

Approved 10/10/13

Minutes of the Cambridge Historical Commission

September 129, 2013 - 806 Massachusetts Avenue - 6:00 P.M.

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

Members absent: William Barry, Robert Crocker, Jo M. Solet, *Members*; Joseph Ferrara, Susannah Tobin, *Alternate Members*

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

Public present: See attached list.

Chair King called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM with a quorum of four. He made introductions and designated Ms. Berg, an alternate, to vote on all matters.

Public Hearings: Alterations to Designated Properties

Case 3102: 28 Fayerweather St., by Vartan Keshishian. Enlarge breakfast room addition; construct dining room addition and patio; alter dormers on the south side; alter landscape structures; construct circular driveway and excavate drive to new basement garage; exterior alterations including expansion of front stairs. *Request received from the owner to postpone the hearing.*

Ms. Berg moved to continue the hearing until October 10. Mr. Bibbins seconded, and the motion passed by a vote of 4-0. (Mr. Irving arrived.)

Case 3127: 16 Garden St., by Commander Realty Associates Nominee Trust. Replace hotel windows.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and said that the Commission had granted the hotel a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace their original 1927 wood guest room windows in 1978 (Case 83). The replacements were state of the art, but had the muntins inside the insulated glass; they were now failing. The panning was square, flat coil stock. Most openings on the first floor retained their original windows and were not part of this application.

Michael Guleserian, the manager, introduced architect Dick Hardaway. He said the windows negatively affected the guest experience and would best be replaced during his slow season, December through March. The new windows would have exterior muntins. He told Mr. King that about 700 windows would be replaced.

Mr. Hardaway passed out samples of the panning, which was the same profile but slightly bigger than original, and said that the proposed off-white color had been worked out by the staff and the management. The new windows would be well-insulated and should reduce the hotel's heating bills. The outer layer of glass would be laminated for sound reduction and would have a low-E rating. The top sash would be fixed.

Mr. Irving asked if the aluminum would be powder-coated. Mr. Hardaway replied that it would be a more-durable Kynar finish with a 20-year warranty. He asked if there was a self-cleaning feature; Mr. Hardaway said it was available, but not proven yet. The hotel cleaned its windows yearly.

There were no public questions or comments.

Mr. Irving moved to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the windows as proposed, and to delegate construction details to the staff. Ms. Harrington seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.

Case 3128 and Case 3129: 27 Garden St., by Longy School of Music of Bard College. Temporary art installation (decorated piano) and light projection for Celebrity Series performances.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and reported that the Commission had granted Longy a Certificate of Nonapplicability for a similar installation a year before.

Vanessa Belknap of the Longy School said that as before a temporary projector would shine on the wall of Pickman Hall to guide visitors to the site and to feature Longy's relationship with the Celebrity Series. It would be illuminated for 5½ hours on five nights during the concert season. The temporary art installation would be a decorated piano placed by the steps.

Mr. Sullivan told Ms. Berg that the projector had received a Certificate of Nonapplicability in 2012 because the equipment was not visible. Mr. King asked if the piano was a structure the Commission would have jurisdiction over. Mr. Sullivan replied that it would be a temporary object like a piece of lawn furniture.

There were no public questions or comments.

Mr. King reviewed a letter from Dia Phillippides, an abutter, and recalled that the Commission had asked Longy to stay in touch with their neighbors about these issues. Ms. Belknap said that she had sent her a letter.

Mr. Irving moved to grant Longy a Certificate of Nonapplicability for both projects and to authorize the staff to issue certificates for similar displays in the future. Ms. Berg seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.

Public Hearing: Demolition Review

Case D-1309: 24 Kelly Rd., by 24 Kelly LLC. Demolish house (1868).

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and reported that he had met with the proponents several times since the last meeting to help shape their revised proposal. He described the evolution of the structure and evaluated its parts.

Sebastian Mariscal, the property owner and architect, described the latest version of his proposal, which involved rebuilding a new house in the backyard and removing parts of the existing house to reduce FAR so the project would be as-of-right. These areas included the entire ell and back porch, the right rear corner of the building, a small addition at the right front corner, and part of the second floor next to the tower, which would now appear freestanding above the second floor level. Brian Militana of Mr. Mariscal's office added that they would remove the asbestos shingles, restore the clapboards and trim, and rebuild the porch. Mr. Mariscal said the new house would be similar to the ones he presented previously, with gardens and voids. The two houses would be 10' apart. Each would have 1,488 square feet.

Mr. King asked about access to the rear house. Mr. Mariscal said there would be a 4' wide pathway along the property line.

Eleanor Steinadler of 28 Kelly Rd. said it was a superb solution. Barbara Aiken of 20 Kelly Rd. agreed.

Mr. King closed the public comment period.

Mr. Sullivan recommended that the Commission find that the specified portions of the building were no longer preferably preserved in the context of the new proposal. Ms. Harrington so moved, Mr. Irving seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.

Ms. Harrington, Mr. King, and Mr. Irving complimented the proponents on the outcome of their project.

