

Approved 10/4/2012

Minutes of the Cambridge Historical Commission

September 6, 2012 - 806 Massachusetts Avenue, 2nd Floor - 6:00 P.M.

Members present: William B. King, *Chair* and Bruce Irving, *Vice Chair*
M. Wyllis Bibbins, Robert Crocker, Chandra Harrington, Jo M. Solet, *Members*
Joseph Ferrara, *Alternate Member*

Members absent: Shary Page Berg and Susannah Tobin, *Alternate Members*

Staff present: Charles Sullivan, Sarah Burks

Public present: See attached list.

Chair King called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and made introductions. He dispensed with the consent agenda and explained hearing procedures and the landmark designation ordinance.

Public Hearings: Landmark Designation Procedures:

Cases L-100-101-102 (continued): Kendall Square Building, 238 Main St., J. L. Hammett Building, 264 Main St. a.k.a. 290 Main St., and the Suffolk Engraving & Electrotyping Building, 292 Main St. M.I.T. Investment Management Co., owner.

Mr. King noted that the hearing had been advertised inadvertently and would not be held.

Public Hearings: Alterations to Designated Properties

Case 2935: 130 Brattle St., by Daryoosh Vakhshoori & Julia Holderness. Change exterior paint colors; Relocate vent; Install chimney cap.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and explained that the house had been built as a single family but later split into two condominiums. The proposed changes were for the front unit. He summarized the application for a vent and chimney cap. Shingle repairs prompted the need to paint the house. He pointed out that there was a pre-existing violation with the two white PVC furnace vents installed in the brick foundation without approval.

C. Blackmore of America Dural Architects noted the chimney location and described the new range vent. The owners were discussing possible color changes in consultation with Susan Maycock of the Commission staff, but no decisions had been made.

Mr. King asked if one uniform paint scheme would be used on the whole building and Mr. Blackmore replied in the affirmative. Julia Holderness, an owner, indicated that samples would be put up within a few days.

Alan Dworsky of 8 Mercer Circle expressed interest in the color selection. He asked if he would have an opportunity to comment on the colors. Dr. Solet suggested that he discuss the samples with his neighbors. Mr. Dworsky remarked that Dean Acheson and Cole Porter had been roommates in the house. Ms. Holderness added that they liked to entertain and almost got expelled from the Law School.

[Mr. Ferrara arrived].

Mr. Irving moved to approve the application as submitted, on the following conditions,

- that the white furnace vents installed without approval by a prior owner be painted black or to match the color of the adjacent foundation
- that the new colors be approved by the Commission staff and that they be agreed upon by both sets of owners in consultation with Mr. Dworsky. If agreement could not be reached then the matter must be addressed by the full commission at a public hearing.

Dr. Solet seconded the motion. The motion carried 6-0, with Mr. Ferrara not voting.

Case 2936: 16 Craigie St., by Inmaculada Silos-Santiago & Thomas F. Deuel. Demolish rear addition and construct new addition. Alter rear porch and stair.

Mr. King designated alternate member Mr. Ferrara to vote on all remaining matters.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and described the Second Empire style house. He described the International Style addition that was built behind it in 1961 for the Thayer family. It was designed by Edward Diehl, a recent graduate of GSD. The addition consisted of very thin roof and floor plates, yellow pine timbers, and glass walls. The structure was supported by Lally columns. The uninsulated room was designed for seasonal use. The addition was significant architecturally, though certainly incongruous to the original house. The owners had been studying ways to renovate it for two years, but the condition of the structure, current codes, and the importance of the original thin, light supports to the design made it a very difficult proposition. They had concluded that it could not be renovated without completely rebuilding it and impacting its integrity. Charles Myer had designed a proposed new addition in a traditional style that would be similar in materials and details to the original house.

Charles Myer, the architect, explained the decision to demolish the 1961 addition. A structural engineer had been consulted. A new facsimile would be neither practical nor authentic. The existing room bifurcated the back yard, while his proposed addition would be smaller in footprint. A landscaping plan was not part of the application. He showed elevations and described the proposed design. He noted materials, window changes at the back of the house, and the changes to the rear porch.

Mr. Sullivan said the proposed design was consistent with one of two approaches he had laid out (either clearly contemporary addition or matching the architectural style of the original). He agreed the owners had gone an extra mile to try to preserve the existing addition, but it just wasn't feasible.

Chandra Harrington asked about the roofing of the existing two-story rear bay; it was tar-and-gravel.

Dr. Solet asked about the view from Berkeley Place. Mr. Sullivan answered that Berkeley Place was a private way. The view of the rear elevation from the Berkeley Street was minimal even in winter.

Mr. Ferrara asked whether there would be similar changes to the glass walls of the front porch. Mr. Myer said the steel columns and glass panels had probably been installed at the same time as the addition and were similar in concept. The location of the old balustrade could still be seen. There was no current proposal for changes to the front porch. Dr. Solet commented that she had grown to like the glass panels at the front porch. They have a practical use in protecting one from the weather. Mr. Sullivan agreed.

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

Mr. Ferrara commended the restraint of the new addition. It was appropriate in that it maintained the primacy of the original house and respected its materials and details.

Dr. Solet suggested that the 1961 addition be documented with photographs. Mr. Myer said that could be done. He noted that they had donated Diehl's original plans for the addition to the Historical Commission archive. Mr. King recommended keeping a photograph of the addition in the house as a record.

Dr. Solet moved to approve the plans as submitted. Mr. Ferrara seconded, and the motion passed 7-0.

Case 2937: 7 Phillips Pl., by Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. Exterior renovations to building, landscape structures, mechanicals, and lighting.

