

MINUTES OF THE MID CAMBRIDGE NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION

Tuesday, September 5, 2023, 6:00 PM, online Zoom meeting

Commission Members present: Tony Hsiao, *Chair*; Charles Redmon, Katinka Hakuta, *Members*

Absent: Monika Pauli

Staff present: Allison Crosbie, Preservation Administrator

Members of the Public: See attached list

This meeting was held via online zoom webinar <https://tinyurl.com/45tspmdx> with remote participation and was closed to in-person attendance. The public was able to participate online via the Zoom webinar platform. The meeting ID was 816 0196 5698.

Commission Chair Tony Hsiao made introductions, explained the process for the hearing, and called the meeting to order at 6:05.

Case MC-6813: 8 Cleveland Street, by Kleber-Polito Family Trust. Demolish chimney for new skylight.

Ms. Allison Crosbie, Preservation Administrator, presented background on the non binding review of the property and showed slides of the proposed demolition of the chimney and new skylight. Ms. Jessica Polito, one of the owners, was present, and mentioned that they are looking to bring more light into the space.

Commission Questions

Commissioner Katinka Hakuta asked why the skylight needs to be in that specific location. Ms. Polito answered that they are constructing a bathroom in that spot.

Vice Chair Lestra Litchfield asked for more information about the bathroom. Ms. Polito replied that removing the chimney opens up space for the bathroom.

Ms. Hakuta asked if the applicant had considered installing a faux chimney. Ms. Polito responded that they talked a little bit about it, and she understands the idea of a faux structure but just decided not to build one.

Commissioner Charles Redmon asked to see the drawings again. Ms. Polito stated that the chimney really isn't that visible. Ms. Litchfield asked to see the street view and noted that the chimney is one of several on the street.

Public Questions and Comments – none

Commission Comments

Ms. Litchfield explained why chimneys are important to the Commission because they speak to the history of the neighborhood, and many are disappearing due to renovations. Ms. Litchfield stated that when you look at the streetscape you can see chimneys are a real feature of the

neighborhood. Mr. Hsiao shared his screen to look at google view to see how many chimneys there are on the street.

Ms. Litchfield said her preference would be to preserve the chimney but if that's not possible, she advised constructing a faux chimney because it's a character-defining feature of these homes. Ms. Hakuta agreed.

Mr. Hsiao pointed out that this is one of five chimneys on the street and observed that other houses also have skylights.

Mr. Redmon said the character of the street should be retained and suggested that the applicant work with the architect to revise the design to accommodate the chimney.

Ms. Litchfield reminded the applicant that this is an advisory hearing and gives the Commission the opportunity to advocate for and encourage the preservation of character defining architectural features.

Ms. Polito thanked Ms. Litchfield for her comments.

Ms. Litchfield motioned to reject the proposal as submitted and recommended the alternatives discussed, including reworking the design to accommodate the chimney or installing a faux chimney if that isn't possible. Ms. Litchfield also recommended consulting with CHC staff for guidance on constructing a faux chimney. Mr. Redmon seconded, and the motion passed, 4-0.

Case MC-6814: 27 Roberts Road, by Andrew McIlvaine and Patricia Moran. Replace windows with vinyl windows.

Ms. Crosbie showed slides of the property and the proposed window replacements and noted this is a non binding review.

Mr. Andrew McIlvaine, the applicant, and his wife Patricia, stated that the house is not up to date and the current windows are not efficient, they are single pane windows. He also pointed out that the new windows will be very similar in appearance and won't change the look.

Commission Questions

Ms. Litchfield asked if the proposed windows are all vinyl or a combination of materials. Mr. McIlvaine answered that the windows are all vinyl, but the frame is wood. Ms. Litchfield asked about the grid, will it be exterior or interior. Mr. McIlvaine said he wasn't sure. Ms. Crosbie pointed out the manufacturer brochure in his application offers several options. Mr. Hsiao explained the differences between the options and recommended exterior simulated divided lights (SDL) which looks like what is in the proposal.

Ms. Litchfield said the SDL makes a big difference.

Public Questions and Comments - none

Commission Comments

Ms. Litchfield commented that the SDL is much nicer in appearance, and while the house is currently sided in vinyl, down the road you might want to change that. The SDL will look much better with a restored exterior. Mr. Redmon agreed.

Ms. Litchfield motioned to reject the application as submitted with the recommendation that the new windows have SDL, and that the Commission prefers vinyl clad over all vinyl. Ms. Litchfield suggested the applicant look at a property on Hancock and Broadway where the house was restored but the windows have snap-on grids between the glass that detract from the look of the house. Mr. Redmon seconded, and the motion passed, 4-0.

The minutes for August 7 were approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Allison A. Crosbie, Preservation Administrator

Members of the Public Present on September 5, 2023Panelists:

Jessica Polito, applicant

8 Cleveland Street

Andrew McIlvaine, applicant

27 Roberts Road

Patricia Moran, applicant

27 Roberts Road

Attendees:

None