had been significantly reduced and pushed back to minimize the visibility, and that there was no other viable solution. Staff noted that upon visiting the site it was determined that the penthouse mock-up was minimally visible from across Commonwealth Avenue, and suggested that all the Commissioners visit the site as well to gain perspective.

Public testimony was called for and Susie Schaffer suggested that the applicant consult with the garden club. She also said that she had a problem with the penthouse and its visibility and that more work should be done to calculate how to make it not visible. Sue Prindle of the NABB suggested that the roof be hipped in the back and dropped down on the front to reduce visibility, but the applicant noted that the slope would still make the penthouse visible. Tom High noted that the façade on the rear where the addition was being proposed is not original and that it should be approved.

In conclusion the application was approved as submitted. J. Moss initiated the motion and L. Stevens seconded the motion. The vote was 9-0 (JC, JCK, KC, ID, DE, JM, PQ, LS, STEVENS).

18.857 BB 288 Commonwealth Avenue: Amend Application 16.997 by extending area of paving at rear yard, repairing rear elevation wall and installing rooftop vents.

Representatives: Arthur Choo

Staff read its recommendation to approve this application with provisos. The applicant presented current condition photographs, renderings, and drawings. The Commission opposed the amendment because they felt that the newly paved area would become another parking spot. Additionally they noted that the prior approval was pending that more green space be added to keep the area from becoming a parking spot. The Commission members agreed that a rodent problem was not a valid argument for this proposal and that there were other ways to mitigate the rodent problem.

Public testimony was called for and Sue Prindle of NABB said that the green space was a tradeoff for the ramp and that the green space is critical. She also said that there were other ways to keep the rats out. Maureen Kotb-Van Hogesand from 290 Commonwealth Avenue stated that the rat problem is a health hazard that is being caused by the neighboring restaurant. Susan Dretzsky stressed the importance of preserving the tree, and also explained that even with the proposed paving, the rats could still burrow beneath it. A resident of 286 Commonwealth Avenue said that despite the applicant's claims, his property has had no problems with rodents. He suggested that the applicant stick with the original plan and keep the green space, and instead find a better exterminator, otherwise the paved area would turn into a parking lot. Tom Hive recommended that the Commission observe that the green space was a trade-off for the ramp and garage and approving this would set a bad example for current and future applicants.

In conclusion the application was approved and denied. I. Demetriades initiated the motion and J. Moss seconded the motion. The vote was 9-0 (JC, JCK, KC, ID, DE, JM, PQ, STEVENS, RW).

- Approve changes to rooftop venting.
- Deny changes to green space.

18.871 BB

17 Gloucester Street: Remove twenty existing non-historic skylights and replace with ten dormers.

Representatives: John Day

Staff read its recommendation to approve this application as submitted. The applicant presented photographs of the existing conditions, drawings, a map of the area, and renderings of the proposed dormers. The applicant explained that the new dormers are meant to meet code requirement and they allow an easier rescue from fire fighters as opposed to breaking a skylight window for entry. The Commission felt that the design was appropriate and that it was sensitive to the design of the roof line. The Commission asked what materials were being used and the applicant explained that it was slate on the sides, copper on top, mahogany on the front, and that the copper will match the profile and ridge of the top banding.

Public testimony was called for and Susie Schaffer noted that the proposal is an improved condition from the existing. Tom High also noted that the dormers were a vast improvement of what exists today and urged the Commission to approve it. Don Carlson of 17 Gloucester Street said that he liked the plans and the project as a whole and that he was in favor of its approval.

In conclusion the application was approved as submitted. D. Eisen initiated the motion and J. CooperKing seconded the motion. The vote was 9-0 (JC, JCK, KC, ID, DE, JM, PQ, STEVENS, RW).

18.868 BB 7 Marlborough Street: Install boiler vent at basement level of rear elevation.

This agenda item was withdrawn prior to the hearing and was not reviewed by the Commission. It will be reviewed at a subsequent hearing.

18.782 BB 288 Marlborough Street: Construct dormer and roof deck; relocate roof top HVAC equipment; refurbish existing skylight; and restore missing finial at gable.

Representative: Chad Vest

Staff read its recommendation to approve this application as submitted. The applicant presented current condition photographs, aerial photographs, and drawings. The Commission posed no objections to the work.

Public testimony was called for and Sue Prindle of the NABB asked whether or not the mechanical equipment was visible from a public way and the applicant confirmed that it was not.

In conclusion the application was approved as submitted. J. Christiansen initiated the motion and J. CooperKing seconded the motion. The vote was 9-0 (JC, JCK, KC, ID, DE, JM, PQ, STEVENS, RW).

18.776 BB 142 Beacon Street: At front façade replace existing brick veneer with cast stone veneer; replace all windows; install new intercom, door hardware and light fixtures at entry; restore front and rear slate roofs; replace elevator headhouse, skylights and mechanical equipment at uppermost roof; and construct two-story rear addition and garage with roof deck above.

