



CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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April 28, 2017

To: Members of the Historical Commission
From: Charles Sullivan
Re: D-1431: Relocation of 229 Concord Avenue (amended)
D-1447: Demolition of 221-225 Concord Avenue

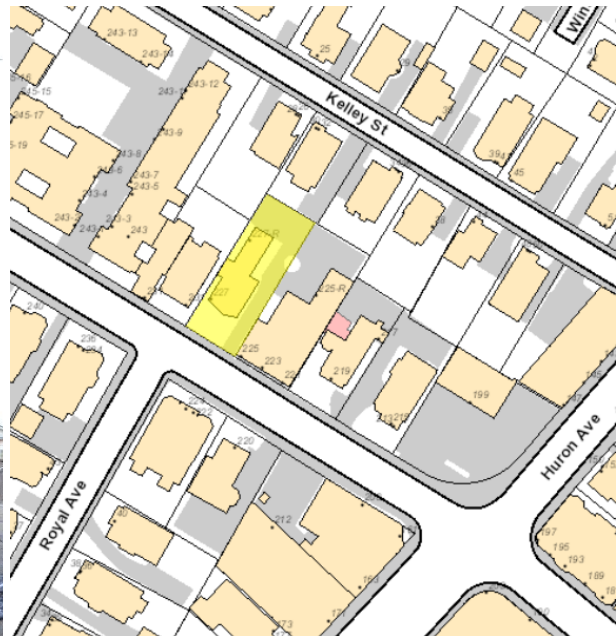
On February 2, 2017 the Historical Commission held a hearing to consider an application to relocate the house at 229 (a.k.a. 227) Concord Avenue on its lot, in conjunction with a development proposal that included removal of a portion of the adjacent building at 221-225 Concord Avenue and construction of townhouses at the rear of the lot. The Commission found 229 Concord to be significant but not preferably preserved in the context of the development proposal.

On April 11, 2017 the same owner filed new applications under the demolition delay ordinance with a different development scenario. One was to relocate 229 Concord to a different location on the lot; the second was to remove the entire commercial building at 221-225 Concord Avenue. The applicants, Walden Huron LLC and Somervista/Concord 1 LLC, were notified of an initial determination of significance and a public hearing was scheduled for May 4.



229 Concord Avenue

CHC photo 2017



Cambridge Assessors

2016

Site

The 1847 Luther Hayes house at 229 Concord Avenue is located on the north side of the street between Huron Avenue and Donnell Street. It is sited on a 5,861 square-foot lot (Map 229/Parcel 160). The adjacent 1925 William Eagan store and a two-story office building of indeterminate age at 221-225 Concord Avenue sit on a 6,000 square foot lot (229/159). The zoning for both is Business BA-1, a neighborhood business and office district that allows an FAR of 1.0 for those uses and .75 for multifamily construction (as in Residence C-1), with a 35' height limit for both.



L-R: 229, 221-225 and 219 Concord Avenue

Cambridge GIS

The owners propose to demolish all the structures at 221-225 Concord Avenue, including the two-story office building and commercial block at 221-225 Concord Avenue. They intend to remove the ell of 229 Concord Avenue and relocate the main body of the house closer to the street to allow construction of four townhouses at the rear of the lot and two free-standing single-family houses on the site of the commercial building. Parking will be on grade, not underground as in the previous proposal. I previously determined that the ell of 229, the two-story office building behind 221-225, and one



bay of 221-225 to be not significant. In the context of the current proposal I determined that the entirety of 221-225 and the main block of 229 to be significant, but not the two-story office building or the ell of 229.

Description

The 2 ½ story Greek Revival house at 229 Concord Avenue was constructed in 1848. The house has features characteristic of many vernacular Greek Revivals throughout Cambridge, including a side-hall plan, a gable end with a full pediment facing the street, wide pilasters, and a one-story portico supported by four Doric columns. The ell has been extended from its original footprint and at some point was given a second story with a flat roof. The house is in excellent (if somewhat weathered) condition, having been restored in the 1980s. It was formerly occupied by therapists' offices.



