

Approved 12/6/12

Minutes of the Cambridge Historical Commission

October 4, 2012 - 806 Massachusetts Avenue - 6:00 P.M.

Members present: William B. King, *Chair* and Bruce Irving, *Vice Chair*;
M. Wyllis Bibbins, Chandra Harrington, Jo M. Solet, *Members*
Shary Page Berg, Joseph Ferrara, Susannah Tobin, *Alternate Members*

Members absent: Robert Crocker, *Member*

Staff present: Charles Sullivan, Sarah Burks

Public present: See attached list.

Chair William King called the meeting to order at 6:04 P.M. and made introductions. He dispensed with the consent agenda and explained hearing procedures.

Public Hearings: Alterations to Designated Properties

Case 2952: 16 Garden St., by Commander Realty Associates Nominee Trust. Install air conditioning condenser in basement stairwell on Berkeley St. side of building.

Charles Sullivan showed slides and described the proposed location of the air conditioning unit.

Jo Solet commented that the noise of the equipment would reverberate due to its location in a cement box. She said there was not enough information provided in the application. She asked what the dimensions were and how it would be attached. She was concerned about both noise and appearance. There were no specifications for the equipment. Bruce Irving noted the installation details on the plan and said he did not object to the proposal. Chandra Harrington said the stairs were already unattractive and the installation would not make it any worse.

Dr. Lloyd Aiello of 2½ Berkeley Street asked if the Commission's jurisdiction in the historic district included noise. Mr. King explained that the Commission did not have the authority to enforce the noise ordinance, but could control the appearance and location of things that produce noise, such as air conditioners, to the extent that they were visible from a public way. Dr. Aiello inquired if the public could help increase the authority of the Commission to include such things as noise and ashtrays which affect the character of the historic environment.

Richard Hardaway, the architect for the Commander, arrived and reported that the equipment would be comparable in size to a residential installation. The noise level of the equipment was 72 dba. He noted that the unit would cool the laundry room during the day and would not be used at night.

Dr. Solet pointed out that 50 dba was the nighttime maximum level allowed by the noise ordinance. The location would cause that sound to reverberate. She suggested that Mr. Hardaway look for an alternative because the equipment would be twice as loud in the day and four times as loud at night than allowed by the ordinance.

Dr. Aiello asked the architect to confer with him in the future before applying.

Ms. Harrington moved to approve the application, with the condition that the selection of equipment be adjusted to meet the requirements of the noise ordinance. Dr. Solet indicated that there was not enough detail in the application and recommended continuing the hearing to next month. There being no second to Dr. Solet's motion, Mr. Irving seconded Ms. Harrington's original motion, which passed 6-1 with Dr. Solet in opposition and Susannah Tobin and Shary Berg voting as designated alternates.

Case 2953: 52 Church St., by 50 Church Street Realty Trust, owner, o/b/o Bowery Cambridge LLC, tenant. Modify entry area, storefront, and railings; install lighting and signs; construct roof over accessible lift.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and described the building, designed by Sert Jackson Associates in 1978. The courtyard entrance at #52 was designed by Connor Architecture and approved by the commission in 2008.

James Rafferty, representing the proponents, the Bowery Cambridge LLC, explained that the space would be operated as a music venue and restaurant. He distributed a revised design and explained that the previously proposed projecting sign at the corner had been replaced by an internally illuminated sign above the door.

Steve Preble of Signature Architects, Inc. said the existing glass panel railing was broken and proposed replacing it with a black wire mesh. The access board required that a roof be constructed over the handicap lift. A door would be added to the storefront at the top of the landing for entry to the new restaurant. The color of the architectural materials would be changed from a bright white to an off white. He described the marquee sign, which would be located in an existing opening in the parapet wall. The sign could be swung around and the content changed by hand.

Mr. King asked for questions or comments from the public, but there were none.

Mr. Irving moved to approve the application as submitted, on the basis that the configuration and location of the signs were appropriate to the building and district. Mr. Bibbins seconded. Joseph Ferrara proposed an amendment to delegate approval of construction details and materials of the signs to the staff with the instruction that the materials be suitably durable. Dr. Solet proposed delegating approval of the brightness of the illumination to the staff so that it would not create a hazard. Mr. Irving agreed to the amendments. Mr. Bibbins seconded the amended motion, which passed 7-0 with alternate members Ferrara and Berg voting.

