

Approved 9/2/10

Minutes of the Cambridge Historical Commission

July 1, 2010 - 806 Massachusetts Avenue - 6:00 P.M.

Members present: William B. King; *Chair*, Shary Page Berg, Joe Ferrara, Frank Shirley, Jo M. Solet, Susannah Tobin
Members absent: M. Wyllis Bibbins, Robert Crocker, Chandra Harrington, Bruce Irving
Staff present: Charles Sullivan, Sarah Burks
Public present: See attached list.

Chair King called the meeting to order at 6:06 P.M. He designated the alternates, Mr. Ferrara, Ms. Berg, and Ms. Tobin, to vote on all matters. He noted that July 1st was the first effective day of the new Open Meeting Law. He described the consent agenda procedure and asked if there were any cases that a member of the public, commission, or staff would recommend for approval without a full hearing.

Mr. Sullivan recommended Cases 2532 and 2533 for approval subject to staff review.

Mr. King asked if anyone present objected to action on those two cases without a full hearing. Hearing no objections, Dr. Solet moved to approve the following cases per the consent agenda policy, and authorized the staff to review and approve construction details:

Case 2532: 101 Brattle St., by Lesley University. Install wheelchair lift and landing platform at west porch.

Case 2533: 6 & 7 Shady Hill Sq., by Merav & Hannah Gold and Joanna Soltan. Replace gutters.

Ms. Berg seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

Public Hearings: Alterations to Designated Properties

Case 2445: 1991 Massachusetts Ave., by Saint James's Episcopal Church. Review project details.

Mr. Sullivan reviewed the case. The Commission conditionally approved the application in concept on January 7, 2010. On April 1, the Commission confirmed its earlier approval and requested further information and assurances to satisfy conditions on the landscape master plan, exterior appearance, public access, and financial arrangements. He summarized the contents of a May 26, 2010 letter from St. James's Church, with the church's latest responses about the building endowment and public access to the garden.

Rev. Antolini clarified that the church's proceeds from the condominium sales would be used 1/3 for the endowment, 1/3 for immediate needs of the historic sanctuary building, and up to 1/3 for operating expenses, with the balance applied to the endowment and immediate property needs. She said the church would post the open hours of the garden, probably sunup to sundown, with a welcome sign. The garden would be closed at least one day a year for maintenance and prevention of a perpetual easement.

Mr. King said the phrasing "at least one day a year" was not specific enough.

Ricardo Dumont of Sasaki Associates displayed the building materials and site plan. He described the changes that had been made since April, including removal of the chapel, more informal placement of trees in the forecourt, enlarged green area, and, at the suggestion of the Commission, more planting around the sanctuary. He described the proposed materials, including boards, blocks and clapboards by Nichiha, aluminum windows, tiles, and cable railings. He described alternate materials for some areas including slate, Alucobond, and aluminum rail-

ings. He reviewed the materials for each elevation. The clapboards would be installed with varying reveals of 8", 6", and 4" in a repeating pattern. He displayed the site plan and noted changes to trees, including replacing an existing magnolia with an elm or pin oak at the front corner and planting new pin oaks on Massachusetts Avenue. Honey locusts would be planted in the play garden, while the residential gardens would have birch trees. He displayed photos of landscape materials, including stone walls, paving, memorial plaques, and plant materials.

Ms. Berg complimented the removal of the chapel, allowing for more open space. She suggested keeping the benches closer to the sidewalk. She expressed doubt about the success of plantings around the base of the sanctuary and suggested that trees near it have vertical ~~trunks~~ branching, not spreading. Mr. Dumont agreed and said he preferred a mostly paved site plan. He suggested paving with Goshen stone or slate in large sizes if possible.

Mr. King asked for questions of fact from the public.

Deputy Fire Chief Jim Burns asked about the fence between the new building and the fire house. Mr. Dumont answered that it would be a 6' or 7' high wood fence. Present CFD parking would not be affected.

Elaine Callahan spoke for herself and on behalf of Jacqueline Kelly. She asked how the proponents justified building what to her looked like a tenement. The design did not relate to the historic sanctuary. Modern architecture was inharmonious by nature. She objected to the impact on the existing building and the garden.

Diane Carr of 14 Beech Street asked if the new building had been pushed back from the sidewalk. She said it was too dark and would not fit in with the neighborhood.