Case 2938: 9 Phillips Pl., by Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. Exterior renovations to building, landscape structures, mechanicals and lighting. Construct new porch.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides of 7 and 9 Phillips Place, both recently purchased by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. He explained that there had been many alterations made to 9 Phillips Place, although 7 was nearly intact. Both buildings had been in institutional ownership for many years.

Jonathan Austin, the architect, displayed a proposed site plan and explained that the owner would use the buildings for offices. A new sloped walkway and new porch would be constructed at #9 and a new ramp would be constructed at the back of the side porch of #7 for accessibility. He had met the abutters, Nancy and Lloyd Aiello, to discuss the proposal and had made some modifications in response to their feedback. He noted that in a later phase the porch of #7 would be enclosed. Two specimen trees would be protected. Signage would be discreet. Air conditioning condensers would be located behind #7, where they would be least conspicuous. The fences were not yet finalized, but would likely be picket fences.

Dr. Solet commended the proponents for meeting with the neighbors. Cars had in the past parked behind the fence on the Berkeley Street side of #9. She cautioned that putting the condensers between #7 and the hotel could cause reverberations. She encouraged the designers to avoid security lights that could be a nuisance.

Levering White of the Lincoln Institute said that employees were encouraged to use public transportation.

Mr. Austin said there were two parking spaces in the driveway of #9 and no new spaces would be added. He noted that low bollard-type lights would be installed along the path to #7 and lighting design improved at #9.

Mr. Austin told Ms. Meyer that the porch enclosure at #7 would be glass with a wood frame.

Dr. Aiello commented on the placement of condensers. The worst place would be where mechanical noise would be generated from a different direction. Since there was already noise coming from the hotel, adding them there was preferable to another side of the property. He noted that a high pitched noise would be problematic.

Mrs. Aiello thanked Mr. Austin for consulting with them. She noted that trucks often jumped the curb at the corner of Berkeley Street and Phillips Place. A fence at the corner might be damaged.

Mr. King closed the public comment period.

Mr. Sullivan asked if the three new skylights at #7 were necessary. Could they be moved to face the hotel? Their presence signaled a more intense institutional use. Mr. Austin answered that one or two could potentially be moved. Mr. Sullivan asked if the new porch at #9 needed a roof. It was very shallow and not very functional. Mr. Austin answered that it was shallow because he did not want it to extend further than the existing bay. Mr. Ferrara commented that the horizontal line of the porch roof was welcome on an otherwise bare elevation.

Mr. Irving moved to approve the application for #9 as presented, subject to approval by the Commission of the fences and signs and approval by staff of construction details and colors. Ms. Harrington seconded the motion, which passed 7-0.

Mr. Irving moved to approve the application for #7 as presented with the amended ramp design and with the strong recommendation that the number of skylights be reduced. He further moved that the approval was con-

ditioned on the approval of skylights and paint colors by the staff. Ms. Harrington seconded the motion, which passed 7-0.

New Business: Determination of Procedure: Alterations to Designated Properties

Case 2784 (Amendment): 7 Waterhouse St., by Moshe Safdie. Clarify drawings to indicate demolition of existing trellis and shade assembly over rear deck and construction of new trellis and shade assembly.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and described the house. He reported that the Commission had approved the demolition of the existing addition and dormer and construction of a new addition and expanded dormer with a Certificate of Nonapplicability because of lack of visibility from a public way. The existing trellis was partially visible from Waterhouse Street. The permit plans indicated this was to be demolished and rebuilt in a different form, which was not noted on the schematics previously reviewed by the Commission.

Matthew Longo of Safdie Architects indicated the shape of the proposed smaller trellis. It would be white and made of aluminum. A motorized fabric shade, similar to the existing, would be installed on the trellis.

Dr. Solet reminded the architect about an unapproved pipe. The applicant said he would look into it.

Ms. Burks asked about the changes at the mudroom entrance by the garage. Mr. Longo said that the step would be increased and the trim would be modified below the window. The size of the glass would not change.

Marilee Meyer of 10 Dana Street was irritated that the addition had been granted a Certificate of Nonapplicability. She disapproved of the extent of alterations to the historic house.

Mr. King closed the public comment period.

Dr. Solet moved to amend the Certificate of Nonapplicability to include the changes to the design, in light of the minimal public view of the existing trellis and the diminished impact of the new one. Mr. Irving seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

Minutes

Ms. Harrington and Mr. King offered corrections to the August 9 minutes including adding the phrase “was presently” to the second to last sentence of the second paragraph on page one and rephrasing the fourth paragraph from the bottom on page 5 to read, “...as shown on the site plan submitted...” as well as correcting the spelling of Ed Rice’s last name.

Ms. Harrington moved to approve the corrected minutes. Mr. Irving seconded, and the motion passed 7-0.

Executive Director’s Report

Mr. Sullivan reported on the Conductors Building on Mt. Auburn Street, which might be reused as a bar. Asbestos abatement was underway. Reuse of the Harvard Square Theater was still under study. The Martin Luther King, Jr. School on Putnam Avenue was slated for demolition by the City. Built in 1970, it was not yet 50 years old. He also reported that Christ Church was studying interior rearrangements in the sanctuary.

Mr. Irving moved to adjourn. Ms. Harrington seconded, and the motion passed unanimously at 8:16 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks
Preservation Planner

**Members of the Public
Who Signed Attendance Sheet 9/6/12**

Lloyd and Nancy Aiello	2/5 Berkeley St
Thomas F. Deuel	16 Craigie St
John Sanzone	540 Memorial Dr. #304
Charles Myer	875 Main St
Ted Schwartz	143 Huron Ave
Marilee Meyer	10 Dana St

Town is Cambridge unless otherwise indicated.