

Kelley's Corner Steering Committee

Meeting with Landscape Architects, 30 August 2017

On 30 August 2017, members of the Kelley's corner Steering Committee met with landscape architects from GPI to talk about the impact of proposed infrastructure improvements on Hosmer House located at 300 Main Street.

The meeting took place on the street in front of Hosmer House and began at 7:00 am.

Attendees

Kelley's Corner Steering Committee (KCSC)

- Andy Brockway
- Larry Kenah
- Peter Berry (BoS)
- Peter Darlow

Planning Department

- Roland Bartl
- Kristen Guichard
- Danny Zuccaro, Planning Department Intern

Design Review Board (DRB)

- Holly Ben-Joseph, DRB
- David Honn, DRB

Greenman Pedersen (GPI)

- Lindsey Barbee, GPI Project Manager
- Ron Headrick, Senior Project Manager

Meeting Notes

A big issue associated with this site is that the actual property line is several feet closer to the building than the stone wall. The property line runs through the middle of the tree in front of the building to the right.

Question

- “Does section 106 apply?” Kristen Guichard provided the following background on Section 106.

The Kelley's Corner project is receiving Federal and State construction funding which requires the project follow very strict and rigorous reviews in order to receive National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) clearance. This includes a review of all properties within the project area that are subject to the National Historic Preservation Act, also known as Section 106 review

process. GPI has staff that specializes in permit application preparation for the approximately 13 environmental permits, one of which is the Section 106 application. MassDOT's Environmental Services Division is consulted by GPI while preparing these documents. This review happens in the 75% - 100% design phase.

The applications and permits are reviewed by MassDOT's Cultural Resource Unit with concurrence from the Mass Historical Commission who determines whether or not the impacts affect the historic properties and if a full Section 106 review applies, if it does apply there are additional steps taken to evaluate and determine if there is either no adverse effect or an adverse effect. If there is determined to be an adverse effect the next step is to look at ways to (1) avoid the impact, if that is not possible then to (2) minimize the impact, and if that is not possible for the project then how to (3) mitigate the adverse effects. Public comment is typically solicited by the State to the Towns and typically the Town Historical Commission and we have made it clear to the Historical Society at that meeting that we would make sure they are also made aware of the notice to comment. The entire environmental review process (including the Section 106) is then reviewed by FHWA.

Recommendations

- Make whatever changes we can to minimize the project boundary beyond the existing property line (that is, even closer to the building)
- Use landscaping and other changes to emphasize the presence of this building itself

"Stuff"

Stone Wall

The existing stone wall will be moved as part of the expansion of the width of the road. The Acton Historical Society wishes the wall to be reproduced in its current form.

Trees

- The right hand tree in front of the building will definitely be removed.
- Depending on the final location of the revised property line, the left hand tree may also be removed.

Power Lines

With the trees removed, the power lines may become more visible. If the buffer between the sidewalk and roadway is removed, the power lines would have to be moved closer to the house.

We talked about a couple of approaches.

- It is possible that the power lines could be moved spaced differently further from the building up and down Main Street.
- The power lines might be moved across the street upstream and downstream of 300 Main Street to not distract from the building itself. This would have to be approved by MassDOT and

may or may not be considered a non-participating item, meaning the Town may have to cover the cost of moving the poles.

Next Steps

GPI Revisions

GPI will come up with a couple of sketches that incorporate the ideas that we talked about last Wednesday. They will present these ideas next Thursday to the folks who attended this meeting and other interested parties.

What were the different ideas that they will explore?

- Eliminating the buffers between the roadway and the sidewalk in front of 300 Main Street
- Using different material for the sidewalk to emphasize that the building is a "special place"
- If possible, eliminating the landscape island and using either side of the road for landscaping currently included in the island. This approach would create a "neck down" that would act as a traffic throttle.

Peter Darlow Summary

Peter Darlow (KCSC and DRB) summarized several options to enhance Hosmer House.

With the Kelley's Corner roadway improvements there is an opportunity to enhance the visibility and importance of the Hosmer House to the streetscape and the neighborhood. Whereas many drive by presently, paying little or no attention, the opening up of views to the house, especially when driving south on 27 from Route 2, can be used to offer a historical and contextual introduction to Acton's past.

Options to consider:

Rebuilding the stone wall in a manner, such as more parallel to the house, as to offer a widened place for stopping to view the home or just sit. There is potential for an informational panel describing the significance of the house to be incorporated along the sidewalk.

Consider a brick sidewalk at this location to draw attention to the uniqueness of the property at this portion of the street edge.

Landscape options to be considered include elimination of the 4.5 foot grass strip, and have the sidewalk tight to the curb. Look at shifting from the 8 foot planter bed in the middle lane to "necking" down the road on each side by about 4 feet, allowing for a reduced taking of land directly from the yard of the Hosmer house.

Communication

We (Peter Berry) will reach out to the Acton Historical Society to talk about some of these ideas.

These notes were recorded by Lawrence J Kenah with help from Kristen Guichard and Peter Darlow