

**MINUTES OF THE MID CAMBRIDGE NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
**APPROVED AT THE JANUARY 9, 2017 HEARING**

Monday, October 17, 2016, 6:00 PM, Lombardi Building, Basement Meeting Room, 831 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge

Commission Members present: Nancy Goodwin, *Chair*; Sue-Ellen Myers, *Member*; Margaret McMahon and Charles Redmon, *Alternates*

Commission Members absent: Tony Hsiao, *Vice Chair*; Lestra Litchfield and Monika Pauli, *Members*

Staff present: Samantha Paull Elliott

Members of the Public: See attached list.

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Ms. Nancy Goodwin, Commission Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:07pm. She reviewed the agenda as well as meeting procedures. She designated that all alternates present would be voting.

**MC-5056: 6 Maple Avenue, by John Herron & Julia Moore. (*Continued*) Construct addition and alter grade for driveway**

Ms. Samantha Paull Elliott, staff, showed slides, gave an overview of the structure and application.

Ms. Julia Moore, an owner, introduced herself and thanked the Commission for scheduling the Architect's Committee Meeting on October 4, 2016. She pointed to the Commission's packets and noted that the updated plans included in their submission had incorporated comments from the Architect's Committee Meeting. Mr. John Herron, an owner, shared that they amended the plans to reflect a garden house versus a carriage house. He credited the idea to the Architect's Committee meeting. He continued that the plans also removed the second floor, made landscaping a higher priority, and moved the structure toward Broadway to allow or the parking to be repositioned away from abutters. Mr. Herron noted that the site plan also included an area for a community garden at the back of the lot abutting Fayette Park. He closed, sharing that their goal was to have the house disappear into the background, behind landscaping.

Ms. Goodwin asked for questions from the public.

Mr. Mark Dishop, a resident at 7 Maple Avenue, asked if the roof was flat or sloped. Mr. John Lodge, architect for the project, said that the roof would have a very low pitch. Mr. Dishop asked if the roof would provide rooftop living space or a deck. Mr. Lodge replied no.

Ms. Goodwin called for any other questions from the public - there were none. She called for comments from the public.

Mr. Dishop commended them on the removal of the second floor. He said he did not want to see it from Maple Avenue. He noted that there had not been substantial additions or secondary structures constructed, except for 4 new garages within the boundaries of the Maple Avenue National Register

District. He expressed his concern over the precedent the project would set. He handed out a page that noted the construction and development patterns as deduced from atlases along the Maple Avenue National Register District to support his assessment.

Mr. Paul Levenson, a resident at 7 Maple Avenue, agreed with Mr. Dishop and said he felt it was a trompe l'oeil.

Ms. Helen Snivley, a resident at 1 Fayette Park, asked how much of the structure would be seen from Fayette Park and if there was a fence proposed to hide the addition. Mr. Lodge said they were hoping to work with abutters on landscaping, which would further help to reduce the impact of the one story addition. Ms. Snivley asked for the height of the addition. Mr. Lodge replied nine (9) feet.

Ms. Sue Ellen Myers, Commissioner, asked what the difference between the zoning districts meant for the site. Ms. Elliott responded that she was not certain about the differences between the zoning districts and noted that zoning was not within the Commission's purview. Ms. Elliott said that some terms are used in both zoning and historic preservation such as massing, scale and density, adding that the Commission was looking at how those components related to the character of the area. Ms. Myers asked how the National Register listing impacted their decision. Ms. Elliott replied that the National Register Districts, under Mid Cambridge, meant that the review was binding and thus more closely looked at in the specifics of how the decision would affect the district.

Ms. Marjorie Saunders, resident at 7 Maple Avenue #2, thought that it was interesting that the development character of Maple Avenue was unique for the Mid Cambridge area. She felt that keeping the structure low was merely hiding it and expressed concern over the additional density.

Ms. Goodwin read letters expressing concern for the project from Jason Korb at 4 Fayette Park, Helen Snivley at 1 Fayette Park, and Richard Talkov at 8 ½ Maple Avenue. She read a support letter from Alanna and Robert Mallon at 3 Maple Avenue.

Ms. Goodwin replied to the concerns of residents in the area, noting that as proposed it would have limited visibility with location and landscaping.

Mr. Redmon added that he felt the owners had taken concerns of the Commission and abutters into consideration when revising the plans. He said he felt that it would read as a low wall versus a building from Broadway. He noted that the Commission's review was limited to what was visible from a public way.

