

Approved 7/12/12

Minutes of the Cambridge Historical Commission

February 2, 2012, 6:00 P.M. Cambridge Senior Center, 806 Massachusetts Ave.

Members present: Bruce Irving, *Vice Chair*; M. Wyllis Bibbins, Chandra Harrington, *Members*; Shary Page Berg, Joseph Ferrara, Susannah Tobin, *Alternates*

Members absent: William B. King, *Chair*; Robert Crocker, Jo Solet, *Members*

Staff present: Charles Sullivan, Sarah Burks

Public present: See attached list.

Vice Chair Irving called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM, made introductions, and designated the three alternates to vote on all matters. He reviewed the consent agenda procedure and asked if there were any cases which members of the staff, Commission, or the public thought did not require a full hearing.

Susannah Tobin moved to approve the following case according the consent agenda procedures and subject to review of construction details by the Executive Director:

Case 2825: Agassiz House, 14 Mason St., by President & Fellows of Harvard College. Install fuel fill and vent pipes, basement louvers, replace rooftop mechanicals.

Shary Berg seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

Public Hearings: Alterations to Designated Properties

Case 2806 (continued): Harvard Yard, by President & Fellows of Harvard College. Install up to 19 exhibit panels on the fence along the north side of the Yard between Bradstreet and Holworthy Gates. *Written request received to continue case indefinitely.*

Charles Sullivan reported that the applicant had requested an indefinite continuance.

Mr. Bibbins moved to grant the requested continuance. Ms. Berg seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

Case 2826: 88 Garden St., by Michael & Eliza Anderson. Remove fence and walkway; re-grade; reconstruct walkway; install new fence on granite base.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and described the house, built in 1810 for Asa Gray, keeper of the Harvard Botanical Garden. Originally designed by architect Ithiel Town, the house was moved from 79 Garden Street by architect Allen Cox. The Colonial Revival fence, documented in an early photo by Lois Lilley Howe, was attributed to Cox. The fence had an elaborate center section and less formal cedar saplings to the left and right. The existing fence was a replica based on the photo.

Michael Weishan, the landscape architect, described the problems with the fence. It was in direct contact with the ground and was acting like a retaining wall, which was causing it to rot out quickly. He described the proposed new fence, also Colonial Revival in style and similar to examples on Brattle Street. It was available from Walpole Woodworkers. He reviewed other proposed changes, including new brick pavers and revised grading so water would not drain toward the house. The existing fence was not continuous in style and the owners would prefer a more unified and beautiful design. The pickets of the new fence were widely spaced to maintain transparency and views of the house. The fence would have a granite footing, which would increase its longevity. The patterning of the posts and pickets could be modified, though 8' was a standard panel dimension.

Mr. Bibbins said the proposed fence would overpower the house with its formality and flourishes every 8'. The existing fence was less formal. Mr. Ferrara said that the fence would be too heavy. The posts were too frequent. If the design were lighter he could support it. The long span of the existing fence made it look better. Mr. Bibbins said he understood the need for the granite base, but it did not need to be so formal and large. Ms. Berg suggested that the curves at the front be eliminated and the height lowered. Mr. Irving said the existing fence, though unusual, was interesting and original to the Colonial Revival period.

Mr. Sullivan noted that a retaining wall could be built behind the fence. Mr. Weishan said that would not be possible without damaging tree roots and possibly losing the trees.

Mr. Sullivan recommended that the hearing be continued to allow for further design development. Mr. Weishan agreed on behalf of his clients to continue the hearing to the March meeting, but indicated that they needed to address the drainage issues and repave the front walkway soon.

Mr. Ferrara moved to continue the hearing to March 1st. Ms. Tobin seconded, and the motion passed 6-0.

Case 2827: 60 Clifton St., by Kevin Emery & Eamon Fee. Restore and expand existing house and construct a freestanding building to the rear.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and explained that a demolition delay had been followed with a landmark study. During a study a certificate is required before alterations can be made. The current case was an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to alter the existing house and construct a new building at the rear. The house was a worker's cottage on a high brick foundation built about 1850 and moved from Rindge Avenue a few years later. He noted that 66 Clifton, a similar worker's cottage that had also been moved from Rindge Avenue, had recently been restored. He had met with the owners about their design ideas.

