

Approved 5/2/13

Minutes of the Cambridge Historical Commission

February 7, 2013 - 806 Massachusetts Avenue - 6:00 P.M.

Members present: William King, Chair; William Barry, M. Wyllis Bibbins, Robert Crocker, Chandra Harrington, Jo M. Solet, Members; Shary Page Berg, Joseph Ferrara, Alternate Members

Members absent: Bruce Irving, Member; Susannah Tobin, *Alternate Member*

Staff present: Charles Sullivan, Executive Director, Sarah Burks, Preservation Planner

Public present: See attached list.

Chair King called the meeting to order at 6:05 P.M. and introduced a new member, William Barry. He explained the consent agenda and hearing procedures and designated the alternates to take turns voting.

Mr. Sullivan suggested that Case 3001: 16 Longfellow Park be approved per the consent agenda. Dr. Solet so moved, Mr. Bibbins seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Hearing: Landmark Designation Proceedings

Case L-111: 18 White St., by Porter Square Properties, LLC. Consider initiating a landmark designation study for a preferably preserved significant building (1872).

Mr. Sullivan showed slides of the building, which had been found significant and preferably preserved on July 12, 2012. He noted that the staff had missed the five-month hearing, and the demolition delay period had already expired. The owner had requested a postponement, but he recommended that the Commission proceed with the advertised hearing.

Mr. King asked whether the owner still had the right to submit a revised proposal if the Commission initiated a designation study. Mr. Sullivan replied in the affirmative.

Mr. King asked for questions or comments from members of the public.

Sean Hope, attorney for owner Ben Rogan, said that the project was scheduled for review by CDD on February 25. They were expecting a lot of community feedback, so a determination tonight might be premature. The transitional Business C district allowed greater density than a residential district. The Commission should consider designating all the houses on White Street, not just this one. Mr. Rogan added that the house was not an uncommon type in Cambridge.

Marilee Meyer of 10 Dana Street asked if 18 White was the purest example of its type in the neighborhood. Mr. King answered that there were several others like it. Most of the street was in Somerville.

Mr. Sullivan said that the neighborhood context was severely compromised by the shopping center across the street. Even the three houses together were of marginal significance.

Ms. Harrington said that 32 White had been carefully restored, and asked if the staff had been in touch with the Somerville Historical Commission. Mr. Sullivan said they had not.

Mr. Bibbins noted that the area had significantly changed from its original character, and it was no longer an ideal residential neighborhood.

Mr. King said that he voted to find the building preferably preserved in the hope that design improvements could be made during the delay. Mr. Rogan had indicated that changes were underway, so perhaps a deci-

sion should be postponed until after CDD had reviewed the project. Mr. Sullivan pointed out that the demolition delay period had expired. The only decision before the Commission was whether the property as it stood was eligible for landmark designation.

Dr. Solet asked Mr. Rogan if he would be willing to confer with staff about the new design. Mr. Sullivan noted that he could attend the large project review at CDD and report back.

Mr. Bibbins moved that the Commission decline to initiate a landmark study for 18 White Street. Ms. Harington seconded, and the motion passed unanimously with Mr. Ferrara voting.

Public Hearings: Alterations to Designated Properties

Case 2806 (Continued): Harvard Yard Fence, by President & Fellows of Harvard College. Install exhibition panels on the north side of the Harvard Yard fence.

Mr. King noted that the Commission had met on site on February 25. Mr. Barry had not been present, so he designated both alternates to vote.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and summarized the proceedings. Gary Hammer of Harvard Planning noted that actual panels had been installed for the site visit, not mock-ups.

Tanya Iatrides of Harvard Planning said that her team had taken the comments into account. They wished to eliminate five panels, so the installation would be only between the Meyer and Holworthy gates. The panels would be present only for the fall and spring semesters, and would be taken down for the winter and summer holidays.

Dr. Solet found the black color objectionable, and asked if the panels could be gray. Eric Prince, the designer, said they were intended to match the fence but could be different if desired.

Francis Donovan of 42 Irving Street asked what criteria the Commission would use to decide the case. Mr. Sullivan said the Commission had to find the proposal appropriate or not incongruous to the structure and the district. Mr. King noted that the decision would represent the collective judgment of seven members.

