

## Minutes of the Cambridge Historical Commission

June 1, 2023 – Meeting conducted online via Zoom Webinar (846 1231 7497) - 6:00 P.M.

Members present (online): Bruce Irving, *Chair*, Susannah Tobin, *Vice Chair*, Chandra Harrington, *Members*;  
Gavin Kleespies, Paula Paris, Kyle Sheffield, *Alternate Members*

Members absent: Joseph Ferrara, Liz Lyster, Jo Solet, Yuting Zhang, *Members*

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

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.

With a quorum present, Chair Irving called the meeting to order at 6:04 P.M. He explained the online meeting instructions and public hearing procedures, then introduced commissioners and staff and designated all alternate members to vote on all matters. He explained the Consent Agenda procedure and asked if there were any objections to considering cases 4972 and 4854 as Consent Agenda items. There were no objections raised from the commission, staff or public.

**Case 4972: 15 JFK St., by Harvard Collection LLC o/b/o Union Square Donuts, tenant.** Install an internally-illuminated blade sign.

**Case 4854 (amendment): 170/172 Brattle St., by Brattle Street LLC c/o Otto Magdanz.** Remove and reconstruct one chimney from the roof up.

Ms. Paris moved to approve certificates of appropriateness for cases 4972 and 4854, subject to staff review of construction details. Mr. Sheffield seconded the motion, which passed 4-0 in a roll call vote. (Harrington, Kleespies, Paris, Irving)

[Mr. Kleespies arrived.]

### Public Hearing: Alterations to Designated Properties

**Case 4954 (continued): 2 Garden St., by Garden Lodge LLC.** Renovate house, demolish carport and rear addition, and construct new 3-story rear addition.

Mr. Sullivan shared his screen and shared slides of the Greek Revival house, built in 1835 by William Saunders for Sarah Howe. He explained that the hearing had been continued on May 4.

Ryan Wittig, an owner, described the intent to restore and renovate the existing structure. They planned to keep the chimneys and interior period details and to add a 1200 square foot addition to the existing 6500 square foot building. The proposed use was a lodging house that would be professionally operated by Lark Hospitality.

Peter Quinn, the architect, shared his screen and shared the revised drawings of the proposal. He said the addition would be clad in similar materials to that of the main building. He explained that the project would require a special permit from the Board of Zoning Appeal because it was an addition of more than ten percent on an existing non-conforming building. A variance would not be required. He continued to describe the addition, with dormers and two small balconies and below-grade patios. He showed a rendering from Appian Way and noted that the addition had been pulled away from the abutting building at 1 Garden Street.

Mr. Sheffield asked the purpose of the balconies. Why not just incorporate that area into the room. He also asked about the 2<sup>nd</sup>-floor bathroom on the northwest corner. Mr. Quinn said the balconies took advantage of space that would otherwise be under the eaves and not very useful inside space. He said the ceiling height in that bathroom would be slightly lower than in the bedroom. Mr. Sheffield asked about the windows on the 2<sup>nd</sup>-floor facing 1 Garden Street. Mr. Quinn said they were located high on the wall and would be above eye level to provide privacy.

Mr. Irving asked if there were any questions of fact from the public.

Suzanne Blier of 5 Fuller Place asked if any trees would be added. Mr. Wittig answered that there was a large tree on the abutting property that provided plenty of shade in the rear yard. They did not plan to add new trees. Ms. Blier asked how snow would be removed from the balconies and patios. Mr. Wittig answered that it would be hand shoveled and proper drainage would be provided.

Mr. Irving opened the public comment period.

Craig Kelley, a lawyer and member of Christ Church Cambridge, indicated that the church does not oppose the issuance of a certificate of appropriateness but also did not support it. He said the church did not agree that the lodging house use was as-of-right by zoning but would address that issue with the Board of Zoning Appeal.

Ms. Blier remarked that there was a need for short term housing near Harvard for visiting speakers, students, and faculty. She said the design of the proposal looked good.

