

Approved 7/1/10

**Minutes of the Cambridge Historical Commission**

June 3, 2010 - 806 Massachusetts Avenue - 6:00 P.M.

Members present: William B. King, *Chair* and Bruce Irving, *Vice Chair*; Shary Page Berg, M. Wyllis Bibbins, Robert Crocker, Joe Ferrara, Chandra Harrington, Jo M. Solet, and Susannah Barton Tobin

Members absent: Frank Shirley

Staff present: Charles Sullivan, Sarah Burks, and Eiliesh Tuffy

Public present: See attached list.

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Chair King called the meeting to order at 6:04 P.M.. 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 2500, 2511, 2518, and 2524 for approval. Mr. King asked if anyone present wanted a full hearing on any of those cases.

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 2500 (continued): 1374 Massachusetts Ave., by Cambridge Savings Bank.** Replace windows.
- Case 2511: 765 Massachusetts Ave., by John Kurt Miller, Trustee, on behalf of Heidi Feinstein, tenant.** Install new signs, install menu boxes, bench and planters.
- Case 2518: Kidder House, 2-4 St. John's Rd., by Lesley University.** Replace sliding glass doors with windows; remove wood fencing.
- Case 2524: 12 Concord Ave. #3, by Stefan I. McDonough.** Replace windows.

Mr. Crocker seconded the motion. Mr. King designated alternate members Berg, Tobin, and Ferrara to vote on all matters in turn, beginning with Ms. Berg. The motion passed 7-0, with Ms. Berg voting.

Mr. Sullivan reported that a petition for a landmark study of 22 Cottage Park Avenue had been received. He was unaware of any immediate threats to the buildings and recommended scheduling a hearing on the matter for the meeting on July 1, at which time the Commission could decide whether or not to accept the petition and initiate a study. Mr. Irving so moved. Mr. Bibbins seconded, and the motion passed 7-0 with Ms. Tobin voting.

Mr. King reviewed the public hearing procedures.

Public Hearings: Alterations to Designated Properties

**Case 2515: 1797-1803 Massachusetts Ave., by Lesley University.** Demolish rear additions and basement, relocate church, replace steeple, repair and restore siding, roof and windows, install skylights; construct four-story building on lot with connections to church.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and described the architecture and history of the North Prospect Congregational Church, which was constructed in 1845 and moved to its present site in 1867. He reviewed the evolution of Lesley's proposal for the new location of the Art Institute of Boston. He described the review procedure for the landmarked structure. He showed slides from several perspectives and historic photographs of the church.

Marylou Batt, Vice President for Administration at Lesley University, noted that the university had supported landmark designation. She said the current proposal had evolved in response to public feedback received over the course of the last three years.

James Rafferty, attorney for the university, reviewed the recent history of the site. He described the rezoning study and the plan to move the church and build a new building with a connector, which had been anticipated in the zoning and acknowledged as a possibility in the landmark report. He reviewed the design guidelines in the landmark report and compared them to the current proposal. The existing basement space was not suited for the special light and ventilation demands of an art school. The restoration of the church was a preservation opportunity for Lesley and could prepare the building for the next 100 years.

Simeon Bruner of Bruner Cott Architects described the timeline of the building. He said it would be better to move the building than to have it remain between two modern buildings (University Hall and the new AIB building). He reviewed the evolution of the design from a 100,000 square foot concept to the current 75,000 square foot proposal. The current plan would include removing the 1899 additions at the rear of the church, moving the church and transept, constructing one new level below grade and two levels in the church above grade, constructing a connector with glass to the new AIB building, and creating an art commons and art plaza. The new floor in the church would be in the attic and would not necessitate inter-flooring the original sanctuary.

Mr. Bruner described the proposed restoration of certain features of the church building including the copper cupola, which replaced the original steeple in 1902. This was selected because it was a more secular design and easier to maintain than the original steeple. The Egyptian capitals and pediment ornamentation would be restored. He proposed stabilizing and repairing the existing windows and protecting them with storm windows. They would be more fully restored over time. The first floor of the relocated church would be about 5' above grade. The front steps would be restored based on photographic evidence.

