

Minutes of the Half Crown-Marsh Neighborhood Conservation District Commission

October 15, 2013 - 6:00 PM - Longfellow-Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site, 105 Brattle Street, Cambridge

Members present: James Van Sickle, *Chair*; Judith Dortz, William King, *members*; Michael Robertson, *alternate*

Members absent: Deborah Masterson, *member*; Charles Smith, *alternate*

Staff present: Charles Sullivan

Members of the Public: See attached list

Chair Van Sickle called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM. He introduced the Commissioners and staff present. He announced that Judith Dortz, an abutter, would recuse herself.

Public Hearing: Alterations to Designated Property

HCM-212: 32 Ash Street, by Anthony Philippakis and Eirene Kontopoulos. Remove chimneys; install new kitchen windows at rear of side wall; remove gutters from flat-roofed rear addition/garage.

Mr. Sullivan showed photographs taken from Ash Street and noted that 30-32 Ash was built in 1865. The original T-shaped footprint had been altered with two-story additions on each side of the shared ell. At number 32, the property under review, the addition incorporated a two-car garage of about 1925. The north half, 30 Ash, had been added to at least twice since the inception of the District in 1981. Both halves were uniformly painted and maintained to the same standard. The owner wished to remove the front chimney, install new kitchen windows, replace doors with windows, and remove the gutters.

Ben O'Sullivan-Pierce, the contractor, said they wished to remove the gutters from the garage and the flat roof of the two-story addition because they were not needed. He would detail the edge of the roof to match the addition on the north side, using PVC stock. In response to a question from Ms. Dortz, he said the condensers would be in the same location but would be smaller and more efficient.

Mr. King asked why the chimney was to be removed. Mr. O'Sullivan-Pierce said that the attic rooms were small and the chimney would interfere with their intent to combine them. He told Mr. Robertson that the chimney would no longer be needed to vent appliances; there would be a direct-vent through the foundation, between the two bay windows.

Mr. Van Sickle asked about the detailing of the flat roof. Mr. O'Sullivan-Pierce said there would be a gravel stop around the perimeter, and that the roof would continue to pitch toward the rear. Mr. Van Sickle observed that proper drainage was necessary to keep water out of the neighbor's yard.

Mr. O'Sullivan-Pierce said the proposed windows on the south wall of the addition would be comprised of two rows of fixed clerestory sash with the same trim as other windows.

Mr. Van Sickle called for questions and comments from the public.

**Minutes of the Half Crown-Marsh Neighborhood Conservation District Commission Meeting held October 15, 2013
Approved December 9, 2013**

James McDavit of 11 Brewer Street said that he and Barbara Yeoman were direct abutters, with a 4' high dry stone wall separating the properties. Currently the gutter on the rear of the addition fed a downspout that emptied at the top of the wall. If the gutter were removed, the water could erode the wall and cause it to collapse. Ms. Yeomans noted that a wall at 5 Brewer had collapsed in similar circumstances.

Adrienne [Landsman?] of 34 Ash Street identified herself as a direct abutter. She said that a previous owner had installed a dry well to take care of drainage. Mr. Sullivan observed that Cambridge required drainage to be accommodated within the property. Mr. Van Sickle added that this was a specific requirement of the Half Crown-Marsh Order.

Ms. Dortz asked Mr. O'Sullivan-Pierce if he had specifications for the compressors. He did not. Would they shield the units? Mr. O'Sullivan-Pierce said they would be quieter than at present. Mr. Van Sickle observed that the Commission only had jurisdiction over features visible from a public way.

Mr. King asked about the visibility from Brewer Street. Mr. McDavit said the back of the garage was visible.

Ms. Landsman[?] said the asphalt on the driveway was recent and had covered the drain for the dry well. She didn't object to the windows, but was concerned about the furnace vent. Could it go to the back yard? Mr. O'Sullivan-Pierce replied that there was only a crawl space behind the cellar of the main house.

Mr. Van Sickle closed the public comment period. He noted that the Commission had received a letter in support from Catherine Hayden, the abutter at #30.

Mr. King objected to the loss of the chimney, a character-defining feature of all 19th century houses; perhaps the stack could be removed and the top of the chimney supported by additional framing. A replica was also a possibility. Mr. Van Sickle observed that the vent could be run up the existing chimney. Both he and Mr. King said that there was insufficient information on the vent and the drainage

Mr. Sullivan suggested that the Commission could approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the windows and delegate approval of the vent arrangements, chimney and drainage to the staff.

Mr. Robertson so moved. Mr. King seconded, and the motion passed unanimously with Ms. Dortz recusing herself from voting due to her proximity to the proposed project.

Mr. Robertson moved to adjourn, and Mr. King seconded. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 6:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sincerely,

Charles Sullivan
Executive Director

Members of the Public
who signed the attendance sheet, October 15, 2013

Barbara E. Yeoman	11 Brewer Street
Jim McDavit	11 Brewer Street
Eirene Kontopoulos	53 Ellery Street #2
Ben O'Sullivan-Pierce	94 Park Avenue, Belmont
Adrienne Landsman[?]	36 Ash Street

Town is Cambridge unless otherwise indicated.