Ms. Margaret McMahon, Commissioner, expressed concern over additions to the street and the precedent it would set. Ms. Myers agreed that it would be groundbreaking in the area and that she would prefer to see it as more of a detached carriage house. Ms. Myers added that she hoped it would not encourage others to do the same in the future. Ms. Goodwin said she didn't feel it would set a precedent as each application was reviewed under its own merit and conditions unique to that parcel.

Mr. Paul Levenson, an abutter, said that it seemed like the Commission did not object to the addition as long as it would be hidden. Ms. Goodwin replied that the Commission reviewed projects that were visible from a public way, regardless of fencing or screening with landscaping. Ms. Elliott noted that any changes to the plans would require the applicant to return to staff; adding that larger changes could constitute a second hearing.

Mr. Redmon made a motion to approve as proposed. Ms. Goodwin seconded the motion. The motion was approved 3-1 with Ms. McMahan voting nay.

Mr. Heron noted his intent to continue working with the abutters on landscaping and fencing details.

**MC-5066: 50 Inman Street**, by Scott James & Elizabeth Cullen. Alter exterior, replace windows, alter entrance, and construction addition

Ms. Elliott, staff, showed slides while giving an overview of the structure and application.

Dr. Scott Cullen, an owner, gave an overview of the proposal, outlining the hope to alter window openings and construct multiple additions, which included an attached single car garage as part of a larger renovation project for the structure.

Mr. Redmon asked if the existing siding was vinyl. Dr. Scott Cullen, the owner, replied that the existing siding was vinyl and that many of the original details had been removed. Dr. Cullen said he found some clues of previous details from the survey photo that the Commission had, but that the asbestos had covered up a fair portion of the original details in said photo.

Mr. Redmon noted that the plans did not appear to show the recessed entry. Dr. Cullen apologized and continued, saying that while the historic details were missing they were hoping to reconstruct some of the features, including the recessed entry that they found details of inside the structure. He said it seemed that the entry was altered when the front steps were added 50-60 years ago. He noted that the one story bump out in the rear would be enclosed as part of the proposal.

Ms. Goodwin asked if it was a one or two family structure. Dr. Cullen replied that the structure had been previously used as a three-family with back to back spiral stairs that served two small units. He noted that currently it was a two family with a tenant on the first floor while he occupied the second and third floors with his family. He said the goal was to return the main house to a single family house and have a tenant space in the rear, which would help fund the restoration of the main house. Ms. Goodwin asked if he was proposing a one car attached garage. Dr. Cullen replied yes next to the kitchen. He noted that there was also room for a driveway next to the garage which would provide two parking spaces, one for each unit.

Ms. Goodwin asked for additional questions from the Commission. There were none. She asked for questions from the public. There were none. She asked for comments from the public. There were none. She noted that the Commission had received two emails, one from Mr. Roman Stocker, and abutter, and another from an abutter, Ezra Block. She read the emails which expressed concern with the massing, detailing, and scale of the proposed project. The abutters did not support the proposal.

Ms. Goodwin noted that she agreed with the concern of abutters that the massing was out of scale. She commended Dr. Cullen for his desire to restore the main structure, but expressed concern over the scale of the proposal. Dr. Cullen asked if the structure was even historic. Ms. Goodwin replied yes.

Mr. Walter Beebe-Center, contractor on the project, said that it was the smallest addition that would accommodate the owner's proposed use. Mr. Redmon asked if there were two separate larger additions. Mr. Walter replied yes and said he felt the proposed restoration of the building was admirable.

Dr. Cullen replied that currently there were two units within 2,000 square feet, which he felt was ambitious as both units were cramped. He continued, noting that the lot was non-conforming which presented additional issues. He added that his property was in close proximity to four (4) different zoning districts with a variety of uses and styles. Dr. Cullen shared that he was open to specific feedback but did not agree with abutters' letters.

Ms. Goodwin noted that the Commission encouraged applicants to design additions that were subservient to the main structure, with a lower ridge and not replicating the frieze or other ornate details. Dr. Cullen replied that during the design period, they tried a few variations and felt that the other options detracted from the Greek Revival character of the structure. Mr. Beebe-Center replied that from the rendering, the garage appeared to be larger than it would be as constructed, as the garage was only 11 feet.

Ms. Goodwin noted that the proposal appeared to replicate the original architecture. Dr. Cullen replied that was the goal. Ms. Goodwin clarified that it was not the goal of the Commission; she continued that the addition needed to be identifiable as new and subservient to the main structure. Mr. Redmon added that the proposal was too big. He noted that the proposal distracted from the main house with its brackets, excessive use of cornerboards, and multiple additions. He noted that the additions should be quiet and simple. Mr. Redmon asked if Dr. Cullen could do without the two story garage addition and maintain the driveway for parking. Dr. Cullen responded that it may be possible but that they hoped for a garage because of the snow. Dr. Cullen added that a detached garage would come with additional zoning issues.

