

DRAFT Minutes of the Cambridge Historical Commission—THIS DRAFT HAS NOT YET BEEN REVIEWED OR APPROVED BY THE COMMISSION

Minutes of the Architects Committee of the Cambridge Historical Commission

July 10, 2023 – Meeting conducted online via Zoom Webinar (882 7719 5863) - 10:00 A.M.

CHC present (online): Paula Paris, Kyle Sheffield

Staff present (online): Charles Sullivan, *Executive Director*, Sarah Burks, *Preservation Planner*.
Eric Hill, *Survey Director*

Public present (online): See attached list.

This meeting was held online with remote participation pursuant to Ch. 2 of the Acts of 2023 adopted by the Mass. General Court and approved by Governor Healey. The public was able to participate online via the Zoom webinar platform.

Mr. Sullivan opened the meeting at 10:06 A.M. He explained that the meeting had been requested by DND Homes, the applicants for cases D-1642 and D-1643, for the purpose of soliciting further critiques of their design for a proposed replacement building at 231-235 Third Street. The Architects Committee was made up of members or alternates of the Commission and was not limited to practicing architects. There would be no decisions made or votes taken with regard to whether the existing buildings at 231 and 235 Third Street were preferably preserved in the context of a replacement proposal. A continuation of the public hearing would be scheduled for a regular meeting of the Historical Commission.

Dan Anderson of Anderson Porter Architects said they were looking for constructive input prior to submitted revised drawings for consideration by the Commission at a continued public hearing. The message they had heard at the last hearing was that the design was moving in a good direction, but it wasn't yet at a point that the Commissioners could vote in favor of allowing a replacement building. While that was encouraging, they didn't quite know how to interpret it and were seeking further information about what needed refinement. He shared his screen and displayed the plans presented at the June 1 hearing. He summarized the proposal for a new building as having a three-story mass close to Third Street, the main entrance facing Third Street, and a five-story (45') mass set back behind that.

Trina Murphy, the developer, thanked the staff and members for the meeting. She had sent Dan photographs of the proposed NewTech composite cladding that her company had used on another project. They proposed the color, Peruvian Teak, but the product came in other colors including a dark charcoal.

Mr. Anderson displayed the photo. The product could be ordered in either a horizontal or vertical orientation and in different sizes. He described the proposed cladding material for the taller portion of the building as a nickel-gap cementitious siding in a light gray color. The windows would be a dark color.

Ms. Murphy said that several people mentioned brick as a material for the building, but she did not think it would be successful in creating a historic look.

Mr. Sheffield said his thoughts about the design were organized into two areas: massing and materials. With regard to the massing, East Cambridge buildings often hugged the street edge. This could be seen all the way up Third Street, so he appreciated that aspect of the design. With regard to materials, he said the chosen materials made the project look like it was three separate buildings. One option would be

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to wrap the front material around the corner onto Bent Street to connect the two masses and read as a single building. The 3” coursing of the New Tech product was very dense looking. Perhaps they could try the larger dimension. Another option would be to tie the two taller parts together with a more cohesive material selection.

Ms. Paris said she appreciated the attempt to break up the mass of the building into smaller parts. It helped transition from the evolving end of the neighborhood to the historic residential area. She would favor a two-part massing rather than three because it could relate to the existing two buildings.

Mr. Sheffield said the taller mass was clad in a horizontal material. The elevations were very flat. There could be a deeper recess on the taller portion of the building.

Mr. Sullivan noted that the narrow dimension of the coursing of the front mass was comparable to the height of brick coursing. He agreed that simplifying the materials of the taller part of the building was a good idea.

Ms. Burks asked how the two nickel-gap materials of different dimensions, but in the same plane would intersect. How would that intersection be joined?

Mr. Hill said a brick material might work on the three-story element.

Mr. Sullivan opened up the meeting to public comment.

Suzanne Blier of 5 Hillard Place said she loved the existing buildings but if a new building is constructed she encouraged it to be bold. She could appreciate the Mondrian-like patterning of the windows and panels of the taller mass. Go bolder with the lower mass. Play the two against each other by reversing design elements. Be more playful and less vanilla.

Marie Saccoccio of 55 Otis Street said light colored siding would get dirty very quickly. The units facing the rear would see industrial rooftops. Were there rooftop mechanicals proposed? Mr. Anderson showed the roof plan with small HVAC units set back from the edges. Ms. Saccoccio said she was still partial to the existing buildings.

Ilan Levy agreed with Ms. Blier. The design was missing originality. This was an opportunity for a bold architectural statement.

Justin Saif of 259 Hurley Street said the refinements looked great. The massing was appropriate to the location. Bent Street has a very industrial character. The proposed new building would be an improvement over the existing buildings. The design met the city’s design guidelines. The project would allow more families to live in East Cambridge.

Heather Hoffman of 213 Hurley Street said the design could be from anywhere in America. The existing buildings made people smile, but she didn’t get the same joy from the design for a new building. She said she did not object to the density of the project, but the design wasn’t welcoming. Industrial looking design could be cool, as at the former garage building on Lopez Avenue.

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Dan Phillips, a Cambridge resident, said he was concerned about the continued delay of the project. He wanted to see the nineteen new units (four affordable) completed.

Marilee Meyer of 10 Dana Street said the Juliet balconies were light looking compared to the spandrels. There was too much variety of texture.

Betty Saccoccio of 55 Otis Street said the courthouse would have a lot of brick on it, because that's what people wanted to see. The project was not an affordable housing project.

Mr. Sullivan closed the public comment period. He said an earlier rendering had a bright color for the windows, which added a playfulness to the design that he appreciated.

Mr. Sheffield said that would pick up on the Mondrian reference. He said he could understand the constraints under which the design team was working.

Mr. Anderson and Ms. Murphy thanked everyone for their comments and suggestions.

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks
Preservation Planner

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**Members of the Public
Present on the Zoom Webinar online, July 10, 2023**

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Dan Anderson | Anderson Porter Architects, Cambridge |
| Trina Murphy | DND Homes, Burlington |
| J. D. | East Cambridge Business Association |
| Jean Spera | 12 Sciarappa St |
| Marilee Meyer | 10 Dana St #404 |
| Justin Saif | 259 Hurley St. |
| Dan Phillips | Cambridge |
| John Hawkinson | CambridgeDay.com |
| Suzanne Blier | 5 Fuller Pl |
| Heather Hoffman | 213 Hurley St |
| Ilan Levy | 148 Spring St |
| Betty Saccoccio | 55 Otis St |
| Marie Saccoccio | 55 Otis St |

Note: Town is Cambridge, unless otherwise indicated.