Mr. Bruner described the connector and the technical aspects of how the art commons would connect to the church building. The terracotta skin of the new building would transition from the brick of University Hall to the clapboards of the church. He described the intent to make the new building appear light with a glass ground floor, so that the wood church would stand out as the more prominent feature of the site. He ended his presentation by showing the existing and proposed views of the site from Arlington Street and Massachusetts Avenue.

Mr. King asked about the existing and proposed heights of the church. Jason Forney of Bruner Cott said the existing heights were 41' to the eave and 45' to the ridge, and the proposed condition would be 34' to the eave and 38' to the ridge, a difference of 7'. Mr. Bruner said that the church would be about 25' closer to Massachusetts Avenue, with a front setback of 35'. Mr. Forney said that the setbacks of 1791 and 1815 Massachusetts Avenue were 58' and 0' respectively. The new AIB building would have the same 35' setback as the church.

Dr. Solet asked about the placement and size of mechanical equipment. Mr. Bruner answered that it would be located on the roof near the back of the new building and would probably include a screen and parapet. They would be about 12-14' tall, though the parapet would not have to be that high. Mr. Forney said the roof of the new building would be at 55' and the parapet would be above that height.

Mr. King asked that the model be changed to include the mechanical structures.

Mr. Sullivan asked how the program had been adjusted to account for the reduced volume. Ms. Batt answered that some offices would be located in University Hall. Mr. Rafferty said the current proposal was about 20,000 square feet less than zoning would allow.

Mr. King asked if the proponents had considered moving the church toward Massachusetts Avenue, but keeping it on the corner of Roseland Street. Mr. Bruner explained that if the church and new AIB building were switched, the size of the new building would be very limited due to the height limitations for new buildings.

Mr. King opened the floor to questions of fact from the public.

Gordon Moore of 9 Rutland Street asked if the zoning overlay district allotted 100,000 square feet of development potential to the area behind University Hall. With the chair's permission, Mr. Rafferty answered the question by saying that the overlay district did create a development opportunity behind University Hall with a special permit, but it was less than 100,000 square feet and would require relocation of the existing parking spaces. Lesley had no plans to develop that site in the near future. Mr. Dr. Moore asked if Lesley had studied putting the AIB elsewhere and leaving the church building where it was. Mr. Rafferty said that had been explored, but it was not the chosen direction for a number of reasons. Mr. King stated that the purpose of the Historical Commission's hearing was not to deliberate a zoning case or to re-plan the overlay district.

Dr. Solet asked if a master plan was on record. Mr. Rafferty said the master plan was available online.

Costanza Eggers of 47 Porter Road asked about the plan for the first floor and basement of University Hall, where the public enjoyed the retail spaces. Ms. Batt said the retail spaces would be retained.

Michael Brandon of 27 Seven Pines Avenue asked about the parking lots opposite University Hall. Will Suter, campus planner, said that the master plan described broad planning concepts but did not lay out specific developments in specific places. Dennis Carlone, an architect consulting for Lesley, said the overlay district set a 45' height limit for the parking lots opposite University Hall and indicated that they could not be used for dormitories. Three-story buildings were being considered for those sites, but not in the immediate future.

Martha Hass of 4 Newport Road asked if a large building could be built at 1791 Massachusetts Avenue, a house recently bequeathed to Harvard University by the owner. Mr. Rafferty said that the zoning of that lot was Residence B, which would not allow for a large new development at that location.

Sarah Farrington of 18 Frost Street asked where the 18,000 square feet of programming had gone. Mr. Bruner said the program had been slimmed down and some could be accommodated at University Hall, but it was not all figured out yet. Mr. Forney said the proposed above grade volume had been reduced by 25 percent.

Mr. King opened the floor to public comment.

Peter Lang of 1 Frost Terrace read a statement and submitted it in writing. He spoke in opposition to the proposal and said it was inconsistent with the landmark report. He did not have confidence in the Commission's process and objected to the revisions to the report with regard to the recommendations for siting the church. He wanted to avoid canyonization of the avenue. There was no reason to approve moving the church.

Dean Johnson of 30 Agassiz Street supported restoration of the church in place. He spoke in support of Jim Freeman's Plan D/E, which would keep the church where it was. He encouraged Lesley to explore that plan

further; he said they should acquire 1791 Massachusetts Avenue and expand the overlay district to include it. Mr. King clarified that the Commission had received correspondence from the Neighborhood Nine group about Plan D/E. Although that plan was not before the Commission, it was part of the record.

