

MINUTES OF THE MID CAMBRIDGE NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION

Monday, July 10, 2023, 6:00 PM, online Zoom meeting

Commission Members present: Tony Hsiao, *Chair*; Monika Pauli, Katinka Hakuta, *Members*

Absent: Lestra Litchfield, *Vice Chair*, Charles Redmon

Staff present: Allison A. Crosbie, Preservation Administrator
Sarah Burks, Preservation Planner

Members of the Public: See attached list

Meeting held via online zoom webinar <https://tinyurl.com/MCjuly2023>. Due to statewide emergency actions limiting the size of public gatherings in response to COVID-19, this meeting was held online with remote participation and was closed to in-person attendance. The public was able to participate online via the Zoom webinar platform. The meeting ID was 831 0129 2436.

Commissioner Charles Redmon made introductions, explained the process for the hearing, and called the meeting to order at 6:05.

Case MC-6753: 42 Dana Street, by LaColterton LLC c/o Stephan Dubouloz. Exterior alterations to garage including new pitched roof, solar panels, siding, and trim.

Ms. Allison Crosbie, preservation administrator, presented slides of the property and some of the alterations over the years, and also stated the review is non-binding.

Mr. Steve Hiserodt, project architect, shared his screen to present the proposed project. He also introduced Mr. Stephan Dubouloz, the owner.

Mr. Hiserodt explained that they decided to look at the garage to make improvements, and specifically expand solar access for the property by just putting a solar array on a frame structure on top, but it would not have been attractive. So looked at modifying the garage structure and make it look more like a carriage house and have the surface to install solar panels that are less visually prominent. Shows site plan, 20by 25 garage, currently nonconforming. Required setbacks are 5 feet but it's less than a foot here. Looked at siding the garage with wood clapboard and putting a gable roof facing the street with rake detailing to match the house, new loft window in gable, slope set for more direct solar exposure. Have spoken to neighbors, right and left most impacted are in favor and written letters to BZA.

Mr. Dubouloz mentioned that the house will not have gas, all electric, and would like to make the most of solar energy on the property.

Commission Questions

Commissioner Monika Pauli asked how high the solar panels will be above the roof. Mr. Hiserodt answered that he has no specific details from installer yet, but the objective is to make them as flush as possible with the roof.

Public Questions and Comments - none

Commission Comments

Ms. Pauli commented that it looks nice if the detailing is worked out and there are no surprises with the solar panels.

Mr. Hsiao agreed and said the alterations to the garage are compatible with the house and that he had no issues with the proposal.

Ms. Pauli motioned to approve as submitted with follow up review by CHC staff on details including the solar panels. Commissioner Katinka Hakuta seconded, and the motion passed 3-0.

Case MC-6754: 9 West Street, by Margaret Hickey. Alter window openings, install bay window.

Ms. Crosbie presented a brief history of the building and explained that the review is non-binding.

Kieth Giamportone, the owner's representative, explained the proposed project, adding bay window off dining area on second floor and on the side façade raise the sill of a window for interior counter. Ms. Crosbie asked about a window next to the proposed bay window, and Mr. Giamportone replied yes, so there are two windows being reconfigured and one new window.

Mr. Hsiao shared his screen to look at google view to orient the property, noting that these alterations are off the side street, not West Street.

Commission Questions

Ms. Hakuta asked about a window that already looks a little shorter. Ms. Hickey replied that it is. Ms. H asked will it be even shorter. K – what are the dimensions of the window opening. Ms. Hickey answered 5 inches.

Ms. Pauli asked if the bay window is visible from a public way. Ms. Crosbie answered yes, Mr. G claimed it was a private way, but people can walk by it.

Mr. Hsiao looked at the drawings and noted that the windows will be shortened by 8 inches.

Ms. H noted that the windows in the building are not all the same.

Public Questions and Comments

Ms. Crosbie referred to an email received by Emily Talcott and Ken Lynch of 3 West Place in support of the proposal.

Commission Comments

Ms. Hakuta remarked that the alignment of the proposed bay window on a façade with a strong center line seems a little off, but understands how the interior is driving this decision.

Mr. Hsiao asked if they looked at modifying the interior to slide the bay window to the center. Mr. Giamportone replied that the kitchen would get smaller and they want to maximize its usefulness, but understand the desire to center the window.

Ms. Pauli asked if the bay window is over the counter or is the sill lower than the counter. Mr. G referred to the elevation. It's aligning with the bottom of the other window. Ms. P suggested if the bay window could move away from the other window just a little bit would be better, it looks too tight right now. Ms. Hakuta agreed with Ms. Pauli noting that the double windows on the façade and perhaps a pair of windows would be more consistent with this elevation. Ms. Hickey said she chose windows to operate with a handle so you don't have to lean over the counter to open them. Ms. H asked if the bay is over the counter. Mr. Hsiao looked at the plan view and pointed out the end of the counter with the corner removed and suggested reducing the length to accommodate moving the bay window north which would alleviate some of the discomfort. And instead of the bay window choose windows such as a pair of windows that are more in keeping with the other windows.

Ms. Hickey pointed out that there is a step to the dining area so she didn't want the seating to back up towards this step. Would not want to move the dining table closer to the step.

Ms. Pauli asked is the table round or square. 3x 6 table. Ms. Hickey said she put in a rectangle in the plan. Ms. Pauli suggested a round table so it wouldn't be an issue. Ms. Hickey said she doesn't know what the inhabitant will have. Ms. Pauli explained that the outside would look better and perhaps using a round table.

Ms. Burks looked at the partition wall and asked if they are sure it's not load bearing. Ms. Hickey replied that it is not. Ms. Hickey noted that it was a very old fashioned kitchen with a twenty inch gas stove and sink.

Ms. H noticed the former bathroom and the dog legged wall to make room for the existing window, maybe consider removing the existing window, straightening the wall, and moving the bay to the south to align with the windows below it.

Mr. Hsiao showed a mark-up of the drawing to help clarify the suggestions being discussed. Straightened out the counter to square off the dining space and further defining the space, instead of all the angles that are currently depicted on the plan. Ms. Hickey answered that she would look at these ideas.
Mr. Hsiao

Ms. Pauli agreed, noting that both the interior and exterior are simplified. Mr. G explained they were motivated by not removing an existing window, but would consider it if the Commission supports it. Mr. Hsiao stated it seems warranted to re-look at this façade and make it more regular. Ms. Hickey said she would study this and thought the laundry might have to be moved. Mr. G asked for the suggestions.

Mr. Hsiao motioned to approve the proposal as submitted with the recommendation that the applicant to reconsider the location of the bay window to align with the windows below and eliminate the adjacent existing window.

The June 5, 2023 minutes were approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Allison A. Crosbie, Preservation Administrator

Members of the Public Present on July 10, 2023

Panelists:

Steve Hiserodt
Stephan Dubouloz
Margaret Hickey

MA
Somerville, MA
Sunrun

Attendees: