

Approved 12/7/09

## Minutes of the Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission

November 2, 2009 - 6:00 P.M. – 831 Massachusetts Avenue, Basement Conference Room

Commission Members: Nancy Goodwin, *Chair*; Tony Hsiao, *Vice Chair*; Lestra Litchfield and Charles Redmon, *Members*; Siobhan McMahon, Sue-Ellen Myers, and Monika Pauli, *Alternates*

Staff: Sarah Burks

Members of the Public: See attached sign in sheet

---

With a quorum present, Ms. Goodwin called the meeting to order at 6:01 P.M. and made introductions.

### Public Hearing: Alterations to Designated Properties

**MC-3553: 25 Fainwood Cir., by Mary Soares c/o Louise Paré.** To remove porches and rebuild at first floor only; replace two doors with windows; install vinyl siding.

Ms. Burks showed slides and summarized the application. She noted that the Commission's review was non-binding in this case.

Louise Paré, the owner's niece, explained that the porches were in dangerous disrepair and she could not afford to rebuild all three levels. She described the proposed vinyl siding, which would be a light tan or gray. The trim around the windows would be painted. Ms. Paré said that some of the existing porch posts could probably be re-used.

[Mr. Redmon arrived].

There were no questions of fact or comments from the public.

Mr. Hsiao explained the purpose of the Commission's review. The porches were important architectural features of the building and it was not preferable to eliminate them. He supported the idea of keeping the original columns and suggested bringing back the original wood cladding instead of introducing vinyl siding. Vinyl siding did not hold up well over time.

Ms. Goodwin concurred. She said that some of the wood clapboards may be in salvageable condition underneath the asphalt shingles.

Ms. McMahon cautioned against installing vinyl siding in phases because it could be difficult to match the color exactly.

Ms. Paré said they had considered restoring the wood to the front elevation and doing the rest in vinyl.

Ms. Goodwin responded positively, adding that they could restore the wood to the front and do nothing on the sides for now, if money was short. Then other sides could be restored to wood later.

Ms. Litchfield advised that resale value would be higher with a wood clapboard vs. artificial siding.

Mr. Hsiao noted that the roof above the third floor porch appeared to have been altered. The staff could consult on what the original may have looked like. He moved to deny the application for a certificate of appropriateness, as submitted, on the basis that the vinyl siding was a material incongruous to the age and style of the building and that the removal of the original porches was detrimental to the overall architecture of the building. Because the Commission's decision was non-

binding, he made the recommendation that the owner consider using wood clapboards on the front elevation, explore the removal of artificial siding on the sides and examine the condition of original cladding beneath, consider retaining the porches at all three floors and exploring restoration of the original porch roof design.

Ms. McMahon seconded the motion. Ms. Goodwin designated Ms. Pauli to vote on the matter, and the motion passed 5-0.

**MC-3554: 371 Harvard St., by John Patrick O'Brien, Joseph Marcini, Elizabeth A. Shea, Angela R. Foss, Tr., Emilie Norris, Joyce Kazanjian.** To replace windows.

Ms. Burks showed photos from the previous hearing in June, showing the fire damaged building. The application was subject to non-binding review.

Angela Foss said the unit owners liked the windows that were installed in the first phase of repair and now wanted to install the same windows in other units. They could not afford to replace them all at once, but proposed select replacements at this time including all the windows on the fourth floor and other units with rotted wood. She indicated on the slides which windows were to be replaced. The muntin pattern would match the existing with 9-over-1 and 6-over-1. The Marvin windows would be double glazed with screens. It was the same window as previously approved in June.

There was no public comment or questions from the members of the public.

Mr. Redmon moved to accept the application, as submitted, as the next step in advancing the building back to what it was.

Mr. Hsiao seconded the motion. Ms. Goodwin designated Ms. Myers to vote on the matter, and the motion passed 5-0.

**MC-3555: 82 Inman St., by Ann F. Halford.** Rebuild front steps in stone.

Ms. Burks showed slides and provided the background of the case. She had signed off during the summer on a building permit application to replace the non-original brick landing and steps with a new stone landing and steps. She had approved it because the existing condition was not original fabric of the building, but conditioned the approval on maintaining the same dimensions as the existing, reusing the wrought iron handrails, and not extending the stone up as an integrated railing because it would be too massive and not in keeping with the scale or in materials appropriate to the frame house. The project was completed at variance to those conditions and the owner was requested to make an application to the Commission. It was subject to non-binding review.

Ann Halford, the owner, explained that communication challenges with her contractor resulted in his building the steps to the original design, not modifying it as she had requested. Once built, she did not know what to do and did not request the contractor to deconstruct it. The cap on the side railings was granite and met code requirements. She said she had completed a lot of renovation work on the house, which had been a vinyl box when she bought it. She said she had received a lot of positive feedback from her neighbors about the design.