Dr. Cullen asked if the Commission would be more supportive of the proposal if there was a break in continuous massing with simple detailing. Ms. Goodwin stated that the proposal had too much massing for the lot. Mr. Redmon suggested that the additional needs should be met by extending the massing of the house toward the rear only. Dr. Cullen asked if that meant eliminating the garage addition. Mr. Redmon replied yes and dealing with the third floor roofscape, as well as extending the massing from the house to the rear. Ms. Goodwin added that it would help resolve the concerns of the neighbors. Dr. Cullen clarified that they were not deaf to the concerns of the neighbors; noting that he attempted to address the concerns with window locations and heights. He continued, stating that they could give up the garage but expressed concern over achieving the needed head height with a stepped down extension from the main house. Mr. Redmon replied that a step down was not necessary and advised him to keep the massing simple.

Ms. Goodwin added that having a model would be helpful and that they were open to scheduling an Architect's Review Meeting. Dr. Cullen said that he was open to that. He also asked if the applications could be separated - with the front entry alteration, window alterations, and siding replacement getting approved. Ms. Elliott replied that staff had already approved the replacement of the siding and windows, but could not approve the alterations to the opening sizes on a staff level. Ms. Goodwin asked if he could state the proposed window alterations. Dr. Cullen outlined the alterations on the first floor windows. Mr. Redmon said that it seemed like he was talking about the first floor windows facing Inman Street as well as those facing north and south. Dr. Cullen replied yes, and added that the north and west elevations were most important. Mr. Redmon and Ms. Goodwin said that selective approval was too confusing without plans reflecting the proposed changes. Mr. Redmon stated that they would need an updated application with plans reflecting the proposed changes as well as the existing elevations.

Ms. Myers asked what material was proposed for the windows. Dr. Cullen clarified that they were looking at a fiberglass clad product with a simulated divided lite. He asked if there was a color preference. Mrs. Elliott recommended that he follow up with Susan Maycock for a paint and window consultation if he wanted guidance on color. She noted that the Commission in Mid Cambridge did not regulate color.

Mr. Redmon offered to break the proposals up - he made a motion to deny the two additions as proposed. Ms. Myers seconded the motion. The motion was approved 4-0. Mr. Redmon made a motion to approve the request to alter the entrance and alter the windows on the Inman Street elevation. Ms. Myers seconded the motion. The motion was approved 4-0. Mr. Redmon clarified that the motion was for a partial approval and a partial denial of the original proposal. The Commissioners agreed on this clarification.

Dr. Cullen asked about working out a site visit. Mrs. Elliott replied that she would work with the Commission and applicant to schedule the Architect's Committee Review Meeting.

**MC-5072: 5 Saint Paul Street, by Judy Housman. Install solar panels**

Ms. Elliott, staff, showed slides, gave an overview of the structure and application.

Mr. Sven Amirian, the company representative, introduced himself and gave an overview of the proposal.

Mr. Redmon asked why the array plan was 17 panels. Mr. Amirian clarified that the company used past electric bills to assess the annual needs of the property owner. He added that the goal was to exceed annual need by five percent (5%). Ms. Judy Housman, an owner, stated that she was retiring shortly and would have increased need for heating during the day as she wouldn't be at her job during the day. Mr. Paul Rajcok, an owner, added that although it was an odd number, the panels were hardly visible from Prospect Street.

Ms. Goodwin asked if there were additional questions from the Commission. There were none. She asked for questions from the public; there were none. She asked for comments from the public, there were none.

Ms. Goodwin said that the Commission wanted to keep solar panels below the ridge line to minimize visibility and impact to the roofline. Mr. Amirian said it was kept off the ridge and below the ridge vent. Mr. Redmon asked if it could be pushed further back away from the street. Mr. Amirian replied that he was concerned with the impact of neighboring structures and trees if it was pushed farther back. Mr. Rajcok noted that the neighbors to the east had panels to the edge of their roof. Mr. Redmon asked if they could meet the neighbor's setback on their panels. Mr. Amirian replied that they could meet the neighbor's setback.

Ms. Myers asked if the chimney was staying. Ms. Housman replied yes.

