

Approved 9/18/11

Minutes of the Cambridge Historical Commission

July 7, 2011 – Cambridge Senior Center, 806 Massachusetts Ave. – 6:00 P.M.

Members present: William King, *Chair*; Bruce Irving, *Vice Chair*; M. Wyllis Bibbins, Chandra Harrington, *Members*; Shary Page Berg, Susannah Tobin, *Alternates*

Members absent: Robert Crocker, Jo Solet, *Members*; Joseph Ferrara, *Alternate*

Staff present: Charles Sullivan, Sarah Burks

Public present: See attached list.

Chair King called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM and made introductions. He designated alternate members Susannah Tobin and Shary Berg to vote on all matters. He described the consent agenda procedure and asked if there were cases for which members of the staff, Commission, or the public thought did not require a full hearing. The following cases were identified for the consent agenda procedure, and no objections were registered:

Case 2728: 1446-1450 Massachusetts Ave., by First Parish in Cambridge, Unitarian Universalist Church. Install two flag poles and flags.

Case 2738: 144 Brattle St., by Stephen Greenblatt and Ramie Targoff. New walkway. Relocate and extend fence. Install gate.

Ms. Tobin moved to approve cases 2728 and 2738 per the consent agenda procedure and subject to approval of construction details by staff. Mr. Irving seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

Public Hearing: Alterations to Designated Properties

Case 2735: 4 Berkeley Pl., by Thomas Byrne/4 Berkeley Place Trust. Exterior modifications including: replace select windows, replace front door, relocated side door, rebuild brick porch, remove one chimney, repave driveway and walkway, install new entry gate posts, construct trellis.

Charles Sullivan showed slides and noted that Berkeley Place was a private way. He described the aspects of the project that would be visible from a public way.

Charles Myer, the architect, described the 1910 house and 1929 addition. He summarized the proposed alterations including replacing a row of windows on the second floor rear, rebuilding the front porch in wood, changing doors, and constructing a trellis. They had decided not to add a third window in the first floor bay.

There were no public questions or comments. Mr. King closed the public comment period.

Mr. Sullivan said the changes were all benign. The brick patching would have to be done carefully. He recommended approving a Certificate of Appropriateness, subject to staff approval of masonry details.

Mr. Myer noted that the ivy was Boston ivy, which did not hurt the mortar like the English ivy. He noted that they would work with the staff to determine a trim paint color, to soften the bright white of the existing.

Ms. Berg moved to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work described, subject to staff review and approval of masonry details and paint colors. Mr. Bibbins seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

Case 2734: 24 Berkeley St., by Jeffrey & Lisa Kerrigan. Demolish rear addition and construct new addition, add new windows and replace windows, replace front door.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and described the 1936 house. The existing one story ell was visible from Berkeley Street, near the corner of Craigie Street.

John Holland, the architect, described previous alterations to the house including dormers and rear additions. He described the scope of work including replacing windows and doors to match existing, adding windows to the side wing (originally a garage), demolishing the rear additions, and building an addition. The new windows would be Pella historic series wood windows with double glazing and simulated divided lights.

Mr. King asked what zoning relief would be required. Mr. Holland answered that the house was non-conforming. Relief was needed for FAR and front and side setbacks.

Ms. Berg asked how construction equipment would access the site. Mr. Holland answered that they would use a mini excavator and pump concrete back to the site.

Ken Taylor of 23 Berkeley Street asked if the ell was original and how the revealed corner would be treated. Would the muntin dimensions match the existing? Was the door surround changing?

Mr. Holland said he thought the ell was added in 1962. A 1x4 wood corner board would be recreated at the corner. The muntin dimensions, moldings, and sills would match the existing. A new door would be milled to match the existing but the surround was not changing.

Mr. Taylor asked if the double- or triple-ganged windows were appropriate for the period. Mr. Sullivan replied that they were not inappropriate.

Mr. Holland indicated that the former garage was being remodeled to look more like a sunroom with the added fenestration. The shutters could be eliminated from the double and triple windows. The intent of the owners was to use the house as a single-family residence. The old basement apartment was not code compliant.

