

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

November 10, 2021 – Meeting conducted online via Zoom Webinar (810 1007 8635) - 6:00 P.M.

Members present (online): Bruce Irving, *Chair*; Susannah Tobin, *Vice Chair*
Chandra Harrington, Liz Lyster, Caroline Shannon, Jo Solet, *Member*
Paula Paris, Kyle Sheffield, *Alternate Members*

Members absent: Joseph Ferrara, *Member*; Gavin Kleespies, *Alternate Member*

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 and was closed to in-person attendance, consistent with the provisions set forth in the Act Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency, which was signed into law on June 16, 2021. The public was able to participate online via the Zoom webinar platform.

With a quorum present (Irving, Tobin, Harrington, Lyster, Shannon and Solet), Mr. Irving called the meeting to order at 6:09 P.M. He explained the online meeting instructions and public hearing procedures, then introduced the commissioners and staff.

Case D1595 and Case L-141: 2161 Massachusetts Ave. ND Development, LLC, owner. Application to move building on lot and demolish rear and side sections. Consider petition by ten or more registered voters to initiate a landmark designation study.

Mr. Irving reported that the applicants for Case D-1595 had requested a continuance to the December 2 meeting. Dr. Solet asked if the landmark petition case would also be continued. Ms. Burks reported that she had communicated with the lead petitioner and he had no objections to continuing the hearing. Dr. Solet moved to continue cases D-1595 and L-141 to the December 2 meeting. Ms. Shannon seconded. The motion passed 7-0 in a roll call vote. (Lyster, Harrington, Tobin, Irving, Solet, Shannon)

Case D-1596: 47-53 Bay State Rd., by American Association of Variable Star Observers, current owner, o/b/o Sun Property Group. Demolish house, offices, and warehouse buildings (1948 with later additions).

Mr. Sullivan reported that the applicants had withdrawn their application and planned to work with the house and fit it into their townhouse development plans. Mr. Sullivan said he had found the other buildings on the site to be not significant. No vote was needed.

Public Hearing: Landmark Designation Proceedings

Case L-140: 1627 Massachusetts Ave. Lesley University, owner. Consider confirmation of the commission's initiation of a landmark designation study.

Mr. Sullivan shared his screen and explained that the Commission had acted on the staff recommendation at its October 7 meeting and voted to initiate a landmark study for the Charles Hicks Saunders house. The present hearing was to meet due process requirements. He described the location of the house on the avenue in a group of other houses from the same period. There was development potential on the parking lot behind the house and compared it to the Frost Terrace affordable housing project recently completed next to Lesley's Lunder Arts Center. He recommended that the Commission confirm its vote to

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initiate a study.

Mr. Irving asked if there were questions of fact from the Commission. There being none, he asked if the public had questions of fact.

Marilee Meyer of 10 Dana Street asked how a 100% affordable housing project per the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) would be applied if the property was a landmark.

Mr. Sullivan answered that the Commission's jurisdiction remains in effect per the AHO. He clarified that landmark status would not preclude re-use of the building for affordable housing. The Commission's purview extended only to the appropriateness of the exterior aspects of a design.

Mr. Irving asked for public comment.

Ms. Meyer expressed great admiration for the building. Suzanne Blier of 5 Fuller Place commended Lesley University for its preservation of many significant buildings in the city.

Mr. Irving closed public comment.

Dr. Solet asked why confirmation of a prior vote was required. Mr. Sullivan said that the October 7 discussion had had not been advertised beforehand. The owner and abutters had now been notified and a fully advertised public hearing was taking place to allow the Commission to confirm its earlier vote.

Ms. Shannon moved to confirm the Commission's prior decision to initiate a landmark designation study report for the property at 1627 Massachusetts Avenue. Ms. Tobin seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0 in a roll call vote. (Lyster, Harrington, Tobin, Irving, Solet, Shannon)

Mr. Irving noted the arrival of alternate members Kyle Sheffield and Paula Paris.