Case 2954: 40 Bow St., by McMillan Realty Trust. Remove artificial siding; restore or replicate exterior cladding, trim, windows, and storefront; and install signs.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides of the 1889 Queen Anne building with a storefront facing Plympton Street. He noted that the storefront was one of four protected storefronts in the Harvard Square Conservation District; alterations to it were subject to the Commission's approval. The vinyl siding, sliding doors, and balconies on the upper floors were alterations by Genevieve McMillan, who lived there for many years. He pointed out that clapboards could be seen on the first and third floors, fish-scale shingles on the second floor, and square-cut shingles on the fourth floor where the owners had removed some of the siding.

Hubert Murray, representing the McMillan Realty Trust, explained that Ms. McMillan had died a couple of years ago. She was a philanthropist who left a foundation supporting numerous art programs, including many in Africa. The trust planned to fix up the three apartments on the upper floors and the retail space on the ground floor. There might also be a studio unit on the ground floor.

Kyle Larabee of Pfeufer Richardson Architects noted that the property was a contributing building in the Harvard Square National Register District. He explained that they had removed select areas of siding to see what existed beneath it. He asked for approval to stage the building, remove the siding, and confer with the staff about the condition of existing materials and the scope of repair vs. replacement. Then they intended to repair or replicate the wood windows, repair or replace the cladding in the original design, replicate missing brackets and trim,

and repair and restore the storefront. He described other alterations including changing the hood over the apartment entrance, adding a new accessible entrance, installing 6 condensers on the roof, removing the doghouse for the roof stair, and installing a commemorative plaque.

Mr. King recommended they return to the Commission with details of future retail signs and the plaque.

Dr. Solet asked if the original colors were known. Mr. Larabee indicated that they were not known yet.

Mr. Murray distributed booklets about Genevieve McMillan's life.

There being no public questions or comments, Mr. King closed the public comment period. He agreed with Dr. Solet that it was a well researched and positive proposal. He recommended approval.

Mr. Irving moved to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the staging, condition assessment, and work as described on the condition that the final scope of repair vs. replacement be determined in consultation with the staff and on the further condition that signs and the plaque be brought back to the Commission at a future date. Dr. Solet seconded the motion, which passed 7-0 with alternate members Tobin and Ferrara voting.

Public Hearing: Demolition Review

Case D-1280: 28 Vineyard St., by James Hazard. Demolish house (ca. 1862-1872).

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and described the double house at ~~26-68-28~~ 28 Vineyard Street, built between 1862 and 1872. The house had been built by Patrick Quigley, an Irish immigrant and early resident of the Auburn subdivision. He showed slides of other early houses in the neighborhood.

Mr. King explained the demolition delay review procedures.

Jookun Lim of Twin Spine Architects explained the problems with the existing building, including low ceilings, stairs not built to code, and termite damage. To meet current codes it would be necessary to add a lot of reinforcement. He noted that his client was an upwardly mobile person like the original owner, Patrick Quigley.

Dr. Solet said that most older buildings in Cambridge had some past problem with termites. She asked if there was an engineer's report. Mr. Lim said there was not, but the neighbor was pleased with the idea of a new building being further from his house. He clarified that the house was located in a Residential B zone, not C-1.

There being no questions or comments from the public, Dr. Solet moved to find the house significant for the reasons provided in the staff report, and as defined in the ordinance. Ms. Harrington seconded, and the motion passed 7-0 with alternate members Berg and Tobin voting.

Mr. Lim described a revised design for the proposed replacement. The side-by-side townhouses would be staggered. He described a modern design and construction, with a rainscreen and green features like rain water collection, a green roof, and a privacy buffer of fruit trees. He could also design something traditional, but he preferred to experiment with the modern ideas. The design was not yet finished, but it was a collaborative process and he was considering the comments of the neighbors.

Mr. King recommended finding the existing house preferably preserved because the replacement design was not yet certain.

Dr. Solet recommended the applicant talk to other neighbors and take design references from features in the neighborhood.

Mr. Lim said the street was very eclectic, so he thought something contemporary would fit in well.

Ms. Berg said the replacement design could be contemporary rather than traditional, but she commented that the current design seemed very boxy and tall for its context. She asked if there had been a survey. Parking in the front setback was probably not allowed.

Mr. Irving said there was no dominant style on the street. He would be happy to see a contemporary structure. He suggested that the proponents return when the design was finished.

Mr. Ferrara said that how a building addresses its context was important, but it did not have to be a replica of its neighbors. Mr. Bibbins agreed. The siting of the building was good and the offset created some privacy for each unit. He was not opposed to a contemporary building.

Mr. Sullivan said that he had seen the inside of the existing house and that it was in rough shape.

