

Minutes of the Cambridge Historical Commission

January 8, 2009 - 806 Massachusetts Avenue - 6:00 P.M.

Members present: Chair King, Vice Chair Irving, Mss. Harrington and Berg; Dr. Solet; Messrs. Bibbins, Crocker, and Shirley

Staff present: Mr. Sullivan, Ms. Burks

Public present: See attached list.

Chair King called the meeting to order at 6:03 and recommended that no items be placed on the consent agenda. He designated alternates Berg and Harrington to vote, beginning with Ms. Berg on the first case.

Public Hearings: Landmark Designation Proceeding

Case L-87: 1-12 Shady Hill Sq./34-36 Holden St., Stone House, LLC Holdings, Deborah Valenze, David Goldbaum, John & Monica Hexner, Jerzy Soltan Life Estate, Carol Gold, Dennis & Judy Townley, Dennis & Carol Thompson, Edward & Jane Rabe, John Moore & Barbara Britt, Howard Van Vleck, and Natalie Tabet, owners. To consider extension of the landmark designation study period.

Mr. Sullivan reported that the Commission had voted in October 2008 to extend the landmark designation study, with no objections from the property owners, to January 15, 2009, with further extensions possible. He had spoken to Peter Madsen, an owner of the center lot, who had indicated that a further extension would be useful due to the delay in negotiations over the holidays. Mr. Sullivan recommended extending the study and protections through June 15, 2009, with the hope that negotiations could be completed by that time.

Michael Gilmore, of 1 Shady Hill Square, expressed his support for the extension. Monica Hexner of 12 Shady Hill Square and Jane Thomas of 45 Holden Street concurred.

Mr. King closed public comment and moved to extend the landmark study and protections through June 15, 2009, as recommended by the Executive Director. Ms. Berg seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0, with Ms. Berg voting as alternate.

Public Hearing: Policies

Policy Limiting Validity of Permits. To consider proposed amendment.

Mr. King noted that he did not think it was necessary to have a public hearing on either policies or guidelines, but both had been advertised. He summarized the existing policy regarding the six month life of certificates, which can be extended by the chair for good cause. He said that, as chair, he had been liberal in granting such extensions. He read his proposed amendment to the policy, which would clarify the chair's ability to grant an extension for demolition review decisions. He submitted his written edits for the record. He asked for public questions or comments, but there were none.

Ms. Harrington moved to approve the changes to the policy, as proposed by Mr. King. Mr. Bibbins seconded the motion, which passed 7-0 with Ms. Harrington voting as alternate.

Public Hearing: Guidelines

Window Repair and Replacement Guidelines. To consider confirmation of action to adopt window guidelines.

Mr. King reported that several drafts had been circulated and posted for comment on the web site. The Commission had, at its last meeting, approved the substantive content of the last draft with minor edits submitted in writing. He asked for public questions or comments, but there were none.

Dr. Solet moved to approve the final draft of the window guidelines. Mr. Crocker seconded the motion, which passed 7-0 with Ms. Berg voting as alternate.

Minutes

Mr. King suggested corrections and clarifications on pages 1, 2, 3, and 5 of the December 4 minutes. Dr. Solet moved to approve the minutes, as corrected. Ms. Harrington seconded. Mr. Shirley and Ms. Berg did not vote because they had not been present. The motion passed 6-0 with Ms. Harrington voting.

Public Hearings: Alterations to Designated Properties

Case 2315: 5 Shady Hill Sq., by David Goldbaum. To alter windows at rear and construct second floor addition over existing one-story rear addition.

In the absence of the applicant, Mr. Sullivan shared copies of the application with the public and summarized the proposal. A prospective buyer had asked for some alterations at the rear of #5. He showed photographs of existing conditions and described the proposed second floor addition and changes to rear windows. The changes would only be visible from Beacon Street over the masonry wall. He described the proposed new window details.

Mr. King said the window details followed the new guidelines. He suggested approval of the application, subject to review and approval of details by the Executive Director.

Mr. Shirley asked about the proportions of the windows, door details, and roofing material. Mr. Sullivan replied that there appeared to be a drafting error for the first floor window and that the roof of the addition should be slate to match the rest of the house.

Mr. Van Vleck, of 11 Shady Hill Square, noted for the record that he and other neighbors had appealed to the Board of Zoning Appeal that the building was non-conforming and that the addition would further exceed the FAR non-conformity. He did not oppose the application, but wanted to point out that there was a zoning issue that would be worked out by the Board of Zoning Appeal and Inspectional Services.

Mr. Shirley said the proposed changes would help to clean up a messy rear elevation.

Ms. Berg supported the application, because of the unique circumstances of how the addition was tucked into the back corner of the house.

Bri Grady, the realtor for David Goldbaum, explained that Mr. Goldbaum was on his way.

Mr. King closed the public comment period.

Mr. Shirley moved to approve the application, subject to approval of construction details including stucco, windows, and roofing by the Executive Director. Mr. Irving seconded the motion, which passed 7-0 with Ms. Berg voting.

Director's Report

Mr. Sullivan reported that Harvard and Larry Tribe had signed a Purchase & Sale agreement for sale of the Philip Johnson House. Presumably, the Graduate School of Design would use the house as a study center for visiting scholars.

Mr. King inquired if the Commission could get a tour.

Mr. Shirley asked if many changes would be necessary for accessibility. Mr. Sullivan said they would be minimal because the house was mostly at grade to begin with.

Mr. Sullivan reported that the staff had refused to sign off on a building permit for the new building at 114-116 Mount Auburn Street until agreement could be reached about stabilization of the Conductors' Building. He reported on the St. James Church project, which included demolition of the parish house, construction of a new building on the car wash and parish house sites, and below-grade parking. The property was subject to a preservation restriction held by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. The project would also trigger a demolition review hearing with the Cambridge Historical Commission.

Mr. Sullivan reported that the neighbors of the former Immaculate Conception Lithuanian Church were upset that the landmark study had been extended without a public hearing.

Election of Officers

Mr. Bibbins moved to reelect Mr. King and Mr. Irving as Chair and Vice Chair for another year. Dr. Solet seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0 with both alternates voting and Mr. King and Mr. Irving not voting.

Mr. Irving moved to adjourn. Mr. Bibbins seconded. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 7:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks
Preservation Planner

**Members of the Public
Who Signed Attendance Sheet 1/8/09**

Marilee Meyer	10 Dana St
Jim Shannon	820 Massachusetts Ave #407
Michael T. Gilmore	1 Shady Hill Sq
Deborah Valenze	1 Shady Hill Sq
Monica Hexner	36 Holden St (12 Shady Hill Sq)
Howard Van Vleck	11 Shady Hill Sq
Jane C. Thomas	45 Holden St

Note: Town is Cambridge unless otherwise indicated.