



CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

831 Massachusetts Avenue, 2nd Fl., Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Telephone: 617 349 4683 Fax: 617 349 3116 TTY: 617 349 6112

E-mail: histcomm@cambridgema.gov URL: <http://www.cambridgema.gov/Historic>

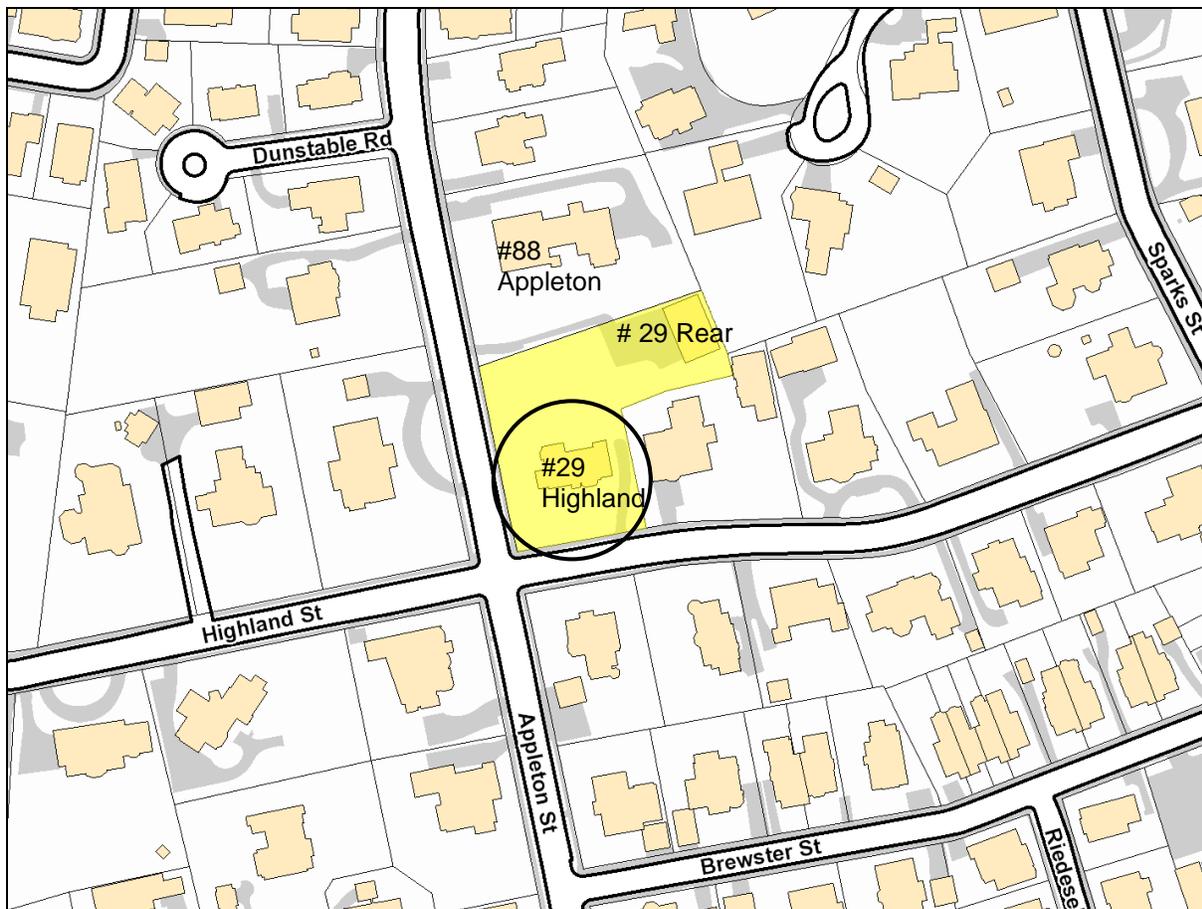


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Shary Page Berg, Joseph V. Ferrara, Susannah Barton Tobin, *Alternates*

Date: May 1, 2015
To: Members of the Historical Commission
From: Sarah Burks, Preservation Planner
Re: L-116: 29 Highland St. (Hubbard House), Petition for Landmark Study

Background

An application for demolition of the house at 29 Highland Street was received on December 16, 2014. On January 8, 2015, the Commission found the house to be a preferably preserved significant building as defined in the demolition delay ordinance and within the context of the original proposed replacement building design. The Commission has had hearings on subsequent amendments to the project plans on March 5 and April 2. A petition from 13 registered voters was received on April 2 and verified by the Election Commission on April 3, 2015. A public hearing was scheduled on the matter for May 7.



Cambridge GIS Map of 29 Highland Street and surroundings. Dec. 2015.

Twenty-nine Highland Street is located on the north side of Highland Street at the corner of Appleton Street. The 2½-story house shares a 30,629 square foot L-shaped lot with a detached carriage house converted to a dwelling (29 Rear Highland Street), to its northeast . The lot is located in a Residence A-1 zoning district, a single-family district that allows an FAR of .50 and a minimum of 6,000 square feet per dwelling unit. The height limit in this district is 35 feet.

The existing site plan includes a driveway to the east of the house (#29) to access the carriage house dwelling at the back corner of the lot (#29 rear). The carriage house is situated with non-conforming setbacks on two sides, and it is not proposed for demolition. The front house has conforming setbacks, being closest to the property line of #23 Highland Street on the east side with a 20 foot setback.



29 Highland Street front elevation, staff photo, Dec. 31, 2014

Landmark Criteria and Goals

Landmarks are enacted by the City Council upon recommendation of the Historical Commission. The Commission commences a landmark designation study process by its own initiative or by voting to accept a petition of ten registered voters. The Commission may decline to accept petitions that do not meet the criteria for landmark designation.

The criteria provided in the ordinance outlines eligible properties as:

any property within the city being or containing a place, structure, feature, or object which it determines to be either (1) importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, aesthetic, cultural, political, economic, or social history of the City or the

Commonwealth or (2) historically or architecturally significant (in terms of period, style, method of construction or association with a famous architect or builder) either by itself or in the context of a group of structures...(2.78.180.A)

The purpose of landmark designation is described in the ordinance, which was enacted to,

preserve, conserve and protect the beauty and heritage of the City and to improve the quality of its environment through identification, conservation and maintenance of neighborhoods, sites and structures which constitute or reflect distinctive features of the architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City; to resist and restrain environmental influences adverse to this purpose; to foster appropriate use and wider public knowledge and appreciation of such neighborhoods, areas, or structures; and by furthering these purposes to promote the public welfare by making the city a more desirable place in which to live and work. (2.78.140)

As part of the demolition review process, the house at 29 Highland Street was deemed significant for its architecture as a well-crafted example of the Colonial Revival style associated with prominent Cambridge architect Allen W. Jackson. The building was also determined to be significant for its important associations with the Hubbard family of Cambridge including Eliot Hubbard, Eliot Hubbard, Jr., Elizabeth Freeman Thaxter Hubbard, and Cecilia Thaxter Hubbard.

The most recent amended project proposal received from the property owner includes preservation of the main block of the house, the two-story kitchen wing on the east side, removal of the sleeping porch on the west side, rotation and relocation of the house to face Appleton Street, and construction of a modern addition to the east of the relocated house connected to the main house with a smaller connecting block.

On May 7, the Commission will consider both the revised replacement proposal as a continuation of the demolition review hearing and the petition for initiation of a landmark designation study.

cc: Ranjit Singanayagam, Inspectional Services Commissioner
Highland Street Cambridge LLC