Mr. King closed the public comment period.

Mr. Sullivan was concerned about the masonry details and the windows. What was their condition? Mr. Holland answered that the windows were original, did not close properly, and had significant rot. The majority were unsalvageable. All the windows would match in the new addition and the main house. The muntins would be 7/8" and the sills 2 1/4". The windows would have new sash, brick mold, frame, and trim.

Mr. Irving was skeptical that the existing windows were beyond repair. He was not persuaded to approve replacement of the original windows on the main block of the house at this time. Mr. Holland requested a site visit regarding the windows, or that the matter be delegated to the staff.

Mr. Irving moved to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for all the proposed work except replacement of the existing windows on the front and sides of the main house, with the following conditions: that the shutters on the double or triple windows on the side addition be eliminated, and that the staff approve the masonry details and paint colors. He further moved to schedule a site visit and to delegate a decision about the replacement of windows on the main block of the house to the subcommittee in attendance. Ms. Harrington seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

The site visit was scheduled for Monday, July 18, at 8:00 A.M.

Case 2736: 1280 Massachusetts Ave., by 1280 Mass Ave LP c/o Boston Residential Group. Alter storefronts, replace select windows, install awnings, signs, and lights.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and explained that in past cases the Commission had been interested in maintaining consistency of sign placement on the fascia and maintaining the granite sills, piers and lintels.

Gregory Godfrey of Panera (the new tenant) described the proposed changes, including a blade sign, a wall sign, awnings, relocation of a door, and replacement of 6 second floor windows with operable casements.

Mr. Sullivan suggested reducing the projection of the awnings.

James Williamson of 1000 Jackson Place said the building was one of the most successful newer buildings in Harvard Square. He agreed with Mr. Sullivan that the façade should be consistent.

Mr. King closed the public comment period. He said there were precedents for both blade signs and awnings in the district. He recommended a Certificate of Appropriateness be granted, subject to the staff being satisfied that the awnings and signs are conforming and subject to the staff approval of window details and lighting.

Mr. Bibbins so moved. Ms. Harrington seconded, and the motion passed 6-0.

Case 2737: 15 Hawthorn St., by 15 Hawthorn St LLC c/o President & Fellows of Harvard College. Exterior rehabilitation of house and garage including removal of siding, select window changes, new mudroom, new front steps, repave driveway and new walkway, new fencing.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and described the history of the 1896 house, which had been moved from 100 Brattle Street in 1954. He described its condition and summarized the application.

Alexandra Offiong of Harvard Planning and Project Management noted that the university had received the former boarding house as a gift. The intent was to restore it to single family use.

Mark Boyes-Watson, the architect, described the proposed changes including removal of aluminum siding, restoration of clapboards and trim, restoration of most windows, alteration of some window locations, restoration of the dormers, replacement of the asphalt roofing, construction of a trellis on the garage, removal of a chimney, construction of a mudroom, and hardscaping/landscaping improvements.

There being no public questions or comments, Mr. King closed the public comment period.

Mr. Bibbins moved to approve the application on the condition that the shutters on the double window be eliminated and subject to review of construction details and paint color by staff. Mr. Irving seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

Case 2740: 151 Brattle St., by Ilyas Sikander & Heidi Greiling. Select window replacement, replace skylight, install new mechanical units, remove front porch and reconstruct entry, install new fence and gate, replace side door.

Mr. King noted that recent correspondence had been distributed to the commission members.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and described the Queen Anne house. The original entrance porch had been filled in for a porch. Most of the windows were original. The swimming pool was not visible behind the fence.

Daniel Stieger, the architect, distributed a historic photograph of the house. He described the proposed changes to the kitchen ell and bathroom venting, which would not be visible from a public way. A new air conditioning system would have condensers located at the back corner of the lot with the pool equipment and would not be visible. He reviewed the proposed visible changes, including replacement window sash with new mahogany single glazed sash with 5/8" muntins. He described the five existing fence types and the proposed new fence.

