

Approved 11/13/11

## Minutes of the Cambridge Historical Commission

October 6, 2011, 6:00 P.M. Cambridge Senior Center, 806 Massachusetts Ave.

Members present: Bruce Irving, *Vice Chair*; M. Wyllis Bibbins, Robert Crocker, Chandra Harrington, Jo Solet, *Members*; Shary Page Berg, Joseph Ferrara, *Alternates*

Members absent: William King, *Chair*; Susannah Tobin, *Alternate*

Staff present: Sarah Burks

Public present: See attached list.

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Vice Chair Irving called the meeting to order at 6:07 P.M. and made introductions. He designated alternates Joseph Ferrara and Shary Berg to vote on all matters. He reviewed the consent agenda procedures and asked if there were any cases which members of the staff, Commission, or the public thought did not require a full hearing. Mr. Ferrara moved to approve the following cases according the consent agenda procedures and subject to review of construction details by the Executive Director.

**Case 2782: 16 Garden St., by Commander Realty Assoc. Nominee Trust.** Alter two windows and add louvers.

**Case 2783: 190 Brattle St., by Marjorie Garber.** Construct basement addition beneath rear deck.

Dr. Solet seconded the motion, which passed 7-0.

### Public Hearing: Alterations to Designated Properties

**Case 2094 (Amendment): 424-432 Windsor St., by Just-A-Start Corp.** Modify plans previously-approved for Certificate of Appropriateness to include change in location of A/C condenser and construction of access ramp.

Ms. Burks showed slides and summarized the requested amendments.

Sharon Cowan, the project manager, indicated that the accessible walkway to the front door of the former church was a requirement of Inspectional Services, as they interpreted the code. She described the walkway and railings. She described the relocation of two condensers from behind the rectory—one to the inside of the garage and one to the left side of the former church.

Dr. Solet encouraged the use of acoustical panels to dampen the noise of the condenser units between the former church and the former rectory. Steve Hiserodt of Boyes-Watson Architects said they would take all precautions and look into the use of the panels.

There were no public comments or questions of fact.

Ms. Berg asked about materials on the accessible walkway. Mr. Hiserodt replied that it would be medium brushed concrete, to match the other walks.

Dr. Solet moved to approve the amendments for access and air conditioning, recognizing the proponents' consideration of using acoustical panels. Mr. Ferrara seconded the motion, adding that construction details be delegated to the staff. The motion passed 7-0.

**Case 2717 (continued): 1131 Massachusetts Ave./1-5 Remington St., by Veritas at Harvard Square, LLC.** Application for Certificate of Hardship for existing transformer, installed previously in violation of Case 1956.

Ms. Burks showed slides and summarized the case history.

James Rafferty, attorney for the owners, apologized that the principals of the hotel were not present. He explained that they had made progress in the discussions with NSTAR. The easement for the transformer pad was

for a smaller pad, but NSTAR later told the hotel that it needed to be twice the size. He said that Bill Zamparelli of NSTAR had indicated that the pad size had been increased so that other properties on Remington Street could be serviced by the transformer and so the pole mounted transformers across the street could be removed. He said they had asked NSTAR to return to the original size pad and a smaller transformer unit. They had looked at other locations on the site, which though they wouldn't accommodate the existing transformer, might accommodate a smaller transformer. NSTAR said they would look into it. It was unclear who would do the work or pay for it, if it proved possible. NSTAR had been asked to come, but they thought it was premature. The role of the Pole & Conduit Commission was relevant because NSTAR had met their concerns.

Ms. Burks noted that the Pole & Conduit Commission only reviews work in the public way. They did, as she understood it, approve the removal of the pole mounted transformers, but did not review the placement or size of the transformer pad.

Mr. Rafferty said he had not yet been able to learn which properties were being serviced by the existing transformer. It might also have been designed to accommodate future capacity. It was certainly bigger than it needed to be for the hotel alone and bigger than originally intended. He requested a continuance to the December meeting in order to continue discussions with NSTAR.

Dr. Solet moved to approve the continuance. Ms. Berg seconded the motion, which passed 7-0.