Representative: Guy Grassi and Jim Kelleher

Staff read its recommendation to approve this application with provisos. The applicant presented photographs of the existing conditions, aerial images of the area, architectural drawings, examples of proposed products, and colored renderings. The Commission discussed when the façade was so drastically changed, and the applicant said it may have occurred in the 1930s. They also discussed whether the brownstone was still intact behind the current façade, and the applicant said that it was possible that it is still there but that they are unsure of its condition. The Commission also discussed the details of the garage and how it would affect the neighbors. They also suggested maintaining the copper medallions that were along the garage wall and placing them on the outside wall. The Commission discussed the lowering of the windows and said that the detailing of it was not uncommon historically.

Public testimony was called for and Sue Prindle of NABB was concerned about the variance in window sizes across the façade and recommended that it be more consistent. Tom High said that this was an opportunity to restore the façade and that the applicant should work closely with staff throughout the entire process to ensure that the cast stone matches seamlessly so that it looks original to the building. Susan Dretzsky voiced her approval of the changes to the front façade but asked that the Back Bay Garden Club be contacted to suggest an appropriate replacement tree at the rear yard.. Mark Belliod of 144 and 146 Beacon Street said that he was in complete favor of this project.

In conclusion the application was approved with the following proviso. J. Christiansen initiated the motion and D. Sampson seconded the motion. The vote was 9-0 (JC, JCK, KC, ID, DE, JM, PQ, DS, STEVENS).

- Work closely with staff throughout process.
- Any changes to the stone material must be run by staff.
- Construct bay of copper.
- Keep one arch open at the garage wall.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW/APPROVAL

Work that staff reviewed (conforms to standards and criteria) for administrative approval:

- 18.854 BB 280 Beacon Street: At front façade and side elevation replace nine fifth floor eight-over-eight wood windows in-kind.
- 18.861 BB 295 Beacon Street: At side elevation replace five first-story wood one-over-one wood windows in-kind.
- 18.845 BB 483 Beacon Street: At side (Beacon Street) elevation replace four ninth story vinyl one-over-one windows (approved in 2011) with aluminum clad one-over-one windows.
- 18.853 545& 18.833 BB 545 Boylston Street: At front façade replace wall sign; and at patio seating area replace planters, umbrellas and furniture.

- 18.838 BB 565 Boylston Street: At front façade replace existing wall sign.
- 18.471 BB 44 Commonwealth Avenue: At front façade replace seventeen one-over-one wood windows in-kind.
- 18.860 BB 61 Commonwealth Avenue: At Front façade replace eleven one-over-one wood windows in-kind; and at rear elevation replace four two-over-two wood windows in-kind, and seven non-historic one-over-one wood windows with two-over-two wood windows.
- 18.790 BB 148 Commonwealth Avenue: At rear elevation's entry overhang replace deteriorated wood trim in-kind and replaced rolled asphalt roof with black rubber membrane roof.
- 18.773 BB 152 Commonwealth Avenue: At front façade's entry steps add central wrought iron black handrail.
- 18.692 BB 160 Commonwealth Avenue: At rear elevation restore window glass openings.
- 18.821 BB 239 Commonwealth Avenue, Unit 33: At side and rear elevations replace nine second-story wood one-over-one windows in-kind; and at interior courtyard replace one second-story wood two-over-two window in-kind.
- 18.797 BB 390 Commonwealth Avenue, Unit 510: At front façade replace two fifth-story one-over-one aluminum windows with wood one-over-one windows.
- 18.843 BB 117 Marlborough Street: At front façade repair deteriorated sandstone with a tinted cementitious stucco and re-paint window trim black.
- 18.849 BB 298 Marlborough Street: At rear elevation replace one third-story two-over-two non-historic aluminum window with a two-over-two wood window; and replace deteriorated wood decking at deck with wood decking.
- 18.864 BB 7-9 Newbury Street: At rear elevation replace two fifth-story two-over-two wood windows in-kind.
- 18.830 BB 172 Newbury Street: At uppermost flat roof replace ballast roof system with black rubber membrane roof; and at rear lower flat roof remove existing wood decking and install ballast roof.
- 18.863 BB 211 Newbury Street: At front façade replace wood entry doors with wood entry doors matching those at 209 Newbury Street.
- 18.859 BB 331A-333 Newbury Street: At front façade replace blade sign, install window signage and frosted banding at windows; and install two security cameras and intercom.
- 18.822 BB 344 Newbury Street: Clean masonry and remove graffiti at front façade and rear elevation; re-point masonry at front façade; install new black rubber membrane roof; replace missing slate at cupola in-kind; replace rear gutter in-kind; and repair concrete building elements at rear elevation.
- 18.862 BB 346 Newbury Street: Clean and re-point masonry, and remove graffiti at front façade and rear elevation; install new black rubber membrane roof; windows at rear elevation; and replace rear cement block wall at rear elevation. replace three roof skylights in-kind; repair and re-paint three second-story

The applications were approved as submitted. I. Demetriades initiated the motion and P. Quinn seconded the motion. The vote was 9-0 (JC, JCK, KC, ID, DE, JM, PQ, DS, STEVENS).

- J. CooperKing recused himself from voting on 483 Beacon Street (18.845 BB)

RATIFICATION OF THE 12/14/2017 01/10/2018 PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES

The minutes were approved as presented. J. CooperKing initiated the motion and L. Stevens seconded the motion. The vote was 3-0 (JCK, ID, STEVENS).

8:03 PM Commissioner Connor adjourned the public hearing.