Carolyn Mieth of 15 Brookford Street objected to removal of the magnolia tree. Mr. Dumont said that some trees would be transplanted to other locations. The intent was to have two tall stately trees at the corner, as in the historic photos.

Richard Clarey of 15 Brookford Street asked if there were depictions of how much of the view of the church would be lost looking east on Massachusetts Avenue and south on Beech Street. Mr. Dumont said those studies had been shown before. The building had been moved back from both streets.

Michael Brandon of 27 Seven Pines Avenue asked if the paving stones in the sod would meet ADA standards. He also asked about retention tanks; excessive construction would add to the impact of heavy rains. He said the building had not been pulled back enough. He asked about tree removal and replacement caliper. He asked about the landscaping near the Kingdom Hall. Mr. Dumont answered that the main paths would have tight joints for accessibility. Other paths would have the sod joints. He described the location of the retention tanks. More trees would be planted than removed and money would be contributed to the city's tree fund. The granite posts and fence near the Kingdom Hall would be replaced with ground cover and trees.

A member of the public asked about the paving material near the garage entry. Mr. Dumont answered that it would be brick at the front, then change to asphalt at the top of the ramp.

Dr. Solet asked how the play garden was separated from the trash area. Mr. Dumont explained that there was a gate between them.

Mr. Brandon asked if the proponents had responded to the Massachusetts Historical Commission's (MHC) letter of December 2009. Rev. Antolini said that Paul Holtz at MHC had requested a copy of the church's May 2010 letter to the Cambridge Historical Commission. Mr. Sullivan said Mr. Holtz had attended several meetings with the proponents but had not yet prepared a finding.

Mr. Brandon said the CHC's approval of the project was ill advised. The project was completely inappropriate. The vestry's vote was not protective enough of the public interest; an independent body should ensure that there would be funds for the preservation of the church. Money should be spent now on a fire protection system.

Ms. Callahan spoke about the significance of John Nolen and the design of the Knight's Garden. She objected to the loss of the garden.

Mr. King closed the public comment period.

Mr. Shirley said the landscape plan was well thought out. The small planting areas around the church would be vulnerable to burnout and would require lots of maintenance. He suggested allowing the option of extending the pavement up to the church building. He said he was not familiar with the Nichiha materials. Slate was heavy for the base of the building. He suggested a different material for a cloistered effect. He would not vote against the proposed materials, however.

Mr. King said that adding eight new trees on Massachusetts Avenue was excessive. He asked if the area around the sanctuary was still planned for a later phase of work. Mr. Ferrara agreed that the trees along Massachusetts Avenue were too close together. Ms. Berg noted that there might be later adjustments, but the landscape master plan set the intent and design approach.

Mr. King said the materials should not mimic the historic building. They should be interesting and contemporary, but secondary. He referred to the Secretary's Standards for additions. He recommended changing the phrasing granting public access to the garden.

Mr. Shirley moved to approve the commitments in the church's May 26, 2010 letter on the understanding that the gardens be kept open at all times during daylight hours except for reasonable temporary closures necessary for construction of the parish house and reconstruction of the garden, and thereafter except for reasonable temporary closures necessary for maintenance or for one day per year appropriate to prevent a public easement, delegating approval of the final language to the Chair. He further moved to approve a certificate of appropriateness for the project on the condition that a final master plan be prepared and a large mockup of materials be constructed on site for Commission approval at public hearing, and that construction drawings be subject to review and approval by the staff. Ms. Tobin seconded the motion, which passed 6-0 without further discussion.

Mr. King called for a brief recess. He called the meeting back to order at 8:20 P.M.

Case 2531: 25 Mt. Auburn St., by BBC Trust, Inc. Repair and renovate façade including cladding, trim, masonry, and replacement of all windows.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and described the buildings. He reported on his meetings with the owners about window, trim, and cladding details.

Derrick Winters of Wessling Architects reviewed the details depicted in a 1910 photograph.

James Green, the applicant, showed photographs of the selective removal of siding, showing the multiple layers of materials. He explained that his father-in-law had done major renovations over the years. Most of the original materials were still underneath the subsequent layers. He expressed his intent to restore many of the details, but not the false gables above the cornice, due to expense.

