

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

**Minutes of the Cambridge Historical Commission**

April 4, 2024 – Meeting conducted online via Zoom Webinar (842 5566 1370) - 6:00 P.M.

Present (online): Bruce Irving, *Chair*; Joseph Ferrara, Chandra Harrington, Liz Lyster, Jo Solet, *Members*; Gavin Kleespies, Paula Paris, Kyle Sheffield, *Alternates*

Absent: Susannah Tobin, *Vice Chair*; Yuting Zhang *Member*

Staff present (online): Charles Sullivan, *Executive Director*, 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. The public was able to participate online via the Zoom webinar platform.

With a quorum present, Chair Irving called the meeting to order at 6:03 P.M. He explained the online meeting instructions and public hearing procedures and introduced commissioners and staff.

Public Hearings: Alterations to Designated Properties

**Case 5086: 0 Garden St. (rear) / 19 Farwell Pl., by Christ Church in Cambridge.** Replace windows in Parish Hall.

Mr. Sullivan shared his screen and showed photographs of the property. He explained that the property is located in the Old Cambridge Historic District. The building was constructed in 1948 and faces Farwell Place. He indicated the windows in question, double hung sash without screens.

Allene Pierson, the Junior Warden of the Christ Church Vestry. She introduced Jessica Fagiano, Director of Operations and Communication at Christ Church. The Garden Nursery School will be moving into the empty classroom space in the Parish Hall, after having been located across the street on Farwell Place for many years. They were renovating the interior in anticipation of the school use. The 19 windows date to 1949 and were very drafty and had lead paint. The expense for de-leading the windows was more than twice the cost of replacing them. The proposed Harvey replacements were vinyl with 6+6 simulated divided lights. The arched windows on the second floor would not be replaced. They did not understand that the back of the property was in the historic district. They had already ordered the windows, which are not returnable, leaving them in a hardship situation. There were replacement vinyl windows on the west side of the Parish Hall that had not been approved by the Commission.

Mr. Sheffield asked about the jurisdiction of the commission in such a case. Mr. Sullivan answered that the application was for a certificate of hardship. The Commission could approve it with a finding of hardship, financial or otherwise, that pertained to this case and that would not affect the district generally.

Dr. Solet asked if the wood frame and trim on the exterior were also to be replaced. Ms. Pierson indicated that the jambs would remain. If interior trim tested positive for lead, it would be replaced.

Ms. Paris asked about the proposed replacement units. Ms. Pierson described them.

Mr. Ferrara asked about the exterior wood trim. Ms. Pierson said she wasn't sure if it needed to be replaced. The main concern was the lead on the interior. If the window sash could be replaced without removing the exterior trim, that would be done. The exterior would be repainted as part of the project.

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The church was working hard to prepare the building for the nursery school. Any delay could hold up their inspections and move in.

Ms. Harrington asked about the age of the building and windows. Ms. Pierson said it was built in 1948-1949.

Mr. Sheffield asked about the width of the muntins. Harvey offers 5/8 or 1-inch width muntins. Ms. Pierson said they were not snap in grids but would be affixed to the windows. Mr. Sheffield said they should try to match the width of the existing as closely as possible.

Ms. Lyster asked if the Commission had sufficient information to make its decision.

Ms. Paris asked if the existing vinyl replacement windows on the other side of the building would be replaced also. Ms. Pierson said they would remain.

Mr. Sullivan described the replacement windows, which would be installed within the existing window jambs. He had seen the windows on the other side of the building facing the School of Education. They were not visible from the public way and would not be seen from the same view as any of the current windows to be replaced.

Marie Saccoccio remarked that she had Harvey windows at her house. They were very efficient and durable but difficult to open and close.

Mr. Irving closed the public comment period.

Dr. Solet moved to grant the requested Certificate of Hardship for the financial and timing reasons explained. Mr. Kleespies seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0. (Ferrara, Harrington, Lyster, Solet, Irving, Paris, Kleespies)

Mr. Sullivan told Mr. Sheffield that financial reasons could be taken into account for a hardship certificate. Mr. Sheffield said he did not want to create a precedent for people claiming ignorance of the process and ordering inappropriate windows. Mr. Kleespies said he likely would have found the proposed windows appropriate to the 1949 building. Mr. Sullivan said the Commission had given 50 certificates of hardship out of 4,000 over the last sixty years, so not very many. The hardship was self-inflicted here because of changes in church leadership and volunteer administrators and would not be a precedent in the legal sense. Failure to approve it would seriously impact their agreement with the Garden Nursery School.

Preservation Award Nominations

Mr. Sullivan showed slides of the nominated projects for the awards program. He had mailed out the updated spreadsheet of candidates. The list of twenty needed to be reduced to twelve or fifteen. After discussion, the Commission settled on the final list of award-winning projects and individuals. The program would take place on Thursday, May 30, 2024.

Minutes

The Commission considered the minutes of the March 7, 2024 meeting. Mr. Kleespies said she

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had no corrections and moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Ms. Paris seconded the motion, which passed 7-0 in a roll call vote. (Ferrara, Harrington, Lyster, Solet, Irving, Kleespies, Sheffield).

Director's Report

Mr. Irving asked about the prospective tenant of the Harvard Square Kiosk. Mr. Sullivan couldn't recall. [CultureHouse, a Somerville nonprofit that "improves livability in local communities by transforming unused spaces into vibrant social infrastructure."]

Dr. Solet asked about the electrical box and silver gutters at 4 Berkeley Street. Had they been approved? Mr. Sullivan promised to investigate

Ms. Paris asked about the status of 204 Fayerweather Street. Mr. Sullivan said it appeared to be almost finished.

Mr. Sheffield moved to adjourn. Ms. Lyster seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. (Ferrara, Harrington, Lyster, Solet, Irving, Kleespies, Sheffield). The meeting adjourned at 8:07 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks  
Preservation Planner

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**Members of the Public  
Present on the Zoom Webinar online, April 4, 2024**

Allene R. Pierson, Jr. Warden	Christ Church Cambridge, 0 Garden St
Meichelle Ferguson	45 Prospect St
Betty and Marie Saccoccio	55 Otis St
John Hawkinson	Cambridge
Phil Smith	271 Cambridge St
Marilee Meyer	10 Dana St
Jessica Fagiano	Christ Church Cambridge

Note: City is Cambridge, unless otherwise indicated.

Note: See <https://www.cambridgema.gov/historic/permitsApplications/projectplansandstaffreports> for a link to the Zoom meeting recording.