

**MINUTES OF THE MID CAMBRIDGE NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION  
ARCHITECT'S COMMITTEE MEETING FOR MC-4662 - 17 WARE STREET**

*Approved at the April 6, 2015 Meeting*

Friday, March 13, 2015, 8:00 AM, 17 Ware Street, Cambridge

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

Commission Members absent: Margaret McMahan, *Alternate*

Staff present: Samantha Paull

Proponents: Maryann Thompson and Katie Chu of Maryann Thompson Architects

Members of the Public: Marilee Meyer

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Ms. Nancy Goodwin, Commission Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:02 AM.

Ms. Maryann Thompson, applicant, presented her updated plans to the Committee members. She noted that the proposal kept the original chimneys, set back the addition behind the right side gable, lowered pitch of the addition below that of the main peak, and it was not extending past the line of the existing addition. She continued that the bedrooms on the third floor were still useable space but the ceiling height was reduced to allow the addition height to be secondary to the main roof line. She showed the Committee members the shadow studies she had completed for the updated plans that reflected no shadow impact on the neighboring yards. She pointed out the proposed wood exterior would be a natural finish mahogany which would gray over time.

Mr. Charles Redmon, Committee member, asked what the proposed material for the chimney was. Ms. Thompson replied that it was proposed as stucco but that detail was not finalized. Ms. Goodwin asked if brick could be used. Ms. Thompson said yes. Mr. Redmon asked if a design could be tied in such as a vertical running bond or a herringbone pattern. Ms. Thompson said yes. Ms. Sue-Ellen Myers, Committee member, asked why the wide chimney was proposed. Ms. Thompson said it could be made smaller. Ms. Myers suggested it be tapered. Ms. Thompson responded yes we could taper.

Ms. Lestra Litchfield, Committee member, stated that the addition still seemed rather massive from the model and was concerned that it looked dominating. She continued that the photoshopped renderings of the proposal in context however were helpful and less worrisome. Ms. Litchfield emphasized her concern that as proposed, it looked like a shed dormer which was not something typical of this style and was hoping that the corner of the addition, where the stairs were located, could be better worked in to the existing structure. She commended Ms. Thompson on the updated proposal, stating it was an improvement from the previous plans. Ms. Monika Pauli, Committee member, agreed that it was an improvement and suggested setting the stair portion back more so it did not feel like it was a continuation of the main structure's side wall plane. Ms. Katie Chu, an architect from Maryann Thompson Architects, mentioned a concern that setting back the addition wall would impact the stairwell significantly.

Mr. Tony Hsiao, Committee member, stated that it helps it to look secondary, without pulling it back and having problems with the transition piece, he suggested making it more visually open, more transparent, possibly with more glass, which would allow the house to appear more dominant. Ms. Thompson replied that she liked the idea. Mr. Redmon added that she might consider looking at utilizing the same wood in the stairway element, which will further fade as it turned gray. Ms. Pauli noted that it may appear like an enclosed balcony of sorts.

Ms. Litchfield mentioned that in lightening the chimney it becomes necessary to taper even more. Ms. Goodwin commented on its domineering appearance as proposed in the plans. Mr. Redmon stated that the corner would not be as strong with more glass included.

Ms. Thompson also pointed out that the plans included enclosing the existing recessed entrance turning it into a mudroom space with a closet. Mr. Redmon stated that it helped to solidify that room. Ms. Litchfield commented that living in a house without a mudroom is hard. Ms. Thompson asked if the Committee was in support of taking off the historic front door and moving it to the new front wall instead of installing a new door. The Committee supported that idea.

Ms. Pauli asked if the fireplace would remain exposed. Ms. Thompson replied that it was possible but not in the plans currently.

Mr. Redmon asked what the small space on the 3rd floor was. Ms. Thompson replied it was under the eaves, space in the bedroom and bathroom upstairs, enough for a small table or chair.

Mr. Hsiao asked what the base cladding would be along the decking. Ms. Thompson replied that there would be a fascia board that would be sealed and the foundation would probably be stepped back, but she was happy for suggestions. She also noted that many times they apply bluestone vertically to these features. Mr. Hsiao asked what was proposed as the foundation material in the front of the house. Mr. Redmon replied it was brick. Mr. Hsiao suggested utilizing brick all the way around to tie the structure together. Mr. Redmon and Ms. Pauli concurred with Mr. Hsiao.

Mr. Hsiao asked if there was a fence proposed around the property. Ms. Thompson stated that details were still being worked out with Harvard on the actual property lines as Harvard wanted to keep a portion for access to all of the properties abutting. She continued that while the property lines were not finalized, the idea was to utilize a horizontal wood fence.

Ms. Goodwin stated that the project and amendments were looking great. Mr. Hsiao added that the adjustments had been helpful. Ms. Litchfield added that having the site plan is helpful as it would reflect a portion of the property being kept as access by Harvard and might help some of the neighbors feel more comfortable with the project. Ms. Myers noted that some of the students and traffic might be diverted if Harvard is wanting to keep the open space. Mr. Hsiao said that adding a site plan to the submission would really help to see it all tied together. Ms. Thompson stated that she would redraw the site plan as the project stands now and add the fence line on. Ms. Goodwin asked about extant plantings. Ms. Chu responded that the last site plan they were working with Harvard on had notes to maintain as much as possible. Ms. Litchfield suggested the use of a six (6) foot fence in the rear if the abutters supported it and allow for a four (4) foot fence along the front and side property lines. She continued that taller fences on the side property lines end up creating alleys.

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Ms. Thompson thanked the group for their suggestions.

Ms. Samantha Paull, staff member, noted that submission of plans was due on Wednesday the 18th and that the Commission would like to have a draft landscape plan. She continued that the Commission could defer the details of a final review to staff if they felt comfortable with it or the applicant had the option of returning to the Commission for substantial changes.

The meeting adjourned at 8:48am.

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha M. Paull  
Preservation Administrator