Mr. Winters described the proposed materials, including 5½" flat casings, cedar clapboards, 2" sills, single hung windows (top sash fixed) with half screens on the bottom, PVC window heads as recommended by staff, and vertical and horizontal stick work. No window heads were proposed in the interior alley or courtyard. He reviewed the drawings and proposed colors: windows (Essex Green), body (Davenport Tan), trim (Bleeker Beige).

Dr. Solet congratulated the proponents. She asked if there had been brackets at the cornice line. Mr. Green said there were gables, but not brackets. He would like to restore all the details, but it was cost prohibitive. He had proposed everything he could.

Mr. Shirley asked for more information about the windows. Mr. Winters replied that the current proposal was for Anderson aluminum clad windows with a putty glazed muntin profile, spacer bars, and custom sills. The finish would be a Kynar 20-year finish on the sill and windows. There were 256 windows in the building.

Mr. Shirley asked if the proponents had considered using Hardiplank. Mr. Green answered that it would have been their first choice but he did not think it would be approved by the state and federal tax credit programs. The casings would be clad and ordered as part of the window.

Mr. Sullivan noted that the drawings did not show horns extending out as part of the sill.

Tess Hedder of 14R Mt. Auburn Street noted that Arrow Street was very narrow, so gables would not be seen well even if they were recreated.

Mr. Ferraro said he had once worked in the building. He commended the applicants for the improvements they proposed. The headers would be add the appropriate level of detail though they wouldn't restore exactly what had been there originally. He suggested restoring the cornice in a later phase.

Mr. Shirley suggested a heavy cornice with a frieze board, but without the false gables. The vertical trim did not belong without the false gables. He admired the building's simplicity and commended the applicants on their proposal. Mr. Sullivan advised against adding details that had not been there originally.

Ms. Hedder said the building's simplicity was fine and the proportions were wonderful. It had been a factory. It should not be over-embellished. She spoke against adding detail that had not been there originally.

Mr. Green indicated it would have been better if the Commission had denied the application for new windows that his father-in-law had made about 11 years ago.

Ms. Berg moved to approve the application as described, on the condition that the sills be of the appropriate dimension and have horns. Mr. Ferraro seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

Landmark Designation Proceedings

Case L-95: 22 Cottage Park Ave. Consider petition of registered voters to initiate landmark study of property.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and described the site. The building had been constructed in 1909 by the Climax Paper Box Co. and was later acquired by the J. H. Emerson Co., an early manufacturer of iron lungs and res-

piratory devices. Both the factory and the Quonset hut across the street (which was not included in the petition) were vacant. The factory appeared to meet the criteria for significance in the landmark ordinance, but he was not aware of any immediate threats. The building was likely denser than anything that could be built presently.

Richard Clarey provided further detail about a patent dispute between Emerson and Harvard College in the 1920s. The J. H. Emerson Co. had been the longest continually active medical device company in the state. He favored designation because of the historical associations of the building with Emerson and his company.

William Fox of 17 Cottage Park Avenue said he had lived there since 1955 and had known Mr. Emerson. He described his efforts to make the street safe for kids. He expressed support for designation or downzoning to control the neighborhood and keep it safe.

Charles Teague of 23 Edmunds Street gave a slide presentation with photographs of recent inferior construction in the North Cambridge neighborhood. He expressed concern that the brick building would be demolished and replaced with a building of lesser quality. He said zoning would allow increased density on the site. The existing building was one of the best in the neighborhood. He described the outcome of Emerson's lawsuit, explaining that he wanted to keep the price of the iron lung low so that it could help more people.

Mr. Brandon summarized the research about Emerson that he had submitted earlier. Emerson was a mechanical genius and a humanitarian of high significance. Although a recent purchase and sale agreement had fallen through, the parties were still in discussion. A Board of Zoning Appeal application regarding the Quonset hut had been put on hold. The Quonset hut was a rare building type. The Emerson property also included a three-family house at 18 Cottage Park Avenue. The potential buyer, Synapse, would use 1/3 of the brick building and lease out the rest as offices. He said the building was threatened and spoke in favor of a landmark study so that proposed changes would come to the commission for review.

Mr. King described the landmark designation study procedure and the demolition review process.

Dr. Solet said a demolition delay could extend the potential protection period for a property and there might not be an advantage to starting the landmark study at the present time. She did not want to see the building damaged, and noted that it was one of the city's first biotech buildings, an important field to the economy. She encouraged the owners to investigate the potential benefits of donating a preservation restriction.