Heights would match existing. He described a rolling gate for the driveway. The proposed colors were Diplomat gray body (existing) and Linen White trim.

Mr. King asked about the condition of the existing windows. Mr. Stieger described damaged muntins, hardware problems, and lack of weatherstripping.

Mr. King noted the correspondence received that expressed concern about the noise of the mechanical equipment at the back corner of the property. He noted that noise was frequently an issue, but the Commission had limited control. The License Commission enforced the noise ordinance. He asked that the proponents be as sensitive as possible to their neighbors' concerns.

Mr. Stieger said they had used the equipment elsewhere successfully. If there was a problem meeting the requirements of the noise ordinance, acoustical materials could be added to address that. There would only be one or two condensers for six zones.

Annette Lamond of 7 Riedesel Avenue noted that her outdoor seating area was about 50' from the proposed equipment. She hoped the proponents would work with a sound engineer to minimize the noise. She asked if the mechanical equipment could be located in the carriage house. Mr. Stieger said her points were well taken and he would look at the detailing closely and try to mitigate the sound as much as possible.

Mr. King closed the public comment period.

Mr. Sullivan expressed concern about the new board fences which were proposed to extend out to the sidewalk. He said they would be visually inappropriate and limit the public's views of the surrounding buildings. He noted that the existing chain link fences were largely transparent. The fences along the side property lines should be lowered to 4' forward of the front corner of the house. The section parallel to Brattle Street should be set back from the front corner. He expressed concern about the proposal to replace all the sash in the house and the side lights on one door. The sidelights dated to a significant alteration of the 1920s. Mr. Stieger indicated that the fence was intended to provide a safe play area for the young children of the owners. He offered to investigate lower, more transparent side lot line fences.

Mr. Irving applauded the detailing of the proposed replacement sash, but questioned the need to replace the existing. Many of the issues raised could be repaired. Sarah Burks noted that all new sash would mean all new glass as well, which would have a different character than the existing. Mr. Sullivan proposed getting a window restorer's evaluation of the existing windows.

Ms. Tobin moved to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness on the condition that the fences be lowered as recommended by the staff and pending staff approval of sash replacement following a report by a window restoration consultant. Ms. Berg seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

Mr. King called for a brief recess at 8:34 P.M. and reconvened the meeting at 8:40 P.M.

Public Hearing: Demolition Review

Case D-1229: 151 Raymond St., by Charles Mahoney. Demolish house (1875).

Mr. King explained the demolition delay ordinance and review process.

Ms. Burks showed slides and summarized the staff memo about the late Italianate house and its subsequent alterations. She described the significance of the building based on its associations with the New England Brick Company's subdivision of land and as an early example of residential construction on the northern extent of Raymond Street.

Alex Svirsky, the architect, described the design concept for modern town houses on the site. The existing building was non-conforming, complicating its rehab potential, and it had little architectural value. The proposed new construction maxed out the FAR potential of the site at .75. He described the exterior materials as fiber cement boards or panels, with large glazed openings. Each unit would have yard space and a parking space.

Mr. Bibbins asked about the different elevation options A & B. Mr. Svirsky clarified that front elevation B on sheet A3 was the current proposal.

Nancy Wexler of 155 Raymond Street asked about the parking arrangements and landscaping. She noted that it would look very different from the other houses on the street. Mr. Svirsky noted that the interior of the house had been so thoroughly changed that only one old door remained. The conditions were unsanitary.

Matt Hayes, one of the developers, said the project would use conventional materials with a modern design, in a similar way to the Housing Authority's project at Walden Square.

Mr. King questioned the significance of the existing house. He asked about the effect on the streetscape. He noted that the new buildings further down the street had larger windows. Mr. Irving agreed that the design had too many small windows.

Ms. Harrington moved to find the house not significant. Ms. Berg seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

Mr. Sullivan recommended that parking not be located in front of the new building, because it would have a negative impact on the streetscape.

Case D-1230: 60 Clifton St., by Gary S. Twombly o/b/o Emery Homes LLC. Demolish house (1855).