Ms. Goodwin commented that the stonework was executed beautifully, but the materials were not appropriate for the house. The solid masonry side walls/railings were out of scale with the house. The Commission's comments at this point could be of little effect due to the non-binding nature of the review.

Mr. Hsiao concurred that the material was atypical for Cambridge.

Ms. Pauli indicated that she would not want to see the design repeated down the street.

Ms. Litchfield moved to deny the application for a certificate of appropriateness on the basis that the materials and scale of the masonry steps with integrated side wall/railings were incongruous with the materials and traditional detailing of small frame houses of this period and style. She recommended that plantings of shrubs or ornamental trees be used to help reduce the heaviness of the look of the masonry side walls and provide balance at the front of the property.

Mr. Redmon seconded the motion. Ms. Goodwin designated Ms. McMahon to vote on the matter, and the motion passed 5-0.

**MC-3557: 298 Harvard St., by Castle School Inc., o/b/o 298 Harvard Realty Trust.** Repair exterior and construct addition of less than 750 sf.

Ms. Burks showed slides and described the history and architecture of the building. The application was subject to non-binding review of the commission because the proposed addition was less than 750 square feet and because the house was not listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Mark Boyes-Watson, of Boyes Watson Architects, distributed a new set of drawings. He introduced the buildings new owners, Lauren Harder and Martin Hill. Mr. Boyes-Watson displayed drawing boards and reviewed the proposed exterior treatment of the building. He said the exterior of the house would be restored, including the peaked roof of the tower unless it needed zoning relief. The rear porch, which he said was not original, would be removed. He described the proposed sloping brick driveway, stone retaining walls, and basement level parking. He described the proposed addition on the left side of the building. It would be approximately 12' wide. The landscaping would be used to soften the area around the driveway on Lee Street and the addition at the Harvard Street left side. The corner of the lot would remain open lawn. He reviewed each elevation in detail, describing the new dormers, windows, addition, and skylights.

Martin Hill, an owner, expressed his intent to save the original windows and repeat the same pattern of the windows where new windows were being introduced.

Ms. Burks noted that the curved glass windows in the tower, the stone perimeter wall, and the front porch had been restored in recent years with preservation grant money from the Historical Commission. Any changes to those windows would be subject to the binding review of the Historical Commission.

Mr. Hsiao asked what roofing material was proposed.

Mr. Boyes-Watson answered that the roof had asphalt shingles already. He had not yet figured out how to install asphalt shingles in the tight radius at the top of the turret roof.

There were no questions or comments from members of the public.

Ms. Goodwin expressed her satisfaction with the proposed work. The detailing of the design was good. She suggested that a round topped dormer design would work better on the turret.

Mr. Redmon agreed.

Ms. Litchfield asked for clarification on the design of the rear elevation, specifically the area with the basement level parking. What would the supports look like?

Mr. Boyes-Watson said there would be parking for 6 cars. The piers would be finished with masonry. He had considered cantilevering a deck or pergola over the parking driveway. A pergola could become a landscape feature with climbing vines. He suggested a bracket similar to those used on the front porch.

Mr. Hsiao suggested moving the new rear bay to the left side of the house.

Mr. Redmon questioned the proximity of the rear dormer to the existing corners of the hip roof. It was too tight.

Ms. Pauli asked about the detailing of trim at the tower.

Mr. Boyes-Watson said that detail had not yet been resolved.

Guy Asaph, of 30 Jay Street, said it was a brave undertaking on the part of the new owners. There was a lot of rot on the building and it needed lots of work. He expressed support for adding the pergola at the rear near the basement garage spaces. He noted the ISD requirement that pergola beams be spaced 3' apart. He expressed support for the developer in negotiating with ISD. He suggested that the Commission write a strong letter of support to the Board about the restoration of the tower roof. If relief was needed for nicer dormers, he hoped the Commission would also support that.

Ms. Litchfield moved to approve the application for a certificate of appropriateness, as submitted, with the condition that the Architects Committee review details of the landscape plan, driveway and garage bay framing, screening of parking, consistency of fenestration patterns, turret, dormers, and with the suggestion that the proponents consider reorienting the new bay window to the left side.

Mr. Redmon seconded the motion. Ms. Goodwin designated Ms. Pauli to vote, and the motion passed 5-0.

**MC-3559: 89 Inman St., by William Webb & Denise La Belle.** Replace windows.

Ms. Burks showed slides and described the house. She explained that the house would have typically had 2-over-2 windows throughout.

