

Approved 10/7/10

Minutes of the Cambridge Historical Commission

September 2, 2010 - 806 Massachusetts Avenue - 6:00 P.M.

Members present: William B. King, *Chair*; Bruce Irving, *Vice Chair*; M. Wyllis Bibbins, Frank Shirley, Jo M. Solet, *Members*; Shary Page Berg, *Alternate*

Members absent: Robert Crocker, Chandra Harrington, *Members*; Joseph Ferrara, Susannah Tobin, *Alternates*

Staff present: Charles Sullivan, Sarah Burks

Public present: See attached list.

Chair King called the meeting to order at 6:05 P.M. He designated alternate Shary Berg to vote on all matters. He reviewed the agenda items and hearing procedures.

Public Hearings: Alterations to Designated Properties

Case 2574: 30 Holyoke St., by Roy McDonald for the Owl Club. Change window to double door on rear elevation; add railing to 2nd floor deck.

Mr. King recused himself from the case because he had once been a member of the Owl Club. Mr. Bibbins, the most senior member, assumed the chair.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and described the discussion at the last meeting, at which the Commission requested further information and scheduled a full hearing.

Andrew Brown, the contractor, described the scope of the project including enlarging the window opening for 4' wide, vinyl-clad Anderson French doors in Forest Green to match the front door. The existing bricks below the windows would be used to stitch in the jams for the door. He described the materials and construction of the roof deck. It would have 2 x 6 pressure-treated framing, painted PVC trim, and composite decking. The deck would bear on the masonry walls below and would protect the copper roof. Space would be left between the deck and the roof to allow water to drain. The railing would be constructed of 1½" tubular steel, welded in place and bolted into the brick masonry, with a glossy black finish. He described the door as one side active, one side fixed, Colonial ogee molding, simulated divided lights, 7/8" muntins, spacer bar, and 2 lights wide by 5 high.

There were no questions or comments from members of the public.

Mr. Sullivan asked if the proportion of the lights in the doors was the same as the lights in the windows. Mr. Brown answered in the negative. Mr. Sullivan said the door would be visible over the rear wall, but it was not on the front façade. Given the distance from the street, a simulated divided light was not a concern.

Mr. Bibbins said the difference in the size of the lights in the doors and windows was not a problem because they were different architectural elements and did not need to match.

Mr. Shirley moved to approve the application on the condition that details of the brick and mortar work be approved by the staff. Dr. Solet seconded the motion, which passed 54-0.

Mr. King resumed the chair.

Case 2578: 45 Mt. Auburn St., by George and M. Janet Demers. Alter 2nd floor of façade.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and described the building. The Commission had granted a Certificate of Appropriateness for the present façade when it was last remodeled about ten years ago.

Brendan Hopkins, proprietor of the Daedalus Restaurant, reported that the wood façade was rotting. He proposed extending the cedar clapboards all the way across the façade and up into the gable, as shown on the rendering. It would be stained and varnished to match the wood on the front of the deck to the left. The goal was to achieve a more consistent look on the exterior. The pillars would remain as existing. The logo might be reattached, but that decision was not yet final.

Mr. Hopkins told Mr. Shirley that the exterior electrical conduit would be removed.

Ms. Berg commented that the clapboards would stand proud of the window trim. Mr. Shirley suggested adding a casing around the windows. Dr. Solet noted the shallowness of the cornice and wondered if the clapboards would fit. Mr. Hopkins said the contractor had assured him it would work and that the clapboards would be more durable.

There were no questions or comments from members of the public.

Ms. Berg moved to approve the alterations as shown on the rendering submitted, on the condition that the construction details be reviewed and approved by the Executive Director. There was no second.

Dr. Solet asked about the rationale for combining clapboards with the classical trim of the pediment and columns. Mr. Hopkins said he would put it back to match the existing if that was preferred. Or he could remove the pediment and columns.

Mr. Bibbins suggested tongue-and-groove siding inside the pediment and columns.

Mr. Shirley said it could not look any worse than the existing. He suggested that the gabled parapet wall could be removed. There was nothing historically valuable above the soffit.

Mr. King said the design, as drawn, was not incongruous, but if the design proposal were to change, the applicants would need to provide more details.

Mr. Shirley moved to approve the proposal as shown on the rendering, subject to staff approval of details; and to provide conceptual approval for installing clapboards on the entire façade; but in that case, the applicant would need to return to the commission with drawings and details. Dr. Solet seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.

[Mr. Irving arrived].

Case 2580: 0 Garden St., by Christ Church. Remove chimneys on church library wing and rectory ell.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and described the parish house and the rectory buildings. He described the visibility of the subject chimneys. The rectory had two ells and four chimneys on its back wall.

Jonathan Austin, the architect and a member of the church property committee, explained that the two chimneys were no longer used. The church wanted to contain costs by removing them. It was believed that they were both constructed in 1947, but the rectory chimney may have been a reconstruction of an earlier chimney in the same location. Mr. Bibbins noted that much ~~Colonializing~~ Colonialization occurred at the rectory ~~after~~ before 1940.

There were no questions from members of the public.

Ms. Berg asked if there was precedent for chimney removal in the Old Cambridge Historic District. Mr. Sullivan replied that the request did not come up often, and the Commission had tended to protect chimneys in the

district. He noted that the chimney on the parish house was not a prominent feature, but the line of four repeating chimneys on the rectory was a prominent architectural element.

Mr. Austin described the scope of work required including flashing and repair of vertical masonry joints.

Mr. King said he was often in the minority calling for preservation of chimneys when they are proposed for removal in the Half Crown-Marsh Neighborhood Conservation District. He always took into consideration the prominence of the chimney, its visibility, design features, and impact on the streetscape.

