

Minutes of the Avon Hill Neighborhood Conservation District

Monday, March 19, 2012 - 5:30 P.M. - 831 Massachusetts Ave., Basement Conference Rm

Commissioners Present: Theresa Hamacher, *Chair*; Art Bardige, *Vice Chair*; Heli Meltsner, and Constantin von Wentzel, *Alternates*

Commissioners Absent: Robert Crocker, Catherine Henn, Maryann Thompson, *Members*; Mark Golberg, *Alternate*

Staff Present: Sarah Burks

Members of the Public: see attached sign-in sheet

With a quorum present, Chair Theresa Hamacher called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M. She made introductions and reviewed the hearing procedures. She designated alternates Constantin von Wentzel and Heli Meltsner to vote on all matters.

Public Hearing: Alterations to Designated Properties

AH-411 (continued): 38-40 Arlington St., by Adrian Catalano. Consider the following items previously reserved for further review of the full Commission: window repair or replacement, fences, and air conditioning equipment.

Sarah Burks, Preservation Planner, showed slides and summarized what had been approved at the last meeting. The Commission had requested that the applicant return with further details about the windows, fences, and air conditioning equipment.

Adrian Catalano, the owner, described the existing L shaped stockade fence and indicated it was to be removed. He said he had moved the location of the air conditioning condensers. The fences along the driveway and rear property line would remain. All six would be located under the rear decks and would not be visible from a public way. He noted that this approach was more expensive and would shorten the life of the equipment by reducing the air circulation. He introduced Chris Ambrosini of Boston Bi-Glass to describe the proposed window alterations.

Mr. Abrosini said that Boston Bi-Glass had been featured on *This Old House* and had experience restoring about 1800 old windows. He said the wood members of the windows would remain intact and be restored. The old glazing compound would be routed out and the old glass removed. The exterior of the window would be modified to accommodate new insulated glass. A warm edge spacer would be located between the two layers of glass. A new muntin grill would be applied to the outside of the glass.

Ms. Meltsner asked if the process would damage the structural integrity of the sash. Mr. Abrosini said the original mortis and tenon joints let water in over time, causing rot. Any rotted corner joints would be repaired with epoxy. The joints would all be filled with epoxy to prevent further water damage in the future. He said he had only received one call back for fogged glass since he started the company.

Ms. Burks asked what species of wood was proposed for the exterior muntin grill. Mr. Abrosini answered that the stops would be Spanish cedar and the grill would be pine. Ms. Burks asked why the window would be routed out on the outside instead of the inside. Mr. Abrosini replied that it was done that way to save the architectural details on the interior of the window. He said Renovo restoration glass could be used, but it would cost more.

Art Bardige asked if the applicant had gotten estimates for restoration of the existing windows in a traditional manner, which would preserve the original single glazing. Mr. Catalano replied that he had investigated that option, but it would be more expensive. Ms. Hamacher suggested that a storm window was advisable, even with double glazed windows. Mr. Catalano said he did not like storm windows because they cover up the beauty of the window.

Seth Friedman, of 36 Arlington Street, asked if there were any existing arched windows. Mr. Abrosini replied in the negative.

Howard Medwed, of 58 Washington Avenue, said he was disappointed that the new glazing would not be constructed with true divided lights. Mr. Abrosini responded that it was a problem of geometry because the narrowest spacers available were 3/8" wide and they would be more visible with small panes of insulated glass next to each other than with a single piece of insulated glass per sash. Mr. Medwed said larger panes were more vulnerable to weather and breakage. He said he considered fake muntins to have a cheap look.

Ms. Hamacher closed the public comment period.

Heli Meltsner asked if the applicant had received more than one quote for restoration of the existing windows. Mr. Catalano replied that he had asked several companies but only one had replied with a quote. He noted that Boston Bi-Glass could also restore single glazed windows. Ms. Meltsner said the space between the muntins on the double glazed sample was visible and did not replicate a single-glazed window. Mr. Catalano said he preferred not to use storms because of their appearance. Ms. Hamacher clarified that preservation of existing materials and the appearance from the public way were considerations of the Commission.

Mr. Bardige suggested a compromise solution, which would require restoration of the single glazed windows on the front of the house and would allow the Boston Bi-glass retro fit with double glazing in the existing wood sashes for the other sides of the house.

Ms. Burks reported that most of the window sashes on the first and second floor were original, but many of the openings on the ell were already modified or were proposed to change in the renovation. New windows would be needed on the ell where the window sizes were changing. The proposed new windows should also be reviewed by the Commission. She said many of the windows on the third floor had already been replaced or were in worse condition than on the lower floors. Mr. Catalano said he proposed new custom replica windows by Boston Bi-glass in the new or changed openings.

Ms. Hamacher moved to approve the Boston Bi-glass retrofit double glazing in the existing sashes on the rear and sides of the house, but to require restored single pane windows on the front elevation and to approve custom replica windows by Boston Bi-glass at the new or changed window openings. Mr. Bardige seconded the motion, which passed 4-0.

AH-417: 37 Lancaster St., by John McQuillan. Expand deck, alter select areas of paving, bring door forward in opening on north elevation, construct elevator addition, install condensers in pit on west side, construct low granite wall on west and south sides of property, construct new wood fence on north side of property.

