

# MINUTES

## Minutes of the Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission

September 7, 2010 - 6:00 P.M. – 344 Broadway, City Hall Annex/McCusker Center, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor

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

Staff: Eiliesh Tuffy

Members of the Public: See attached sign-in sheet

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With a quorum present, Ms. Goodwin called the meeting to order at 6:03 P.M.

### Public Hearings: Alterations to Designated Properties

**MC-3706: 285 Harvard, #411, by Richard Cadrin.** Replace windows.

Staff member Eiliesh Tuffy presented slides showing the property, which is a top floor, corner unit at the rear of a large brick condominium building. Ms. Tuffy summarized the proposal to replace four sash windows on the West Street elevation and a large steel window with operable casements along the side gangway.

Ms. Goodwin asked if the property owner was trying to match other windows in the building. The owner, Richard Cadrin, said the condominium board has asked owners to match a specific type of window. He also added that the existing casement windows were quite rotted through.

Siobhan McMahon inquired about the gangway windows on the lower floors, which were shown to be replacement sliding doors. Charles Redmon suggested that Mr. Cadrin share the information for his proposed replacement windows with the owner of the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor unit, should he decide on replacement as well. Carole Perrault noted that the proposed replacement units were an improvement over those selected for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor units.

Communication between the condominium board and individual owners, with regard to project review, was discussed. Mr. Redmon wondered if there had ever been a situation where a condominium board had appeared before the commission, and recommended that as a good opportunity. When asked whether he had received information about the Mid Cambridge review process from the condominium board, Mr. Cadrin said that he had. Ms. McMahon suggested negotiating a multiple year agreement with the board for select windows that are appropriate replacement options. Mr. Redmon added that, only if an owner deviated from those options, would they be required to explain their proposed choice to the commission.

Ms. Perrault asked what the muntin size would be for the replacement windows. The specifications indicate that all proposed replacement windows will have 5/8" muntins. Monica Pauli asked if the trim would remain, and Mr. Cadrin said he believed it would.

There were no questions from the public.

Lestra Litchfield moved to approve the proposed replacement windows. Mr. Redmon seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.

**MC-3723: 19 Magnolia Ave., by Mordechai Halpern.** Install new vinyl siding and trim.

Ms. Tuffy showed slides and described the property, which was built as part of a grouping of four adjacent properties on Magnolia Avenue designed by James E. Brown in 1894. The frame gambrel at #19 has a matching

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structure at #9 Magnolia, the latter of the two retaining its original wood shingle siding and ornamental details. The existing conditions on the exterior of #19 consist of asbestos siding with primarily non-original trim details. The current proposal is to add vinyl siding and trim to encapsulate the aging asbestos shingles.

Ms. Perrault asked the owner, Mr. Halpern, if he had considered installing wood siding. Mr. Halpern felt that option would be almost impossible, since it would require removal and proper disposal of the existing asbestos shingles. Ms. Perrault suggested the possibility of simply covering over the shingles with wood.

Ms. Goodwin brought up the issue of the increasing depth of the siding with each successive new layer. Ms. Litchfield said it seemed as though the new siding would cover any existing trim and the gabled pediment. The Commissioners pointed to the CraneBoard system's "Architectural Essentials Window Trim" option in the case file as a good option for period appropriate trim finish. The contractor, Mr. Mike Bedard, stated they could install whatever the client wants. He also mentioned a neighboring property at 20-22 Magnolia that was resided without altering the existing trim.

Ms. Perrault reiterated the concern over increasing the siding depth, and the effect it would have essentially burying the trim.

Ms. McMahan asked about the color choices and siding reveal. Mr. Halpern said they were considering Saddle for the body – which would be CraneBoard 6 – and Wheat for the trim. Ms. Litchfield inquired about the condition of the asbestos siding. Mr. Halpern said it was brittle, breaking and becoming an unsafe condition. Ms. Goodwin stated that this property was most likely similar to the partner building (#9) underneath all of the later siding material. Mr. Halpern confirmed that there is still wood siding underneath.

Ms. Goodwin asked if the owner had considered replacing the non-original metal porch supports. Mr. Halpern said he could consider it.

Ms. Litchfield said it was hard to approve the siding without specifying the thickness of the trim. Mr. Redmon agreed.

Ms. McMahan asked whether this project might be better considered under a Certificate of Hardship.

Ms. Goodwin interjected that the Commission was leaning towards not approving the Certificate of Appropriateness, but wanted to provide the owner with recommendations. Mr. Hsiao suggested looking to the neighboring properties as a guide. Although #9 has shingles rather than clapboards, Mr. Halpern could replicate the dimensions of the reveal for consistency. Mr. Redmon suggested increasing to a 7" reveal on the siding, rather than the proposed 6" reveal. Mr. Hsiao encouraged the owner to match the measurements of the adjacent buildings.

Details of the siding installation were discussed. Ms. Pauli felt the biggest challenge would be the top flare of the gable, and asked whether they could try to make a trim piece look similar. Mr. Redmon suggested removing the thick trim around the rear windows and replace with a similar trim to match the others throughout the building. Mr. Hsiao again noted that this proposal was bulking up the siding and trim considerably. He also suggested letting the siding reveal dictate an appropriately scaled trim selection. Mr. Redmon suggested matching the white trim of the other three houses in the original grouping to lend cohesion. Mr. Hsiao said the corner board should be the same color as the body, not the color of the other trim pieces.

There were no questions or comments from the public.

Mr. Redmon moved to deny the application as presented, and add the following recommendations for the property owner's consideration:

1. Match the dimensions of the siding reveal to the width seen on #9, 11 & 17 Magnolia Ave.

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2. Use a consistent trim thickness on all windows.
3. Choose one overall color for the body of the house, but select white for the windows, eaves, and between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors to match the adjacent buildings.
4. Explore replacing the existing metal porch supports with wood posts in keeping with the style of the adjacent buildings.

Ms. Litchfield seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.

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Mr. Redmon moved to accept the August 2<sup>nd</sup> minutes as amended.

Mr. Hsiao seconded the motion.

The motion passed 8-0.

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Eiliesh Tuffy  
Preservation Administrator

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Members of the Public  
Who Signed Attendance Sheet 9/7/10

Mike Bedard	345 Greenwood St., Worcester, MA 01607
Ray Cadrin	285 Harvard St., #411, Cambridge, MA 02139
Mordechai Halpern	118 Trowbridge, #5, Cambridge, MA <02150>
Ramona DiNatale	6 West St., #2, Cambridge, MA 02139