

## **Minutes of the Half Crown-Marsh Neighborhood Conservation District Commission** ***Approved at the August 17, 2015 Hearing***

July 13, 2015 - 6:00 PM at Friends Meeting House, 5 Longfellow Park, Cambridge

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

Members absent: Judith Dortz, *Vice Chair*;

Staff present: Samantha Paull

Members of the Public: see attached list

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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 designated that as an alternate, he would not be voting.

**HCM-293: 269-271 Mt. Auburn St, by Adrian Catalano.** Install fence.

Ms. Samantha Paull, staff, gave a brief overview of the application and history of the property. She showed pictures that reflected the current conditions and showed the existing fence on top of the masonry retaining wall.

Mr. Adrian Catalano, owner, stated that the fence was made of T-111 and was rebuilt a few times since it was originally installed in the mid-1960s. He hoped that the new fence would provide the tenants with privacy but allow for some visibility. He said he hoped to install a fence that was four and a half (4.5) feet solid and one and a half (1.5) feet of a lattice topper.

Mr. Van Sickle asked if the proposed height Mr. Catalano was referencing was measured from the ground or from the top of the retaining wall. Mr. Catalano responded that the measurement was from the top of the retaining wall. Mr. Van Sickle asked how high the retaining wall was from the ground. Mr. Catalano responded approximately nine (9) inches. Ms. Marie-Pierre Dillenseger, Commissioner, asked if the wall was higher on Gibson Street. Mr. Catalano replied yes. He also noted that Mt. Auburn was rather busy and the hospital was right across the street.

Mr. Van Sickle asked if the new fence would be setback from the property line as the existing one was. Mr. Catalano replied yes. Mr. Van Sickle asked what topper style Mr. Catalano was proposing. Mr. Catalano clarified that he was proposing the square lattice topper and that the fence would be painted gray, similar to the existing fence.

Mr. Bill King, Commissioner, asked if the mid-level rail would be on the inside or the outside of the fence. Mr. Catalano replied that the outside would be tongue and groove cedar, with a center horizontal divide as depicted in the diagram included in the application packet.

Mr. Van Sickle asked if it would be step along Lowell Street. Mr. Catalano replied yes. Mr. Van Sickle requested that it be limited to two or three steps down. Mr. Catalano said that should be achievable as there isn't a lot of grade change.

Ms. Masterson asked if it would impact the existing tree. Mr. Catalano replied no. She asked if the gate would remain in the existing location. Mr. Catalano clarified yes.

Ms. Paull asked if the fence was proposed to be set back from the corner boards of the structure to maintain the structure's corner. Mr. Catalano replied that he could do that.

Ms. Masterson noted that this was a very busy area and the lattice topper improved the fence from the existing solid appearance. Mr. King agreed that it was a unique case due to the large lot size and proximity to the hospital. Mr. Van Sickle agreed and emphasized support for the setback from the retaining wall.

Ms. Masterson made a motion to approve the fence as described. Dr. Schur seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0.

**HCM-294: 16 Brown St, by Dwight Quayle & Deb Manegold.** Construct masonry steps, construct side door overhang and install fence.

Mr. Van Sickle recused himself from the case as he was an abutter and moved to sit with the other members of the public. He designated Mr. King to serve as acting chair. Ms. Paull gave a brief history of the structure and an overview of the proposed application.

Ms. Masterson asked if the owners could elaborate on the proposed stair. Ms. Deborah Manegold, owner, replied that after receiving an estimate the design changed to include a stucco front with granite or bluestone treads. Ms. Masterson asked if the proposal had changed from the submitted plans. Ms. Manegold replied yes.

Mr. King asked if the applicant had a proposed railing design. Ms. Manegold replied she liked the black metal railing they had and also liked the design of the railing at 17 Brown Street.

Ms. Masterson asked how the new plans differed from the submitted. Ms. Manegold replied that originally they hoped to cover the existing stair in brick and use granite slabs as the treads but it was cost prohibitive so they amended their plans to be wood with a granite top step and bottom step with a black railing.

Mr. James Van Sickle, an abutter at 15 Brown Street, noted that this house was one of the oldest two on the street. He said that the houses were present before the road and thus the front steps/porch feature had most likely been altered. He offered his support of a well-executed design to replace the existing deteriorating stairs.

Ms. Marie-Pierre Dillenseger, Commissioner, asked if they had talked to someone about aligning the bricks on the stairs with the foundation. Mr. Dwight Quayle, an owner, replied yes but the expense of that ruled it out as an option.

Mr. King noted that the proposed plans for the small roof over the side door were hard to read and lacked detail. He asked what the proposed materials were. Ms. Manegold replied that the roof structure would be primarily made of wood, with wood columns that ended on the edge of the existing path.

