

Old Library Accessibility Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 23, 2016
(revised June 6, 2016)

Members Present: Wendy Cote-Magan, Mark Mikitarian, Ken Swanton, Lucy Wallace
Press: Joan Eliyesil, *The Harvard Press*
Guests: Members of the Harvard Cultural Collaborative Board

The meeting was called to order at 7 PM.

Administrative: Minutes of March 14, 2016 were approved as presented.

Review of Action Items:

Slope: Al Cormier of D. Boss shot several slopes along the south and north sides of the Old Library (OL) building. Lucy provided Wendy with his calculations which indicated that with ramps or modifications to the landscaping (on the south side) access could be provided to the building at several points.

Property Line: Lucy provided copies of the 1959 approved ANR plan, surveyed and prepared by Charles A. Perkins Co. It also shows the OL on the 8,654 sq. ft. lot. It appears there is enough distance between the eastern lot line and back of the building to accommodate a path to the back door being on the OL property. However, before any access route is approved, the exact location of the building on the lot should be confirmed, especially if the back door is used as the accessible entrance.

Options: Wendy produced drawings of 3 possible accessible entrances. She reminded those present that if work is kept under \$100,000, we only must provide an accessible entrance and bathroom, the latter of which we currently have (as well as the small elevator which provides accessibility between the basement, first floor and mezzanine). Lucy added that small improvements that do not require a building permit (new carpets, painting, etc.) are not counted towards the \$100,000 threshold. Wendy confirmed that there is a cumulative aspect to this as well, with work done over 3 years all counting towards the \$100,000 threshold. Another metric is should the cost of work exceed 30% of the assessed value of the building (\$~106,000) then the entire building must be brought up to code (i.e. sprinklers). Discussion followed on the pros and cons of Wendy's 3 sketches:

1. Pathway/Back Door Access: This is the current access to the building and, given the distance from the handicap parking space on Fairbank St to the door and the change in elevation, a modified path, which would involve landscaping the southern side of the property, could accommodate at 1:20 accessible walkway. At that grade, handrails would not be required. The path would need to be 4' wide, widening to 5' in the area of the door which may require an easement on the abutting property. One concern with this access was its impairment of the use of the Hapgood Room for a movement room, a significant revenue generator in the Harvard Cultural Collaborative (HCC) business plan. Wendy had taken a contractor and mason through the room to look at creating a partition along the southern end of the room and creating a new entry into the basement of the building going through the foundation into a small room on the other side. This would not be an optimal solution for use of the room. The cost of cutting through the foundation wall and providing a beam (the wall is load bearing) will need further investigation.

2. Side Entrance Ramp (north side): Based on Al's elevation and distance measurements, a ramp with a 1:12 slope could be installed from Fairbank St to an existing door on the north side of the building. Given the northern property line, there appears to be sufficient space to accommodate a ramp on the town land. The ramp would require 2 handrails and an intermediate land between two 30' runs of ramp. One issue with this location is that the ramp would likely block the stairs that provide emergency egress from the basement. The ramp would allow access to the main floor of the OL near the elevator.
3. Ramp to Current Main Entrance (south side): This option would allow the existing brick walkway and stairs to remain, as the ramp would be located closer to Old Littleton Road. Given the distance from the handicap parking space on Fairbank to the entrance, this ramp would also be at 1:12 and require handrails and 2 landings. The top landing would require some modification to the current entrance to enable access into the closed porch. Wendy suggested a further modification: to restore the loggia by removing the windows, close off the current door and create a new, shared doorway into the building where the current reception desk is located.
4. At the last meeting there had been some discussion about restoring the original front entrance to the building, with either an exterior ramp (would crisscross in front with exterior stairs crossing at various landings) or provide a lift right inside the door with access up to the main floor or down to the basement. This option was not considered feasible as it would easily exceed the \$106,000 threshold and trigger the building have full code compliance.

Next Steps:

Costing Options: Wendy will do further research *estimated/rough* cost of ramps and materials, as well as further investigate feasibility of modifying Hapgood Room to partition off a hallway and change access to the basement, and the cost of this option.

Ken asked if materials were donated would they be excluded from the cost of the project, which will be driven by public procurement law. Lucy offered to ask Tim Bragan or Lorraine Leonard if this would be possible.

The next meeting will be set once Wendy has gathered more costing information.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.