

DRAFT Minutes of the Cambridge Historical Commission—THIS DRAFT HAS NOT YET BEEN REVIEWED OR APPROVED BY THE COMMISSION

Minutes of the Cambridge Historical Commission

September 5, 2019 - 806 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge Senior Center - 6:00 P.M.

Members present: Bruce Irving, *Chair*; William G. Barry, Chandra Harrington, Jo Solet, *Members*; Paula Paris, Kyle Sheffield, *Alternates*

Members absent: Robert Crocker, Joseph Ferrara, Susannah Tobin *Members*; Gavin Kleespies, *Alternate*

Staff present: Charles Sullivan, *Executive Director*, Sarah Burks, *Preservation Planner*

Public present: See attached list.

With a quorum present, Chair Irving called the meeting to order at 6:06 P.M. He introduced Commission members and staff. He noted that alternate members Paula Paris and Kyle Sheffield could vote on all matters. He dispensed with the consent agenda and described the procedures for public hearings.

Public Hearings: Alterations to Designated Properties

Case 4172: 14 Story St., by President & Fellows of Harvard College. Replace the windows and two doors of office building.

Charles Sullivan showed slides and described the office building built in 1970 and designed by architect Earl Flansburgh for his own office. He noted that at the time, there were several buildings in Harvard Square designed by architects for their own use and that this building fit within that context.

Diane Gray of the Harvard Planning Office introduced the architect, Steve Morrell of Gen Con Design Build.

Mr. Morrell made a slide presentation. He said the original windows from 1970 were life-expired. He displayed a site plan of the property and photographs of existing conditions. He noted the concrete construction of the building and the aluminum framed windows with dark tinted glass. He proposed removing all the glazing and replacing it with a modern glazing system. The entrance on Story Street had recently been replaced and the new windows would match. He displayed both the original elevation and the proposed. The new fenestration would match the original including frame sizes. The one change proposed was at the storefront level on Story Street. He explained that salt had deteriorated the glazing frame and a new concrete curb was proposed. He added that a frosted vinyl band would be applied to the inside of the glass on the first floor for the privacy of the office tenants. An aluminum panel existed above the glass and a new aluminum band was proposed for the knee-level area at desk height. The start date of the project would be in October 2019 and they hoped to complete it by March 2020.

Mr. Irving asked if there were questions of fact from the Commission.

Chandra Harrington asked if the first-floor space was originally intended for retail use. Mr. Morrell answered that he was not sure but there had been a door in the middle of that wall.

Ms. Paris asked why the construction would follow the proposed sequence. Mr. Morell answered that it was phased that way to accommodate the occupants' schedules.

Jo Solet asked whether the new curbing would cause accessibility problems. Mr. Morell answered

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that it would not. The curbing would only be located at the windows, not the doors.

Mr. Sheffield noted that the Commission had approved the canopy and the new entrance doors. He asked if the 2¼ inch dimension of the mullions would be matched.

Bill Barry asked the reason for replacing the windows. Mr. Morell answered that the windows were leaking and breaking. The butt-glazed corner with silicone caulking had been poorly repaired.

Mr. Sheffield asked if the new units would be insulated glass. Mr. Morell noted that the front of the building currently had single-pane glazing but the rear wall already had insulated glazing. He proposed that all new units be insulated glass units (IGUs).

Mr. Barry asked about the condition of the concrete. Mr. Murrell answered that it would be surveyed and assessed, then repairs would be made as needed. He noted that a drip edge above the windows would be added.

Dr. Solet noted the tinted existing glass and asked if it would be matched? Mr. Morell said the goal was to match it but the client desired to have somewhat lighter tinting than the existing. Mr. Sullivan reported on the site meeting with the proponents earlier in the summer to discuss the project. He said it should not be light and crystal clear but should have a discernible tint as originally designed. He said the level of tinting could be delegated to the staff for approval.

Mr. Irving asked if there were questions of fact or public comments from the public but there were none. He closed the public comment period. He asked what would happen to the old glass. Dr. Solet asked if it could be recycled. Mr. Morell said he could investigate that possibility.

Mr. Irving said a darker tint was desired to be consistent with the original design intent.

Mr. Barry said he would normally expect more information about the existing and proposed construction details for this type of project than had been submitted with this application. He was interested in the mullion layout, depth, profile, tint, etc. He was not opposed to delegating such details to staff, but that was important information to look at.

Mr. Barry moved to approve the application on the condition of staff review and approval of the glass and all manner of details, as described. Dr. Solet seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

Case 4173: 126 Brattle St., by 45 Brattle & Brown R. E. Trust, Adam Berger, Tr. Alter garage.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides of the property and described the location of the garage near the sidewalk on the Brown Street side of the property.

Charles Myer, the architect, said the concrete block garage would be covered with wood strap-ping and then cedar shingles would be attached. The garage roof would be covered with bright copper that would match the copper used on the house and a neighboring porch. He noted the installation of some new windows and a new door.

Mr. Irving asked if there were questions of fact from the Commission.

Mr. Barry asked if the seam spacing was different on the roof or if that was just a drawing error. Mr. Myer said it was a drawing problem. Mr. Barry asked if the copper seams would be 16 or 20 inches apart, and Mr. Myer said they would be 20 inches apart.

Mr. Irving asked if lead coated copper or zinc had been considered. Mr. Myer replied that it had been considered, but once the copper turns brown it would be visually quiet. It would blend in with the brown shingles.

Dr. Solet asked if the new garage doors would open out like carriage house doors. Mr. Myer answered that the new doors would be electric overhead doors which would mimic carriage house doors.