Harriet Ahouses of 4 Newport Road said she had been a part of the neighborhood working group that met with Lesley a few years ago. She spoke in favor of the proposal, adding that Massachusetts Avenue real estate was too valuable to be community playground. She didn't want to see condominium development on the site and could not expect Lesley to use it as a secondary piece of property.

Carol Weinhaus of 64 Oxford Street summarized a statement from Ron Axelrod and submitted it for the record. His statement in support of Lesley's proposal said that the siting of the church would be improved.

~~Mr.~~ Dr. Moore said it was not necessary to move the church. He had never seen a serious study of putting more programming on the lot behind University Hall. The Commission deserved to see other alternatives.

Phil Morse of 7 Arlington Street said he had never noticed the church. It would benefit from being moved so it would be more visible when looking south. He expressed support for Lesley's proposal to revitalize the church and redevelop the site.

Ruth Ryals of 115 Upland Road said a world-class art institute should be on Massachusetts Avenue, not behind University Hall. She expressed support for Lesley's proposal.

Andrea Wilder of 12 Arlington Street said she was dismayed that there hadn't been more changes to the proposal. It was good to keep the transept, but she objected to moving the church. A brick plaza was not a good replacement for a grassy open space. She opposed the proposal; she favored keeping the church in place and framing it with newer buildings.

Fred Meyer of 83 Hammond Street spoke about the history of the church and expressed support for Lesley's proposal. The steeple would be restored and the ugly raised foundation would be removed. The church would relate better to the Sears building.

Mr. Brandon spoke in favor of retaining the church in its present location. Moving it would destroy the view of it from Arlington Street. The church evoked a feeling of New England churches and church greens in general. He objected to creating a canyon of buildings on Massachusetts Avenue. The Commission should use different criteria to review the project than planners used. He hoped the Commission would not manipulate the public's interest as other boards had done.

Ms. Farrington commended Lesley for proposing to preserve the church but objected to moving it.

Mr. King closed the public comment period. He said there was not enough detail on which to issue a certificate of appropriateness, but the Commission could give Lesley a sense of direction. He acknowledged that the discussion of siting options in the draft report had been amended to include design considerations for several possible locations. He had always been sympathetic to lowering the church and moving it closer to Massachusetts Avenue, but had not been convinced about moving it to the south side of the lot. If the overlay district's regulations were different, putting the new AIB building on the south side of the lot would be a good idea.

Dr. Solet recalled moving testimony about Arlington Street at a previous hearing. She asked for clarification about why the new building could not be located on the south side of the lot. Mr. Rafferty explained that the height in the transitional area (50' wide on the border of a residential district) was limited to the allowable height in the adjacent residential district, but the historic church building would be exempt from that limitation. The program could not be accommodated if the buildings were reversed.

Ms. Harrington said she approved of the architect's proposal for restoration of the church. She said she understood the reasons for moving the building. It was a good design.

Mr. Irving agreed. He observed that there were proponents and objectors to the proposal. The church had not been placed on its present site for the purpose of providing a view of it down Arlington Street, but because that corner was an available piece of real estate. There was an opportunity to give the building new life. He commended the architects for the design of the connector, which he considered a brilliant technical solution.

Joe Ferrara agreed. He said the change in the height of the foundation was in line with the architectural intent. The return to the cupola version of the steeple would be appropriate. Moving the building away from University Hall would be beneficial. He expressed concern about the height of mechanicals on the new AIB building. The mechanical stack should not become a tower.

Mr. Sullivan said his first impression of the proposal was that it was plausible to think that the Commission might approve it. His top priority for preservation would be to restore the church in its current location, but that was not the only possibility. The church would not be degraded by being moved intact, as presently proposed, and the new location would be viable from an urban design point of view. The congregation had not been able to properly maintain the building, which needed a productive use and an owner committed to preserving it. There was a trade-off in that. He suggested that the Commission approve in concept the general massing and siting of the proposal, reserving approval of other aspects of the design including service areas, loading docks, curb cuts, landscaping, paving, lighting, parking, construction details, and the like.

