

Approved 7/1/11

Minutes of the Avon Hill Neighborhood Conservation District

Monday, May 23, 2011 - 5:30 P.M. - 831 Massachusetts Ave., Basement Conference Room

Members Present: Theresa Hamacher, *Chair*; Art Bardige, *Vice Chair*; Robert Crocker, Catherine Henn, Maryann Thompson, *Members*; Heli Meltsner, Mark Golberg, Constantin von Wentzel, *Alternates*

Members Absent: none

Staff: Sarah Burks

Members of the Public: see attached sign-in sheet

With a quorum present, Chair Theresa Hamacher called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M. She made introductions and reviewed the hearing procedures.

Ms. Hamacher and Art Bardige recused themselves from Case AH-385 because of their properties were both across the street from the subject property. Maryann Thompson arrived. Catherine Henn assumed the chair and opened the hearing.

Public Hearings: Alterations to Designated Properties

AH-385: 87 Raymond St., by Annika Malmberg & Steven McCarroll. Alter stairs, porches, bulkhead; raise the roof of the ell between original house and modern addition.

Ms. Henn designated all the alternates to vote on the matter.

The owner, Steven McCarroll, and his architect, Bhupesh Patel, introduced themselves.

Sarah Burks, of the Historical Commission staff, showed slides of 87 Raymond Street and the surrounding neighborhood context. She described the history of the building and noted the side additions of 1867 and the far rear addition of the 1980s. The house had been built in 1846 by George Wyatt, a brick maker, and later belonged to W. A. Mason, a well known local surveyor. It was individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The application was subject to binding review of the Commission because of changes to porches, the roof and eave lines of the ell.

Mr. Patel reviewed the existing and proposed plans. He reviewed the proposed alterations including regarding to fix water problems and to reduce the number of steps up to the porches, bluestone patios, landscaping in front of redesigned side porch, elimination of the bulkhead and construction of a new stairway to the basement, a short rock wall replacing an existing fence on the south side. He then described major framing problems that had resulted when the side additions were added in 1867, cutting off original posts. He described the inadequate roof framing of the middle ell. When reframed and insulated, 7 inches of height would be lost on the second floor of the ell. He described different design schemes considered for the roof and eave of the ell. The approach favored by the applicants was to eliminate the dormers on the ell and raise the cornice/eave height to match the height of the cornice/eave on the front mass and rear addition. The ridge height would also be raised but would remain below the ridge height of the front mass or rear addition. He described the proposed new 2' railings on the roof of the front corner porches and the noted that two windows would be changed to doors to access the new decks. He also proposed replacing the other windows in the house, though window restoration

had been investigated and priced. He described changes on the south elevation, most of which were not visible from a public way.

Ms. Henn asked for questions of fact from the Commission members.

Constantin von Wentzel asked about the railing at the new basement stair. Mr. Patel replied that the railing would be screened by new plantings.

Ms. Burks asked about the pitch of the new ell. Mr. Patel replied that it would rise 2' over a length of 8.5'.

Ms. Henn asked for public questions, but there were none. She opened it to public comment.

Mr. Bardige, of 98 Raymond Street, said he and his wife had reviewed the plans and liked the proposal. The changes would solve a lot of problems for the new owners.

Ms. Hamacher, of 95 Raymond Street, said she and her husband had reviewed the plans and approved of the proposed changes. The house did not have a principle entrance, which was unusual. The previous owners had needed to paint every couple of years due to water problems on the Bellevue side of the ell. The porch changes at the Bellevue Avenue entrance would be an improvement.

Ms. Henn closed the public comment period.

Heli Meltsner asked about the changes in grade.

Ms. Thompson commented that the new railings above the front corner porches made the house more formal looking. The design overall was nice. She recommended that existing windows be repaired, not replaced. The old windows would last longer than modern replacements.

Mr. Crocker indicated that the changes to the roof and eave line at the ell would pull the house together; it currently looked like a couple of towers with something in between.

Mr. von Wentzel agreed. The revised north elevation pulled the house together. He also favored re-use of historic windows and new storms. He suggested the railing at the new basement entry match the style of other railings, and that the details of the railing be delegated to staff.

Ms. Meltsner said the house read as an Italianate style now, but it would be harder to read if the ell was raised. She said she wasn't sure if it was more important to read the architecture of the building or the use of the second floor.

Mark Golberg noted that doors were very drafty. Would the second floor decks really get used. Were the new doors necessary? Mr. Patel replied that the deck closest to Bellevue Avenue would be adjacent to the home office and would be used for breaks.

Mr. McCarroll said he wanted the house to feel more welcoming. It could look formidable and lonely now.

Ms. Henn commended the overall design.

Ms. Burks noted that the staff had advised the architect to keep the cornice/eave height below that of the front mass so that the ell would continue to read as subordinate to the main mass. She cautioned against having the pitch of the ell be too shallow on the north side.

Ms. Thompson agreed with Ms. Burks about the cornice height. She excused herself and left the meeting.

Mr. Patel said he could not keep the cornice height below that of the front mass and still achieve the height he needed for the stair. Inspector David Byrne had said that the stair did not have to change if the roof height of the ell was raised.

Ms. Meltsner moved to approve the project on the condition that the original windows be repaired rather than replaced and re-used elsewhere if being changed to doors and on the further condition that construction details be reviewed and approved by staff and on the understanding that the muntin profiles of the porch doors would match those of the existing windows. Mr. von Wentzel seconded the motion, which passed 5-0.

AH-386: 37 Lancaster St., by John McQuillan, Jr. Alter east and north entrances, expand front deck, construct elevator tower, porte cochere, fence, and new rear driveway. *A request has been received from the owners for a further continuance of the case.*

Ms. Hamacher resumed the chair and reported that a continuance had been requested for case AH-386.

Mr. Patel explained that the applicants' baby was due the week of the Commission's next hearing on June 27. Several of the Commissioners noted that they would be unavailable on June 27 anyway. Mr. Patel asked if an extra meeting date could be arranged in mid July. The Commission agreed to schedule a special meeting date and said they would send Ms. Burks their summer schedules so that she could arrange the meeting date.

Mr. von Wentzel moved to grant the requested continuance. Ms. Henn seconded the motion, which passed 5-0.

Staff Report

Ms. Burks reported on other projects that had been reviewed by staff. She said the landscaping plan for 79 Raymond Street would come back to the Commission for review, per condition of the Certificate of Appropriateness.

Mr. Crocker asked about the City Council order not to have meetings (other than the City Council) on Monday evenings.

Ms. Burks answered that the Executive Director planned to write a memo to the manager explaining that this requirement would be a hardship for both the staff and NCD commission members who currently met on Mondays.

Mr. Crocker moved to support the staff opinion on this issue. Mr. Bardige seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Minutes.

Ms. Henn moved to approve the minutes of April 21, 2011. Mr. Crocker seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Bardige, Mr. Crocker, Ms. Henn, and Ms. Meltsner voting. Ms. Hamacher, Mr. Golberg, and Mr. von Wentzel abstained from voting because they had not been present at the April 21 meeting.

Mr. von Wentzel moved to adjourn the meeting.

Ms. Henn seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:55 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks
Preservation Planner

Members of the Public
May 23, 2011

Bhupesh Patel	3 Bowdoin St
Steven McCarroll	87 Raymond St
Art Bardige	98 Raymond St
Theresa Hamacher	95 Raymond St

Addresses are in Cambridge, unless otherwise specified.