

Approved 9/4/2014

Minutes of the Cambridge Historical Commission

March 6, 2014 - 806 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge Senior Center - 6:00 P.M.

Members present: Bruce Irving, *Vice Chair*; M. Wyllis Bibbins, William Barry, Robert Crocker, Chandra Harrington, Jo M. Solet, *Members*; Susannah Tobin, *Alternate*

Members absent: William King, *Chair*; Shary Berg, Joseph Ferrara, *Alternates*

Staff present: Charles Sullivan, *Executive Director*, Sarah Burks, *Preservation Planner*; Samantha Paull, *Preservation Administrator*

Public present: See attached list.

Vice Chair Irving convened the meeting at 6:05 P.M., made introductions, and explained hearing procedures. He imposed a time limit of three minutes per speaker for public comment.

Public Hearing: Alterations to Designated Properties

Case 3181 (continued): 96 Winthrop St./57 JFK St., by Crimson Galleria LP. Construct residential addition over existing 2-story commercial building.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides of the building and its surroundings. He reviewed the discussion at the previous hearing and pointed out the relative heights of nearby buildings.

Raj Dhanda, the owner, said that his team had sought to address the earlier comments and had dramatically redesigned and reshaped the new structure. They had also reworked the colors and materials.

Peter Quinn, the architect, said they had increased the Winthrop Street setback to 17.5'. The building would include 40 micro-units, five of which would be inclusionary. He showed renderings from different perspectives and pointed out that the tower of Lowell House would remain visible. The materials would include limestone or cast stone panels, light-colored on Winthrop Street and darker on Kennedy Street, and structural glazing. The third floor would have a green roof. There would be a shared deck with planters 3' high and private balconies. He projected shadow studies to show the effects on Winthrop Park.

Mr. Quinn told Dr. Solet that the limestone would be non-reflective, that rooftop mechanicals would be surrounded by a 6' screen, and that deliveries and trash removal would remain in the back alley. Mr. Dhanda said that commercial haulers could use Winthrop Street until 11 A.M.; the city would pick up residential trash.

Mr. Quinn noted that the materials proposed in February were not "cheap," as some had alleged. There were cheap materials in the storefronts, which would be upgraded.

Mr. Irving asked for questions of fact from members of the public.

Gordon Moore of 9 Rutland Street asked how the planters would be maintained. Mr. Quinn said that would be done by a contractor.

Sue Ellen Meyers asked about the color of the glass facing Winthrop Street. Mr. Quinn said that some would be transparent, while opaque (spandrel) panels would be celery-colored. Each unit would have an operable sash.

Mr. Quinn told Chuck Redmon of 18A Highland Avenue that the green roof would not be accessible, and that the fascia at the top of the existing building would be replaced.

Marilee Meyer of 10 Dana Street asked if there would be illuminated glazed panels in the new design; Mr. Quinn said there was no current intention to include those. He said that the floor-to-floor height on levels 3-5 would be about 12'. She asked about the corner towers, and whether the architect had considered stepping down the corners. Mr. Quim said he couldn't make that work, visually.

Mr. Quim told Susan Taretsky of 7 Gilmore Street that plantings would be visible behind the glass railings.

Ken Taylor of 23 Berkeley Street asked if this would be the tallest building on Kennedy Street. Mr. Quinn replied that the height measured from the average grade would be 60'. He told Mr. Taylor that floors 3-5 would be 1.5' away from the stair tower of the garage; that mechanical equipment would be on the roof; that rooms might have AC units behind grills; and that because the footprint would be the same as existing there would be no open area as required by zoning.

Charles Teague of 53 Emmons Street asked what surfaces would be transparent. Mr. Quinn pointed these out, and said there would be structural glazing on the lower levels facing Kennedy Street.

Mr. Quinn told Jane Thompson of 93 Winthrop Street that there would be a 6' screen around the mechanicals; there would continue to be five restaurants in the building, with daily pickup of trash; and that each residential floor could have a trash room.

Heather Hoffman of 213 Hurley Street asked about rooftop exhausts, and the possibility of fire. Mr. Quinn said that restaurant stove hoods were all vented to the roof, and would be extended as high as possible. Mr. Dhanda said that there would be clean-outs on each floor. No grease would accumulate.