Mr. Irving moved to approve in concept the application to relocate the church, remove the existing basement and rearmost additions, construct a new basement below the relocated church, replace the steeple, repair and restore the siding, roof, and windows, install skylights, and construct a new four-story building on the lot with a connection to the church, with conceptual approval for the general massing and siting of the buildings as generally depicted in the application materials submitted on May 11, 2010, on the condition that ongoing review and approval will be required for all exterior aspects of the project, including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Detailed plans and elevations, to scale and with primary building, lot, and setback dimensions indicated.
2. Building materials and architectural details of the new building and connector.
3. Exterior HVAC and other mechanical equipment, as well as piping, meters and other utility structures.
4. Service areas including loading docks, delivery bays, trash storage and removal facilities.
5. Curb cuts, paving, and parking.
6. Landscaping, lighting and signage.
7. Construction details of the repair and restoration work at the church, including windows, steps, siding, skylights, materials, carpentry, steeple design, foundation, painting, and roofing.

Ms. Harrington seconded the motion, which passed 6-1 with Mr. King in opposition and Mr. Ferrara voting.

Mr. King called for a brief recess. He called the meeting back to order at 8:55 P.M.

**Case 2516: 3 & 5 Phillips Place and multiple buildings at 99 Brattle St., by Lesley University and the Episcopal Divinity School.** Install identification signage and map displays on shared campus.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides of the campus.

Mr. Suter described the different types of signs and their designs. He indicated their proposed locations on a site plan. He reviewed the design package by Roll Barresi & Associates. The tallest of the signs would be 10' at the top. Similar sign poles already existed on the campus but the sign boards had been stolen. There would be no more than two campus maps, which would be 3-4' high.

Dr. Solet asked if they had considered putting the parking lot sign on the masonry wall instead of making it freestanding, which did not seem appropriate for this location. Mr. Suter said the wall-mounted sign would not be visible. There were many existing parking signs; each space in the lot had been signed with a name. The goal was to reduce the number of signs on campus.

Ms. Berg asked who the target audience was. Mr. Suter replied that it would be people new to the campus, summer attendees, and the general public in recognizing Lesley's presence at the campus.

Dr. Solet objected to the gray bar on the signs, which made the signs overly large.

Mr. Sullivan read a letter received from Lloyd and Nancy Aiello of 2½ Berkeley Street with concerns about the impact of signs on the character of the campus and with specific concerns about some parking signs.

Dr. Solet said that some of the new signs were more prominently visible from the main paths than the pre-existing parking signs had been. She objected to the placement of the tavern-style sign at the corner of Mason and Brattle streets. She asked in particular about a large tow-away parking sign at 3 or 5 Phillips Place. Ms. Batt answered that state law required all the wording on that sign.

Mr. Sullivan recommended approving the application on the condition that the three tavern signs be lowered 1' so the top of the poles did not exceed 9'.

Mr. Irving so moved, but then amended his motion to authorize the staff to approve proposals for repositioning signs. Mr. Ferrara seconded, and the motion passed 7-0 with Ms. Berg voting.

**Case 2520: St. John's Chapel, 99 Brattle St., by Episcopal Divinity School.** Install gas meter.

**Case 2519: Lawrence Hall, 99 Brattle St., by Lesley University.** Install new gas meter.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and described the existing gas pipes and meter at Lawrence Hall and the proposed new installation at St. John's Chapel.

Oliver Radford of Perry & Radford Architects described the proposed location and details of a gas meter at the chapel. He described the more expensive alternative to run a pipe from Lawrence Hall to the chapel. He displayed a cut sheet of the new meter, which would be about 2' above the ground. The Episcopal Divinity School (EDS) would be willing to plant an evergreen shrub to screen the installation. Mr. Bibbins said a shrub in that location would not be ~~not~~ appropriate.

Mr. Sullivan explained that until this year, the utility companies had deferred to the Historical Commission about the placement of meters at historic properties. Now, they wanted to put them close to the street in plain sight with exceptions only in very crowded conditions like Harvard Square.

Ms. Burks reported that an NStar representative had met with the staff on site and explained the new guidelines. Mr. Sullivan said that he wanted to challenge NStar's decision, but perhaps this was not the occasion.

Robbie White of EDS asked for approval of the chapel location because of the expense of the alternative.

Mr. Irving moved to approve a Certificate of Hardship for the meter and to authorize the staff to determine the most appropriate screening. Ms. Harrington seconded, and the motion passed 7-0 with Ms. Tobin voting.

Mr. White withdrew the application for case #2519 at Lawrence Hall.