**Case 2784: 7 Waterhouse St., by Michal and Moshe Safdie.** Install elevator, rebuild addition, expand dormer.

Ms. Burks showed slides and described the history of the house. She described the limits of visibility of the rear portion of the house.

Mr. Safdie noted that the garage had been constructed before he bought the house. He described the proposal to rebuild the 1973 living room addition, add an elevator, and widen a dormer. The roof of the living room would be lowered. The proposed work would not be visible from a public way. He explained that the dormer (built 1983) would accommodate the elevator without requiring an additional penthouse. Repairs to the front of the house would include shutters and water damage.

Marilee Meyer of 10 Dana Street asked whether the Commission was responsible for protecting the whole house or if it was restricted to what was visible from a public way. She was concerned the house would be negatively impacted. She objected to the expansion of the dormer. The transition from old to new did not work. Mr. Irving answered that the Commission's jurisdiction did not extend to alterations not visible from a public way.

Dr. Solet moved to approve a Certificate of Nonapplicability, on the basis that the work would not be visible from a public way and for repairs in kind, subject to approval of construction details by the staff. Mr. Ferrara seconded the motion, which passed 7-0.

Dr. Solet asked about the noisy white plastic pipe in the front yard. Mr. Safdie said he would try to fix it.

#### Public Hearing: Landmark Designation Proceedings

**Case L-104: 28 Fayerweather St., Arthur Astor Carey House** (1881, Sturgis & Brigham, architects), owned by Susan Weld. Consider initiating a landmark designation study.

Ms. Burks showed slides and reviewed the staff memo regarding the architecture and history of the house. It was one of the earliest examples of the Colonial Revival style in the northeast. The architects had been influenced by the Hancock House that had been demolished in Boston in 1863.

Ms. Meyer added that the original owner, Arthur Astor Carey, was very important. He was one of the founders of the Boston Society of the Arts & Crafts. It was a very important house for architectural historians.

Mr. Bibbins noted that Sturgis had made drawings of the Hancock House before it was demolished.

There were no public comments or questions.

Mr. Ferrara moved to initiate a designation study. Mr. Crocker seconded, and the motion passed 7-0.

#### Public Hearings: Demolition Review

**Case D-1227: 2-10 Brattle Circle, by Brattle Circle Series E Trust.** Review previous demolition case finding of not preferably preserved in view of amended construction plans.

Ms. Burks showed slides and reported that the project had been amended during the course of Planning Board and Board of Zoning Appeal review. The amended proposal was brought back to the CHC for review.

James Rafferty, attorney for the owners, explained that a variance had been received from the Board of Zoning Appeal and a townhouse special permit from the Planning Board. The project had been changed from 10 units to 7. The GFA had been reduced by 3,000 square feet. The amount of demolition remained nearly the same. The front of 2 Brattle Circle would still be restored. Previously, all the buildings were attached with covered walkways, but in the amended plan some were fully detached. Unit 3 was a stand-alone one-story unit. Townhomes are generally semi-attached; another special permit would be required to have unit 3 be fully detached.

Ms. Berg asked about parking. Mr. Rafferty replied that parking on the circle was not proposed and had been worked out with the neighbors. A variance was granted to park in the front setback, so as not to park on the circle. More than the minimum number of parking spaces would be provided.

Ms. Burks commented that the removal of the covered walkways was beneficial in that it would maintain more of the original character of a grouping of detached buildings.

Dr. Solet asked about paving materials for the walkways. Mark Boyes-Watson, the architect, said that the walkways might be brick. The extent of demolition of the ell of #2 Brattle Circle would increase by about 6' in depth from the original proposal. The first two bays of the ell and the projecting bay window would be retained. The additional demolition was required to achieve a separation between buildings.

Ms. Meyer liked the idea of separating the historic building and having it free standing.

Mr. Irving closed the public comment period.