Kerry Kuelzer, the owner of Grendel's Den, asked if the shadow studies included the mechanical screen. Mr. Quinn said they did.

Mr. Quinn told Ms. Thompson that the residential entrance would be on Winthrop Street. He told Mr. Irving that the entrance would be set back 6.5' to be coplanar with 96 Winthrop Street.

Ms. Meyer asked about noise issues and fire escapes. Mr. Quinn said they would retain a sound consultant to meet city requirements, and that there would be two internal staircases.

Mr. Taylor asked if the storefront glazing and framing would be replaced. Mr. Quinn said they were looking for guidance on that question.

Mr. Irving asked for comments from the commissioners.

Dr. Solet said that there were some changes to celebrate and complimented the response to earlier comments about materials and setbacks from the park.

Ms. Harrington said might be better to eliminate the glass railing and have the green roof plantings serve as a barrier. Mr. Quinn agreed.

Mr. Barry said the full-width tower facing Kennedy Street caused problems with massing and shadows, and eroded the gains that had been made elsewhere. Mr. Irving agreed, and said he would rather

see an airy corner. Dr. Solet asked about exposing the private deck space; Mr. Irving replied that he would prefer the tower to go away.

Mr. Irving opened the meeting to public comment.

Ms. Meyer said the building was too big on the Kennedy Street side, too tall, and the proportions were “too strong.” The third floor was too much.

Chuck Redmon said the design missed an opportunity by eliminating the frieze of the existing building. He suggested introducing a heavy striation so the addition would sit more solidly.

Jonathan King of 40 Essex Street said he represented the Cambridge Residents’ Alliance. It was very significant that 40% of the park would be shaded. The value of the park outweighed the need for residences in the heart of the city.

Carolyn Shipley of 15 Laurel Street said that the design reminded her of plastic stackable boxes. The tower detracted from the design. The large windows were not in character with the neighborhood.

Jane Thompson said she was glad the black trim had been deleted, but said the white color made the building look bigger.

Charles Teague of 23 Edmunds Street said he was on the city’s lighting task force and asked for mandatory shades to mitigate light trespass.

Gordon Moore asked about exterior signs. Mr. Dhanda replied that he was trying to get all the stores to use pinned letters, like Shake Shack. Mr. Moore advocated eliminating the red Staples sign. He said the building seemed too big.

Margaret McMahon of 14 Highland Avenue said the building would take over the park; it needed to be more integrated with its surroundings.

Ken Taylor said that Winthrop Square was as important to Cambridge as Faneuil Hall or Post Office Square was to Boston. The scale should be more compatible with the historic buildings. The park would always be in shadow. The giant “57” was not appropriate.

John DiGiovanni of Trinity Properties agreed with Dr. Solet’s praise for the changes, but as an abutter asked for more time to review the design. He observed that the top floor of his garage was set back from Kennedy Street. He supported more density in Harvard Square, and was not opposed to micro-units. Tenants might not change their signs immediately, but there could be a long-term plan for them. He discussed issues relating to trash, and asked if the Winthrop Street sidewalk was public or private. Mr., Dhanda replied that about 6’ of the sidewalk was his property.

Kerry Kuelzer said the design still appeared driven to maximize return. No one liked the lower floors; the addition should be earned by improvements at the storefront level. Storefronts should be distinguished from one another, like Shake Shack’s recent improvements. Lighting should be improved.

Mr. Sullivan reminded the commissioners that they had previously agreed that additional development could be appropriate at this location, and that the existing building need not be preserved in

its present form. He thought the increased setback and lighter color were improvements over the previous design, but the proportions might be improved if the glazed area was divided into smaller units. Brick would not be a good material at this location; perhaps terra cotta would be an alternative to limestone. The palette should relate to the context. The picture-frame effect on the Kennedy Street façade seemed awkward; the old and new parts of the building should adopt the same rhythm, and the frieze should remain continuous. He thought this was a plausible approach, but it needed more design development and he recommended a continuance.

Mr. Barry appreciated the architect's responsiveness. He commented on the ambiguity of the Kennedy Street façade, but felt the material was more appropriate.