Kevin Emery, a co-owner, explained that his architect had come up with a design that would open up the full volume of the house with a cathedral ceiling that would become the living room of the enlarged building. A new addition would replace the existing one. A detached house would be constructed behind #60.

Ms. Berg asked about materials for the two houses. Eamon Fee, a co-owner, answered that they would both be clad in wood. The rear building would have fish-scale cedar shingles.

Mr. Bibbins questioned whether the roof pitch of the existing house was correctly represented on the drawings. Mr. Emery said he would check, but assured the Commission that he would keep the existing roof structure. Mr. Bibbins commented that the addition to #60 should have a matching pitch, even if it was a little higher than the front block.

Mr. Ferrara asked about the trim detail proposed above the windows. Mr. Emery said the hoods were adapted from the cottage at 17 Winslow Street, which had been given as a good example.

Cheryl Webb of 64 Clifton was disappointed that the new house was not a replica of 60 and 66 Clifton.

Mr. Irving closed the public comment period.

Mr. Ferrara commented that the proposal had moved in a positive direction. The scale of the addition was okay, and the design of the detached building drew from features of other houses in the neighborhood. He agreed

with Mr. Bibbins that the pitch of the roof of the addition was important and recommended that the Executive Director be delegated to confirm the accuracy of the drawing.

Mr. Bibbins indicated that fish-scale shingles were not appropriate on the old building or its addition, but could be used on the detached structure. Mr. Irving agreed that straight cut shingles would be better on the addition. He commended the applicants for a creative solution.

Chandra Harrington moved to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application, on the condition that construction details, roof pitch, and materials be delegated to the Executive Director. Ms. Tobin seconded, and the motion passed 6-0.

Case 2828: 6 Longfellow Pk., by Jonathan & Maggie Seelig. Remove bays, covered stair, and chimney at rear; remove fire escape; construct one-story rear addition and new entry porch at west side; alter fenestration on north, east and south sides; reinstall or replicate shutters; re-grade at rear for wheelchair access.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and described the visibility of the different elevations of the house from public ways. Most of the proposed alterations were at the rear of the house.

Applicants Jonathan and Maggie Seelig introduced themselves. Mr. Seelig explained that his family of five plus two grandparents would be moving to Cambridge.

Steve Hart, the architect, summarized the proposed changes. There would be no change to the front façade. On the south side, the fire escape would be removed and the triple-hung windows would be altered. On the east elevation, two bays and a chimney would be removed, windows changed, and a one-story addition constructed. The slate roof would be maintained. Most windows would be restored. New storms would be added. New double-glazed wood windows would be installed on the rear elevation. Zoning relief was needed because work was proposed in the rear setback. An accessible entry and elevator were proposed for the grandfather.

Mr. Ferrara asked if the north chimney was being eliminated on the interior but maintained above the roof. Mr. Hart replied in the affirmative.

Lindy Hess of 11 Hawthorn Street asked for the mass of the rear addition to be mocked up with stakes. Mr. Hart indicated that the new addition would be lower at the top and at the eave than the existing addition.

Ms. Tobin moved to approve the application, with approval of construction details and paint colors delegated to the staff. Ms. Harrington seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

Case 2829: 40 Norris St., by La Court Family LLC, c/o Sean D. Hope, Esq. Exterior alterations including skylights, vents, snow fence and cleats at roof; site alterations including access ramp, parking, paving, signage, fencing, trash and mechanical structures, and lighting; remove rear fire escape; replace doors; envelope repairs.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and summarized the application.