Matt Clarida of the Harvard Crimson noted that there was already exhibition space in the Yard; why were the new panels necessary? Would there be more elsewhere? Ms. Iatrides replied that the existing panels were for notices; the new ones would be for art, in response to the President's initiative for arts. No other installations were contemplated.

Mr. Donovan complained that the content would not be known in advance. Better to have movable partitions on the plaza. It would be incongruous to put these panels on the fence.

James Williamson of 1000 Jackson Place asked who would be on the panel deciding what would be exhibited. Ms. Iatrides said that had not been decided.

Marilee Meyer said that the installation would block views into the Yard. The fence was one of the finest in the country, and it would be inappropriate to use it as a billboard.

Luis Cotto, a member of the Public Art Committee of the Cambridge Arts Council, noted that art could be hung on kiosks on the plaza.

Elizabeth Gombosi of 42 Irving Street said that she was a 35-year employee of the Harvard Art Museums. The panels would mar the fence and display reproductions, not original art.

John Sanzone of 540 Memorial Drive asked if the installation would be allowed elsewhere in the historic district.

Carole Perrault, a National Park Service employee, summarized a letter she had submitted. The fence was significant in its own right and had survived without alterations. The proposal would not conform to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Buildings and would be inappropriate and incongruous to the district and compromise the integrity of the fence.

James Williamson said the planning process for the project was insufficiently inclusive. He objected to the panels as inappropriate.

Mr. King closed the public comment period.

Ms. Harrington observed that the fence was a work of art. Dr. Solet said the Commission welcomed funky projects, but she could only consider supporting such an installation as a temporary event.

Mr. Ferrara commended Harvard's commitment to the arts, but said that the fence was as important as the buildings in the Yard. Even on the limited basis proposed it would be too much of an intrusion.

Mr. King said he would probably approve the installation as a one-time event. The proceedings had expanded his opinion of the fence as a work of art. The panels would inappropriately block the view into the Yard. He would consider a temporary Certificate of Appropriateness for two or three years if the panels near the Meyer Gate were eliminated. Ms. Iatridis agreed to this.

Ms. Meyer asked if there was any thought given to installing the panels on the Science Center side of the plaza. Mr. King said that such an installation would be outside the district.

Mr. Barry felt that the Commission shouldn't make a decision without knowing the content of the panels, and said that both sides of the fence were equally significant.

Ms. Harrington moved to find that the project as proposed would not be appropriate to the historic fence or to the historic district, and that the panels would be incongruous additions to the fence. Mr. Bibbins seconded, and the motion passed unanimously with both alternates voting and Mr. Barry not voting.

Case 2993: 14 Craigie St., by Joseph & Carol Green. Replace 3 fixed windows on left side with 3 awning windows.

Dave Barry of Renewal by Anderson said the owners wanted three operational windows in place of the present fixed sash. The exterior appearance would be identical. The new windows would be Fibrex, a polymer composite.

Mr. Sullivan said that the existing windows were not original to the house.

Mr. Barry told Mr. King that Fibrex had been manufactured since 1995, and that it did not rot or blister. He told Dr. Solet that the sash would open 16" at the bottom.

Mr. Ferrara asked about the original window configuration. Mr. Sullivan said that there were probably a pair of double-hung windows with lower sills.

Mr. Sullivan recommended that the Commission grant a Certificate of Nonapplicability, since it would essentially involve a replication of the existing condition.

Dr. Solet moved to approve a Certificate of Nonapplicability for the project as proposed. Ms. Berg seconded, and the motion passed unanimously with Ms. Berg voting.

Case 2995: 1336 Massachusetts Ave., by President & Fellows of Harvard College. Alter exterior of the building to reflect changes in tenant configuration; install fireplace vent; modify Cambridge Trust Co. signs

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and described the exterior of the bank.

Mark Verkennis of Harvard Planning said that the changes were due to the bank's decision to give up half the ground floor and all of its second floor space.