Mr. Sheffield moved to approve the application for a certificate of appropriateness, as presented. Mr. Barry seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

Mr. Sheffield noted that when the strapping and shingles were added to the garage, it would exacerbate the setback non-conformity to the property lines. Mr. Myer agreed but noted that the shingles would not extend beyond the eaves.

Case 4174: 50 Church St., by Trinity Property Management. Replace skylight glazing. Install solar panel arrays on flat roofs and atrium roof in two phases.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and explained the history of the buildings. Two different eras of construction were present: 1875 for 13-15 Brattle Street and 1978-80 for 50 Church Street and 9-11 Brattle Street. He noted that the metal A-frame on the roof was original to the construction of 50 Church and had been designed for solar hot water. He noted the visibility of the rooftop from various locations.

John DiGiovanni summarized the application to add solar panels to the roof and reglaze the atrium. He noted that the solar system designed in 1980 had been the first privately-funded solar system in the state. It had never worked properly, and the A-frame remained on the roof but with no solar panels. The forty-year old atrium roof had been leaking for some time.

Leeann Suen of Bruner Cott Associates narrated a slide presentation. She said that the work would occur during two phases. In the first phase, solar panels would be attached to the A-frame and on the flat roofs. The unused half of the A-frame would be cleaned up and painted white. In the second phase, solar panels would be added at the apex of the atrium roof and the single-pane glazing would be replaced with at least double-pane insulated glass. The glass was currently tinted a dark gray and they intended to match that. Structural engineers were investigating how much weight the existing light steel frame of the atrium could support.

Mr. Irving asked for questions of fact from the Commission.

Mr. Sheffield said the design looked great. Had they considered continuing the panels across the whole frame? It would look unfinished otherwise. Why not go all the way? Ms. Suen explained that there

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was a relatively new ventilation system below the A-frame that required air circulation above it, which was the reason why the west side could not receive solar panels. Mr. DiGiovanni said he wanted to go all the way across the A-frame, but it was not possible. Dr. Solet asked if there was the option to upgrade the air equipment to be more efficient. Mr. DiGiovanni answered that the equipment was new and efficient. If in the future it became obsolete, he said he could install more solar panels on the A-frame.

Mr. Sheffield asked if they had considered using all-black panels for the A-frame. Ms. Suen asked what was meant by all-black panels. Mr. Sheffield answered that some manufacturers make a panel with a frame and the photovoltaics all of which are black so that the grid of the individual panels is not discernable. Mr. Sheffield noted that LG and SunPower made all-black units.

Mr. Barry asked if the whole A-frame tower had originally been used. Mr. DiGiovanni replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Sullivan asked if the solar panels on the flat roofs were parallel to the roof plane or at an angle. Ms. Suen said they were not co-planar with the roof but were tilted 25 to 30 degrees. She added that they would still be below the height of the parapet wall and not visible from the ground.

Mr. Irving asked if there were questions of fact or comments from the public. There being none, he closed the public comment period.

Mr. Barry said he did not join in Mr. Sheffield's enthusiasm for the all-black panels. A visible grid would break up the scale of the installation. Mr. DiGiovanni said that in 1980 there were individual solar panels on the A-frame. Mr. Sheffield said that the all-black units tended to make the divisions between the solar panels disappear. Mr. DiGiovanni agreed that in a residential installations that might be desirable, but in this case he was celebrating the addition of solar to the building and he thought it would look better with the individual panels visible. Ms. Suen said she could study both options.

Mr. Sheffield moved to approve a certificate of appropriateness for the application, as presented, with the option to the applicant to use all-black panels or not. Dr. Solet seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

Mr. Irving noted the receipt of a three-page poem from Daryl Janes. He entered the communication into the record.

Minutes

Dr. Solet offered an addition on page 7 of the August minutes. The addition should note her skepticism that the mechanical kitchen exhaust fan and the air conditioning condensers could together meet the requirements of the noise ordinance when the fan alone was specified to operate at 73.3 db. Ms. Harrington noted a period was missing from the end of the fourth paragraph.

Ms. Paris asked if those who had been absent at the August meeting could vote. Noted

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parliamentarian John Hawkinson volunteered that not only was it allowed but it was recommended practice.

Dr. Solet moved to approve the August 8, 2019 minutes, as corrected. Ms. Paris seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

Director's Report

Mr. Irving asked about design development for the Metropolitan Storage Warehouse. Mr. Sullivan answered that two different design concepts were being developed for the consideration of the Institute. He described the preservation goals provided to the Institute and its designers. He and Ms. Burks had been participating in periodic review meetings about the design.

Mr. Irving asked about the fire at Sever Hall. Mr. Sullivan said it had been a small fire that started in a utility closet after the installation of a new and more powerful generator. He also noted that a large new emergency generator had been installed outside Weld Hall in the middle of the yard. It had been installed without adequate review and the University was studying options to relocate it.

Ms. Paris noted that on page 7 of the Director's Report, in the first column, the number should be 1.270 not 1.290. Mr. Sullivan thanked her for the correction.

Mr. Sheffield moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Harrington seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:20 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks
Preservation Planner

**Members of the Public
Who Signed the Attendance List on September 5, 2019**

John Hawkinson	Cambridgeday.com
Diane Gray	Harvard Planning
Susan Malaab	Harvard School of Education
Toby Darnton	
Stephen Morrell	Gen Con
Leeann Suen	Bruner Cott Associates
John DiGiovanni	50 Church St
Charles Myer	Charles Myer Architect
Steve Frank	
Aden Berger	126 Brattle St

Note: Town is Cambridge, unless otherwise indicated.