Jai Khalsa, the architect, reviewed site details, including a sloped walkway to the entrance, bike parking, a transformer at the corner of Drummond and Norris, a recessed cooling tower, and fences. He described changes to the building, including approximately 25 low profile Velux roof window skylights, repairs to the cornice, snow cleats and fencing on the roof, new front doors, decorative ironwork based on photographic evidence of the original doors, repointing with matching mortar, and removal of the fire escapes. He displayed the elevations and reported that the mechanical engineers had approved locating all the vents within existing chimneys. The existing

aluminum windows would be retained. He proposed infilling the basement windows at the rear with glass block and vent louvers. The project included 25 units and 27 parking spaces.

Blair Hines, the landscape architect, displayed the landscape plan and described the sloped walkway, edging, evergreens around the chiller, less paving along Drummond Place, paving, and trees near the property line.

Mr. Irving noted that there was a type of pavement available that would allow water to pass through. Mr. Hines said he was familiar with the product. Mr. Irving asked about the curb height of the skylights. Mr. Khalsa replied that it was approximately 4.5”.

Mr. Sullivan asked about the transformer. Mr. Khalsa answered that the wires would be buried.

Lilla Johnson of 23 Rice Street asked about the proximity of the abutting garage and the proposed dumpster. Mr. Khalsa answered that there would be a fence between them.

George McCray of 2301 Mass. Avenue said the number of skylights seemed high. The character of the roof would be changed. What percentage of roof area would be covered with skylights? Mr. Khalsa said each skylight was about 6 sf for a total of about 150 sf, which was probably less than 10% of the total roof area.

Dan Bertko of 13 Norris Street asked if details of the venting through the chimneys had been finalized. Mr. Khalsa replied that the details had not all been worked out. Vents would be collected to minimize the number of penetrations. Code required that the vents extend above the top of the chimneys.

Ms. Johnson asked about lights. Mr. Khalsa displayed the lighting plan. It was designed to prevent light trespass. No lights would be attached to the building.

Mr. Hines provided further details on the proposed metal fence at the curb, a cedar board fence with lattice top at the rear, and a metal emergency access gate on the Drummond Street side.

Young Kim of 17 Norris Street asked about the color of the light fixtures and the screening and location of the transformer. Mr. Khalsa said the lights were available in brown or black. NSTAR would dictate the location of the transformer and would recommend nothing be planted around it for easier access.

Mr. Kim presented a slide show on behalf of the neighbors.

John Hixon of 41 Norris Street complimented the proponents on the restoration aspects of the design. He expressed concern about the appearance and impact of the skylights on the slate roof.

Mr. Bertko said the historic building was designed with large windows for lots of light and air. Small roof windows in the attic units would not do the job. He suggested eliminating the skylights on the wings.

Ms. Johnson showed a picture of a church in Boston with multiple roof penetrations, windows, and balconies, representing the type of change the neighbors did not want to see. She suggested fewer and smaller skylights, no satellite dishes, elimination of the glass block and louvers at the rear basement windows, and careful lighting and fence design. Drummond Place was too narrow for fire trucks, so the gate was not necessary. She suggested a preservation expert be consulted for the restoration and use of vetted contractors. Mr. Khalsa spoke on several of Ms. Johnson’s points, ensuring the neighbors that the project would be handled skillfully. Tremont Preservation Consultants were already being consulted about the design and the state tax credit program.

Mr. Irving closed the public comment period.

The Commission discussed aspects of the project they would like to see further refined, such as transformer, signs, fences, chimney vents, lighting, venting, masonry specifications, snow fences and cleats and the front doors. Construction details such as slate, cornice repair, and masonry repair could be delegated to the staff.

Mr. Ferrara noted that the number of skylights were the fewest the building could have and would not diminish its character. He moved to approve the project in principle and continue the hearing to discuss those items discussed earlier. Ms. Tobin seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

Public Hearings: Demolition Review

Case D-1249 (continued): 8 Blanchard Rd., by George Kouyoumjian. Review amended design for new construction on site of unauthorized demolition.

Mr. Sullivan showed a slide of the house prior to demolition. He reported that the Commission had met previously and determined that the house had been demolished otherwise than pursuant to the demolition ordinance procedures. The present application was to cut short the remainder of the two-year delay. He showed additional slides of the houses along Blanchard Road.

