

Crosbie, Allison

From: Speight, C Allen <casp8@bu.edu>
Sent: Monday, May 24, 2021 4:55 PM
To: HistComm
Subject: Appeal to Historical Commission of MCNDC Order Regarding 12 Fayette Street
Attachments: historical commission appeal letter. 05 23 21.docx

Dear Historical Commission Members:

Attached is a letter from the undersigned appealing the May 3 decision of the Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission regarding application MC 6112 (12 Fayette Street).

Allen Speight 33 Antrim Street
Hallie Speight 33 Antrim Street
Tony Hung 43 Antrim Street
Soojin Hung 43 Antrim Street
Amy Meltzer 45 Antrim Street
Philip McArthur 45 Antrim Street
Larry Rosenberg 48 Antrim Street
Regina Barzilay 39 Antrim Street
Karla Paschkis 35 Antrim Street
Nate Phinisee 43 Antrim Street
Robert Stickgold 46 Antrim Street
Deborah Korn 46 Antrim Street
John Pitkin 18 Fayette Street

May 23, 2021

Cambridge Historical Commission
831 Massachusetts Ave., 2nd Floor
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Dear Commission Members:

Pursuant to the appeals procedure outlined in section 2.78.240 of Article III of the City Code, we the undersigned registered voters of the City of Cambridge write to formally appeal the recent (May 3) decision of the Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission regarding application MC 6112 (12 Fayette Street).

This applicant has proposed changes to the existing house at 12 Fayette Street and a new single family house in the backyard of 12 Fayette. Our concern is primarily with the proposed new structure, which in its size, scope and design is utterly inconsistent with the character of this mid-Cambridge neighborhood. The MCNDC issued an order relative to this application following its May 3 meeting, but made its approval of the project contingent on follow-up architects' committee meetings. To date there have been two of these committee meetings and another is to be scheduled in June. We await the outcome of this next meeting but are concerned as neighbors to preserve our right of appeal concerning this project under section 2.78.240, which stipulates that an appeal must be filed within twenty (20) days of the order.

The Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission has met five times (in three regular meetings and two architects' committee meetings) on this proposal. More than five dozen neighborhood residents, including both direct abutters and other concerned citizens of mid-Cambridge, have expressed significant concerns about the size and scope of this project over the course of these meetings. The proposal is for a large, three-story structure to be built as infill in a neighborhood which has typically only approved two-story carriage house style buildings.

At each of the previous meetings, the MCNDC has requested that the applicant reduce the size, bulk and massing, particularly of the third floor. At the April meeting, the Commission specifically requested a "substantial" reduction. But at each subsequent meeting, the applicant has presented minimal reductions, if any. In fact, at the most recent Architects' Committee meeting, the applicant presented a third floor plan that *increased* the area by ten per cent.

Each request for reduction has been met by a warning from the applicant that making the building smaller will compromise its "passive house" status. We share the applicant's concern for the environment, but it appears that they believe the only environmentally responsible step is to build a large box that is out of character with the neighborhood in all respects. In our view, the Commission has not sufficiently challenged the applicant on this question—and our understanding is that the MCNDC could in fact request reductions of up to 30% of zoning-allowable structure for this lot. Surely an environmentally responsible house that is harmonious

with the neighborhood is possible; we ask that the Historical Commission review the decision of the MCNDC to ask the applicant to propose one or to abandon the project for out-of-scale infill in this mid-Cambridge backyard. (As neighbors we do not oppose infill as such. In mid-Cambridge, a number of projects have involved infill but consistent with neighborhood character: 378 Broadway is an excellent example of appropriately sited/scaled infill, but very much different from the sort of building the applicants have proposed for 12 Fayette.)

We thank you for reviewing our appeal. Based on the discussions with the applicant at the next architects' committee meeting, we intend to file an amended appeal with further documentation.

