

Minutes of the Half Crown-Marsh Neighborhood Conservation District Commission
Approved at the January 11, 2016 Meeting

December 14, 2015 - 6:00 PM at Friends Meeting House, 5 Longfellow Park, Cambridge

Members present: James Van Sickle, *Chair*; Judith Dortz, *Vice Chair*; Deborah Masterson, Marie-Pierre Dillenseger, William King, Peter Schur, and Charles Smith, *members*

Members absent: none

Staff present: Samantha Paull

Members of the Public: see attached list

Mr. James Van Sickle, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:01pm and gave an overview of the agenda. Mr. Van Sickle discussed meeting procedures.

Mr. Van Sickle noted that as there were five members present, no alternates would be voting.

Mr. Van Sickle noted that he was going to take the items out of order, as the owner was not present for HCM-313. Mr. Van Sickle added that he would recuse himself from HCM-313, 9 Brown Street, as he was an abutter.

HCM-314: 146 Mt. Auburn Street, by Ted Galante. Construct rear dormer.

Ms. Samantha Paull, staff, gave a brief history of the structure, showed slides, and an overview of the proposed application.

Mr. Ted Galante, an owner and architect, gave a brief history of his ownership of the building and renovation projects. He said he was hoping to move his residence to the second floor as his office was occupying the first floor and basement space. He showed a 3D model he built to reflect the proposed dormer and alterations to the structure and indicated that the proposed alteration was in scale with the neighborhood.

Mr. Galante continued, explaining the need for the dormer, which would allow for additional useable space, both storage and turning the upstairs into a three bedroom unit.

Mr. Van Sickle called for public questions or comments. There were none.

Ms. Deborah Masterson, Commissioner, expressed her concern about water drainage. Mr. Galante replied that he believed he had worked out the issues that were discussed at the last hearing.

Mr. Bill King, Commissioner, asked if the project complied with the dormer guidelines. Mr. Galante replied that he was not aware of any issues with zoning beyond setback issues.

Mr. Galante continued that his goal was to unify the building and restore the character elements that had been lost over the years.

Ms. Masterson asked what the head height inside the 3rd floor space was and the pitch of the dormer. Mr. Galante responded that it was a one on twelve pitch and head height was between seven and eight feet.

Ms. Dortz asked if he was proposing to remove the wall AC units, ladders and previously replaced windows. Mr. Galante replied yes and added he wanted to increase the window size to match the windows on 144 Mt. Auburn Street. Dr. Peter Schur, Commissioner, asked if he was proposing to add central air. Mr. Galante said that was the idea.

Mr. Van Sickle asked what windows were proposed. Mr. Galante responded Andersen 400 series divided lite. Mr. Van Sickle asked if they were true divided lite. Mr. Galante responded no, but they did have exterior profiled muntins to match the existing replacement window on the front elevation.

Mr. Van Sickle asked if the dormer could be set back from the side of the rear ell. Mr. Galante clarified yes.

Ms. Dortz asked if the window replacement and exterior renovation could be heard at this hearing. Ms. Paull noted that the changes in siding material and most window replacements for previously replaced windows were generally handled on a staff level, rather than having a hearing. She added that the component being discussed would be whether or not those opening sizes could change and the application was noticed for a more substantial alteration.

Ms. Masterson asked Mr. Galante if he had the ability to get his computer or download the PowerPoint to allow the Commission to see the proposed changes. Mr. Galante responded yes. The Commission tabled the discussion to allow Mr. Galante to obtain his presentation.

Mr. Van Sickle moved to sit with the other members of the public. Ms. Judith Dortz, Vice Chair, assumed the chair.

HCM-313: 9 Brown Street, by Thomas & Sachiko Rodes. Exterior rehabilitation and alterations; construct additions.

Ms. Samantha Paull, staff, gave a brief history of the structure, showed slides, and an overview of the proposed application.

Dr. Schur asked how many front doors there were. Mr. Mark Boyes-Watson, an architect with the project, responded currently that there were three (3) doors facing the street. Ms. Masterson asked if there were two front yards. Mr. Boyes-Watson responded that zoning considered it to have two front yards.

Mr. Thomas Rodes, an owner, said that he and his family had lived in the house for almost five (5) years and through the proposed project were hoping to maximize the usability of the house and lot, along with simplifying the appearance of previous additions to the house.

Mr. Boyes-Watson outlined the proposal and showed boards. He noted the changes proposed to each elevation, as well as the outdoor space and garage. He added that the garage footprint wouldn't change.

Ms. Dortz asked if the garage itself would be half of the current size. Mr. Boyes-Watson replied yes, it would be a one car garage with a workshop. Ms. Dortz asked if the workshop took up one of the existing car bays. Mr. Boyes-Watson clarified that yes it would, and there will be more living space outside with reducing the driveway.

Ms. Paull asked where the bulkhead would be located, as it appeared to be removed on the proposed drawings. Mr. Boyes-Watson answered that it would be moved to the west (right) elevation.

Ms. Dortz asked if someone could explain the purpose of the dormer on the garage. Mr. Boyes-Watson responded that the goal was to have a storage space above the workshop, which was for the owner and his woodworking hobby. Ms. Dortz asked if there was a door separating the spaces inside. Mr. Boyes-Watson replied they were still working out interior details.

Mr. King asked if there was an AC condenser currently on the property or if they were adding one. Mr. Rodes replied that there wasn't one currently, but they were looking into mini-split systems. Mr. Boyes-Watson added that they were looking at Mr. Slim mini-split systems.

Ms. Dillenseger asked if they had a preference between the two roof styles for the garage that were proposed. Mr. Boyes-Watson responded that they originally drew a gambrel roof to match the main structure but felt concerned that it was competing with the historic structure.

