

Acton Historical Commission
Public Hearing – May 13, 2009
8:00 p.m., Acton Town Hall, Rm. 121

AHC Members Present: Peter Grover, chair (PG), Bill Klauer (BK), Anita Dodson, Victoria Beyer, Kimberley Connors-Hughes (KCH), Bill Dickinson, Brad Maxwell

Members of the public present: Daniel Wagner (the applicant), Carol Holley, [OTHERS]

1. PG called to order the public hearing to discuss the demolition permit application filed for 54 Great Road. PG next discussed with Mr. Wagner the abutter mailings and Mr. Wagner then related the history of the house since he's owned it, including the change in surroundings. KCH read aloud the Cultural Resource Listing for the house. When prompted, Mr. Wagner eventually disclosed that he owns two properties (house, auto garage) adjacent to 54 Great Road as well.
2. Mr. Wagner then discussed his reasons for wishing to demolish the house, namely, because he is growing old and the house is no longer livable or feasible for him. He stated that the building needs heating, plumbing and new septic, and he does not want to, and cannot afford to, rebuild all those aspects of the house. Mr. Wagner also stated that his plan for the property would be to knock down the house and put up a new 38' x 56' one-story home on the site that would work for his elderly years. He also stated that he would consider donating the property to the Town as a pet cemetery.
3. Mr. Wagner stated that he felt the bylaws would not let him simply add onto the existing structure in a way that would give him satisfactory space. When prompted, Mr. Wagner stated that he listed the house with Acton Real Estate (no info as to duration of listing) and had at least one interested party who wanted to turn the house into a music school, but Mr. Wagner refused that option.
4. The Commission asked whether he had done a cost comparison for rehabilitation and adding onto the existing house, versus the planned demolition and new house, and he said he had not. However, Mr. Wagner estimated the cost of demolition at \$29,000 and cost of his planned new house at \$200,000. BD noted that he believes an addition could be put on for less than this amount. The Commission also stated its willingness to support such an addition with the building and planning departments, if the structure is preserved.
5. Carol Holley, of the East Acton Village Planning Committee, noted the possibility of transferable development rights and density bonuses that could add to the development potential and value of the house, if it is left in place.
6. Finally, Mr. Wagner invited the Commission to conduct a walk-through inspection of the house. PG, AD, VB, KCH and BD to attend the inspection on May 20th at 6:00 p.m. A decision on whether to impose a demolition delay was held until after that walk-through.

Hearing adjourned at 9:00 p.m.