Marie Saccoccio of 55 Otis Street said the use question should be answered first since it was driving the design of the addition.

Mr. Sullivan noted that the question of use was outside the purview of the Historical Commission and could not be a factor in a decision on the application for a certificate of appropriateness. He said the revised design for the addition was more subsidiary to the main house and therefore more successful.

Mr. Sheffield stated that the exterior 3<sup>rd</sup>-floor decks were incongruous to the historic building. He recommended removing the one that would be visible from a public way. He also recommended pitching the roof over the 2<sup>nd</sup>-floor bathroom and pulling that mass away from the back corner of the addition so that it would read as a bay. He said he really appreciated the work that had gone into the revisions of the addition since the previous hearing.

Mr. Kleespies moved to approve the certificate of appropriateness and to recommend the design changes proposed by Mr. Sheffield. Ms. Paris seconded the motion. The motion failed 2-3 in a roll call vote. (Irving and Kleespies in favor and Harrington, Paris and Sheffield opposed)

Mr. Sheffield moved to approve a certificate of appropriateness with the following conditions: remove the 3<sup>rd</sup>-floor balconies, make the roof over the 2<sup>nd</sup>-floor bathroom a shed roof, pull its mass away from the corner of the rear façade, and pull the mass of the one-story bay on the other side away from the corner. Ms. Harrington seconded the motion, which passed 5-0 in a roll call vote. (Harrington, Kleespies, Paris, Sheffield, Irving)

[Susannah Tobin, Vice Chair, arrived].

**Case 4973: 202 Brattle St., by Caroline Mortimer.** Replace fences.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and described the 1903 house, designed by architect Allen W. Jackson for his own home. He designed double-sided shingled fences along the side property lines. He showed a photograph of the original fence taken before 1912 and views of the existing fences.

Ruth Webb, landscape architect, described the proposal and noted that the shingled fence has been difficult to maintain. She noted that the fence on the Lowell Park side would match the design and materials of the existing fence at 200 Brattle Street for a consistent look along the park. The fences near the driveway and front of the house would be similar but with a lattice topper. Both sides would step down where the grade sloped at the front of the lot. The cedar would be untreated and would weather naturally to gray.

Ms. Harrington asked if any portion of the shingled fences were to remain. Caroline Mortimer, the applicant, said no portion of the shingled fence would remain. She noted that when she purchased the property twenty years ago, there was a stockade fence and no shingled fences. She had installed the existing shingled fences at that time.

Ms. Paris asked about the proposed lighting fixtures. Ms. Mortimer said they would be very small down lights affixed to the fence along the driveway. Their purpose was path lighting so she could walk her dog at night.

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

Ms. Blier asked if a more open style of fence had been considered on the park side. Ms. Webb answered that they did consider it, but she had advised that a closed fence style would help with the noise from the very busy Fresh Pond Parkway. The height of the fences would match the existing.

Mr. Sullivan recommended that the fence slope down following the grade, rather than stepping down in sections.

Mr. Irving asked for public comment.

Ms. Blier said a board fence might be more likely to receive graffiti than a shingled fence. She suggested that the fence be stained gray. She liked the idea of sloping the fence with grade.

Ms. Webb noted that the price of a new shingled fence came in at three or four times the price of a board fence.

Ms. Mortimer said she would agree to angle the fence with the slope of the grade.

Ms. Harrington wondered if the price differential warranted a certificate of hardship.

Mr. Kleespies objected to the change in fence style. It would result in a change in the character of the property and the park, due to its high visibility.

Ms. Mortimer noted that 200 Brattle Street already had a board fence along the park and Elmwood had chain link fences along the park.