Ms. Masterson asked if there were doors to the garden. Mr. Boyes-Watson responded that the doors had the same treatment as the windows on the one story addition, to give the feel of a continuous living space as it was proposed to be built on grade. Ms. Dillenseger asked if the windows were actually sliding doors or functioning windows under the pergola. Mr. Boyes-Watson responded that they were double-hung sash windows that went down to the baseboards.

Dr. Schur asked if there were changes to the south elevation of the garage. Mr. Boyes-Watson replied no.

Mr. King asked which materials were proposed. Mr. Boyes-Watson clarified that the proposal was wood trim on everything, wood true divided lite windows with insulated glass, wood 3.5" exposure clapboards, and the roof was proposed as a composite slate. Ms. Dortz asked about the two pipes in the roof. Mr. Rodes replied that they were existing bathroom vents and would be maintained.

Ms. Paull asked if they were planning on adding insulation, air sealing or if there were additional roof repairs as part of the project. Mr. Boyes-Watson replied that they were hoping to use ice and water shield and were uncertain about which type of insulation they were proposing, but they were considering spray foam, blown-in or ISO board. Ms. Paull noted that generally preservationists shy away from spray foam as it can contribute to undetected leaks, rot, trapped moisture, it's irreversible, and can cause damage to plaster if you're hoping to preserve the existing plaster.

Ms. Dortz called for public comment.

Mr. James Van Sickle, abutter at 15 Brown Street, was present with his wife, Mary Alice. He stated that they were pleased to see the renovation and were in support of the project. He added that it was uncommon to see someone purchase a house, move in and wait to renovate. He believed that the renovation was thoughtfully researched before being proposed. Mr. Van Sickle noted that the Rodeses were sensitive to neighbors' concerns.

Mr. John Downs, abutter at 8 Foster Place, asked if the applicant would be returning to the Commission for approval on the specific roofing material. Mr. Boyes-Watson said he was happy to do that if needed. Mr. Downs asked if the proposed slate replica product was single tone or multi-tonal. Mr. Boyes-Watson clarified that they were proposing to use single tone, as the multi-tone did not replicate historic slate as well. Mr. Downs offered his support of the single tone.

Ms. Dortz read a letter from the Pratts, abutters at 11 Brown Street, in support of the project.

Mr. Downs asked what they were proposing for siding, wood or hardiboard. Mr. Boyes-Watson replied wood.

Ms. Van Sickle asked what style of fencing was proposed. Mr. Rodes replied that it would be something similar to existing.

Mr. King asked what the materials of the proposed pergola was. Mr. Boyes-Watson replied wood. Mr. King commended the architect on the project and voiced his agreement with the subservient nature of the gable roof for the garage versus the gambrel roof.

Mr. Downs asked the material of the gutters. Mr. Boyes-Watson responded wood. Ms. Masterson noted that she preferred copper as wood gutters tend to rot out. Mr. Boyes-Watson added that copper could be painted.

Ms. Paull expressed staff's concern about the introduction of the large windows that related more to the Greek Revival style than the Colonial Revival style of the house, and asked if the shutters were functioning and how they were handling the paired windows. Mr. Boyes-Watson said that the shutters would be functioning, and at the pairs, would be hinged in the middle and stack.

Dr. Schur made a motion to approve the application as submitted. Mr. King seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0.

HCM-314: 146 Mt. Auburn Street, by Ted Galante. Construct rear dormer.

Mr. Van Sickle resumed the chair and noted that the hearing for HCM-314 would resume.

Mr. Galante showed slides, referencing the 1967 survey photo. He added that he was hoping to restore the Brewer Street elevation, a project that would deal with the siding, windows and eave returns. He said the proposed new windows would match the size of the window on the front elevation, which matched the size of the window on 144 Mt. Auburn Street, the other half of the double house. He explained that the windows were currently 32" by 48" and he would install new windows that were 36" by 58" which were more historically appropriate.

Mr. Van Sickle noted that the skylights shown on the rendering were exempt due to their size. Ms. Dortz asked if they matched the existing skylight. Mr. Galante replied yes.

Mr. Van Sickle said that the Commission could take up each item to vote separately.

Mr. King made a motion to approve the dormer as submitted. Ms. Dillenseger seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0.

Dr. Schur made a motion to approve the renovation of the west elevation, including the window replacement, siding, and restoration of the historic eave returns. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0.

New Business

Ms. Paull noted that the Commission asked staff to research the requirement of a site plan as part of the application packet. She reported that the Commission could request a site plan but it could not be required for every application as some may not have exterior alterations and it could prove cost prohibitive. She noted that the Commission was supportive of an assessors plans marked with the proposed changes if they were minimal changes. She said we will work with applicants to submit one when there is exterior work being done.

The Commission expressed its support in having applicants turn in site plans, and when possible floor plans, for future applications. The Commission also expressed the helpfulness of the slides.

Minutes

Ms. Dillenseger made a motion to approve the September 21, 2015 minutes with marked edits. Dr. Schur seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0.

Mr. King made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:56pm. Dr. Schur seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Paull
Preservation Administrator

**Members of the Public
(who signed the Attendance list)**

Mary Alice Van Sickle	abutter	15 Brown Street
James Van Sickle	abutter	15 Brown Street
Ted Galante	owner/architect	146 Mt. Auburn Street
John Downes	abutter	8 Foster Place
Carolyn Burns	abutter	8 Foster Place
Levi Tofias	architect	30 Bow Street, Somerville
Mark Boyes-Watson	architect	30 Bow Street, Somerville
Thomas Rodes	owner	9 Brown Street

Note: All addresses are located in Cambridge unless otherwise noted.