

Approved 3/18/13

Minutes of the Avon Hill Neighborhood Conservation District

Monday, February 25, 2013 - 5:30 PM - 831 Massachusetts Ave., Basement Conference Room

Commissioners Present: Constantin von Wentzel, *Chair*; Mark Golberg, *Vice Chair*; Art Bardige, Robert Crocker, Theresa Hamacher, and Catherine Henn, *Members*; Heli Meltsner, *Alternate*

Commissioners Absent: Maryann Thompson, *Member*

Staff Present: Sarah Burks

Members of the Public: see attached sign-in sheet

With a quorum present, Chair Constantin von Wentzel called the meeting to order at 5:33 P.M. He reviewed the hearing procedures.

Public Hearing: Alterations to Designated Properties

AH-442: 33 Agassiz St., by Michael & Colette Bentley. Change the material of gutters and install a new hand rail at the Lancaster Street side porch.

Mr. von Wentzel indicated he would be the voting alternate member on the case.

Sarah Burks, Preservation Planner for the Historical Commission, showed slides and described the history and architecture of the Queen Anne home. She noted that the rear deck project had been completed in 2012.

Michael Bentley, an owner, noted that many renovations had been undertaken when he first bought the house, but that he and his wife had put things on hold for several years after the birth of their daughter. He said they were now returning to complete some additional projects. He explained that not all the gutters on the house were original or of the original profile. The staff had met with him on site to determine areas of the existing gutters that were of the original profile and that could be matched in replacing gutters. He said he would use a paintable metal material, possibly zinc coated copper, to match those original wood gutter profiles. He indicated on the slides which areas were to be replaced on the south and east sides and above the north side porch. He explained that the masonry walls of the north side porch needed to be rebuilt. A mason would prepare a sample of the mortar and joint for staff review and approval. The temporary wood hand rail at that porch would either be replaced with a simple metal rail or replaced in kind.

He noted a future intent to install a scupper, per Charles Sullivan's suggestion, between the main gable and the tower, where there was intensive water flow during a rainstorm.

Theresa Hamacher asked how the repair or replacement of wood gutters was usually treated in the district. Ms. Burks answered that the staff usually recommends replacement of wood gutters with metal to match the wood gutter profile because a metal gutter would last longer, would carry more water, and could even be painted to match the appearance of a wood gutter.

Heli Meltsner asked about the style of architectural shingle that would replace the three tab shingles on the roof of the north side porch. Mr. Bentley noted that the main roof was all covered in slate, but on this north side, where there was a lot of snow and ice fall in the winter, the slate was too fragile. He said he wanted a shingle that would look about the same as what was

there now. He indicated that he did not want to use a fake slate. He did not want a shingle that would call attention to itself in that location.

There were no questions or comments from members of the public. Mr. von Wentzel closed the public comment period.

Ms. Hamacher said the requested changes were essentially replacements in kind with minimal visual change. She moved to approve the application, subject to staff approval of samples. Mr. Bardige seconded the motion, which passed 5-0 with Mr. von Wentzel voting as alternate.

AH-436: 85 Washington Ave., by Matthew L. Fisher. As condition of certificate, return to Commission with details of the proposed repair or replacement of windows.

Mr. Bardige noted that the Commission had not introduced themselves at the top of the meeting. Mr. von Wentzel apologized and the Commissioners all introduced themselves.

Ms. Burks showed slides and reported on her site visit with Matthew Fisher to observe the type and condition of the existing windows. She said she had been impressed with the quality of the windows, not having been sure what to expect for the period of the house, and with their overall very good condition.

David Hajian, an architect for the project, noted that the original application had shown 2-over-2 sash windows.

Paul Hajian, also architect for the project, noted that the Board of Zoning Appeal had granted a variance for the project, which included changing the height and shape of the roof and changing some window and door openings. He said the configuration and sizes of the existing windows had been inventoried (sheet A 4.1). He said they had studied keeping the 6-over-6 window configuration that is existing. He remarked that at the December hearing, the Commission had also discussed the proposal to raise the sill height of the kitchen windows. He said the revised proposal showed three windows across the first floor front and all would retain the existing sill height and dimensions. He proposed moving the center window on the first floor so that it aligned with the center window on the second floor. He described the proposed new windows by ~~Geldwen~~Jeldwen. They would be simulated divided lights, double glazed for greater efficiency.

Ms. Burks asked if the efficiency of the double glazed windows had been compared to the existing window with a new storm window added. Mr. Hajian replied that a storm window would make the exterior of the windows look different. The ~~Geldwen~~Jeldwen window had a 5/8" putty glazed muntin profile as a custom option. The 5/8" would be very close to the dimension of the muntins on the existing windows. He said that in his experience, windows could fall apart when being repaired. Ms. Burks asked if they had consulted with or gotten estimates from any of the window repair professionals on the list that she had provided. Mr. Hajian replied in the negative. Ms. Burks summarized the staff's advice about windows and storms vs. replacement units.

Ms. Hamacher added that even double glazed windows lose their efficiency after a few years and the owner may want to put storms on even with double glazed windows. She said the Commission had not allowed any other applicants to make complete window replacement, es-

pecially on such visible areas of a house. Unless they were falling apart, she would vote to require to keep them.

Catherine Henn recommended continuing the hearing and requesting the applicant to get more information from a window repair contractor.

Mr. Bardige said he could see a distinction between the windows of this 1940 house and windows of an earlier house. Because the glass was not wavy by the time the 1940 house was constructed, it would not be the same loss of character to replace the windows.

Ms. Meltsner said that although the house was not as old as others in the district, the windows were original to the house and correct to the period. She said she would not vote because she wasn't present at the first hearing.

Mr. von Wentzel noted that three sides of the house were visible from the public way and the house was set very close to the street.

Mark Golberg said he would like to hear a window repair professional's assessment of the windows.

Ms. Henn moved to approve the alignment of the center windows and addition of windows on the left side of the front elevation, as shown in the drawing, but to continue the hearing on whether to replace all the windows, with the owner's consent. Mr. Fisher agreed to continue the hearing to March 18. Mr. Golberg seconded the motion, which passed 5-0 with Mr. Bardige and Ms. Meltsner not voting because they had not been present at the first hearing and with Mr. von Wentzel and Mr. Golberg voting as alternate members.

Staff Report

Mr. Bardige reported that the owners had moved into the house at 79 Raymond Street. Ms. Burks reported on two site visits she had with property owners in the neighborhood.

Minutes

Ms. Hamacher moved to approve the November 2012 minutes, as submitted. Mr. Crocker seconded the motion, which passed 5-0, with Mr. Golberg voting as alternate.

Ms. Henn recommended two corrections to the January 2013 minutes: the first was to clarify that Ms. Meltsner was present at the meeting and the other change was to correct a grammar mistake. Ms. Hamacher moved to accept the January 2013 minutes, as corrected. Mr. Bardige seconded the motion, which passed 5-0 with Ms. Meltsner voting as alternate.

Ms. Henn moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Crocker seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:46 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks
Preservation Planner

**Members of the Public
that Signed Attendance Sheet
February 25, 2013**

Paul Hajian	29 Williams St
Matt Fisher	85 Washington Ave
David Hajian	85 Washington Ave

Addresses are in Cambridge, unless otherwise specified.