

Neighborhood
Association of the
Back Bay



Bulletin

October 2020

Architecture Committee Report

Susan Prindle, Chair

September was a busy month for our committee and for the Back Bay Architectural Commission. Several of the projects we have been following through the summer were brought to conclusion, and some new ones emerged.

In the commercial area of the district, a front yard was reconfigured at **79 Newbury**, continuing the trend to seek entrances directly from the sidewalk for basement shops, while maintaining significant planting areas. And the roof amenities proposed for **28 Exeter**, which have been considerably reduced from the original proposal, were approved with NABB's support.

In the residential district, the proposals were more controversial this month. The Gibson House at **137 Beacon** requested approval for a temporary (three month) front yard display concerning the effects of the 1918 Spanish flu epidemic, the women's suffrage movement in the Back Bay, and the Gibson family in the 1920s. Although freestanding signage is generally strictly controlled in the residential district, the Commission voted, and our committee agreed, that the current pandemic is a unique situation. The proposal was approved with the proviso that it not be a precedent for other such installations. The French Library at **53 Marlborough Street** is seeking approval for an extensive rooftop HVAC system. This application was postponed until the October hearing at the request of several concerned abutters. The rear wall and planting plan at **15 Commonwealth Avenue**, which was discussed with NABB and the Garden Club over the summer, was approved with NABB's support. Finally, a proposal for an exterior garage at **129 Commonwealth Avenue** was denied. NABB opposed this application both because it conflicts with the Alley Guidelines designed to preserve open space in the alleys and because the rear facade of 129 Commonwealth is one of the few entirely original and unaltered facades in the neighborhood.

If you have gotten this far in the report, you are perhaps interested enough to consider sitting in on one of our meetings. They are held the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30, and are currently only on ZOOM. If you are interested, send an email to architecture@nabbonline.org, and we will send you the link.

Licensing and Building Use Committee Report

Conrad Armstrong, Chair

The Licensing and Building Use Committee saw only one new application in September, from **Select Oyster** (50 Gloucester St). They want to change their indoor occupancy from 38 to 52 (30 seated, 19 bar, 3 standing) and outdoor occupancy from 22 to 38. There is no other change to hours or use of the space. NABB voted to not oppose, the thinking being that the Fire Department is the judge of how many people can safely fit in a space, and ISD is in charge of enforcing those rules and any temporary lower occupancy levels due to COVID.

Visit us on the web @ www.nabbonline.org

160 Commonwealth Avenue L8, Boston, MA 02116 Tel: 617.247.3961 Email: info@nabbonline.org

From the Chair Elliott Laffer

Welcome to what will be a regular feature of the NABB Bulletin. Each month I or another NABB leader will offer some thoughts on important issues in the neighborhood. I hope that you will find these brief pieces interesting. You can let me know what you think at elaffer@nabbonline.org.

This is all part of increasing and improving how we connect with you. In addition to this monthly bulletin, we have the weekly e-news that highlights important goings-on. We have upgraded the timeliness of the material on our website, www.nabbonline.org, we have increased the activity on our Facebook page, and we have added an Instagram page in the last year that is gaining an increasing number of followers. Links to the Facebook and Instagram pages can be found below. Of course, communication is a two way street; to connect with any NABB officer or committee or to get a question answered or make a comment, please use info@nabbonline.org.

Many of you attended our virtual annual meeting in September, for which we received many compliments. The meeting was recorded; if you missed it or would like to view all or part of it again, there is a link on our website. Also available separately is the video presentation on NABB's 65th anniversary that was shown as part of the meeting.

Finally, for now, one of the things that helps make Back Bay the wonderful neighborhood we love is our commercial district. The stores, restaurants, and other venues help make the area interesting as well as convenient. Many were suffering from changes in the retail environment even before COVID, and more are facing difficulties now. If we want to have a vital retail area as part of our neighborhood, we need to patronize the stores and restaurants that are there now.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/NABBonline/

Instagram: [@nabbboston](https://www.instagram.com/nabbboston)

NABB Special Events Presents an Evening of African American History in Massachusetts

Please join Special Events on Wednesday, Oct 21st at 7:00 pm for a Zoom virtual event, African American History in Massachusetts, Exploring the Legacy. The presenter, Rosalyn Delores Elder, a registered architect and entrepreneur with a passion for architecture, cities and history, founded African American Heritage in Massachusetts in 2016 to celebrate the contributions of African Americans to the state's heritage. Her book, African America Heritage in Massachusetts: Exploring the Legacy explores the contributions of African Americans to both our state's and country's history through 742 sites in 141 towns around the Commonwealth. It features the historical significance of those sites, photos of the sites and illustrations of the individuals involved at those sites.