Dr. Solet said the wide variety of window treatments might be disturbing. Mr. Irving said that the proponent's building at 1075 Massachusetts Avenue was a useful precedent. This was an opportunity to create an important building.

Mr. Dhanda consented to a continuance.

Dr. Solet moved to continue the hearing until April 3. Ms. Harrington seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Case 3188 (continued): 15-33 Richdale Ave., by Hathaway Partners LLC. Review design details of exterior renovation and additions.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and read the motion adopted at the February meeting.

Joel Bargmann, the architect, said they proposed to drop the sills of the windows of the two-story portion, both front and back. Windows would be dark green, matching the existing pattern. They would remove the elevator penthouse. He described how the additional units would be placed on the roof, and presented material samples and colors. Light tubes would illuminate first floor spaces like bathrooms.

Dr. Solet noted the preference of residents of 75 Richdale for high windowsills, which gave them privacy. Mr. Bargmann said they wished to have operable windows; that the deep units needed more light, and that it would be uncomfortable for tenants to have the windows so high. Dr. Solet said lower sills would mean a loss of privacy, and that windows could be operated with poles.

Mr. Irving opened the discussion to questions of fact.

Gordon Moore asked if the windows would be double-glazed. Mr. Bargmann said there would be applied muntins with brass spacer bars. Screens would be on the inside.

Elizabeth Stern of 20 Cambridge Terrace asked about the depth of the solar overhang; Mr. Bargmann said it would be 3'.

Mr. Bargmann told Steve Perry of Cambridge Terrace that the additions would be 12'4" high. Sash would be doors and sliders. The garage bay at the east end would be filled in with a metal panel.

John Sanzone asked about systems. Mr. Bargmann said each unit would have a small condenser on the roof, not visible from the street.

Mr. Bargmann told Arlene Miller that the windows would not have snap-in muntins.

Charlotte Moore of 9 Rutland Street noted that the original sash had the same number of lights, top and bottom. Mr. Bargmann said the windows would be easier to operate if the lower sash were smaller. After some discussion, Mr. Barry said this was a rehabilitation project and perfect authenticity was unnecessary. Lowering the exterior sills would not be detrimental, either.

Mr. Bargmann told Dr. Solet that all floors would be accessible. Most units would be accessible from the start; others could be converted.

Mr. Irving commented approvingly on how the project had evolved. Dr. Solet said the rooftop addition was clearly new, but didn't overpower the old building.

Gavin Kleespies, Executive Director of the Cambridge Historical Society, asked if an old industrial sink could be salvaged for the City Sprouts program. Mr. Wolff, the owner, agreed.

Gordon Moore said that the rooftop additions would look stuck on and not integrated with the building. Could they look more distressed? Mr. Irving said that was a deliberate design decision. Mr. Bargmann said that he tried to make them distinct; the choice of mill-finish aluminum over dark green was purposeful. Gene Hollis of 75 Richdale Avenue agreed that the addition was incongruous.

Elizabeth Stern of 20 Cambridge Terrace said that the new structure should echo the horizontality of the old, but in a more restrained way. She objected to the separation between units and to the heavy roof overhang, and displayed a rendering of a different, more continuous approach.

Steve Perry said that Mayor Maher had asked him to announce that the neighbors were hoping to execute a Memorandum of Understanding with the developers. In his opinion, the additions should be gray, not green, but said their simplicity made them look too large. The end panel in the garage bay should be dark.

Judith Pickrell spoke in favor of Ms. Stern's rendering.

Oliver Radford said that lowering the sills would create very different proportions in the windows; maybe three sash could be stacked, not two.

Liz Moore of 75 Richdale said it would be important to have operable windows.

Gordon Moore suggested making a thin edge on the solar overhang, instead of a flat 11" fascia.

Ms. Stern asked why the rooftop units had to be visually separated. Mr. Bargmann he had made a different design choice. He wanted to articulate the units and give them a sense of individuality, rather than make them continuous.

Mr. Irving closed the public testimony.

Mr. Sullivan said that both design approaches to the rooftop additions were valid. He thought it would be desirable to maintain continuity of the meeting rails of the window sash. He thought that ISD would require a safety rail at the edge of the roof, and wondered how that would affect the design. The overhang was appropriate, but the 11" fascia could be detailed to break up the flat surface.