Mr. Sheffield moved to approve a certificate of appropriateness for the application, on the condi-

tion that the top of the fence slope down with grade rather than stepping down. Ms. Harrington seconded the motion, which passed 5-1 in a roll call vote. (Harrington, Tobin, Paris, Sheffield, Irving in favor, Kleespies, opposed)

**Case 4974: 44 JFK St., The Fox Club, by Fox Club Holdings LLC c/o Matt Pierce.** Construct addition for accessible entrance and elevator; modify wall.

Mr. Sullivan shared his screen and displayed slides of the Fox Club building, constructed in 1906. It was designed by architect Guy Lowell.

Don Mills, of Mills Whitaker Architects, explained that the private club wants to host occasional public events but is not currently accessible. He described the scope of the project, which would include modifications to the garden wall, accessible path to a new entrance on a side addition. This new entrance would allow for an elevator to reach the basement, first and second floors. A new safe egress stair and mechanical equipment would also be located in this addition. Minor changes would occur on the Mt. Auburn Street and rear elevations of the building. Interior assembly spaces and bathrooms would be made accessible without requiring inappropriate alterations to the architectural design details of the building's interior. He described the shifting of the doorway in the brick wall facing JFK Street and moving the brick wall back on the Mt. Auburn Street side.

Ms. Paris asked if the HVAC deck in the back of the addition would have a railing or sound buffering fence. Mr. Mills said they would get an acoustical report to determine if sound mitigation would be needed.

Mr. Kleespies asked if the events would require access to the second floor and if not, could the addition be made smaller? Mr. Mills said the largest assembly space, the Great Hall, is on the second floor.

Mr. Irving asked for public questions of fact.

Ms. Blier asked about the oculus window. Was it the right size and shape. Did they consider using a fox on the window? Mr. Mills said the window lights a stair, but a narrower rectangular window didn't seem right. The club already had fox figures on the doors. He said he did not intend the oculus window to be a prominent feature on the façade.

Mr. Irving asked for public comment.

Ms. Blier commended the applicants on the proposed accessibility improvements.

There being no other public wanting to speak, Mr. Irving closed the public comment period.

Mr. Kleespies expressed concern that the club would follow through on the public access to events. Matthew Pierce, the club treasurer and chair of the building committee, said the preservation restriction of the exterior facades had allowed for charitable fundraising to help with costs of the exterior repair and maintenance. That wasn't possible for the interior because it is not currently accessible. By making it available to the public periodically, then they can meet IRS requirements for accepting donations for interior preservation.

Mr. Sullivan asked about the material of the gable end of the addition. Mr. Mills indicated it would be stucco. Mr. Sullivan complimented the color renderings. Mr. Sullivan recommended approval with a certificate of appropriateness. He said he had been invited into the building a few times and there were very remarkable architectural elements inside that would be nice for other people to get to see.

Mr. Sheffield moved to approve the application, as presented. Ms. Paris seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0 in a roll call vote. (Harrington, Tobin, Kleespies, Paris, Sheffield and Irving)

Mr. Irving recused himself from the next cases because he sold one of the buildings for a client who is involved in the project. Ms. Tobin had agreed to chair those cases. He would return to the meeting after that. He called for a 10-minute recess at 8:00 P.M. [Mr. Irving left the meeting].

Public Hearings: Demolition Review

**Case D-1642 (continued): 231 Third St., by 231 Third Street LLC c/o DND-Homes LLC.** Demolish 2-story dwelling (1903).

**Case D-1643 (continued): 235 Third St., by 235 Third Street LLC c/o DND-Homes LLC.** Demolish 1½-story house (1872).

Vice Chair Tobin reconvened the meeting at 8:10 P.M.

Mr. Sullivan introduced the case, which had been continued from May 4. The Commission had found the two houses to be significant but had not yet voted as to whether they are preferably preserved.