Sincerely,

Allen Speight 33 Antrim Street
Hallie Speight 33 Antrim Street
Tony Hung 43 Antrim Street
Soojin Hung 43 Antrim Street
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CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

831 Massachusetts Avenue, 2nd Fl., Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139
Telephone: 617 349 4683 TTY: 617 349 6112 Fax: 617-349-6165
E-mail: histcomm@cambridgema.gov URL: <http://www.cambridgema.gov/Historic>



Bruce A. Irving, *Chair*, Susannah Barton Tobin, *Vice Chair*; Charles M. Sullivan, *Executive Director*
Joseph V. Ferrara, Chandra Harrington, Elizabeth Lyster, Caroline Shannon Jo M. Solet, *Members*
Gavin W. Kleespies, Paula A. Paris, Kyle Sheffield, *Alternate Members*

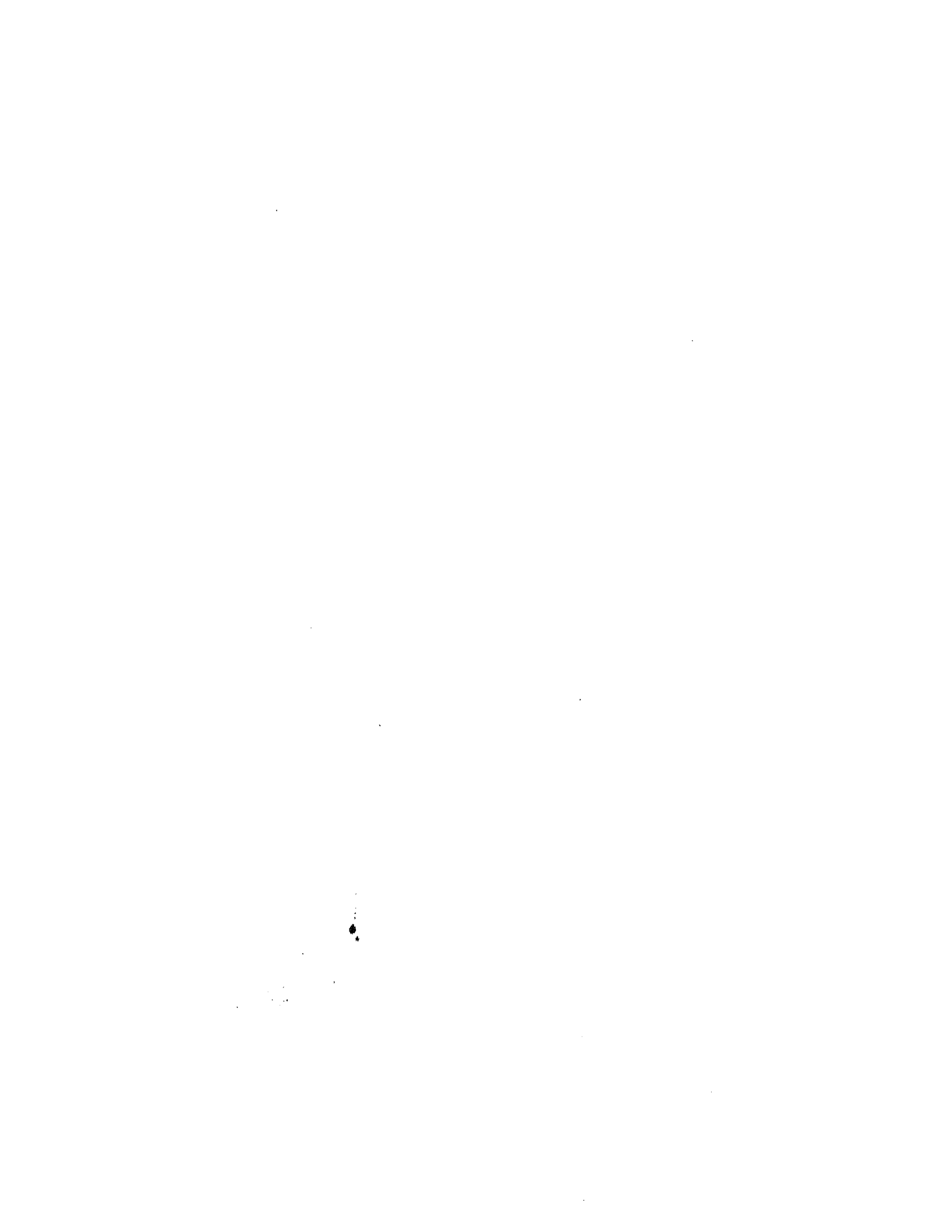
Date: 6/16/21
To: Tanya L. Ford-Crump, Executive Director
Election Commission
From: Charles M. Sullivan, Executive Director
Cambridge Historical Commission
Re: Request for Verification of Registered Voters

