

## Minutes of the Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission

June 7, 2010 - 6:00 P.M. – 344 Broadway, City Hall Annex/McCusker Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Commission Members Present: Nancy Goodwin, *Chair*; Lestra Litchfield, Carole Perrault, and Charles Redmon, *Members*; Sue-Ellen Myers, Monika Pauli, *Alternates*

Commission Members Absent: Tony Hsiao, *Vice Chair*; Siobhan McMahon, *Alternate*

Staff: Sarah Burks, Eiliesh Tuffy

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. She described the Commission's procedures and made introductions.

### Public Hearings: Alterations to Designated Properties

**MC-3658: 22-24 Myrtle Ave., by Ori Porat.** To replace windows.

Ms. Burks showed slides and described the residence, an 1893 vernacular Queen Anne constructed by James E. Brown. Ms. Burks summarized the proposal to remove the existing windows and install replacements. The windows appear to be a mix of original and later replacements in the same two-over-one glazing pattern. All windows have exterior storms and appear to be in sound condition based on a site inspection by the commission staff.

Arne Gronningsater, the contractor, described the proposed replacement windows, which would be double-hung vinyl with spacer bars and applied muntins. A sample window was presented for the Commission's review. The scope of work includes removal of existing storm windows but does not include removal of exterior aluminum siding or window casings. Mr. Gronningsater stated that the owner was unaware of the neighborhood conservation district regulations and that many neighboring properties have had their original windows removed.

Ms. Litchfield asked about the condition of the existing wood windows. She also mentioned the energy efficiency that could be achieved just by installing new, high-end storms and that well-preserved wood windows can contribute to resale value. Mr. Gronningsater said the existing windows were not in bad shape, but he was concerned about air drafts entering through the existing framework and expressed a desire to better insulate those areas. The likely presence of lead paint was also a motivating factor to replace the wood windows.

Ms. Pauli asked if the removal of the storm windows would leave holes in the siding or window frames. Mr. Gronningsater said the jambs would be re-wrapped to cover any residual holes.

Members of the Commission inquired about removing the aluminum siding sometime in the future, but the owner – Ori Porat – said was not planned at this time but if the Commission recommends siding removal he would consider it.

Ms. Litchfield asked if the exterior siding were removed, whether the trim could be restored at that time. Mr. Gronningsater felt the trim could be restored.

Commission Chair Nancy Goodwin reminded the property owner that this was a non-binding review, but that the Commission recommends keeping original fabric as often as possible as well as installing storm windows.

There were no questions from the public.

Ms. Litchfield moved to deny the Certificate of Appropriation. Charles Redmon seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0, with Monika Pauli voting as an Alternate.

Ms. Goodwin closed the discussion by encouraging the property owner to remove the non-original siding at some point in the future.

**MC-3659: 23 St. Mary Rd., by Kimball Hull and Deborah Steenland.** Demolish and rebuild top floor, including construction of new dormers; Build one-story rear addition and new porch; relocate bulkhead; Complete exterior rehabilitation.

Ms. Burks showed slides and described the residence, which was constructed between 1878-79 and is the earliest surviving house on the block. Ms. Burks explained that, despite the extensive nature of the work, the proposal falls under the stated threshold for a binding review by the Commission. There is one existing dormer that has a strange relationship with the roofline. Part of the project would add a second dormer to mirror the existing and help balance the appearance of the façade. Plans submitted with the application have since been modified to scale back the design, but a variance will still be required due to existing non-conformities at the side yard setback.

Mr. Edrick van Beuzekom, project architect, introduced the property owners and described the proposed alterations. Work to be conducted would include filling in the rear corner at the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, removing the roof and reconstructing it at a steeper pitch while also extending it back to cover the ell. The roof ridge would be lifted above the top of the existing shed dormer.

Revised plans submitted at the meeting show a second shed dormer that is shorter in length than the initial proposal. The total square footage of the project was reduced and corrections were made to the side yard setback calculations.