Dan Anderson, of Anderson Porter Design, said they had received the comments at the last meeting, revised the design proposal, and re-presented to the East Cambridge Planning Team (ECPT) for comments. He shared his screen and described the changes to the proposed design of the new residential building. The front wall would be parallel to the street and sidewalk on floors one, two and three. Then the upper floors would be set back and squared off. A commercial use was not found, but the front rooms on the lower floors would not be bedrooms. The wall cladding of the front three-story section would be U-Tech wood-look cladding. The third-floor roof might be a planted, but it was not intended to be an active deck for either public or private use. Mini split HVAC units would be located on the roof of the taller portion of the building. More south facing windows had been added. The parapet was lowered. He showed renderings from different viewpoint. He said the ECPT would prefer to see the existing two buildings remain.

Ms. Paris asked if the lower portion of the building was a rehab or new construction. Mr. Anderson said it would all be new construction.

Mr. Irving asked for public questions of fact.

Ms. Blier asked if there were renderings of an option that would keep the older buildings. Mr. Anderson said there had been consideration of partial preservation of 231 Third Street. It was presented at an earlier meeting.

Marie Saccoccio said the rear building would look out at industrial steel rooftops.

Heather Hoffman of 213 Hurley Street questioned if the proponents had understood what people

did not like about the proposal.

Mr. Irving opened the public comment period.

Ms. Blier spoke in favor of preserving the existing buildings. The new building was generic.

Marie Saccoccio described the history of the East Cambridge Land Company's original development of the Kendall Square area. The corner lot was the last example of that plan. The rear units would have terrible views. The design needed more thought.

Ms. Hoffman said the design was soulless and not worth demolishing the existing buildings.

Joe Rose of 72 Spring Street said the site is a gateway to E.C. and deserves a better design.

Ms. Meyer said she did not have a problem with the design of the new building except for the demolition of 235 Third Street. She said 235 Third is a visual landmark as one enters East Cambridge and makes her smile. The design did not have to be as tall as the building across the street.

Betty Saccoccio of 55 Otis Street agreed with the other speakers. There were six big trees that would be cut down. She objected to the proposal. The site was East Cambridge, not Kendall Square.

Mr. Sullivan summarized an email received from Cindy Mathers of Third Street, who is opposed to the proposed project.

Mr. Kleespies said he thought the design wasn't quite ready, but he was not opposed to seeing the existing buildings replaced for additional housing density.

Mr. Sheffield said he could tell that the proponents had listened at the last meeting, and he thanked them for the responsive revised proposal. He said it was a difficult transitional area between Kendall and East Cambridge. He said he considered the gateway moment to be at the row houses at the corner of Third and Charles streets. He advised against the suggestions to keep part of the existing buildings. It would likely not be successful. Change was already happening in this area. This building could help make the transition for the large buildings of Kendall Square and the smaller neighborhood buildings of East Cambridge. The new building going up on an empty lot at 213 Third Street would be three stories. The volume and massing of the current proposal was working. Brick did not have to be employed for context.

Mr. Sullivan said it was a tough case. He appreciated the character and scale of the existing buildings but his background as a planner made it clear to see that the site lends itself to higher density.

Mr. Anderson said they would be happy to continue to refine the design. He asked for some specific design feedback or suggestions.

Ms. Harrington moved to continue the hearing, with the consent of the applicants. She said she liked the changes that had been made so far and encouraged the staff to consult with the team.

Trina Murphy of DND Homes agreed to a further continuance.

Ms. Paris encouraged further conversation with the neighbors. Ms. Murphy agreed.

Ms. Tobin concurred that the design was moving in the right direction.

Ms. Paris seconded the motion, which passed 5-0 in a roll call vote. (Harrington, Kleespies, Paris,

Sheffield, Tobin)

**Case D-1657: 88 Holworthy St., by Stephen Sillari.** Demolish house (1874).

Mr. Irving thanked Ms. Tobin and then resumed the chair.