As required by Chapter 2.78.180 of the Code of the City of Cambridge, the Historical Commission requests that the names on the attached petition be verified as being registered voters of the City of Cambridge. ONLY TEN NAMES NEED TO BE VERIFIED TO VALIDATE THE PETITION.

Please sign and return to the Historical Commission via interoffice mail.

Signatures checked by Michaela [Signature] Date 6-21-21

RECEIVED
JUN 23 2021
CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL
COMMISSION



June 2, 2021

Cambridge Historical Commission
831 Massachusetts Ave., 2nd Floor
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Dear Commission Members:

Pursuant to the appeals procedure outlined in section 2.78.240 of Article III of the City Code, we the undersigned registered voters of the City of Cambridge write to formally appeal the recent (May 3) decision of the Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission regarding application MC 6112 (12 Fayette Street).

This applicant has proposed changes to the existing house at 12 Fayette Street and a new single family house in the backyard of 12 Fayette. Our concern is primarily with the proposed new structure, which in its size, scope and design is utterly inconsistent with the character of this mid-Cambridge neighborhood. The proposal is for a large, three-story single family house to be built as infill in a neighborhood which has typically only approved two-story carriage house style buildings in the past.

The MCNCDC issued an order relative to this application following its May 3 meeting, but made its approval of the project contingent on follow-up architects' committee meetings. The (apparently) last of these meetings has now taken place (June 2). We believe that the Commission has failed to exercise true oversight over the development process in this case. We understand that the Historical Commission's review is not *de novo*, but we are concerned that, while the MCNCDC has solicited input from the neighborhood, it has not sufficiently followed up on its own recommendations requiring the applicant to make changes that would truly address the neighbors' concerns about the appropriateness of this project.

More than five dozen neighborhood residents, including both direct abutters and other concerned citizens of mid-Cambridge, have expressed significant concerns about the size and scope of this project over the course of the commission's meetings. There have been *no* public expressions of support for this project by neighbors during any of the meetings. At both its March and April meetings, the MCNCDC expressly requested that the applicant reduce the size, bulk and massing, particularly of the third floor.¹ But at the subsequent architects' committee meetings, the applicant has presented only minimal reductions to the overall scope and size of the project.


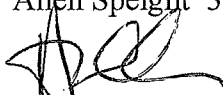
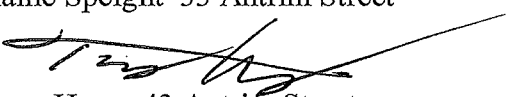
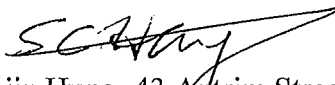


¹ According to the Minutes of the April 5, 2021 meeting of the MCNCDC, all four commissioners present for this part of the meeting explicitly noted the incompatibly large size of the proposed structure and its poor fit given the character of this mid-Cambridge neighborhood. Commission Member Margaret McMahon remarked that it appeared to be "excessive infill"—"too much project for the location." Commission Member Lestra Litchfield noted that the proposal was for "a 3,000-square foot, five bedrooms house behind a house... a suburban house in an urban neighborhood." Commission Member Charles Redmon noted that the proposed structure was "larger than a carriage house"—"it should be 2 stories, not 3." Commission Member Monika Pauli stated that "she would rather see a gable roof, a carriage house, so the massing would be less monumental" (MCNCDC Minutes, 4/5/21, p. 4).

The proposal as reviewed by the Commission members at the April meeting was for a structure totaling 3,879 sf (2,939 sf plus 940 sf in the basement), but the most recent design shown to the Commission, according to the architect, is still 3,550 sf. (2,680 sf plus 870 sf in the basement)—a reduction of only 8.4%, with a third-floor roof that is still 33 feet 6 inches above grade. Yet the Commission has enthusiastically accepted this minimal reduction and is now allowing the project to proceed. In doing so it is ignoring not only the concerns of the neighbors but its own requests to the applicant to achieve a significant reduction in the size and scale of the project.