Mr. Ferrara said the design had improved from the previous proposal. He asked if the roof of the garage would be prominently visible from Mt. Auburn Street. He recommended pulling the garage back into the mass of units #6 and #7. Mr. Boyes-Watson explained that the grade dropped too much between the garage and the street. Mr. Rafferty said that other boards had discussed the garage. The townhouse requirements make it necessary that a garage not be communal, but part of a particular townhouse. Mr. Boyes-Watson said any changes to the garage would mean delays and return trips to the other boards for approval.

Dr. Solet said that mechanical equipment was not noted on the plan. She recommended that mechanical arrangements be reviewed and approved by staff.

Ms. Burks said it was regrettable to lose the additional 6' of the ell of #2 Brattle Circle but overall, the proposal was improved with less GFA and removal of the connectors.

Mr. Ferrara moved to confirm the original finding of preferably preserved in the context of the amended plans, with the recommendation to consider adding a balustrade on the garage roof or other such improvement. He further moved that construction and renovation details and review and approval of the mechanical arrangements be delegated to the staff. Ms. Berg seconded the motion, which passed 7-0.

**Case D-1243: 23-25 Cottage Park Ave., by Beantown Properties.** Demolish Quonset hut (by 1946) for parking lot associated with residential conversion of 22 Cottage Park Ave.

Mark Resnick, an owner, requested a continuance of one month in order that he could meet with the North Cambridge Stabilization Committee about his project. Michael Brandon suggested a longer continuance.

Dr. Solet moved to approve the applicant's request for a one-month continuance and to advertise the matter on the November meeting agenda. Ms. Harrington seconded the motion, which passed 7-0.

#### Preservation Grants

Ms. Burks showed slides and reviewed the grant requests. The current available balance was \$565,000. She reviewed the staff recommendations shown below:

##### Institutional Preservation Grants:

					Recommended:
IPG 11-7	13 Waterhouse St.	First Ch. of Christ, Scientist #3	\$11,500	Recoat dome	\$5,000
IPG 11-8	29 Mt. Auburn St.	St. Paul's Church #2	\$50,000	Masonry repair	\$30,000
IPG 12-1	1450 Mass. Ave	First Parish Unitarian	\$50,000	Wall repairs	\$25,000 if down-spouts repaired
IPG 12-2	1418 Camb. St.	First United Presb. Church #3	\$32,000	Exterior trim	\$15,000
IPG 12-3	9 Waterhouse St.	Mercy Corps #2	\$63,400	Water damage	\$30,000
IPG 12-4	0 Garden St.	Christ Church	\$100,000	Exterior rest.	\$30,000
IPG 10-4	820 Mass. Ave.	Cambridge YMCA	\$50,000	Masonry	\$50,000

##### Affordable Housing Preservation Grants:

					Recommended:
PG 11-8	424-432 Windsor Street	JAS	\$50,000	Exterior restoration	\$30,000
PG 12-1	14 Carlisle Street	HRI	\$30,000	Strip and restore	\$30,000
PG 12-2	18-20 Carlisle Street	HRI	\$30,000	Strip and restore	\$30,000
PG 12-3	171-173 Columbia Street	HRI	\$30,000	Strip and restore	\$30,000
PG 12-4	175-177 Columbia Street	HRI	\$30,000	Strip and restore	\$30,000
PG 12-5	300 Prospect Street	HRI	\$30,000	Strip and restore	\$30,000

Ms. Berg moved to approve all grants as recommended. Mr. Bibbins seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

#### New Business

Mr. Irving distributed copies of his book, *New England Icons: Shaker Villages, Saltboxes, Stone Walls and Steeples*, to each of the commissioners and staff.

Dr. Solet moved to adjourn. Mr. Crocker seconded, and the motion passed 7-0 at 8:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks  
Preservation Planner

**Members of the Public  
Who Signed Attendance Sheet 10/6/11**

Marilee Meyer	10 Dana St #404
Marjorie Garber	190 Brattle St
Sharon Cowan	Just A Start
Beth Whitaker	190 Brattle St
David O'Sullivan	580 Main St, Ste #204, Reading 01867
Michael Brandon	27 Seven Pines Ave
Robert Purdy	1515 Washington St, Braintree 02184

Town is Cambridge unless otherwise indicated.