Ms. Burks showed slides and summarized the staff memo. She recommended finding the 1855 workers cottage (relocated from Rindge Avenue in 1859) significant for its important associations with the architectural and social history of the city, as well as for its architectural significance in terms of its period, style and method of building construction, both individually and in the context of the Race Course subdivision. It was the same age and style as the neighboring house at 66 Clifton Street.

Mr. King explained the demolition review process.

Kevin Emery, the developer, displayed a site plan and elevations for a new double house similar to ones he put up at 122 Clifton Street and 70-72 Harvey Street. He said the project was zoning compliant. The design was desirable and sold well in previous projects.

Penny Brigham of 61 Clifton Street noted that the abutting Russell Field had environmental issues in the soil, and said this site should be tested. How would excavation of the basement affect the water table in the area? Mr. Emery said the city required all water to remain on the site. He would probably need to build drains and dry wells to meet those requirements. He did not know the content of the soil.

Cheryl Webb of 64 Clifton Street noted that the city had capped the park with 6' of soil because the ground was contaminated. There was a retaining wall along the lot line between 60 and 64 Clifton; her lot was lower. What would happen to the water on her lot? How far would the new building be from hers?

Mr. Emery answered that the new building would be 7'-6" from the side lot line.

Mr. King clarified the Historical Commission's jurisdiction and review process.

Cheryl Webb asked if Mr. Emery couldn't rehab the existing house and build something of similar scale in the back. She asked if he would be removing trees. Had the lot been surveyed? Would the retaining wall remain?

Mr. Emery answered that such a design would require a variance. He said the back 30' of the lot would not be changed. The lot had not yet been surveyed. The fence would be set in a couple of inches from the lot line. He was not sure about the wall.

Dolores Webb of 64 Clifton Street said the park was contaminated with asbestos from W. R. Grace and was capped over.

Richard Clarey of the North Cambridge Stabilization Committee asked for a decision that would allow more time for the neighbors to discuss the details of the project with Mr. Emery. The deep lot was typical for the neighborhood. Developments such as the one proposed were causing a lot of historic open space to be lost.

Michael Brandon, the clerk of the North Cambridge Stabilization Committee, urged the Commission to find the building significant and preferably preserved. It would allow time to explore other options such as rehab and a new detached structure. He commented that the cookie-cutter designs were problematic.

Penny Brigham of 61 Clifton Street asked that the Commission show equal concern for the architecture of her neighborhood as it had in the previous cases on the agenda. Mr. King noted that the Commission spent as much time on demolition review and neighborhood conservation district issues as on historic district cases. He closed the public comment period.

Mr. Irving moved to find the building significant for the reasons set forth in the staff report, and as defined in the ordinance. Ms. Berg seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0.

Ms. Harrington noted how well the similar house at 66 Clifton Street had been renovated.

Mr. Irving commented on the irony of that some streets in the Race Course neighborhood had originally exhibited the cookie-cutter syndrome, and how that compared with Mr. Emery's repeated design for townhouses. Many of the early houses have been altered, and the same individualization could occur over time with the townhouses. He observed that the existing house could be recycled and recalled Guy Asaph's Jay Street project, where an old house was attached to a new building.

Mr. Bibbins moved to find the existing house preferably preserved in the context of the proposed replacement building. Ms. Tobin seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

Mr. King said that backyard infill was an issue in other neighborhoods and was worthy of discussion.

Preservation Grants and Municipal Projects Proposed for CPA Funding: Make Recommendations

Mr. Sullivan summarized his July 1 memo about Preservation Grants. The current balance in the grant fund was \$46,000. He was not ready to recommend any new grants for the remainder of the fiscal year because the available funds were so low. Applications from the Old Cambridge Baptist Church and the CCAE's Brattle House had already been deferred. New applications had been received from the Christian Science Church, St. Paul's Church, First Parish Church, and Just-A-Start for the former Lithuanian parish church.

David Ray, the chair of the building committee at First Parish Church, explained that the north wall of the building was in bad disrepair and was probably leaking behind the sill. He proposed full replacement of the wood cladding on that side, to match the same design. Mr. King asked if the church was treating this as a major capital project. Mr. Ray replied that it was being treated as such and the church had a history of raising money for capital improvements because it did not want to go too deeply into its endowment. Mr. Sullivan noted that a conductor pipe had collapsed halfway down the side of the building, which was an easy repair that should have been made right away.

Mr. Sullivan asked the Commission to identify its priorities for future funding. Ms. Berg indicated priority for the needs at First Parish Church and St. Paul's Church and then the Lithuanian Church. Further discussion ensued.

Mr. Sullivan reviewed his July 7 memo regarding municipal requests for CPA funds for FY 2012. The Commissioners agreed with Mr. Sullivan's recommendations.

New Business, Determination of Procedure:

Potential Landmark Studies

Kendall Square Building, 238 Main St. (1917, William L. Mowll);
J. L. Hammett Building, 264 Main St. (1915, Densmore & LeClear); and
Suffolk Engraving & Electrotyping Building, 292 Main St. (1920, John C. Spofford).

Mr. King suggested that a public hearing be scheduled for the Kendall Square group of buildings.

Mr. Irving moved to schedule the hearing for August 4, 2011. Ms. Tobin seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

13 Kennedy Road (1963, James Freeman, architect)

Mr. Irving recused himself because a client might be interested in the property. He left the meeting.

Mr. Sullivan described the house located just outside the Old Cambridge Historic District. Because it was less than 50 years old, the Commission would have no jurisdiction to review a demolition permit request. He noted that the house was not visible from a public way, making it difficult to exercise jurisdiction over alterations. Nevertheless, it seemed to be a significant house for the period.

Ms. Berg suggested that the house be documented and that David Fixler of the local DOCOMOMO chapter be asked to spread the word of the house's availability. Mr. King suggested that a hearing be scheduled to discuss a possible landmark study.

Mr. Sullivan noted that there was another threatened building in the same area, at 45 Fayerweather Street - the Bogner House. Mr. Bibbins said that that was clearly a significant Modern building

It was the consensus of the Commission to schedule public hearings for August 4 to discuss potential landmark studies for both 13 Kennedy Road and 45 Fayerweather Street.

a. Alterations to Designated Properties

Case 2747: 1 Brattle Sq., by Wells REIT – One Brattle Square I, LLC o/b/o Zynga, Inc., tenant. Install dish antenna on roof.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and summarized the application for a new rooftop antenna.

Ms. Berg moved to approve the application, subject to the 10-day notice procedure. Ms. Tobin seconded the motion, which passed 5-0.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. King asked about the continued hearing for Christ Church's application to make accessibility and lighting changes. Mr. Sullivan recommended that it be continued again to the September meeting and to give the church notice of such continuance.

Ms. Harrington so moved. Ms. Tobin seconded, and the motion passed 6-0.

Mr. King noted that interviews were ongoing with the Boston Society of Architect nominees to fill the vacancy on the Commission left when Frank Shirley had resigned.

Ms. Tobin moved to adjourn. Ms. Berg seconded the motion, which passed 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 11:10 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks
Preservation Planner

**Members of the Public
Who Signed Attendance Sheet 7/7/11**

Kenneth Taylor	23 Berkeley St
Stephen Hanna	79 Parsons St, Brighton, 02135
Thomas Byrne	4 Berkeley Pl
Charles Myer	875 Main St
Penny Brigham	61 Clifton St
Jessica Brown	741 Mt. Auburn St, Watertown, MA 02472
Steve Nason	29 Lopez St
Alexandria Offiong	1350 Massachusetts Ave
Gary Hildebrand	741 Mt. Auburn St, Watertown, MA 02472
Mark Boyes-Watson	30 Bow St, Somerville, MA 02143
Dolores Webb	64 Clifton St
Rich Clarey	15 Brookford St
Nancy Wexler	155 Raymond St
Michael Brandon	27 Seven Pines Ave
James Williamson	1000 Jackson Pl
Cheryl Webb	64 Clifton St

Town is Cambridge unless otherwise indicated.