After a five minute recess, Ms. Hamacher reconvened the meeting. Ms. Burks showed slides and described the Hartwell and Richardson designed Shingle Style Yerxa House and carriage house at 37 Lancaster Street.

Sean Hope, attorney for the applicant, noted that they had been before the Commission previously for the driveway and rear entry ramp. He said that the owners had worked out a resolution with the neighbors which would allow the driveway to go forward.

Bhupesh Patel, an architect and representative for the owner, outlined the changes to the building proposed in the current application, elevator addition, entrance changes, deck expansion, installation of HVAC equipment, and construction of a low wall. He said a sound engineer had studied the best location for the equipment and decided that the west side would have the least impact on the neighbors.

Ariane Rutt, of Myer & Myer Architects, displayed a rendering of the west side of the house and described the sunken mechanical pit covered by a metal grate. The bottom of the pit would contain crushed stone and concrete pads for the units. The pit would fit mostly between the two round bays of the house. Mr. Bardige asked if there would be plantings around the pit. Ms. Rutt said they would work with a landscape architect on that but a landscape plan had not yet been drawn. Mr. Patel noted that it was shady on that side of the house and not much, including grass, would grow there. He proposed vinca vines in that area as a ground cover.

Ms. Rutt continued her presentation by describing the proposed deck extension on the east side of the house. One metal grate would provide access to the crawl space under the deck and would match the existing grate. She described the entrance changes on the north façade; the existing door would be pulled forward to be flush with the north wall. The design would be similar to the side door with a transom and side lights. She described the proposed elevator tower, placed on the north side because it was the least visible location from the public ways. A residential grade elevator would be installed. The existing gable would be extended to accommodate the elevator and a tower would rise past the third floor eave. Several different design alternatives for the placement of the elevator tower had been studied before arriving at this proposal. The tower would sit forward of the existing eyebrow dormer and would be clad with shingles to match the rest of the house. Ms. Burks showed slides from Washington Avenue and Arlington Street indicating the location of the dormer and proposed elevator tower. Mr. Bardige asked about the false window on the north side of the elevator tower. He suggested that the same thing could be done on the west elevation of the tower.

Vincent Panico, attorney for abutter Seth Friedman, asked if zoning relief would be needed. Mr. Hope replied that the proposal would need a variance for the additional gross floor area. Ms. Rutt added that about 80 square feet would be created by the elevator tower above the roofline.

Ms. Rutt displayed the site plan and described the proposed low stone wall at the south and west sides of the property. It would have a limestone cap and would probably be granite below. There would be no gates.

Eileen Rudden, of 32 Arlington Street, asked if the wall was subject to Commission review and whether the proposed wall would be consistent with the architecture of the house. Ms. Hamacher replied that the wall was subject to review because the property was located in the National Register portion of the NCD. The compatibility of the materials and design with the architecture of the house would be considered.

Ms. Meltsner referred to an existing wall on Lancaster Street that used large blocks of granite. Mr. von Wentzel noted that the concrete pier in the construction drawing was a good idea because of the clay soil. Mr. Bardige asked what type of stone was used at the steps to the deck. Ms. Rutt replied that the steps were sandstone. Mr. Bardige asked how the wall would compare to the foundation of the house. Mr. Patel said it would not be pudding stone as in the foundation wall due to lack of availability. Ms. Hamacher said more detail was needed about the design of the wall before it could be approved.

Ms. Rutt described the proposed new wood fence. The Medweds' fence would be preserved and a new 4' solid fence with a lattice top would be installed behind the house and carriage house. She described addition of brick paving at the bottom of the stairs to the deck. Mr. Medwed asked about changes to the circular driveway. She said a section of paving matching the existing driveway would connect the circular driveway to the new ribbon driveway. The circular driveway would be reduced somewhat to protect the tree roots. No additional paving changes were proposed.

Ms. Hamacher closed public comment.

Mr. Bardige recommended adding the false window on the west side of the elevator tower. Mr. Patel said they would do it if it meets code.

Mr. von Wentzel moved to approve the application as presented with the following conditions,

- Construction details including material samples and a landscape screening plan for the condenser pit be reviewed with and approved by the staff.
- That further detail drawings and material samples be reviewed and approved by the Commission at a public hearing, potentially to be held on site.
- That consideration be given to adding a window or false window to the west side of the elevator tower, to match the size and detail of the window on the west side of the gable.

Mr. Bardige seconded the motion, which passed 4-0.

Staff Report

Ms. Burks reported on staff approvals of certificates of non-applicability and non-binding certificates of appropriateness at 23 Bellevue Avenue and 36 Lancaster Street.

Ms. Meltsner moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. von Wentzel seconded the motion, which passed 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:35 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks
Preservation Planner

**Members of the Public
that Signed Attendance Sheet
March 19, 2012**

C. J. Moynihan	58 Washington Ave
Howard Medwed	58 Washington Ave
Seth Friedman	36 Arlington St
Adrian Catalano	267 Grove St
Chris Ambrosini	13 Meadowlark Dr, Middleboro, MA 02346
Vincent Panico	2343 Massachusetts Ave
Eileen Rudden	32 Arlington St
Bhupesh Patel	3 Bowdoin St

Addresses are in Cambridge, unless otherwise specified.