229 Concord Avenue (left), 221-225 Concord Avenue, and 219 Concord Avenue (right)

CHC photo 2017

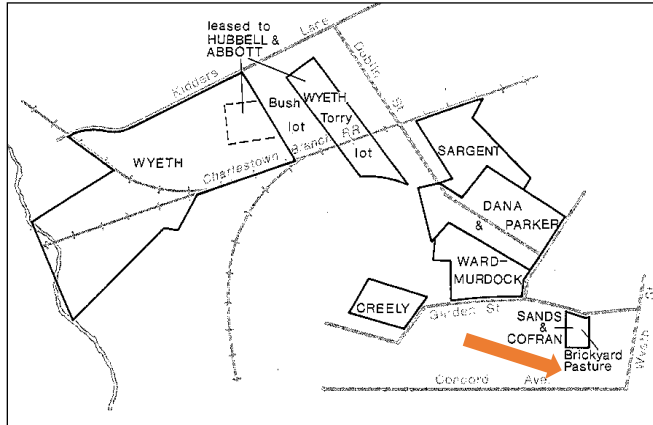
The adjoining building at 221-225 Concord Avenue is a one-story commercial structure that William C. Egan erected as a market in 1925. Soon after construction it was extended by one additional bay to the west. The Concord Avenue façade, which was probably constructed of red brick, has been painted but otherwise appears to be in good condition. The original storefronts appear to be intact, but the Luxfer prism transoms have been painted over. No architect was recorded for the project.

The two story structure in the rear was originally a garage accessed from R.C. Kelly Street; it was altered from one to two stories in the 1980s. This is also to be removed.

History

The 1842 extension of the Charlestown Branch Railroad from Miller's River to Fresh and Spy Ponds opened up North Cambridge for the brick industry and for suburban development. Several subdivisions were platted by the owners of the brickyards for the mostly-Irish worker population. Many of the brickyard workers built modest cottages, but some more substantial houses accommodated skilled tradesmen, foremen and managers.

Samuel Cofran and John Sands moved their brickmaking operations from the Charles River to the 18th-century Brickyard Pasture on Garden Street in 1845. Orrin and Tierney streets now occupy the site of the Cofran and Sands clay pit. John Sands subdivided the Concord Avenue frontage and in 1846-47 had builder Luther Hayes put up the two Greek Revival houses at 219 and 229 Concord Avenue. Hayes purchased one of the houses, and Sands sold the other to an absentee owner.



Cambridge Brickyards, 1848 (Fig. 34, *Northwest Cambridge*).

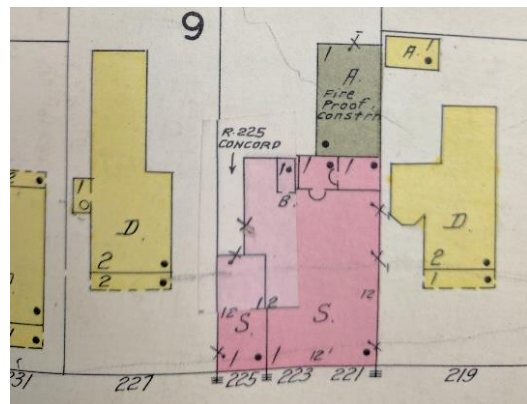


H.F. Walling, *Map of Cambridge* (1854)



Home of Noah and Maude Cofran, 229 Concord Avenue. Note one-story ell and carriage house (latter no longer extant). Photo before 1904.

Luther Hayes was a Maine native who arrived in Cambridge about 1845 and worked as a house carpenter until his death in 1884. In 1870 he sold the house, and it was owned by a leather dealer and a clerk in an ice business until in 1884 it was purchased by brickmaker Noah Cofran, Samuel's brother. After his death in 1904 the property passed to Thomas Cosgrove, who about 1925 sold the side yard to William C. Egan, a grocer who put up the present commercial buildings on the site.



Sanborn *Map of Cambridge*, 1935

Significance and Recommendation

The Greek Revivals at 219 and 229 Concord Avenue are important survivors of the brickyard era in North Cambridge. The store building at 221-225 Concord Avenue is significant as an intact example of the genre, but its construction in 1925 disrupted a relationship between the two Greek Revival houses that cannot easily be recovered.

The proposed removal of the stores at 221-225 Concord and construction of two single family houses would free up the site and restore residential uses. On the other hand, some neighborhood residents cherish the stores on Observatory Hill and have recently filed a zoning amendment that seeks to preserve commercial uses on Concord Avenue.

The Commission should hear testimony from the neighbors and review the plans for replacement construction before making a determination.

cc: Ranjit Singanayagam, ISD
Lauren Harder
Mark Boyes-Watson