

WEST ROXBURY ~ ROSLINDALE BULLETIN

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West Roxbury resident Derek Rubinoff got some help recently from *This Old House* for some renovations and repairs.

PHOTO BY DEREK RUBINOFF



Mayor Michelle Wu announces \$50 million for Mildred Hailey Apartments. Behind her at top left Steve Meacham City Life and middle left Beverly Williams GBIO.

COURTESY PHOTO

This Old House comes to WR

Ariane Komyati
Staff Reporter

The home improvement series on PBS, *This Old House*, is airing new episodes about transforming a Victorian house in West Roxbury.

The series based in West Roxbury is entitled, “The West Roxbury Victorian.” The show described West Roxbury as a “small town in a big city.” The first episode discusses how the Victorian house in the neighborhood was originally built on farmland in 1894 and was the first single-family erected in the new subdivision. The crew from *This Old House* said they hope to bring the house up to the lifestyle standards of the 2020s.

The homeowner is West Roxbury resident and Architect Derek Rubinoff. He bought the house nine years ago and always had plans to renovate it.

“It was under-improved but had great bones,” Rubinoff explained. “I received an email from another architect friend back in early August forwarded from someone he knew from the show. *This Old House* had a remaining slot to fill for Season 4.”

He said he forwarded the email to his wife, Robyn Marder, who applied to be on the show. Marder and Rubinoff had already lined up the drawings, the building permit, the financing, and the



The TV show came to work on this particular West Roxbury Victorian house.

PHOTO BY DEREK RUBINOFF

general contractor for their home renovation.

To their surprise, *This Old House* contacted them back.

“I guess they liked the project and thought we’d do okay on TV. I know many people apply to be on the show and so I’m very grateful we were chosen, and quickly, at that,” he said.

Rubinoff and Marder were able to work out a budget with their terrific contractor, Delianro Dias Cruz of Alpha Smart Builders, and “obtained the right financing at the right time.” The staff at *This Old House* have helped them connect with manufacturers and vendors and have helped move things along on schedule.

For Rubinoff, he said the most interesting part of the filming and renovation is how

great everyone connected to the show is.

“All the stars and the production staff are just great, quality people, and very knowledgeable, experienced, and talented. The set atmosphere is a lot of fun, and so it doesn’t feel so much like we’re being filmed and more like we’re all collaborating on something special together. Furthermore, I’m learning a great deal about construction best practices, and that’s invaluable to me as an architect,” Rubinoff said.

He added that working on his own home can be as rewarding if not more so than working to improve a client’s building.

“There is no delight for an architect quite like working

This Old House
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Wu announces \$ 50 million for Mildred Hailey Apts.

Richard Heath
Staff Reporter

On Jan. 20 Mayor Michelle Wu, joined by Chief of Housing Sheila Dillon, Boston Housing Authority (BHA) administrator Kate Bennett, elected officials, the Mildred Hailey Tenants Organization leaders and housing advocates announced that \$50 million would be allocated for improvements at Mildred Hailey Apartments.

“This is another step toward our commitment to Mildred Hailey [apartments].” Wu said.

“I’m excited to announce a \$50 million investment that will upgrade all 526 apartments at Mildred Hailey.”

The money will go towards ventilation, new bathrooms and kitchens, plumbing and other capital needs in apartments not part of the Centre Street Partners redevelopment previously reported by *The Bulletin*.

Wu said that in the next few weeks the BHA would hire architects to determine the scope

Mildred Hailey
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Brighton protests tree chopping

Mary Ellen Gambon
Staff Reporter

More than 150 protesters came out Saturday morning at the former Our Lady of the Presentation Church’s parking lot in Brighton to voice their anger about the cutting down of a 175-year-old heritage tree without their prior knowledge by a developer who owns the property.

The tree, located at 720 Washington St., was one of more than 40 removed earlier this past week, according to

several sources who attended the protest.

“This is a huge loss for us,” said District 9 City Councilor Liz Breadon, who represents Allston and Brighton. “That tree is irreplaceable. This is happening at a time when we have been working on preserving and expanding the urban tree canopy.”

Breadon confirmed that her office received no notice beforehand and has no knowledge

Heritage Tree Cutting
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BPD take ATVs and dirt bikes



The Boston Police Department (BPD) reported on Feb. 4, 2022 that members of the BPD Auto Theft Unit seized approximately 50 dirt bikes and other all-terrain vehicles from a self-storage facility in the area of 44 Lochedale Road in Roslindale. These seizures came as a result of a coordinated investigation involving the Seekonk Police Department, Boston Fire Department HAZMAT Unit, City of Boston Inspectional Services along with other specialized BPD Units.

PHOTOS BY BPDNEWS.COM

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been complaining that they have been disrespected by some of the business owners," Jackson said, "and have been restricted from coming into some of the stores on River Street. Some businesses are complaining about some thievery and some youths stealing and causing fights with them. So we really need to get a handle on this and pull it in as a community."

In late March, there will be what is being called an "unconference" hosted by the CIB because of the informal structure of the meeting. It will be a visioning session to deter-

mine what residents want to see in their town. The information gleaned from that will be presented as a community benefits agreement to developers. The meeting may be virtual or hybrid, with more information to come.

Jackson said its purpose "is so that we can take back more control as opposed to developers just coming in and doing what they want by way of the help of the BPDA."

Also on the agenda was a half-hour presentation by representatives from the Boston Home Center. Residents

learned about several city programs that can help homeowners pay for needed repairs.

The Boston Home Center helps income-eligible homeowners with technical assistance and loans. Homes must be owner-occupied, and the owner must be current with real estate and property taxes as well as mortgage and Boston Water and Sewer Commission payments. The team fielded several questions, including one about having elders having their property into a trust for their children.

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on his or her own home," he said. "To see the spaces transform from our plans to the reality of our home has been magical. We have been combining bold contemporary design with an affection for the home's historical character, and the results are really quite beautiful."

Rubinoff said if he had any advice to give anyone looking to renovate their own home, he said it would be to "preserve the character and the craftsmanship, but bring some personality to the project."

He explained that there have been huge advancements in technology over the past many decades. This includes the development of new materials, appliances, and lighting which can be sensitively integrated into historic homes to make them feel fresh and new.

"An old home can be made to feel both timeless and contemporary so that it inspires while suiting our lifestyle of today," Rubinoff said.

The renovation and the production started at the beginning of October, and will finish in a few weeks.

"We are very grateful to our father-in-law for hosting us during this time, but all of us are ready for us to come back home," Rubinoff added.

Watch the season online at www.thisoldhouse.com/west-roxbury-victorian. New episodes are aired on Thursday on WGBH.

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