Henry Moss of Bruner-Cott Associates said that the alterations to the doors on the plaza would be more in keeping with the original design, reversing incremental changes since the 1960s. The bank seal would be removed. A door on the lower level ramp would be altered for accessibility. The new double glazing would unobtrusive. He told Dr. Solet that new glass would be installed only where there were changes.

Mr. Moss told James Williamson that the present ATM entrance was not original, and that there would not be any changes to the adjacent flower shop.

Mr. Sullivan observed that the interior of the bank appeared to be a significant intact example of 1960s design. Mr. Verkennis agreed to provide photo documentation to the Commission.

Dr. Solet moved to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work as submitted. Mr. Crocker seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0 with Mr. Ferrara voting as alternate.

Case 2996: 54 Brattle St., by Cambridge Center for Adult Education. Exterior modifications to building and courtyard for accessibility and teaching kitchen; alter lighting, mechanicals, trellis, ramps, stairs; reset paving.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides of the 1808 Torrey Hancock house and its courtyard.

Stephanie Morrison of Maryanne Thompson Architects said the project involved alterations to the kitchen at the rear of the house and accessibility improvements to the plaza. They wished to add windows, a vent, a through-wall AC unit, and exterior lighting on the rear of the house.

Erik Prince of Stoss, the landscape architects, said the courtyard designed by Carol Johnson in the 1960s was not accessible by current codes. The stone ramps and stairs would be reconfigured, and a second ramp would lead from the courtyard to the front door of the house. He told Dr. Solet that the swing of the door would be reversed.

Susan Hartnett, Executive Director of the Cambridge Center for Adult Education, said the improvements would be necessary to make their proposed teaching kitchen accessible.

Ms. Morrison told Dr. Solet that mechanical ventilation would be provided at the roof level.

Mr. Prince told Mr. Sullivan that the existing granite would be reused, but that the side walls of the ramp would be concrete. Mr. Sullivan said he regretted the second ramp up to the front door, and wondered why access could not be gained through the adjacent glass connector.

Mr. Prince told Mr. Williamson that the brick ramp paving on the ramp would be replaced with bluestone.

Ms. Harrington moved to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed, and subject to delegate the review and approval of construction details to by the staff. Ms. Berg seconded, and the motion passed with Ms. Berg voting.

Case 2997: 112-114-116 Mt. Auburn St., by Carpenter & Co., Inc. Restore building at 112 Mt. Auburn; demolish existing building and construct new one at 114-116 Mt. Auburn

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and explained that the proposed project had originally been approved in 2008. One extension had been granted on the condition that a new roof be placed on the Conductors Building, which had been done, but no further extensions had been sought. The Law Department had advised that the recent permit extension act did not apply in this case.

James Rafferty, representing the owner, referred to the 2008 Certificate of Appropriateness. He said that Chili's liquor license had been transferred to the Conductors Building, which would become a bar and restaurant. The renovations would be designed by Ann Beha Associates, as before.

David Manfredi of Elkus Manfredi Architects said that the only changes to the proposed new building would be a new side door to accommodate MBTA drivers.

James Williamson asked about the continued use of the busway. Mr. King said that this was not relevant to the discussion, but permitted Peter Diana of Carpenter & Co. to reply that his company had purchased the busway subject to an easement allowing the MBTA continued use of it. Buses would not use it during construction, however.

Dr. Solet expressed concern about the residents of the Craigie Arms during construction.

Mr. King read the findings of the 2008 Certificate of Appropriateness. Mr. Sullivan reviewed the relevant goals of the Harvard Square Conservation District. Mr. Rafferty said that his client would provide amended drawings.

Dr. Solet moved to approve the renewal of the 2008 Certificate of Appropriateness as requested. Mr. Barry seconded, and the motion passed unanimously with Mr. Ferrara voting.

Public Hearing- Demolition Review

Case D-1291: 27 Montgomery St., by Hong Zhuang. Demolish workers cottage (1872).

Mr. King reviewed the demolition delay ordinance. Ms. Burks showed slides and summarized her memo.

Ed Porzio of Fung Porzio Architects said the building could not be brought up to code, and the owner wanted a two-family house. He offered to keep some elements of the old house, and to install wood clapboards if desired. He told Mr. King that no zoning relief was necessary.