Mr. Sullivan shared his screen and showed slides and explained that the applicant had been before the Commission in 2021 with a request to relocate the building on the lot. He summarized the demolition memo and described the architecture and history of the house. The Commission had found the existing building on its current site to be significant but not preferably preserved in the context of the proposal to move it to a new foundation and to make additions and a new detached dwelling at the rear of the lot. The project had not moved forward but the applicant had been seeking other approvals for the proposed design and had been proceeding through the land courts regarding ownership and eviction issues. The applicant was back before the Commission with an application for full demolition and new construction but the same overall design of the project but in new construction.

Dan Anderson of Anderson Porter Design reported that they had recently received approval from the Board of Zoning Appeal and the Planning Board for special permits and were consulting with builders. Duncan MacArthur, who had moved and renovated a similar house on the street, had been consulted about the project. His advice was to build all new due to the changes to the economy since 2021. The reasons were the extent of alterations needed to re-organize the layout of the two units, the desire for high-efficiency construction and current building and financing costs. He noted the addition of a side porch and appropriately sized dormers to the design.

Ms. Paris asked for clarification about the project. Was it a new application or an amendment to the previous. Mr. Sullivan said it was a new application. The replacement project included the proposed new detached residence at the back of the lot.

Mr. Irving asked if there were questions of fact from the public regarding significance.

Dr. Ferahnaz Kahyaoglu, a former resident of the house, objected to the demolition proposal. It would serve no benefit. Other buildings had been successfully lifted and rehabbed. She questioned if there were commission members with a conflict of interest due to friendship with the applicant.

Mr. Irving said he did not know the applicant. He asked if Dr. Kahyaoglu had any questions of fact about the significance of the building.

Ms. Blier asked if there were similarities of the house to others on the street. Mr. Sullivan answered affirmatively. This is a standard side hall plan with Italianate style details.

Mr. Irving asked for public comment on the significance of the existing building.

Dr. Kahyaoglu spoke in favor of preservation of the house and objected to using all new materials for new construction because the existing materials were all natural. She said she was still pursuing her interests in court.

Ms. Blier said she considered the building to be significant and hoped it would be preserved.

Mr. Kleespies moved to find the existing building significant for the reasons in the staff report

and consistent with the Commission's earlier finding of significance. Ms. Tobin seconded the motion, which passed 6-0 in a roll call vote. (Harrington, Tobin, Kleespies, Paris, Sheffield, Irving)

Mr. Irving asked if there were questions of fact about the proposed replacement project.

Ms. Blier asked if the owners had obtained funding for the rehabilitation of the house. Mr. Anderson said he was not aware of available funding sources.

Marie Saccoccio asked why the proposal was no longer to move and renovate the building but to demolish it and replicated its exterior. Mr. Anderson explained that costs for construction had escalated in the last two years, and they believed they could achieve a better-performing building.

Mr. Sillari said he had purchased the property in 2019 from his former neighbor. He had spent a lot of money for the lawyers and court delays. He was considering Duncan MacArthur as his builder and agreed with him that there would be so many changes needed to the building that there would be very little left and it wouldn't make sense.

Mr. Irving opened the public comment period.

Ms. Blier encouraged the Commission to find the existing house preferably preserved. The amount of destruction of the environment was not a public benefit.

Marie Saccoccio said the same arguments made by the applicant in favor of demolition could be applied to any old house. Yes, the building techniques were different in the nineteenth century but there was embedded carbon in both the old construction and the materials needed for new construction so environmental arguments did not add up.

Don Dennis of 4 and 6 Holworthy Terrace was not able to unmute his audio. Mr. Sullivan read his letter in support of the application.

Dr. Kahyaoglu said the existing house's walls were not thin. It was very solidly built. She spoke in favor of saving the house. The foundation could be made stronger. There were other successful projects completed on the street. She opposed the application. Keep it. Save it. Restore it. She spoke in favor of saving the trees and animal habitat.

Mr. Irving closed the public comment period.

Mr. Sheffield asked if the floor heights would remain the same. Mr. Anderson answered in the affirmative. The foundation might be a little taller, but the floor to ceiling heights would be the same.