Mr. Irving moved to authorize the staff to ask NSTAR to attend the next meeting to explain the meter policy because it directly impacted the Historical Commission's operations. Dr. Solet seconded the motion, which passed 7-0 with Mr. Ferrara voting.

#### Landmark Designation Proceedings

**Case L-94: 9 Ash St., Philip Johnson House (Public Hearing).** Consider initiating landmark designation study.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and described the Philip Johnson House, designed for a practical class assignment while Johnson was an architecture student at Harvard. The largely glass facade was behind a 9' high plywood fence all the way around the lot. The property was for sale. Harvard had made a conditional offer to purchase the house but withdrew the offer because it had not gotten the necessary institutional use variance. So, the house was back on the market. Harvard had been willing to grant the Commission jurisdiction to review alterations, as with other Harvard owned properties subject to the HU/CHC protocol. Landmark designation would only allow review of alterations to the wall, but it would be better than nothing.

Dr. Solet asked if Prof. Tribe, current owner, would give the Commission a preservation restriction on the house. Mr. Sullivan said there had been no recent communication on this matter.

James Williamson of 1000 Jackson Place spoke in favor of a landmark designation study for the property. It was historically and architecturally important. He asked that the report address Johnson's political views.

Mr. Irving moved to initiate a landmark designation study. Ms. Harrington seconded the motion, which passed 7-0 with Ms. Berg voting as alternate.

**Case L-87: 1-12 Shady Hill Sq./34-36 Holden St.** Consider initiating a landmark designation study.

Mr. Sullivan explained that a renewed landmark designation study was important because the pending preservation restriction, which had been agreed to by all the current owners, would not be fully effective until all the owners secured subordination agreements from their lenders, which could take months. If the Commission initiated the new study the restrictions could be signed and the properties would be protected while the subordination agreements were secured. He also asked for a vote authorizing the chair, vice chair, or executive director to sign the preservation restrictions on behalf of the Commission.

Dr. Solet so moved. Ms. Harrington seconded, and the motion passed 7-0 with Ms. Tobin voting.

#### Minutes

Mr. Bibbins moved to approve the May minutes as submitted. Mr. Crocker seconded, and the motion passed 6-0 with Dr. Solet, Ms. Berg, Ms. Harrington, Ms. Tobin, Mr. Bibbins, and Mr. Crocker voting.

Ms. Harrington moved to adjourn, and Mr. Bibbins 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 6/3/10**

Michael Brandon	27 Seven Pines Ave
Elizabeth Kane	10 Avon St
Ann Freeman	25A Hillside Ave
Ann Austin	47 Avon Hill St
Andrea Wilder	12 Arlington St
Marjory Wunsch	78 Washington Ave
James Freeman	25A Hillside Ave
Richard Clarey	15 Brookford St
Phil Morse	7 Arlington St #57
Larry Wilcox	55 Fourth Ave, Needham Heights 02494
Daniel Fraine	1374 Massachusetts Ave
Dan Martell	1374 Massachusetts Ave
Carol Weinhaus	64 Oxford St
Martha Hass	4 Newport Rd #7
Gladys Friedler	4 Newport Rd #4
Glen Wallace	62 (or 102) Queensberry St., Boston 02215
Senta Burton	165 Brattle St
Douglas Quirke	2 Ellsworth Park #1
Oliver Radford	33 Richdale Ave
David Goldbaum	4/5 Shady Hill Sq
Robbie White	99 Brattle St
June Ellen Mendelson	24 Arlington St
C. Eggers	47 Porter Rd
Peter Lang	1 Frost Terrace
Harriet Ahouse	4 Newport Rd #2
Gordon Moore	9 Rutland St
Heidi Feinstein	150 Stanford St #912
Dean Johnson	30 Agassiz St
Katherine Lapierre	1 Frost Terrace
Sarah Farrington	18 Frost St
Dennis Carlone	16 Martin St
Henry Moss	130 Prospect St
Marylou Batt	29 Everett St
Simeon Bruner	130 Prospect St
Jason Forney	130 Prospect St
Bill Doncaster	Lesley University
Will Doss Suter	Lesley University
Gisela Ashley	7 Arlington St
Adriane Bishko	5 Arlington St
Fred Meyer	83 Hammond St

Town is Cambridge unless otherwise indicated.