Ms. Harrington said she liked the contrast of old and new, and supported the design.

Dr. Solet moved to approve the application as submitted, delegating masonry restoration, window and sash details, window sill materials, infill of the garage bay, and general construction details to the staff. Mr. Irving suggested that the garage bay infill should come back to the commission, and that the cornice flashing not be green. Mr. Barry suggested adding a row of lights to a sash rather than stretching the proportions. Dr. Solet accepted these amendments, Mr. Barry seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Case 3202: 5 Longfellow Pk., by Friends Meeting at Cambridge. Modify walk and doorway to create an accessible entrance facing Longfellow Park.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and introduced the case. The house was built by Alice Longfellow for a niece in 1914. The meeting house was designed by William and Mary Duguid, Cambridge architects who were members of the Meeting.

David White, a member of the meeting, described an egress door added in the 1950s and the ramps that were built in the 1990s. The rear accessible door wasn't visible to passersby, so they wished to make the door facing the park into the main entrance for all.

Doug Sacra of Maple Hill Architects said the sidewalk now led to three steps up into a dark vestibule. They proposed to regrade the sidewalk to less than a 5% grade up to a new landing and door under a shed-roofed portico. The door would be 3'4" wide with one sidelight and a transom. The roof would be slate and there would be an operator button on a column. The pediment would be removed.

Ms. Harrington asked about the current path from the Friend's Center to the Meetinghouse.

At Mr. Barry's request, Mr. Sullivan said that William Duguid was a Scottish engineer, and his wife Mary, from Philadelphia, was a graduate of the Cambridge School of Landscape Architecture. Both were conscientious objectors during WWI. They established an architectural firm in Cambridge in the 1920s and were noted for their small but high-quality Colonial Revival houses. They closed their practice about 1938 and focused on running the Cock Horse Inn, which they sold to the Window Shop in the 1940s, and then retired to Gloucester. Mr. Irving noted that the Meeting members responded with a Guilford College cheer.

Mr. Sacra told Mr. Bibbins that the slate would be real, but installed with less exposure. Mr. Bibbins said he liked the shed roof; the pediment seemed un-Quakerly. Mr. Barry asked why the pediment couldn't be brought forward and made part of an off-center cross-gable. Mr. Sacra said that would mean sacrificing a maple tree. Mr. Irving said the Dugiuds were members and included it purposely. He hoped it could be kept; it was an important building on an important park. Mr. Sacra said the meeting had rejected earlier studies that kept the pediment. It would require three columns for a small elevation. Mr. Bibbins called the pediment a local feature typical of the 1930s.

Karen Carnean of Cambridge Street said the tree obscured the gable. Michael Muehe, director of the Cambridge Disabilities Commission, had recommended using this entrance.

John Sanzone asked if the pediment could be kept with a simpler shelter, like an awning.

Mr. Sullivan pointed out that the issue was whether the proposal was incongruous. At least two commissioners were saying that the proposal would be more appropriate if the design retained the pediment. He asked the commission to vote the proposal up or down.

John Sternfield, a meeting member, asked the commissioners to approve it as submitted. Elizabeth Fox, a member who said she was a descendant of Charles James Fox, said the proposal represented the Quaker tenets of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, and equality.

Dr. Solet moved to approve the application as received. Ms. Tobin seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Case 3203: 102 Mt. Auburn St., by Eliot Square Enterprises, Inc., owner, o/b/o Harvard University's Hutchins Center for African and African American Research and its Cooper Gallery. Alter design of the existing glass connector between 100 Mt. Auburn St. and 104 Mt. Auburn St. including materials, canopy, and signs.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and described the site.

Mark Verkennis of Harvard Planning introduced Nazeem Cooper of the Faculty of Arts & Sciences. The DuBois Institute was already a tenant in this building. A donor had contributed money for a new Hutchins Center, one component of which would be the Cooper Gallery of African art, designed by David Adjaye, a British architect of Ghanaian descent. The façade of cedar and terrazzo with bronze lettering would be independent of the existing storefront. The signage conformed to zoning.