Mr. Van Sickle asked if they had checked with zoning about the FAR of the property. Mr. Manegold said no.

Mr. King asked if the proposed roof would impact the window on the back. Mr. Quayle replied that it might be obscured by the columns.

Ms. Masterson asked if they could just use brackets instead of columns. Mr. Quayle responded that the architect was not present and he himself was unable to clarify if that was possible.

The Commission asked about the size, width, and impact to the brick addition set farther back on the property. The owners could not explain the plans. Ms. Paull asked if the owner could get the architect to attend the next hearing or if the owners could follow up with their architect and be able to clarify the questions the Commission had.

Ms. Manegold asked if the Commission had questions or concerns about the fence. Ms. Masterson asked how high the fence was proposed. Ms. Manegold replied four (4) feet of solid fence with a two (2) foot lattice topper for a total of six (6) feet. She noted that it would be set back from the street.

Ms. Dillenseger asked if the gate could be kept at the existing four (4) foot height or if they were proposed to increase the height to six (6) feet. Ms. Manegold stated that she was proposing the same six (6) foot height. Ms. Masterson stated her agreement with Ms. Dillenseger's idea of a four (4) foot gate.

Mr. King stated he felt the owners needed to do more research on the proposed overhang and front stair alterations and return to the Commission at a later date. Ms. Masterson agreed and asked for a more detailed drawing. Dr. Schur concurred. Mr. King discussed potential options with the applicant.

Mr. Quayle requested to withdraw the proposed front step alteration and the proposed side roof overhang.

Ms. Masterson made a motion to approve the fence as proposed with the condition that the fence gate measure no taller than four (4) feet in height. Ms. Dillenseger seconded the motion. The motion was approved 4-1, with Mr. King voting against.

Mr. King left the meeting. Mr. Van Sickle designated himself as the voting alternate to take Mr. King's place.

**HCM-295: 146 Mt. Auburn St, by RE Studio, LLC.** Construct dormer and alter exterior of storefront and office space.

Ms. Paull gave an overview of the history of the structure and the proposed scope of work.

Mr. Ted Galante, architect and owner, stated that the proposal included changing out the storefront glass to reduce the mullions and allow for more glass; changing the door and sidelight, to include a full height door without a transom. He added that he hoped a light fixture on the corner would help bring brightness to the dark corner. Mr. Galante noted that he was proposing to add a metal railing, to match 144 Mt. Auburn Street that would sit on top of the parapet wall for safety reasons, as the space was accessible from the upstairs offices. He noted that the proposal included removing the artificial siding and restoring and replacing original wood siding on the front elevation, adding window and door trim details back, as well as swapping the window and door locations on the front facade to mirror 144 Mt. Auburn Street.

Mr. Van Sickle suggested the Commission discuss the alterations on an elevation by elevation scope. Mr. Smith noted that the changes on the Mt. Auburn Street elevation appeared to be in keeping with the District. Ms. Masterson agreed.

Ms. Dillenseger asked if the rooftop would be used as a deck. Mr. Galante said maybe one day, but that was not the plan. He continued that the application also included a dormer on the rear ell and adding a small roof over the rear door.

Mr. Van Sickle asked how close the proposed dormer would be to the existing dormer. Mr. Galante responded about fourteen (14) inches or so. Mr. Van Sickle asked if he was concerned about it being an unmaintainable feature that could cause ice dam problems, which Mr. Galante had noted were already an issue for this structure. Mr. Smith and Dr. Schur agreed with Mr. Van Sickle's concerns. Mr. Galante added he wanted to have more usable space in the attic area but requested to withdraw the dormer component to research further on his own.

Ms. Adrienne Landsman, owner of 34 Ash Street, noted that she looked forward to the site being maintained. She asked for more details on the impact of the storefront alterations. Mr. Galante went over the plans and noted that many changes had happened to the property's storefront in the past that limited his alterations at this stage.

Mr. Van Sickle asked Mr. Galante to follow up on the railing details with staff.

Dr. Schur made a motion to approve the application as submitted with the dormer component withdrawn. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0.

### **Minutes**

Ms. Masterson made a motion to approve the May 11, 2015 minutes as submitted with no changes. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0.

Ms. Dillenseger made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:21pm. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0.

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

Adrian Catalano	Owner	267 Grove Street
Deborah Manegold	Owner	16 Brown Street
Dwight Quayle	Owner	16 Brown Street
Ted Galante	Owner	146 Mt. Auburn Street
Adrienne Landsome	Abutter	34 Ash Street, #1
David Ranieri	Resident	41 Gibson Street

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