Norayr Kherlop, the architect, described the modifications that had been made to the proposed new building. The height was lower, the roof and doors were simplified. He showed photos of a neighboring building that was 2-3 stories with a hip roof. He displayed a rendering of the proposed house with the abutting buildings. The height would be lower than the 35' zoning limit. He discussed the proposed cementitious cladding.

Mr. Ferrara asked about ventilation and chimneys. Mr. Kherlop replied that the fireplaces would direct vent or have a metal flue.

Ms. Berg said she was surprised to see a swimming pool on the site plan but recognized that was not the Commission's concern. Mr. Sullivan agreed, saying that the project was not in a historic district and the Commission's review did not extend to the fine level of site details.

Carey Bloomfield of 10 Blanchard Road said the existing condition was an eyesore. He supported letting the owners rebuild as soon as possible. The new design was appropriate for the neighborhood. Duncan MacArthur of 245 Grove Street seconded those comments.

Mr. Irving closed public comment.

Mr. Ferrara said the design was moving in the right direction. The public interest would be served by allowing the project to proceed along these lines.

Mr. Irving agreed. He asked if the staff needed further review. Mr. Sullivan answered that his main concern had been massing and that was much improved. He recommended that the Commission advise the Inspection Services Commissioner to suspend the moratorium.

Ms. Berg so moved for the reasons stated by Mr. Ferrara. Ms. Tobin seconded and the motion passed 6-0.

Case D-1254: 4 Kimball Lane, by Nicholas Ross & Heather Kelly. Demolish bungalow residence (1931).

Ms. Burks showed slides and summarized the staff report about the bungalow house built in 1931.

Heather Kelly, an owner, said she had lived in the Cambridge since 1999. Their family had grown and they needed a larger home. Residents of Haskell Street, they want to stay in the same neighborhood. The original

plan for 4 Kimball was to add on to it. Their application for a special permit was derailed by a neighbor. They put the house back on the market, but got no strong offers. They now proposed to demolish and build new. The three neighbors in attendance had been very supportive throughout the process.

Steve Hart, the architect, described the existing house. The basement height was 6'10" and contained no living space. The porch addition was not supported by a foundation. The house had two bedrooms and one bathroom, no insulation, and 7" rafters. The condition and size were problematic, but the nonconforming front, side, and rear setbacks made additions to the house impossible without a variance.

Nicholas Ross, an owner, stated that the Planning Board had been dismissive about their proposal for raising the roof and constructing an addition. An abutter objected to anything they proposed. The proposed demolition and new construction was as-of-right by zoning.

Mr. Ferrara asked if they had considered moving the house to a conforming part of the lot. Mr. Hart replied that the house had not been constructed in the most enduring way. It was a kit house for affordable and quick construction. He described the proposed design, displaying the site plan and a model. It would have three bedrooms and a rear yard. It would be energy efficient and economical. He described the floor plans and exterior materials. Kimball Lane was a private way and parking would be on the street.

Gail Wiggins of 23 Hollis Street said she knew the prior owner well, but she had done nothing to maintain the house for the last 10 years.

Fran Cronin of 1 Kimball Lane agreed and read a letter of support. She was glad it would be for a single family and not add density to the small street. She noted that the house had been altered many times.

Mike Wiggins of 23 Hollis Street said the bungalow style did not fit in the neighborhood. It was not particularly significant relative to other Cambridge buildings.

Ms. Wiggins said she appreciated the diversity of architecture in Cambridge, having grown up in Levittown, but Cambridge was expensive and there should be a way for the family to stay there.

Duncan MacArthur said he was glad that the proposal was not a replica bungalow.

Michael Brandon of 27 Seven Pines Avenue said the case was different because the owners were residents, not developers. The North Cambridge Stabilization Committee had not had a neighborhood forum on the matter. He encouraged the Commission to consider the homeowners' experience of having already tried to renovate and expand the house.

Mr. Irving closed the public comment period and explained the demolition review procedure.