Mr. Sullivan said it was an average house of the 1870s. It was well built and capable of being rehabilitated. He acknowledged that in the last several years the clear preference of builders was to build all new, even if it meant replacing old framing and sheathing stick by stick and piece by piece. Houses like this were considered throw-aways in the current market which was a real shift in thinking from development trends in previous decades.

~~Kyle~~ Mr. Sheffield said his street had nine Italianate side halls. Three had been lifted onto new foundations and renovated. Preservation isn't meant to be easy, but it could be very satisfying. A very good HERS rating could be achieved with a historic building.



Mr. Kleespies said moving a building wasn't really very complicated or expensive. It is environmentally wasteful to demolish or do a gut rehab down to the studs.

Mr. Irving said he had watched the building renovation down the street. The options were to either stiffen and rebuild with lots of new material or to construct all new. Either option would result in all new roofing, windows, and lots of new sheathing and framing.

Mr. Sillari said it wasn't just about the economics, but it just made better sense.

Mr. Irving looked for a motion, but hearing none, he moved to find the existing house not preferably preserved in the context of a replica replacement and new detached building. Mr. Kleespies seconded the motion. The motion failed 1-3-2 in a roll call vote. (Irving in favor; Harrington, Tobin and Paris opposed; Kleespies and Sheffield abstaining)

Ms. Paris moved to find the existing house significant in the context of the proposed demolition and new construction. Ms. Harrington seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-1 in a roll call vote. (Harrington, Tobin, Kleespies, Paris in favor; Irving opposed; Sheffield abstaining)

Mr. Sillari asked if he could revert back to his previous proposal to move the house onto a new foundation in a conforming arrangement on the lot. Mr. Sullivan said he would look into the possibility.

Ms. Harrington moved to adjourn. Ms. Paris seconded, and the motion passed 6-0 in a roll call vote. (Harrington, Tobin, Kleespies, Paris, Sheffield, Irving) The meeting adjourned at 10:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

*Sarah L. Burks*

Sarah L. Burks  
Preservation Planner

**Members of the Public  
Present on the Zoom Webinar online, June 1, 2023**

John Hawkinson	CambridgeDay.com
Suzanne Blier	5 Fuller Pl.
Marie Saccoccio	55 Otis St.
Don Mills	Mills Whitaker Architects
Ender Saricay	DND Homes, 1 Garfield Cir. #6, Burlington, MA 01803
Peter Quinn	Peter Quinn Architects
Ryan Wittig	Kinvarra Capital, 667 Somerville Ave. Somerville 02143
John Peterson	Metro Sign & Awning
Caroline Mortimer	200 Brattle St
Otto Magdanz	170 Brattle St
Dan Anderson	Anderson Porter Design, 1972 Mass. Ave.
Trina Murphy	DND Homes, 1 Garfield Cir. #6, Burlington, MA 01803
Stephen Sillari	91 Park Ave
John Goodman	8 Fairmont Ave
Nate Rogers	725 Argyle Rd, Brooklyn, NY 11230
Anne Fernald	642 Huron Ave
Alexandria	125 Dudley St
Ferahnaz Kahyaoglu	PO Box 382463
Don Dennis	4 & 6 Holworthy Ter
Charles Fineman	75 Winter St
Mahir Yuzereroglu	1 Garfield Cir. Burlington, MA 01803
Matthew Pierce	4 Split Rock Ln Mattapoisett MA 02739
Noah Danoff	33 South St Somerville, MA 02143
Marie Saccoccio	55 Otis St
Betty Saccoccio	55 Otis St
Marilee Meyer	10 Dana St, #404
Suzanne Blier	5 Fuller Place
Christopher Rich	11 Poplar Rd., Wellesley, MA
Tabitha Leverone	170 Lorum St, Tewksbury, MA
Craig Kelley	6 St. Gerard Ter.
Heather Hoffman	213 Hurley St.
Joe Rose	72 Spring St

Note: Town is Cambridge, unless otherwise indicated.