Mr. Redmon made a motion to approve the application as submitted with the condition to lower the panels away from the ridge and match the setback of the neighboring structure from the front edge of the roof. Ms. Myers seconded the motion. The motion was approved 4-0.

**MC-5074: 14 Sumner Road, by Ezra Vogel. Install solar panels**

Ms. Elliott, staff, showed slides, gave an overview of the structure and application.

Mr. Redmon asked if the blank space on the roof plan was an existing skylight. Mr. Sven Amirian, representative from the solar company, replied yes.

Ms. Goodwin asked for questions from the public; there were none. She asked for comments from the public, there were none.

Mr. Redmon made a motion to approve the application as submitted. Ms. McMahon seconded the motion. The motion was approved 4-0.

**MC-5073: 1716 Cambridge Street, by Aram Comjean, Diane Paul, & Steven Barbell. Replace windows**

Ms. Elliott, staff, showed slides, gave an overview of the structure and application.

Mr. Redmon asked how many windows had been previously replaced on the structure. Mr. Aram Comjean, an owner, replied about 65% of the building had been previously replaced with various types. He said most were vinyl windows. He noted that the units requesting replacement under this application were all on the first floor. Mr. Steve Barbell, an owner, replied that some windows on the building were 8-over-8 and some were 6-over-6 and that they were proposing to match the existing muntin pattern. Ms. McMahon asked how many windows were in the building. Mr. Comjean, replied 255 windows in the building and the application was addressing replacement of 23 windows. Ms. McMahon asked if what they were proposing would provide for uniformity. Mr. Comjean replied yes.

Ms. Goodwin asked for questions from the public; there were none. She asked for comments from the public, there were none.

Mr. Redmon made a motion to approve the application as submitted. Ms. Myers seconded the motion. The motion was approved 4-0.

**MC-5075: 20 Sumner Road, by President & Fellows of Harvard College. Exterior renovation. Construct addition and ADA ramp, alter and replace windows, replace siding, demolish chimney, construct solar chimney, and replace roofing with photovoltaic shingles**

Ms. Elliott, staff, showed slides, gave an overview of the structure and application.

Ms. Alexandra Offiong, representative for Harvard, gave an overview of the property's history with Harvard and needs behind the proposal before the Commission. She noted that Harvard had owned the property since the 1970s and that they were approaching the renovation as a research project to study alterations and energy projects that can be replicable for homeowners.

Mr. Aaron Dorf, architect with Snøhetta, reviewed the proposal in detail. He noted that the project had a few goals related to energy efficiency: zero energy required for heating and cooling, 100% natural ventilation, zero carbon (carbon neutral or carbon positive), and the structure to be 100% daylight

autonomous. He added that they were also creating ADA accessibility in public spaces, adding new bike spaces, and constructing a half story basement addition.

Mr. Dorf elaborated that the goal was to cut energy use to a ¼ of traditional use with a limited impact to the character of the existing building stock. He said the shingles on the exterior would be untreated and the envelope would be fully insulated. He noted that the ADA ramp was proposed as a low sloping landscape feature that did not have hand rails or block light into the house/basement. Mr. Dorf showed 3D renderings. He noted they were proposing to install a glass vestibule for the porch space, with windows that could be opened up during summer and closed during winter. He said that the existing trees on the south property line would be preserved. Mr. Ali Malkawi, Director of the Harvard Center for Green Buildings and Cities, added they hoped to balance the characteristics of outside while meeting needs of inside.

Mr. Dorf showed samples of the slate roofing products and the photovoltaic shingles, which would be next to each other. He showed window samples to the Commission. He then described how the insulation would be added, building out the façade of the structure to allow proper, uninterrupted vapor barriers.

Mr. Redmon asked why there was a heavy horizontal mullion. Mr. Dorf replied that it was required for the window ventilation system and that they had worked with the manufacturer in Germany to get the mullion as small as possible. Mr. Dorf noted that they were proposing to use a consistent dimension for the windows throughout the building. Mr. Redmon asked if this was a research project that was going to be modified over time or if it would be constructed and studied. Mr. Dorf said that the goal was to construct it and study it – creating its own ecosystem for energy performance. He noted that if one item was changed that it could disturb the entire balance of the project.

Ms. Goodwin asked why the solar chimney was glass. Mr. Dorf responded that it was to aid in the performance of the solar chimney, and help start convection. Ms. Goodwin asked if examples existed. Mr. Dorf replied yes, but noted that they were primarily non-residential buildings. Mr. Malkawi added that solar chimneys were regularly constructed in other countries. Ms. Goodwin said she was familiar with the concept but not in glass.