Exterior work would entail removal of the existing asbestos siding and replacement of trim pieces as required. Existing brackets would be repaired, or recreated where necessary. Proposed replacement materials are fiber cement boards and either PVC or fiber cement trim where original trim cannot be repaired. Landscaping is not part of the plan at this time.

Ms. Carole Perrault asked if wood clapboards had been considered as a siding material, and if excluding the second dormer had been an option. Mr. van Beuzekom said the installation of wood clapboards could be considered, if not cost prohibitive and that the second dormer provided needed living space while helping to balance the overall design of the house. Ms. Perrault said she appreciated the owners' need for additional space, but was concerned about the appropriateness of dormers on both sides of the roof and about their size. When asked if staff had an opinion about the dormers, Ms. Burks said she thought the dormers, as adjusted, were in the limits of the allowable square footage.

Ms. Pauli asked if the greater roof pitch and higher ridge was necessary. Mr. van Beuzekom stated that the owners had requested a full-height addition with a flat roof, but he designed a gable with dormers to remain in keeping with the original structure.

The architect added that the current design proposes a .66 FAR, which is under the allowable .75 FAR. He also affirmed that there are no original windows in the current structure.

Ms. Burks inquired about the window divisions and trim material to be used. Mr. van Beuzekom said he is proposing Pella aluminum clad windows, white in color to match the existing, and would be open to the Commission's suggestion to replicate the original 2-over-2 glazing pattern.

The Commission discussed the anticipated siding removal and the proposal to use fiber cement siding, asking whether the owners were familiar with the finished appearance of the substitute material. Ms. Litchfield pointed out the aesthetic differences between wood clapboards and fiber cement, such as differing rakes and cast shadow patterns, as well as the heavier weight of the cement-based material. Given the deep recess of the windows the Commission felt there may be numerous layers under the current siding and that, if intact, perhaps the original wood clapboards could be repaired and retained. Ms. Burks cautioned against allowing contractors to remove too much material in the siding removal, which could reduce the structure to a frame and trigger a demolition permit. Instead, she suggested incremental removal along with investigation and consultation with Commission staff to determine the best course of action.

Mr. Redmon raised similar demolition concerns with regard to the roof and dormer reconstruction, but complimented the architect on the smaller dormer design and adding grace to the exterior design, which will be furthered by the character defining siding, corner boards, etc.

Ms. Perrault inquired about the heights of other buildings on the block. Mr. van Beuzekom said 23 St. Mary is smaller than the other houses on the block, with a lower roofline.

Ms. Litchfield felt the main issue in the renovation would be the material selection. Ms. Goodwin referred to the prior approval of HardiPlank siding at 116 & 118 Amory Street. Ms. Litchfield asked the owners to consider wood clapboards, but was generally pleased with the direction of the project and moved to issue a Certificate of Approval. Ms. Myers seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-1 with Ms. Perrault opposed and Ms. Myers voting as an alternate.

There were no questions from the public.

Mr. Redmond moved to delegate further changes to the staff. Ms. Myers seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Myers voting as an alternate.

#### Minutes

Ms. Myers noted a spelling correction of her last name on page 2 of the minutes.

Mr. Redmond moved to approve the May 3 minutes, as corrected.

Ms. Litchfield seconded the motion.

Ms. Goodwin designated alternate Ms. Pauli to vote, and the motion passed 5-0.

Ms. Perrault moved to adjourn.

Ms. Pauli seconded the motion, which passed 5-0 with Ms. Sue-Ellen Myers voting as alternate.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Eiliesh Tuffy  
Preservation Administrator

Members of the Public  
Who Signed Attendance Sheet 6/7/10

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Arne Gronningsater  | InnerWorks Construction, 32 Powderhouse Blvd., Somerville |
| Ori Porat           | 35 Ivaloo St., Somerville                                 |
| Kimball Hull        | 23 St. Mary Rd.   |
| Deborah Steenland   | 23 St. Mary Rd.   |
| Edrick van Beuzekom | EvB Design, 33-1/2 Union Sq., Somerville                  |