Each request for reduction has been met by a warning from the applicant that making the building smaller will compromise its "passive house" status. We share the applicant's concern for the environment, but it appears that they believe the only environmentally responsible step is to build a large box that is out of character with the neighborhood in all respects. In our view, the Commission appears to have been swayed by the applicant's environmental claims, at the expense of all other concerns (both the neighbors' and the Commission's own)—and our understanding is that the MCNCDC could in fact request reductions of up to 30% of zoning-allowable structure for this lot. Surely an environmentally responsible house that is harmonious with the neighborhood is possible; we ask that the Historical Commission review the decision of the MCNCDC to ask the applicant to propose one or to abandon the project for out-of-scale infill in this mid-Cambridge backyard. (As neighbors we do not oppose infill as such. In mid-Cambridge, a number of projects have involved infill but consistent with neighborhood character: 378 Broadway is an excellent example of appropriately sited/scaled infill, but very much different from the sort of building the applicants have proposed for 12 Fayette.)

We thank you for reviewing our appeal (amended from our original electronic filing of May 23, with original signatures below).

Sincerely,

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Y Allen Speight 33 Antrim Street
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Y Halle Speight 33 Antrim Street
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Y Tony Hung 43 Antrim Street
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N Soojin Hung 43 Antrim Street
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Y Amy Meltzer 45 Antrim Street
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Y Philip McArthur 45 Antrim Street

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Y Karla Paschkis 35 Antrim Street

Karla Paschkis

Y Nate Phinisee 43 Antrim Street

Nate Phinisee

Y Robert Stickgold 46 Antrim Street

Robert Stickgold

John Pitkin

Y John Pitkin 18 Fayette Street

Y Helen Snively
HELEN SNIVELY
1 Fayette Park

Judith E. Somberg
Y 48 Antrim St
Judith E. Somberg

Y MARY JANE RUPERT
36 ANTRIM ST.
Mary Jane Rupert

16

June 2, 2021

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Philip McArthur 45 Antrim Street

Regina Barzilay 39 Antrim Street

Karla Paschkis 35 Antrim Street

Y Mary S. Kennedy
16 Fayette St

Y Annan Kennedy
16 Fayette St

Speight, Hallie (NOR)

From: Amy Meltzer <ameltzerma@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, June 4, 2021 8:38 AM
To: Speight, Hallie (NOR); Allen Speight
Subject: Fwd: signatures needed by mid day Friday for an appeal to the Historical Commission

CAUTION: This email originated from a sender outside of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts mail system. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dont know if you can do anything with this!
Amy

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Phyllis Bretholtz <pbretholtz@gmail.com>
Date: June 4, 2021 at 8:16:16 AM EDT
To: Amy Meltzer <ameltzerma@comcast.net>
Subject: **Re: signatures needed by mid day Friday for an appeal to the Historical Commission**

Amy, I am in Wellfleet so sadly cannot sign in person. I wish I could. But if it helps, print out my message to you and attach it.

✓ Phyllis Bretholtz
65 Antrim Street
pbretholtz@gmail.com
617-967-5027

On Thu, Jun 3, 2021 at 10:46 AM Amy Meltzer <ameltzerma@comcast.net> wrote:
Hi neighbors!

I hope everyone is well.

The Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission has approved the infill house at 12 Fayette St, and it is still much larger than abutting neighbors would like. The Commission did not exercise the authority they have to diminish the size of the house.

Attached is a letter we sending to the Historical Commission to appeal the decision. If you can give us your support, we need actual real life signatures on paper by noon tomorrow - Friday, June 4. I am sorry that I have too much scheduled today to bring the letter around to your doors. If you are willing to sign, could you please ring the bell at 33 Antrim St, and Hallie or Allen will bring you the letter. If you would like to sign, but it's difficult for you to go over there, please let me know and we will arrange for someone to bring it to you.

Thanks for all your support!

Amy Meltzer
45 Antrim St