Public Hearing: Demolition Review

Cases D-1597, D-1598 and D-1599: 4 and 6 Buckingham Pl. and 10 Buckingham St. Demolish the Kelsey House (1894) and Morrison House (1884; moved 1893) and demolish the additions and reconstruct the Markham building (1892 with later additions) as part of the BB&N Lower School Revisioning.

Mr. Sullivan shared his screen and showed slides of the property while Ms. Burks presented the staff report on the history and architecture of the three buildings. Buckingham Place (originally named Hall Place) had been created by subdividing the land behind the Elizabeth Tower house at 4 Buckingham Street in 1892. The first building constructed on the subdivision was a school building for Jeannette Markham at the corner lot that had been purchased by Edith Longfellow Dana in 1890. Emily Thackeray, also a teacher, built her home at 4 Buckingham Place in 1892. The third building on the north side of the street was an art studio that had belonged to Arthur Astor Carey and which was moved from Fayerweather Street to 6 Buckingham Place in 1893 by the Newell family. She described alterations to the buildings and shared information about their subsequent owners.

Ms. Burks recommended that the buildings be found significant for their important associations to the social history of Cambridge, specifically for their relationship to Jeanette Markham and the Buckingham School as well as to educators Emily Thackeray, Edward Kelsey and Laura Kelsey Allen and to the

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philanthropist Arthur Astor Carey. She indicated that 10 Buckingham Street and 4 Buckingham Place were also significant for their important associations with architects Andrews, Jacques & Rantoul and Charles H. McClare, respectively.

Mr. Irving asked for questions from the commissioners.

Ms. Harrington asked if any other buildings on the campus were proposed for demolition. Ms. Burks answered that only the three buildings just described were to be demolished but there would be some alterations to the Brick building and new construction on the current play field.

Dr. Solet noted that Suzanne Green, a former member of the Commission, had been one of the last teachers to face the mandatory resignation requirement at the time of marriage but that her appeal of that rule had been successful paving the way for married teachers in Cambridge schools.

Mr. Irving asked for questions of fact from the public regarding the significance of the buildings.

Veronique Curaudeau of 7 Buckingham Place stated that #5 Buckingham Place, not #7, had recently been purchased by BB&N.

Mr. Irving asked for public comment about the significance of the buildings.

Ms. Meyer commented that the Carey studio building was significant because of his role in the Arts & Crafts movement in the U.S. and his other contributions to the art scene in Boston.

Ms. Blier commented that the buildings were rich in history and were significant.

Ayol Naor of 38 Parker Street commented that the buildings contributed positively to the neighborhood.

Mr. Irving closed public comment.

Dr. Solet moved to find the three buildings significant for the reasons listed in the staff report. Mr. Sheffield seconded the motion. Mr. Irving designated Ms. Paris to vote. The motion passed 7-0 in a roll call vote. (Lyster, Solet, Tobin, Irving, Harrington, Paris)

Mr. Irving invited to the applicants to present their plans for the school buildings.

Dr. Jennifer Price, BB&N Head of School, said she would make the staff report part of the school's records. She shared slides and described BB&N's background. There were currently 332 students in the Lower School in grades beginner through six. Every inch of the school was used during Covid except Kelsey and Morrison, which were too small to use for classrooms. The school needed more flexible spaces and more outdoor spaces. The plan would keep buildings at the edges of campus, creating a natural boundary for security. She described goals to increase typical classroom size from 500 sf to 700 sf and to create a community space for lunch, performances, and gathering events. The plan was designed with sustainability and operations in mind.

Cynthia Westerman, BB&N Project Manager, shared the screen and described the existing and proposed site plans. She noted that 15 Craigie Street, the former St. Anne's convent, was renovated in

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2001 and received a preservation award. She described the other campus building and said there was a purchase and sales agreement for 5 Buckingham Place, which the school would use for swing space in the short term. She said they had no long-term plans for #5 and it might even be sold when no longer needed for swing space. A new Meeting House building would be constructed on the site of the current field.