Dara Newman of the Nixon Peabody law firm introduced herself as the owners' representative. She conveyed the owners' opposition to a landmark study or designation.

Mr. Shirley said it was in the building's best interest not to initiate a study because there was no clear threat. He moved to not accept the petition at the present time. Ms. Tobin seconded the motion. Mr. Sullivan clarified that the petitioners could resubmit a petition at any time. The motion passed in a vote of 6-0.

Case L-96: 1-12 Shady Hill Sq./34-36 Holden St. Hear staff report and confirm vote to initiate a landmark designation study.

Mr. Sullivan reported that the closing on the green and the preservation restriction had been held on the previous Wednesday but was suspended because the neighbors had not signed a release of litigation. That had been completed and the transaction should be recorded soon. The current hearing was advertised to confirm the

Commission's initiation of a new landmark study, which was necessary to protect properties for which subordination agreements had not been executed.

Dr. Solet moved to confirm the Commission's action to initiate a landmark study and further moved to authorize the staff to terminate the study upon being advised by the Law Department that all the subordination agreements had been signed. Ms. Harrington seconded the motion, which passed 6-0 without further discussion.

Determination of Procedure: Alterations to Designated Properties

Case 2545: 147 Brattle St., by Lawrence Hartmann, MD. Install bluestone chimney caps.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and summarized the application for installation of brick and stone chimney caps. He recommended approval subject to 10 day notice procedures. The proposal was the traditional masonry solution to chimney capping, rather than installation of a stainless steel cap.

Mr. Ferrara moved to approve the application as described. Ms. Tobin seconded the motion, which passed 6-0 without further discussion.

Preservation Grants

IPG 10-5: Cambridge Community Center, 5 Callender St.. Increase the previously-approved \$45,000 grant to \$57,000 to cover additional costs of the roofing project.

IPG 10-8: 46 Pleasant St., by the Women's Educational Center. \$43,560 for window and siding restoration.

IPG 10-9: 42 Brattle St., by the Cambridge Center for Adult Education. \$26,000 for roof replacement on the dance studio wing.

IPG 10-10: 56 Brattle St, by the Cambridge Center for Adult Education. \$35,000 for roof replacement on the classroom wing.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and reviewed the applications for institutional preservation grants. He described his consultations with the applicants and recommended approval.

Mr. Ferrara moved to approve the four grants as submitted. Dr. Solet seconded the motion, which passed 6-0 without further discussion.

Minutes

Ms. Burks noted a correction submitted by Mr. Bibbins, that Gordon Moore's title on page 4 should be "Dr.", not "Mr." Dr. Solet corrected a typo in the fifth paragraph on page 2. Mr. King corrected typos and suggested rephrasing on pages 3, 6, and 7.

Dr. Solet moved to approve the June minutes as corrected. Ms. Berg seconded, and the motion passed 5-0 with Dr. Solet, Ms. Berg, Ms. Tobin, Mr. King, and Mr. Ferrara voting.

Mr. Shirley moved to adjourn, and Ms. Tobin seconded. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 10:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks
Preservation Planner

**Members of the Public
Who Signed Attendance Sheet 7/1/10**

Derrick Winters	Wessling Architects, 1250 Hancock St, Quincy 02169
James A. Green	25 Mt Auburn St, Ste 106
Mark Yoder	21 Haskell St, Allston 02134
Elizabeth Hixson	41 Norris St
Ricardo Dumont	29 Bossom St, Lexington
Holly Antolini	1991 Massachusetts Ave
James Burns	491 Broadway
Karen Klinger	20 Beech St
Marc Levy	132½ Oxford #4
Dick Clarey	15 Brookford St
Michael Brandon	27 Seven Pines Ave
Dara Newman	100 Summer St, Boston 02110
David Danken	40 H? Rd, Belmont 02478
Marilee Meyer	10 Dana St #404
Elaine M Callahan	
Charles Teague	23 Edmunds St
Diane Carr	14 Beech St
Carolyn Mieth	15 Brookford St
Julia Bishop	9 Cottage Park Ave
Virginia Fox	17 Cottage Park Ave
William A Fox	17 Cottage Park Ave
Joy Millman	9 Cottage Park Ave
Karen Sedat	42 Brookford St

Town is Cambridge unless otherwise indicated.