William Webb, an owner, said he had gotten a quote for vinyl windows and then found out he needed a building permit and Mid Cambridge NCDC review. The existing sills and casings would be retained and the replacement windows would fit inside that opening. He had changed his order and got a quote for an inside the glass division of lights for the look of a 2-over-2 window. There were 17 windows total. The manufacturer was the Rite Window Co. He displayed a sample of the window. He said he chose this type of vinyl window because it could tilt in for cleaning and he would not have to climb ladders. The windows came with a 50 year transferable warranty. He would use half screens, and the color of the windows was white.

There were no questions or comments from members of the public.

Ms. McMahon noted that it was possible to get wood windows that tilt in for cleaning.

Ms. Litchfield concurred, adding that they were also available with vinyl exterior and wood interior. She noted that the Commission did not usually approve vinyl replacement windows in the district because the material was generally incongruous with the historic architecture of the district. She moved to deny the application on the basis that the material and between-the-glass muntin grids were incongruous with the period and style of the building.

Mr. Redmon seconded the motion. Ms. Goodwin designated Ms. McMahon to vote on the matter, and the motion passed 5-0.

**MC-3560: 17 Maple Ave. #1, by Jill Callahan & Larry Rowland.** Remove door and window. Install two windows and a new door.

Ms. Burks showed slides and described the row houses that were built in the Maple Avenue National Register District in 1985. The effected windows and door were only partially visible from the public way.

Larry Rowland, an owner, described the proposed changes and the interior layout that made the arrangement more practical. The new windows would be manufactured by Anderson and the existing Pella sliding door needed to be replaced by now anyway.

Ms. Pauli asked if the other units had different doors.

Jill Callahan, an owner, answered that the other units already had this kind of atrium (swing) door with a large light and no muntins.

There were no questions or comments from members of the public.

Mr. Redmon moved to approve the application, as submitted.

Mr. Hsiao seconded the motion. Ms. Goodwin designated Ms. Myers to vote, and the motion passed 5-0.

Public Meeting: Determination of Procedure: Alterations to Designated Properties

**MC-3567: 45 Lee St. #2, by Dennis & Judith Capps.** To replace windows.

Ms. Burks showed slides and described the existing conditions. She noted the house next door that had the 6-over-1 windows, which was the original pattern for 45 Lee Street also. The application had been received after the deadline for a hearing, so the matter was added to the agenda and if approved, a ten-day notice to the neighbors will be sent out after the meeting. The application was subject to a non-binding review.

Joe Buckley, the contractor, explained that the windows to be replaced were all the second floor windows. The selected window was Harvey vinyl replacement units in a 1-over-1 pattern to match the windows already installed at the first floor unit. He displayed a sample window.

Ms. Litchfield asked if the owners would consider maintaining the 6-over-1 pattern.

Mr. Buckley replied in the negative since they preferred that the new windows match those at the first floor.

Ms. Goodwin said it would not be unusual to have different types of windows on different floors.

Judith Capps, an owner, stated that several of her neighbors had replacement windows with the 1-over-1 pattern.

Ms. Burks read a letter of support received from M. Calloway, the resident of the third floor unit. He wanted to follow suit and replace his windows in the same way.

Ms. Litchfield encouraged the owners to keep the 6-over-1 pattern because it would maintain the period character of the house.

Mr. Hsiao moved to approve the application for Harvey replacement windows, as submitted, but suggested that the owners use the 6-over-1 pattern instead of 1-over-1 for the reasons stated by Ms. Litchfield.

Ms. Litchfield seconded the motion. Ms. Goodwin designated Ms. Pauli to vote, and the motion passed unanimously.

#### Minutes

Mr. Hsiao moved to approve the October minutes as submitted. Ms. Litchfield seconded. Mr. Redmon said he would not vote because he had not been present at the October meeting. Ms. Goodwin designated Ms. McMahon and Ms. Myers to vote, and the motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Redmon moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Pauli seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:10 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks  
Preservation Planner

Members of the Public  
Who Signed Attendance Sheet 11/2/09

Joseph Buckley	72 Carey Ave, Watertown 02472
Barbara Caruso	167 Main St, Ehampton 01027
Louise Paré for Mary Soares	112 Greenwood Pl, Gardner 01440
Dennis Capps	45 Lee St
Tim Baker	1059 Harvard Yard Mail Center 02238
Ann Halford	82 Inman St
Jill Callahan	17 Maple Ave
Larry Rowland	17 Maple Ave
Denise LaBelle	89 Inman St
Bill Webb	89 Inman St
Angela Foss	371 Harvard St #3B
Joyce Kazanjian	371 Harvard St #1C
Lauren Harder	10 Samoset, Winchester 01890
Mark Boyes-Watson	30 Bow St, Somerville 02143
Guy Asaph	30 Jay St, #2