Mr. Bibbins said the house was significant, but its siting made it unusable. It couldn't be modified in its current location. It would be onerous to make them move it.

Mr. Ferrara moved to find the house significant for the reasons in the staff report and as defined in the demolition delay ordinance. Mr. Bibbins seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

Ms. Harrington said she would be sorry to see the house go, but she would find it not preferably preserved. Mr. Ferrara commented that although the new design was not a replica, it did refer to architectural ele-

ments of houses nearby without mimicking them. Mr. Bibbins said the design was reasonably sized in a way that was appropriate to the surroundings.

Mr. Irving asked how tall the new house would be. Mr. Hart replied that it would be 31' high, lower than most of the neighboring houses.

Mr. Bibbins moved to find the house not preferably preserved in the context of the proposed replacement building. Ms. Berg seconded, and the motion passed 6-0.

Public Hearing: Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD) Appeal Proceedings

Consider petition of ten registered voters appealing the decision of the Avon Hill NCD Commission in case AH-407: 37 Lancaster St. *Written certificate of withdrawal of appeal received.*

Mr. Sullivan noted that a written certificate withdrawing the appeal had been received from the appellants. No further discussion or action was taken.

New Business: Determination of Procedure: Alterations to Designated Properties

Case 2836: Lehman-Dudley House, Harvard Yard. Install seasonal canopies in front of Lehman Hall to shade the outdoor seating area.

Mr. Sullivan described the proposal for seasonal canopies, which would be removed during the cooler months. He recommended granting a temporary Certificate of Appropriateness for 3-5 years.

Ms. Harrington moved to approve a temporary Certificate of Appropriateness for four years, to be re-evaluated at that time. Mr. Ferrara seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

Preservation Grants

PG12-7: 26-34 Fulkerson St.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and described the 1870 row house with a flat roof, bracketed cornice, asbestos siding, and full entablature around the doors. He described the grant proposal for \$35,000 toward alterations and repairs, removal of asbestos siding and installation of Hardiplank.

Ms. Tobin moved to approve the grant. Mr. Bibbins seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

Minutes

Mr. Bibbins noted that he had not been present at the January meeting.

Ms. Tobin moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Mr. Ferrara seconded, and the motion passed 5-0 with Mr. Bibbins not voting.

Director's Report

Mr. Sullivan reported on the Kendall Square planning meetings and the underpass at Harvard.

Mr. Bibbins moved to adjourn. Ms. Tobin seconded, and the motion passed 6-0. The meeting adjourned at 10:55 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks
Preservation Planner

**Members of the Public
Who Signed Attendance Sheet 2/2/12**

Stephen Hart	50 Church St, Belmont 02478
Michael Weishan	189 Cordaville Rd, Southborough 01772
Eliza Andersen	88 Garden St
John Horst	10 Garden St
Stephen Perry	24 Cambridge Ter
Mark Verkennis	1350 Mass Ave
Young Kim	17 Norris St
Dan Bertko	13 Norris St
Lois Carra	13 Norris St
Maggie Gold Seelig	19 Ash St
Jonathan Seelig	19 Ash St
Lilla Johnson	23 Rice St
William Appleton	11 Hawthorn St
Nicholas Ross	27 Haskell St
Heather Kelly	27 Haskell St
Carey Bloomfield	10 Blanchard Rd
Kevin Emery	9 Gregory Ln
Eamon Fee	6 Richardson St, Winchester 01890
Kevin Crane	27 Norris St
Jeanne Fong	53 Norris St
Cyril Hughes	56 Eliot St, Watertown 02472
George McCray	2301 Mass Ave
Michael Brandon	27 Seven Pines Ave
Fran Cronan	1 Kimball Ln
George Kouyoumjian	8 Blanchard Rd
Zepour Kouyoumjian	231 Washington St, Belmont 02478
Susan Hall	23 Norris St
Duncan MacArthur	245 Grove St
Gail Wiggins	23 Hollis St

Town is Cambridge unless otherwise indicated.