Ms. Goodwin asked if the building would be net zero. Mr. Dorf replied they hoped for it to be beyond net zero. Mr. Malkawi replied that the entire project was a large experiment, with a curiosity to see what would work in the residential US market while valuing historic character of the structure.

Mr. Redmon asked what the proposed timeline was. Mr. Malkawi said he hoped that they would be done with construction in Fall 2017. Ms. Goodwin asked if the findings would be open to the public. Mr. Redmon suggested using an electronic graphic that people could walk by and see what the energy ratings were for that day. Mr. Malkawi asked if they would support a display panel. The Commission nodded their heads in affirmation.

Ms. McMahan asked Mr. Dorf to elaborate on the porch alterations. Mr. Dorf replied that they were not aggressively filling it in, but rather creating a space that could be used in all seasons with the glass panels being set back about one and a half (1 ½) feet back from the porch columns in an effort to maintain the porch lines.

Ms. Goodwin asked if there were questions from the Commission; there were none. She asked for questions from the public.

Mr. Adam Comjean, resident at 1716 Cambridge Street, asked how efficient the photovoltaic shingles were. Mr. Dorf replied that they were 12% efficient. Mr. Malkawi said they could even be as good as 15%, which was similar to solar panels.

Mr. Steven Barbell, resident at 1716 Cambridge Street, commended them on the project and asked if Harvard would be removing some of the paving for parking. Mr. Dorf referred to the site plan which reflected a reduction in pavement. Mr. Barbell asked if they were using the pavement material that produced electricity, noting that it may be limited to highways. Mr. Dorf replied that he had not come across such a product. Mr. Malkawi said that they were a number of products on the market and that they were not using all of them but concentrating on the structure.

Mr. Redmon made a motion to approve the application as submitted. The motion was seconded by Ms. McMahon. The motion was approved 4-0.

**MC-5077: 385 Broadway, by Pamela Enders. Replace windows**

Ms. Elliott, staff, showed slides, gave an overview of the structure and application.

Mr. Jaime Morin, owner representative from Renewal by Andersen, gave an overview of the application and noted that the homeowner was seeking to upgrade the windows. He noted that the windows had been previously altered with tension tracks added by a previous owner.

Ms. Myers asked if it was the same muntin pattern. Mr. Morin replied yes. Ms. Elliott asked for clarification on the muntin pattern as the original submittal said they were proposing a one-over-one product. Mr. Morin replied that he had clarified that with the owner and the application was being amended.

Ms. Goodwin asked for questions from the public; there were none. She asked for comments from the public, there were none.

Ms. Myers made a motion to approve as submitted. Mr. Redmon seconded the motion. The motion was approved 4-0.

Mr. Redmon made a motion to adjourn the hearing. Ms. Myers seconded the motion. The motion was approved 4-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 8:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Paull Elliott  
Preservation Administrator



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

Jock Herron	Owner	6 Maple Avenue
Julia Moore	Owner	6 Maple Avenue
John Lodge	Architect	56 Aberdeen Avenue
Steven Barbell	Resident	1716 Cambridge Street
Aram Comjean	Resident	1716 Cambridge Street
Alexandra Offiong	Owner/Representative	1350 Massachusetts Ave, Ste 573
W. Kevin Cahill	Owner	48 Quincy Street
Ali Malkawi	Owner	48 Quincy Street
Aaron Dorf	Architect	80 Pine Street, NY, NY
Tom Koch	Owner's Representative	30 North Avenue, Burlington, MA
Susan Davies	Abutter	8 ½ Maple Avenue
Laura Zimmerman	Resident	24 Maple Avenue
Paul Levenson	Owner	7 Maple Avenue
Mark Dishop	Owner	7 Maple Avenue
Michelle Humphries	Owner	7 Maple Avenue
Sven Amirian	Solar Installer	26 Parkridge Road, Haverhill
Beata D. Panagopoulos	Neighbor	28 Maple Avenue, #3
Ann Dix	Neighbor	34 Maple Avenue, #3
Judy Ann Goldman	Neighbor	34 Maple Avenue, #2
Marjorie Saunders	Abutter	7 Maple Avenue, #2
Constance Hilton	Abutter	2 Fayette Park
Howard Schultz	Resident	22 Centre Street, #7
Elizabeth Cullen	Owner	50 Inman Street
Scott Cullen	Owner	50 Inman Street
Judy Housman	Owner	5 St. Paul Street
Paul Rajcok	Owner	5 St. Paul Street
Jaime Morin	Contractor, Renewal by Andersen	385 Broadway [sic]

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