



## HISTORIC DISTRICTS COMMISSION

*Town of Concord, Massachusetts*

141 Keyes Road

(978) 318-3290

February 17, 2021

Re: Potential Jennie Dugan Acres Historic District

Dear [Homeowner]:

As we look eagerly toward spring this year, I want to provide some observations as Chair of the Historic Districts Commission regarding the possibility of establishing a historic district in the Jennie Dugan Acres neighborhood area. Let me summarize some of the HDC's observations following our site visit to your neighborhood last fall and the comments we have received from many of you since then.

The purpose of our Commission is "the preservation and protection of buildings, places and districts of historic or literary significance." We are to further that objective by maintaining "buildings, places and districts . . . compatible with . . . the historical tradition of Concord." To follow our mandate, the HDC holds public hearings (comparable to the hearing on November 19, 2020 in which many of you participated) to consider proposed alterations to or construction of buildings within the district to the extent that the construction is visible from a public street or a body of water. In doing so, the HDC applies its guidelines – not "rules" – in an effort to work with homeowners to achieve their design and construction objectives, while protecting Concord's historical traditions.

As some of you have rightly pointed out, the existence of an historic district does impose a requirement on homeowners within the district to file an application for proposed construction or alteration and to seek approval from the HDC. However, the HDC serves as a gatekeeper and tries to assure protection of architectural styles intrinsic to the relevant historic district. Therefore, were you to seek adoption of a Jennie Dugan Acres historic district, the HDC would review proposed construction or alterations with an eye toward maintaining the architectural and aesthetic characteristics inherent in Deck House and mid-twentieth century contemporary homes in the neighborhood.

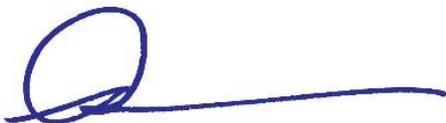
To our knowledge, there are 21 homes in the neighborhood being proposed for the Jennie Dugan Acres Historic District. Of these, 12 are "Deck Houses"; 4 are of a contemporary architectural style; and the remaining 5 are homes of disparate styles. With respect to the latter category of homes, the HDC would not impose adherence to Deck House architectural features

or characteristics but would nonetheless review proposed alterations or proposed construction at those homes to preserve a level of overall neighborhood scale, character, and consistency. As a reminder, the overwhelming number of applications which come before the HDC are approved with minor or no suggested modifications.

Some of you have rightly expressed concern about the impact on the value of homes in historic districts as compared with comparable homes outside such districts. The HDC has undertaken a preliminary analysis of that question, and available data suggests that there is no discernable difference in values. To the extent you decide as a neighborhood to proceed with further exploration of a historic district, the HDC will be prepared to present that data at a public hearing for your consideration.

Finally, I want to make clear that the decision about whether to proceed with a Jennie Dugan Acres historic district proposal is in *your* hands. The HDC has responded only because of interest expressed directly by some of you and your neighbors. These are your homes, and while we represent one aspect of Concord's historic culture and preservation, we are not here to dictate what we believe is principally your decision and that of your fellow Concord citizens. On the other hand, we have considerable experience with Concord's five historic districts and their overall benefit to Concord residents and the character of the Town. It is in that context that we believe you, as a neighborhood, may wish to further consider advocating for the creation of a Jennie Dugan historic district. Assuming there is continuing interest, we suggest you meet again, perhaps form a small committee, and report your views to us by mid-March 2021.

With sincere best wishes for your health and that of your family,



Peter R. Nobile III  
Chair  
Concord Historic Districts Commission

Attachments:

- 11/19/2020 Public Neighborhood Meeting Presentation (pdf)
- Current Historic Districts Commission guidelines (pdf, approved 8/20/2015)