Mr. Shirley agreed. It was necessary to consider how important each chimney was to the building's architectural composition. The chimney on the rectory had architectural relevance while the chimney on the parish house did not. It would be okay to remove the latter.

Dr. Solet noted a chimney's usefulness for providing venting for modern equipment. Mr. Austin said the chimneys were big energy leakers. Mr. Irving said he could be convinced to let both go because they were subsidiary chimneys, not very old, and energy leakers.

Mr. Sullivan noted that the rearmost ell on the rectory was constructed by 1875 and there would have been a chimney there at the time of construction, though he could not be sure it was this same chimney. He spoke of the impressive lineup of repeating chimneys on this very significant building in the district. Even if the chimney was constructed in 1947, it had achieved significance as part of the overall architectural composition.

Mr. Shirley moved to approve the removal of the parish house chimney, with repairs to the masonry in like materials, but to deny the application to remove the rectory chimney, on the basis of its significance as an architectural feature of the building. He further moved to delegate approval of masonry repairs to the staff. Dr. Solet seconded the motion, which passed 5-1, with Mr. Irving voting in opposition.

Determination of Procedure: Alterations to Designated Properties

Case 2590: 99 Brattle St. / 10 Phillips Pl., by Lesley University on behalf of 99 Brattle Street Condominium Association. Alter paving and design of pedestrian paths and courtyard.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and described the path from Phillips Place to the paved plaza between the buildings. He had begun reviewing the project when the scope of work was just repair of the existing features, but as time went by the scope grew and reached a scale that he preferred to bring before the Commission. All the interior pathways were considered to be public ways because it was an open campus.

Will Suter, Lesley University's campus planner, said the purpose of the project was to maintain and repair the plaza. The ADA ramps were being formalized. He summarized the scope of work.

Ms. Berg asked how practical the plantings would be around the large masonry buildings. Andy Elliott, the landscape architect, described the plantings as ground cover and nothing requiring lots of water. Mr. Suter said the plantings at Wright Hall would not be high.

Dr. Solet asked about the color and appearance of the concrete pavers. She recommended seeing a sample next to the building. Mr. Elliott said the color would be similar to the existing pavement. It would contrast with the limestone cladding of Sherrill Hall. George Smith, Director of Operations for Lesley University, said that Sherrill would be washed in coming years, but not right away. It was a beautiful building in 1965 when new.

Mr. Irving moved to approve a certificate of appropriateness for the application, subject to the ten day notice procedures. Dr. Solet seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

Determination of Procedure: Landmark Designation Proceedings

L-94: 9 Ash St., Philip Johnson House. Consider staff recommendation to terminate landmark designation study.

Mr. King reported on a letter of August 19, 2010 from Tanya Iatridis, Director of the University Planning Office at Harvard, describing Harvard University's acquisition of the Johnson House at 9 Ash Street and offering to include it on the list of buildings subject to the Harvard/CHC protocol. He recommended accepting Harvard's commitment and terminating the landmark study of the property.

There was no public comment or questions about the matter.

Mr. Irving so moved. Mr. Shirley seconded, and the motion passed 6-0.

Minutes

Ms. Berg corrected the wording in the second paragraph on page two of the July 1, 2010 minutes to read "vertical branching."

Dr. Solet moved to approve the minutes, as corrected. Ms. Berg seconded, and the motion passed 6-0.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Sullivan reported on the status of the Tudor apartment building at 10 Dana Street, which was characterized by leaded glass windows and an elaborate slate and copper roof. There had been complaints that the condo board was indifferent to preservation issues. Mid Cambridge NCDC review would be non-binding, and the staff was considering whether to initiate a landmark study.

Mr. King asked if the Commission had authority to landmark buildings in Conservation Districts. Mr. Sullivan said there was nothing in the ordinance to prevent it. Mr. Bibbins agreed that the building deserved protection, and asked if storm windows would be appropriate. Mr. Sullivan agreed. Mr. Sullivan told Mr. King that he had not seen the condo agreement.

Mr. Sullivan also reported on the status of 640 Memorial Drive, the former Ford assembly plant now owned by MIT Real Estate. MIT was renovating it for a new tenant, and proposed adding a 30' high acoustic wall on the roof of the 5-story building. He had told the design team that the monolithic structure was inappropriate, and that there would be fewer objections to exposing some of the mechanicals.

Mr. King observed that initiation of a landmark study might have a positive impact on MIT Real Estate.

Other Business

Mr. King said that he wished to discuss the Commission's policies on accepting preservation restrictions and for temporary church signs. He had drafted a policy to authorize staff to approve temporary Certificates of Appropriateness under certain conditions. He wished to schedule a discussion for the October meeting about whether to schedule a hearing in November. Dr. Solet asked for photos of signs that have driven the proposal.

Dr. Solet asked about the proposed amendment to the sign ordinance. Mr. Sullivan explained that the proposal would have no effect on CHC jurisdiction. Signs would have individual letters, not illuminated logos as in a graphic recently published in the Boston Globe.

Mr. Shirley moved to adjourn, and Ms. Berg seconded. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks
Preservation Planner

**Members of the Public
Who Signed Attendance Sheet 9/2/10**

Andrew Brown	96 Upham St, Melrose, MA 02176
Skip Freeman	c/o Owl Club 30 Holyoke St
George Smith	29 Everett St
Ed Nilsson	99 Brattle St
Will Suter	29 Everett St
Andy Elliott	1035 Cambridge St
Brendan Hopkins	45.5 Mt. Auburn St

Town is Cambridge unless otherwise indicated.