There is no charge for this presentation. The book will be available for purchase. Please register for the event at specialevents@nabbonline.org. A link will be sent to participants for the program.

We hope you will be able to join us for a fascinating evening.

Does Your Doctor Recommend a Flu Shot?

We are not medical professionals, and a flu shot may not be suitable for everyone. However, the CDC has issued flu shot guidelines in this COVID-19 era. To review these guidelines: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/>

2020 NABB Community Service Awards



The 2020 NABB Community Service Awards were given to Vicki Smith and Susan Juretschke at the NABB Virtual Annual Meeting.

(**Vicki Smith**, left and **Susan Juretschke**, right)

Presented by Jackie Yessian, **Vicki Smith** was honored with the Paul Prindle Community Leadership Award. Jackie noted Vicki's efforts with Fisher College and the founding of the NABB Homelessness Task Force, as well as, a newly invigorated Membership Engagement Committee. Vicki was pleased that NABB has always worked together in a group effort and asked current members to encourage their neighbors and friends to join NABB.

Margaret Pokorny presented the Mary Natale Citizenship award to **Susan Juretschke** for her long standing work keeping the trees and plants of Back Bay alive and thriving. In turn, Susan noted that she has always appreciated the many volunteers who have assisted in these efforts and that she was thrilled to receive the award.

Join the NABB Mom's Group



This group is being revived for Moms in the Back Bay to meet and connect. We are dedicated to providing information about local child-friendly activities and experiences. We can keep each other up to date as our museums, libraries, and other local resources begin to safely open. We will start to host walks on the esplanade, Coffee get-togethers, play-dates and other in person activities when it is safe to do so. Our goal is to offer support and be a resource for local Moms.

For more information on joining, please send an email to: info@nabbonline.org and the someone from the group will contact you.

Committee Meetings:

NABB committees will continue to be actively engaged and operate virtually, as well as via e mail and phone, because of the COVID-19 pandemic. At this time, we are not holding in-person meetings as we employ "social distancing" to protect the health of members and the community at large. Committee chairs will coordinate with members as appropriate to communicate and "meet" via Zoom or other videoconferencing platforms. As we navigate these difficult times, please let us know if you have other ideas about how we can, and you would like to, continue with our ongoing activities safely

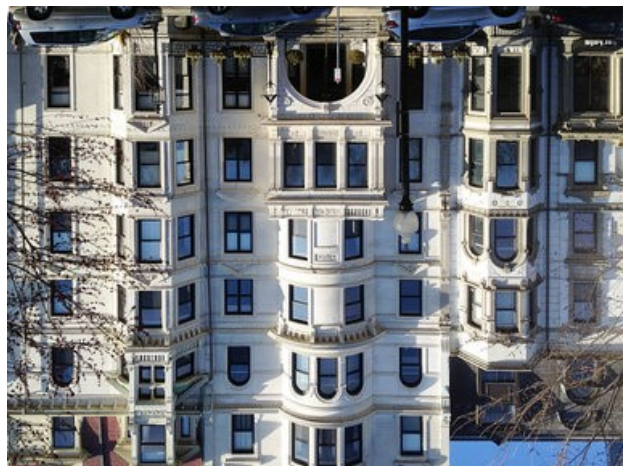
The **Architecture Committee** normally meets on the first Tuesday of each month. The next meeting will be Oct. 6th at 6:30 pm via Zoom. For more information contact Sue Prindle at architecture@nabbonline.com.

Friends and Neighbors:

NABB Friends and Neighbors Groups, as with our committees, will continue to be actively engaged and operate virtually, as well as via e mail and phone, because of the COVID-19 pandemic. At this time, we are not holding in-person events as we employ "social distancing" to protect the health of members and the community at large. Chairs of NABB Groups will coordinate with members to communicate as appropriate and "meet" via Zoom or other videoconferencing platforms. As we navigate these difficult times, please let us know if you have other ideas about how we can, and you would like to, continue with our ongoing activities safely.

The **Men's Discussion Group** will meet via Zoom at noon on Oct. 20th the 3rd Tuesday of October. More information: please contact Grant Schaumburg at: mensgroup@nabbonline.org.

The **NABB Parking Group** will hold a meeting via Zoom on November 17, 2020 at 7:00 pm. For more information and to register for the meeting email: parkinggroup@nabbonline.org



Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay, Inc.
160 Commonwealth Ave. L8, Boston, MA 02116