Determination of Procedure: Alterations to Designated Properties

Case 3138: 1430 Massachusetts Ave. (College House), by University Common Real Estate Co., LLP. Change color of painted wood trim.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and described the history of College House from the 1830s to 1983, when the owners approached the Commission with an offer to donate a preservation restriction on the exterior. The restriction incorporated a plan to restore the storefronts to their original appearance by uncovering original or installing new granite piers and lintels, and included a common storefront design of butt-glazed plate glass whose only traditional element was a wood rail or sill about 30" above grade painted dark green to match the windows above. At the Church Street end, where the building was truncated in 1926, the entire original wood and glass storefront was also painted green. The owner had approached him recently because a new tenant for the corner had a distinctive corporate color and might want to paint these details differently. There was no specific proposal, but the application seemed the best way to start a conversation.

Ed Mank, the owner's representative, agreed that the entire building had improved since the 1970s. Retailers now wanted to distinguish their appearance; branding was very common. None of the structure would be changed, but he wanted permission to tell tenants that they could have the colors of their brands on the wood trim.

Ms. Berg observed that an inappropriate color could detract from the entire building. Ms. Harrington said that perhaps the rails could be painted differently at each storefront.

Mr. Sullivan noted that Commission jurisdiction over paint color was specifically mentioned in the restriction. Mr. Mank said that it seemed unfair that a decision of 30 years ago would limit their color choice now.

Mr. Sullivan observed that the Harvard Square Conservation District did not restrict color and allowed owners great discretion over storefront design, but compared College House to the Read Block, which also had been entirely restored with specific paint colors.

CHC Survey Director Susan Maycock said that the uniform paint color on all wood elements of the building was an important part of the design. It had taken a long time to get the building back to the level of consistency it had now. Colors could be introduced through signs and behind the glass storefronts.

Mr. Mank said that he saw no reason why all the storefronts had to be the same color. Mr. Irving disagreed, saying that the vitrine (the wood storefront) was as important to the appearance of the building as its masonry.

Mr. King noted that the owner had not submitted an application for specific colors in particular locations. He hoped that he would continue to work with staff to come up with creative solutions and return with a detailed design proposal.

Mr. Sullivan recommended that the Commission find that the present consistent color scheme of the building was an important element of its design, and direct the staff to work with the owner to accommodate prospective tenants. Mr. Mank said he appreciated the tone of Mr. Sullivan's statement, but complained that other owners were not subject to such restraints.

Mr. Irving moved that the Commission find that the present consistent color scheme was an important element of the building's integrity, and encourage the staff to work cooperatively with the owner. Ms. Berg seconded, and the motion passed 5-0

Case 3140: 31 Hawthorn St., by Shikhar Ghosh. Extend roof of enclosed entry vestibule to match the soffit at 35 Hawthorn St.; install skylights.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides of the house, which was being renovated. The owner wished to introduce an overhang on his entry vestibule like the one on the house adjacent.

Mr. Irving moved to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed. Ms. Harrington seconded, and the motion passed 5-0

Minutes

Ms. Harrington moved to approve the August 8 minutes as submitted. Ms. Berg seconded, and the motion passed 5-0

Preservation Grants

IPG 14-1: 838 Mass. Ave., by St. Peter's Episcopal Church (#3). Windows (\$13,123).

Mr. Sullivan said that St. Peter's matching grant would restore the main window above the altar and repair other windows and roof leaks would be its third; previous grants supported an accessibility project and restoration of windows in the parish house.

PG 14-1: 70 Bishop Allen Dr., by Just A Start Corp. Siding, windows, trim (\$35,000).

PG 14-2: 77 Bishop Allen Dr., by Just A Start Corp. Siding, windows, trim (\$35,000).

PG 14-3: 51 Norfolk St., by Just A Start Corp. Siding, windows, trim (\$35,000).

PG 14-4: 62 Norfolk St., by Just A Start Corp. Siding, windows, trim (\$35,000).

Mr. Sullivan said that Just A Start had purchased four buildings at Norfolk Street and Bp. Allen Drive for affordable housing and wanted to remove siding and restore the exteriors. Each building would receive \$35,000 outright.

Mr. Irving moved to approve a matching grant of \$13,123 to St. Peter's Church and \$35,000 to each of the four buildings owned by Just A Start. Mr. Bibbins seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.

There being no further business, Ms. Berg moved to adjourn. Ms. Harrington seconded, and the motion passed 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:02 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks
Preservation Planner

Members of the Public
Who Signed Attendance Sheet 98/128/13

John Sanzone	540 Memorial Dr
Sebastian Mariscal	35 Medford Street, Somerville
Brian Militana	35 Medford Street, Somerville
Alberto Meouchi	35 Medford St, Somerville
Eleanor Steinadler	28 Kelly Rd, #1
Vanessa Belknap	27 Garden Street
Elizabeth Lyster	62 Kinnaird Street
Nai Harashima	35 Hamilton Road, Belmont
Barbara Aiken	20 Kelly Road
Paul Grant	20 Kelly Road
Marilee Meyer	10 Dana Street
Richard Hardaway	47 River Street, Wellesley
Michael Guleserian	1 Brattle Circle

Town is Cambridge unless otherwise indicated.