Ms. Berg observed that access to the rear garage looked very tight. Dr. Solet said that garages were not typical for this neighborhood; maybe a detached garage would be possible. Further discussion followed about the massing of the two units.

Gerard Libaridian of 29-33 Montgomery Street said the existing building was not much, aesthetically, and he approved of the proposed replacement.

Bob Dion, the contractor, said the building had low ceilings and sloped to one side.

James Williamson said he appreciated the scale and size of the present building, although that's what made it undesirable to the new owners.

Mr. Sullivan summarized letters from Laura Carlson and Molly Gathnow, who were against the demolition, and Holly Donaldson and Erik Birnbaum, who supported it.

John Sanzone of 540 Memorial Drive said that the front-facing garage was inappropriate for the neighborhood.

Mr. King said that he found the replacement design to be of poor quality. The garages were problematic. He conceded that the building might be costly to rehabilitate, and that the results might not be satisfactory. He was not interested in having any parts of the old house reused.

Ms. Berg objected to the garages, the massing, and how the building related to its site.

Dr. Solet suggested that there could be more living space without a garage. The Commission might support the right plan if it needed zoning relief.

Dr. Solet moved to find the building significant for the reasons stated in the staff report. Ms. Berg seconded, and the motion passed unanimously with Ms. Berg voting.

Dr. Solet moved to find the house preferably preserved in the context of the proposed replacement. Ms. Harrington seconded, and the motion passed 6-0 with Mr. Barry not voting.

Cases 2937 and 2938 (Amendment): 7 and 9 Phillips Pl., by Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. Amend location of air conditioning condensers

Mr. King advised Mr. Barry not to vote because he had not been present at the earlier hearings.

Jonathan Austin, the architect, said the trenching to reach the condensers behind #7 would threaten several significant trees. They had looked at four other locations, and proposed to place them in a well next to the south end of the building, 17' from the sidewalk, with acoustical shielding to achieve 46 db at the property line.

Dr. Solet said that the enclosure should be large enough for air circulation.

Mr. Barry moved to approve the installation as proposed. Mr. Crocker seconded, and the motion passed unanimously with Mr. Ferrara voting.

Minutes

The Commission reviewed the November 1, 2012 minutes.

Dr. Solet recommended deleting the second sentence on the first page, and the word "do" in the sixth line from the bottom of page 3

Mr. King proposed changing "designated" to "designate" on page 5.

Ms. Berg moved to approve the minutes as corrected. Mr. Crocker seconded, and the motion passed 7-0 with Ms. Berg voting.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Sullivan reported that the Superior Court had upheld the Commission's action on the Lesley University case. Harvard was proposing limited improvements to the Philip Jolmson house, including protective film rather than plate glass replacement.

Ms. Harrington moved to adjourn. Mr. Crocker seconded the motion, which passed 7-0. The meeting adjourned at 11:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Burks
Preservation Planner

Members of the Public
Who Signed Attendance Sheet 2/7/13

Lucy Lee	22 White St
Beverly Lee	22 White St
Francis Donovan	42 Irving St
Elizabeth Gombosi	42 Irving St
Marilee Meyer	10 Dana St
Henry Moss	557 Sudbury Road, Concord
Susan Viglione	100 Memorial Drive
Tom Johnson	1336 Massachusetts Avenue
Mark Verkemis	Harvard Planning
Matthew Clarida	1268 Harvard Yard Mail Center
Antonio Coppolo	1291 Harvard Yard Mail Center
Jonathan Austin	Austin Architects, 38 Cameron Ave
John Sanzone	540 Memorial Dr
Sean Hope	130 Bp. Allen Drive
Ben Rogan	98 Winchester St, Medford
David Barry	19 Craigie St
Erik Prince	18 Loring St., Somerville
Gary Hammer	Harvard Planning
Susan Hartnett	42 Brattle St
David Salomon	9 Kinnaird St
James Williamson	1000 Jackson Place
Bob Dion	447 Main St., Dunstable
Ed Porzio	204 Adams St, Dorchester
Levering White	133 Brattle St.

/ Town is Cambridge unless otherwise indicated.