Dr. Solet asked if the terrazzo would be slippery. Ms. Cooper said it would be a honed surface. Dr. Solet said it could be grooved.

Ms. Cooper told Mr. Crocker that the vertical timbers would be 12" apart.

Ms. Harrington moved to approve the project as proposed. Mr. Crocker seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Preservation Grants

Case IPG 14-3: 42 Brattle St., by Cambridge Center for Adult Education, \$50,000 for exterior restoration.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides. The budget for the exterior renovation was over \$200,000; a CPA grant would match a grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission. This would be the fifth CPA grant to the Cambridge Center. He recommended approval of the full \$50,000 on a matching basis.

Case IPG 14-4: 311 Broadway, by Faith Lutheran Church. \$74,024 for roof work and stucco.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides of the church, designed by Newhall & Blevins in 1909. The Commission had previously supported stained glass restoration. The current \$74,000 project would repair roofing, gutters and stucco; Mr. Sullivan recommended a grant of \$60,000 on a matching basis.

Ms. Tobin moved to find both buildings significant and to approve the grants as recommended. Mr. Barry seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Minutes

Dr. Solet said the minutes of February 6 should be corrected so that on page 5, the last sentence of the ninth paragraph would read “She asked the owners to use only the ~~new~~ old building and not construct the addition.” Mr. Barry seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Solet moved to adjourn. Mr. Crocker seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:54 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks
Preservation Planner

**Members of the Public
Who Signed the Attendance List on March 6, 2014**

M. Carolyn Shipley	15 Laurel St
Susan Juretschke	10 Gilmore St #2
Rick Levy	64 Richdale Ave
Terry Drucker	88 Chilton St
Charlotte Moore	9 Rutland St
Gordon Moore	9 Rutland St
Nancy Ryan	4 Ashburton Pl
Steve Perry	24 Cambridge Terrace
Gavin Kleespies	26 McTernan St
Doug Sacra	55 Glezen Lane, Wayland, MA
Gregory Lent	8 Crestview Dr, Spencer, MA
Karen Hull	75 Richdale Ave #5
Joe Sternfeld	175 Richdale Ave
Bijay Bhatta	1075 Massachusetts Ave
Kanhma Dhugara	233 Massachusetts Ave, Arlington, MA
Marilyn Wellons	651 Green St
Fredy Audy	47 Richdale Ave
Kenneth Taylor	23 Berkeley St
Daniel Dryge	57 JFK St
Kari Kuelzer	89 Winthrop St
Kate Killeen	237 Elm St
Charles Redmon	18A Highland Ave
Jane Thompson	93 Winthrop St
Marilee Meyer	10 Dana St
Carole Perrault	9 Dana St #41
Sue Myers	49 Trowbridge St
Doug Myers	49 Trowbridge St
Sam Wolff	19 Maple Ave
Rob Wolff	42 Arlington St
Margaret McMahon	14 Highland Ave
Heather Hoffman	213 Hurley St
Celeste Mendom	1971 Harvard Yard
Arlene Miller	75 Richdale Ave
Marion Foster	75 Richdale Ave
E. Moore Moriarty	75 Richdale Ave
Judith Pickerill	55 Upland Rd
James Perchik	55 Upland Rd
Oliver Radford	24 Cambridge Terrace
Elizabeth Stern	20 Cambridge Terrace
Elizabeth Vandermark	33 Cambridge Terrace
Gene Hull	75 Richdale Ave, #5
John DiGiovanni	50 Church St

Larry Lopez	49 Fayette St
Peter Miller	46 Porter Rd
Denise Jillson	2203 Mass Ave
Jonathan King	40 Essex St
Susan Markowitz	20 Oak St
Elaine Spatz Rabinowitz	75 Richdale Ave
Jo Ellen Hillyer	153 Cypress St
John Sanzone	540 Memorial Dr.
Naz Cooper	60 JFK St
Mark Verkennis	1350 Mass Ave
Mark Webster	15 Owatonna St Auburndale, MA 02466
Elizabeth Fox	2 Sparks Pl
David White	5 Longfellow Park

Note: Town is Cambridge, unless otherwise indicated.