Gonzalo Artigas, the future owner, said that he owned a construction company and had been hired by other architects to look at rehabbing the house. It would cost \$450,000 to do so. A renovation would not work for his family's needs.

Mr. King encouraged Mr. Artigas to design the house he wanted, responding to the Commission's comments, then return with the finished design. He closed the public comment period.

Mr. Irving moved to find the house preferably preserved in the context of the uncertain replacement project. Dr. Solet seconded, and the motion passed 7-0 with alternates Berg and Ferrara voting. Mr. Irving encouraged the proponents to return with a finished design and to ask for a termination of the remaining delay.

Mr. King called for a brief recess at 8:00 and reconvened the meeting at 8:10.

Preservation Grants

Case PG 13-1: 19 Howard St., by Just A Start. Strip and reside three-decker (\$30,000 requested)

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and described the three-decker built ca. 1895. The grant application was to strip off the artificial siding and restore the exterior trim and cladding with Hardiplank. The projected cost of the project was \$42,500 and the requested grant was \$30,000.

Dr. Solet asked if the front door would be replaced. Mr. Sullivan replied that he would look into that possibility. A new front porch was part of the proposed scope.

Mr. Irving moved to approve the request. Mr. Ferrara seconded, and the motion passed 7-0 with alternate members Tobin and Ferrara voting.

Case IPG 13-2: 836 Massachusetts Ave., by St. Peter's Episcopal Church. Windows (Grant #2, \$88,825 requested)

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and described the 1931 brick parish house behind the church. Some of the windows could be repaired but many were ruined. The project estimate was \$127,000 for all new Pella clad windows. He had recommended to the minister that a professional evaluate the condition of all the windows first.

Mr. Irving agreed, adding that he was not inclined to support window replacement if the existing ones were viable. The Commission asked Mr. Sullivan to consult further with the church.

New Business: Determination of Procedure: Alterations to Designated Properties

Case 2959: 13 Berkeley St., by Thomas & Gail Roberts. At rear of property: demolish existing mudroom addition and reconstruct same, construct 2 entrance porches, install French doors. At side, roof bay window with copper and alter support brackets.

Dr. Solet stated that she was an abutter and recused herself from the discussion.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and explained that the affected areas were not visible from a public way.

Mr. Irving moved to approve a Certificate of Nonapplicability on the basis that the area was not publicly visible. Ms. Harrington seconded, and the motion passed 7-0 with all alternates voting and Dr. Solet not voting.

Case 2960: 0 Garden St., by Christ Church Cambridge. Relocate and install new gas meter.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and explained that Christ Church was replacing its heating system. The gas service needed to be replaced and NSTAR wanted to place the new installation on the back of the apse, in a location prominently visible on Farwell Place. The church had proposed an alternative location near the Parish House, in an alcove hidden by shrubbery. He recommended approving the alternative location and conveying that the Commission would deny the apse location.

Dr. Solet so moved, subject to ten-day notice procedures. Mr. Ferrara seconded, and the motion passed 7-0 with alternates Ferrara and Berg voting.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Sullivan reported that MITIMCo had requested an extension of the landmark study period and interim protections for the three Kendall Square properties through January 8, 2013.

Mr. Irving moved to approve the request. Mr. Bibbins seconded and the motion passed 7-0 with alternate members Tobin and Berg voting.

Minutes

Mr. King asked about the wording of the motion regarding 9 Phillips Place at the bottom of page 3 of the September 6, 2012 minutes. Mr. Irving confirmed its accuracy.

Dr. Solet moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Ms. Harrington seconded, and the motion passed 7-0 with alternates Tobin and Ferrara voting.

Ms. Harrington moved to adjourn. Mr. Bibbins seconded, and the motion passed at 8:34 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks
Preservation Planner

**Members of the Public
Who Signed Attendance Sheet 10/4/12**

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Lloyd Aiello | 2½ Berkeley St |
| Stephen Preble | 313 Littlen Rd, Chelmsford, MA |
| Josh Bhatti | 52 Church St |
| Will Gruen | 52 Church St |
| Frances Bonacci | 32 Vineyard St |
| Erica Moser | 40A Leon St, Boston, MA 02115 |
| Alex LaCasse | 1435 Tremont St, Boston, MA 02120 |
| Caroline John | 129 St. Alphonsus St, Boston, MA 02120 |
| John Sanzone | 540 Memorial Dr., #304 |
| Brian Heller | 90 College Ave, #1, Somerville, MA |

Town is Cambridge unless otherwise indicated.