Jean Carroon, an architect with Goody Clancy, said the three subject buildings were very tight for modern pedagogy. They had studied how to use all the school's buildings more efficiently and successfully. No one space could hold the whole school for a gathering event. The Meeting House design was still in its early stages. It would be open like a barn and flexible for multiple uses. The heritage gym in Brick would be infilled with two floors. She described the proposal to re-use fabric from the Markham building. She said the residential buildings did not support the needs of the school.

Mr. Irving asked for questions of fact from the commission.

Ms. Lyster asked about the use of the space where the Meeting House was proposed to be and asked about the security issues alluded to.

Dr. Price answered that there was a turf field where the Meeting House was proposed. With young students, it was important to keep a closed edge around the campus. School building doors were locked for security reasons.

Mr. Sheffield asked about circulation on and around campus. Dr. Price answered that there would be no increase to the student population or the number of parking spaces. Pick up and drop off happens at the circular driveway at 15 Craigie Street. Deliveries would be directed to the back of the Meeting House accessed from Craigie Street.

Ms. Carroon said they had determined the field location as the right place for a new building on campus. The location of Markham was not the spot for a larger building. It would be reconstructed with a smaller footprint and used for admissions. She indicated that relocation of the houses would be beneficial, in a perfect world.

Dr. Solet asked if there would be trees along the campus boundary on Buckingham Place, adjacent to the play field, in order to protect the neighbors? If houses are not conducive for school use, would there be a future application to demolish 5 Buckingham Place? Dr. Price said they would use trees as much as possible. Number 5 Buckingham Place might be sold back into residential use in the future or used as offices. It has larger rooms than #4 or #6.

Dr. Solet asked how staging and construction would affect the neighbors. Will there be someone responsible for coordinating with the neighbors and keeping the neighborhood livable during construction? Ms. Westerman assured her that they would engage the neighbors and protect the students and the neighborhood.

Ms. Lyster asked about the proposed size of the building. Ms. Carroon answered that it would be

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6,400 sf on one level with a big gym/lunchroom. It would be 25' away from the property line. They would work closely with the neighbors on Parker Street about its design.

Ms. Lyster noted the 9,500 sf lot size of 5 Buckingham Place. She asked if there was expansion potential there. Ms. Westerman answered that the Meeting House needs would not fit at #5. Ms. Carroon added that they did not want students crossing an active street.

Mr. Sullivan asked about the timeline of the project.

Dr. Price answered that it was a capital project and would require fundraising first. A start date of Spring 2023 would be the goal if the money could be raised on time. Demolition would be the first phase of work, to get an open space to use when work was happening at the Meeting House and Markham. The renovations to Brick would likely take 2-3 summers to complete.

Mr. Irving asked for questions of fact from the public.

Ms. Blier asked if a final design would be required before demolition would be approved. Why did demolition need to happen before the design of the Meeting House was finished? Ms. Carroon explained that approval would be needed for fundraising purposes. The designs were in process.

Ms. Meyer asked if the Meeting House would have a basement. Could Markham be 2.5 stories instead of 1.5? Ms. Carroon said they were not planning to include a basement, noting that the water table in the area was high. Markham could be taller, but there would be a lot of loss to the usable space for the required stairs, egress, and elevators.

Mr. Irving opened public comment.

Marie Saccoccio of 55 Otis Street said she would hate to see the loss of the houses. She asked if the City had purchased property from BB&N recently. Dr. Price answered that the school sold four acres to the City of Cambridge and then purchased six acres in Watertown for its new field space. There would be a new twenty-acre athletic complex for the use of BB&N and Watertown residents through a public-private partnership.

Ms. Saccoccio said she understood the space constraints at the Lower School but questioned the use of funds for the large athletic complex in Watertown when there were 332 cramped students at the Lower School.

Maria Christopher of 38 Parker Street said she had lived in the neighborhood for 32 years. She said she could not imagine having the Meeting House directly behind the Parker Street houses. She said it was also sad to see two historic buildings demolished.

