

Minutes of the Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission

March 5, 2012 - 6:00 P.M. – 344 Broadway, City Hall Annex/McCusker Center, 4th Floor

Commission Members Present: Nancy Goodwin, *Chair*; Carole Perrault, Charles Redmon, *Members*; Monika Pauli, *Alternate*

Commission Members Absent: Tony Hsiao, *Vice Chair*; Lestra Litchfield, *Member*; Sue-Ellen Myers, *Alternate*

Staff: Eiliesh Tuffy

Members of the Public: See attached sign-in sheet

With a quorum present, Ms. Goodwin called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

Public Hearings: Alterations to Designated Properties

MC-4041: 25-27 Myrtle Ave., by Deborah Belle. Create new curb cut and parking pad; shorten existing side porch.

The property under review is a two-story cottage designed and constructed in 1892 by James E. Brown. The house is located mid-block on the west side of the street. The applicants seek to alter the side porch in order to create a parking pad next to the house. The front yard and brick sidewalk are at the same grade and separated by a simple wood picket fence. The owners have timed their proposal to coincide with the City of Cambridge's plans to upgrade Myrtle Avenue so that the new curb cut is completed before the brick sidewalks are re-laid. This request was filed under a Certificate of Hardship because it is being made to accommodate a resident's debilitating health condition and limited mobility. This proposal falls under a non-binding review process.

The side porch along the south elevation, which is 6 feet in width, has ornamental trim that would be retained and reused on the shorter side porch.

Questions and comments were received from the public.

A letter was received from an abutter in support of the application.

Marilee Meyer of 10 Dana Street asked if, once the porch was cut back, the current front railing would be reused at the new front edge of the porch. The owner said that was the intent.

The Commission made comments regarding the redesign of the shortened porch.

Ms. Pauli noted that there is a slight overhang at the 2nd floor level of the front elevation that would be nice to continue around to the side once the porch roof is cut back.

Mr. Redmon also mentioned simply converting the full column at the front corner of the porch into a dropped pendant to match the one on the front of the house and adding an angle bracket for support. The owners didn't find the angle solution to be the most attractive option, and mentioned that the only reason there is a dropped pendant on the front porch is because the original full-height column was cut to accommodate a large, overgrown tree.

Mr. Ivan Bereznicki, of Ivan Bereznicki Associates architects in Cambridge, pointed out that the current roof structure is most likely self supporting, and could probably be retained without a column in the front corner.

Mr. Redmon added that by keeping that front edge of the porch roof in place it would help to retain the appearance of the façade from the street.

Mr. Redmon made a motion that, understanding this proposal is to alleviate a hardship on the property owner, the Commission approve the application to reconfigure the side porch using existing trim elements and to create a parking pad with the following recommendations:

- Explore the option of retaining the full expanse of the side porch roof in place as a vestige of the original porch configuration

Ms. Pauli seconded the motion, which passed 4-0.

MC-4042: 10 Remington St. #109 & 209, by Raymond McCord. Replace wood windows on side bay and install new vents at porch.

The property under review is within the former Remington Gables Apartment building, a 3-story Tudor Revival building designed by architects Newhall & Blevins and constructed in 1910. The building is currently a condominium complex. The application under review pertains to two former units that are now being combined into one residence. The proposed renovations include the replacement of original wood windows and the installation of exterior vents on the building's South Elevation.

Questions and comments were accepted from the public.

The Commission continued the hearing to allow the applicants time to further develop the proposed installation and arrange for an Architects Committee meeting on site to view a mock-up of the desired height, materials and day/night illumination.

Determination of Procedure: Alterations to Designated Properties

MC-4036: 2 Clinton St., #31, by Cyril McArdle. Window replacement.

This application was received after the legal ad and abutter mailings were sent for this month's public hearing, which means that this case is being reviewed subject to an abutter notification mailing offering a 10-day appeal period to request a full public hearing next month.

The property under review is on the top floor of a 3-story multi-family condominium building. The Tudor Revival building was originally designed by architects Newhall & Blevins and was constructed in 1909.

Leaded glass windows at the front of the unit are currently removed for repair and are intended to go back into their original openings. That aspect of the project, since it is merely repair work, is exempt from this review. In addition, there is an air conditioning unit being installed at the roof level that will not be publicly visible making it also exempt from this review.

The proposed windows to be replaced are on the south elevation at the 3rd floor level. The current windows are asymmetrical wood double-hung windows, with a smaller upper sash and a larger lower sash. The current storm windows are aluminum with a meeting rail at the center of the opening, rather than in-line with the wood window's higher meeting rail. The replacement windows would be insulated vinyl windows to match the current sash proportions.

The Commissioners recommended repair and restoration of the wood windows and installation of new, high quality storms if energy efficiency was the concern. Compared to the lifespan of old-growth wood, vinyl windows cannot even compare in quality or durability, and the insulating value is soon lost due to failed seals that cannot be repaired.

There were no questions or comments from the public.

Ms. Litchfield made a motion to deny the application to replace wood windows with vinyl replacements, as they are a material that is incongruent with historic windows in the district. Ms. Perrault seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

MC-4037: 21-23 Leonard Ave., by Madelyn Yucht. Change window to a door on front elevation; new deck over front porch.

This application was received after the legal ad and abutter mailings were sent for this month's public hearing, which means that this case is being reviewed subject to an abutter notification mailing offering a 10-day appeal period to request a full public hearing next month.

The porch under review is on the front of an 1897 triple decker, which was originally design by architect Zebedee E. Cliff. The deck would be constructed at the second floor level, on top of the existing 1st floor entrance porch. One existing window opening is proposed to have the sill dropped to the floor to install a new door for access to the porch. The building is situated on a triangular lot that also borders Line Street, but the proposed work is primarily visible from Leonard Ave.

There were no questions or comments from the public.

Mr. Hsiao moved to approve the application as submitted with the following recommendations:

- Deck Railing: a wood railing of the same style as the existing is preferred
- New Door: wood preferred; maintain the same width as the existing window opening if code allows
- Door Glazing: a fixed pane of glass without muntins/grilles is preferred

Ms. Perrault seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Eiliesh Tuffy
Preservation Administrator

Members of the Public
Who Signed Attendance Sheet 2/6/12

Tom Wojciechowski	35 Medford St., #202, Somerville, MA 02143
Cyril McArdle	21 Newton St., Brighton, MA 02135
Patricia Payne	931 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139
Pierre Humblet	13 Bigelow St., Cambridge, MA 02139
Marie Humblet	13 Bigelow St., Cambridge, MA 02139
Susan Flannery	Cambridge Public Library, 449 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02138
Warren Pearson	Cambridge Public Library, 449 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02138
Margaret McMahon	14 Highland Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139
Elizabeth Gombosi	42 Irving St., Cambridge, MA 02138
George Metzger	90 Antrim, Cambridge, MA