Steven Sands of 4 Buckingham Street asked if the new field would be fenced. What would the surface material be? He said #5 had a very nice garden due to the previous owner being a horticulturist. It could be used as a botanical site. He said he was concerned about employees parking right outside his kitchen window. He asked if Markham was being picked up and moved. Ms. Westerman answered that

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Markham would be rebuilt on the existing foundation.

Ms. Meyer asked if Buckingham Place was a public or private way. Ms. Westerman said it was an unaccepted public way and that BB&N plowed the street.

Ms. Meyer asked if the buildings could be advertised for possible relocation.

Fred Horton of 25 Craigie Street said the school lived heavy on the street already. He expressed concern about more traffic, people, and administrators. He hoped the construction could be phased and that the school would proceed cautiously and mindfully of the neighbors.

Mr. Irving closed the public comment period.

Mr. Sheffield thanked the applicants for their presentation. He said he could be supportive of the project, but there was a lot left to be done in the way of design development.

Ms. Harrington said she would like to know more about plans for #5. There was too much uncertainty about the proposal to approve demolition at this time.

Mr. Sullivan said there should be a full zoning analysis for the project and an initial conversation with the Community Development Department about institutional expansion. More detail would be needed for the replica of the Markham school building. If demolition were to be approved for that building, it should be studied forensically to understand what was there originally.

Ms. Shannon said she wouldn't rule out a finding of not preferably preserved in the future, but she wanted to see more options of what had been considered as an alternative to demolition.

Ms. Lyster moved to find the three existing buildings preferably preserved in the context of the current proposal.

Ms. Harrington seconded the motion made by Ms. Lyster. Mr. Irving designated Ms. Paris to vote. The motion passed 7-0 in a roll call vote. (Shannon, Lyster, Tobin, Paris, Solet, Harrington, Irving)

Director's Report

Mr. Sullivan reported on the withdrawal of the demolition application for 49 Bay State Road and indicated that the Lexington Avenue application would likely come back in December for reconsideration following a withdrawal of that demolition application. He discussed the status of projects in Harvard Square.

Ms. Shannon moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Harrington seconded the motion, which passed unanimously in a roll call vote. (Harrington, Lyster, Shannon, Solet, Sheffield, Tobin, Irving)

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks
Preservation Planner

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**Members of the Public
Present on the Zoom Webinar online, November 10, 2021**

Nerijus Bubnelis	Khalsa Design
James Rafferty	Adams & Rafferty, 907 Mass Ave
Sarah Rhatigan	Trilogy Law
Nelson Oliveira	2161 Mass. Ave.
Jean Carroon	Goody Clancy
Cynthia Westerman	BB&N
Jan Devereux	Lesley University
Dr. Tara Gohlmann	BB&N
Dr. Jen Price	BB&N
Derek Bross	BB&N
Babette Meyer	8 Newport Rd., Apt. 7
Veronique and Alain Curaudeau	7 Buckingham Pl.
Joanna Chin	492 Massachusetts Ave, 61
Gerburg Wulf	4 Buckingham St
Birol	2146 Mass. Ave.
Evan Stellman	63 Melcher St, Apt 203
Lucy Patton	333 Walden St.
Fred Horton	25 Craigie St
Phyllis Stein	59 Parker St
Suzanne Blier	5 Fuller Pl.
Marc Levy	3 Potter Park #1
James Williamson	1000 Jackson Pl.
Marilee Meyer	10 Dana St, 404
Marie Elena Saccoccio	55 Otis St.
Ayal Naor	38 Parker St
Douglas	35 Standish St
Mark Grubbs	47 Parker St
Miho	2157 Massachusetts Ave
Maria Christopher	38 Parker St, Apt 12
Steven Sands	4 Buckingham St
Anne Randolph	10 Milton St
Michael Brandon	27 Seven Pines Ave.
John Hawkinson	Cambridgeday.com
Rob Ehlert	67 Bay State Rd
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Note: Town is Cambridge, unless otherwise indicated.