

## **Minutes of the Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission**

Monday, June 1, 2009, 6:00 P.M., 344 Broadway, City Hall Annex/McCusker Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Members present: Nancy Goodwin, Tony Hsiao, Carole Perrault, Chuck Redmon, members; Siobhan McMahan, Monika Pauli, Sue Myers, alternates.

Staff present: Paul Trudeau

Members of the

Public present: See attached list

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With a quorum present, Ms. Goodwin called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM. She introduced the Commission and outlined the meeting procedures.

### Public Hearing: Alterations to Designated Properties

**MC 3433: 10 Trowbridge St., by Wallace W. Sherwood (continued).** To install fire escape.

Mr. Trudeau explained that the case had been continued from the May 4 public hearing because Mr. Sherwood was unable to attend.

Mr. Trudeau showed slides of the building and reviewed the proposed location of the fire escape.

Mr. Sherwood explained that he had considered several designs for the fire escape. He said one option was for a spiral staircase, but the Inspectional Services Department (ISD) told him it was not feasible for a three-story building. He said another option involved a bulkier bridge configuration that seemed excessive. The third design with a ladder coming from the second floor platform seemed like the best design. He said he had a brother-in-law who recently died in a fire so he was motivated to provide emergency egress for his building.

Ms. Goodwin asked if there were questions of fact from the Commission.

Mr. Redmon asked if the third floor egress would be through the window out onto the fire escape. Mr. Sherwood said it would.

Mr. Redmon said the elevation drawing showed more than a ladder coming from the second floor landing. Mr. Sherwood said the drawing was incorrect.

Mr. Redmon asked how many units were in the building. Mr. Sherwood said there were three units.

Mr. Redmon noted that plans seemed outdated. Mr. Sherwood explained that an addition was built on to the house several years ago and the unit sizes got larger.

Ms. McMahon asked for clarification that the wide second floor landing for the fire escape was an indication of the size of the addition. Mr. Sherwood confirmed, noting that the fire escape only served the addition portion of the house.

Ms. Goodwin asked how many interior stairs accessed the third floor. Mr. Sherwood explained the interior stair plan for the house.

Mr. Hsiao asked if an architect was involved in the project. Mr. Sherwood said not at present time. Mr. Hsiao asked if the fire escape was required by code and if it only served the top floor unit. Mr. Sherwood said he felt the exterior staircases were as important as interior stairs for egress. He said the fire escape was just for the third-floor unit.

Mr. Redmon noted that fire escape projected about 7' off the building, which seemed excessive.

Ms. Perrault asked if a structural engineer had been consulted on the project. Mr. Sherwood said he had worked with a contractor but was no longer using him.

Mr. Redmon asked if an engineer had advised the proposed egress points. Mr. Sherwood said he was not sure.

Ms. Goodwin asked for questions or comments from the public. There being no public comment, she asked for comments from the Commission.

Ms. Perrault said it seemed like there could be more consultation with the Historical Commission staff on the design. Ms. McMahon agreed, noting that she was having difficulty interpreting the design and it was hard to comment.

Mr. Sherwood said there were different options on the table, including a ladder instead of a stair from the second-floor landing, and was hoping that the Commission could be flexible. He said he was told the decision would be non-binding. Mr. Hsiao said the Commission could not base their decisions on speculative designs, they needed exact drawings. He said the Commission was willing to work with applicants on good solutions to problems but they needed concrete plans.

Mr. Trudeau suggested that the case be continued until a revised drawing could be submitted.

Mr. Sherwood said he said some financial concerns and may not be able to come back with architectural drawings. He said he could amend the existing drawing. Mr. Redmon said the drawing would need to get approval from ISD as well.

Ms. Goodwin said the only options were to vote on the presented materials or to continue to the next hearing. Mr. Sherwood asked if he could come back before the

Commission after his Board of Zoning Appeal hearing. Ms. McMahon said the Mid Cambridge NCD review was required first.

Mr. Hsiao said the Commission could not approve the design based on speculation.

Ms. McMahon MOVED to disapprove the application as submitted based on insufficient application materials and drawings. Mr. Redmon SECONDED the motion, which PASSED 5-0.

**MC 3455: 371 Harvard St., #2C, by Lucy H. Young/Old Times LLC.** To replace windows.

Mr. Trudeau showed slides of the building, a four-story brick Colonial Revival building at the corner of Trowbridge St. He explained that a recent fire in the building required new windows in other units.

Henning Gaissert, the owner, provided details on the proposed replacement windows. He said they were Marvin double-glazed wood replacement windows with the same grid pattern as the existing windows. He said the storm windows would be removed.

Ms. Goodwin asked for questions of fact from the Commission.

Ms. McMahon asked for details on the existing 9-over-1 windows. Chris Johnson, a trustee with the condominium association, explained the varied muntin configurations on all windows on the building.

Ms. Perrault asked if the rationale behind the replacement windows was for energy-efficiency. Mr. Gaissert said he felt the storm windows were unsightly but were required for single-glazed windows. He said he appreciated old windows but his were in poor condition and needed to be replaced.

Mr. Trudeau said that there were more quality storm windows available on the market.

Mr. Hsiao advised that the replacement of these windows might set a precedent for other windows on the building. Angie Foss, a trustee of the condominium association, agreed, and hoped that each unit owner would not have to come back to the Commission if they wanted to use the same replacement window.

Ms. Goodwin asked if the current windows had lead paint. Mr. Gaissert said he was not sure.

Ms. Pauli asked if the whole window frame would be replaced. Ms. Foss said they would only replace as needed.

Ms. Pauli asked if the sash would be clad on the exterior. Ms. Foss said it would, but was unsure of the material.

Mr. Hsiao said it would have been helpful to have a sample window. Ms. Foss said the replacement window would have simulated divided lites with a similar muntin profiles and dimensions. She said the window would be a custom size to fit the frame. Mr. Gaissert confirmed that the sash would be clad in black aluminum.

Ms. Goodwin asked for questions or comments from the public. She read a letter from Baber Johnson and Maria-Pia Di Bella, 371 Harvard St. #3AD, in support of the proposal, with the caveat that they wished to keep their existing wood windows.

Ms. Foss said the trustees were committed to keeping a uniform look on the building. Ms. Goodwin noted that window manufacturers often change the styles of their window. Mr. Johnson reminded that they were proposing a custom window that could be used for future replacement requests.

Mr. Trudeau said if the condominium association had approved the replacement window, the Commission should discuss the appropriateness of the window with the potential for future proposals in mind. Ms. Goodwin noted that restoration is always the Commission's first preference.

Ms. Goodwin asked for comments from the Commission.

Ms. Perrault said she was in favor of restoring the existing windows and installing new storm windows, but did not find the proposed wood replacement window inappropriate. Mr. Redmon agreed.

Ms. Goodwin said that the Marvin replacement window was a good product. Mr. Hsiao agreed, noting that it was difficult to review window replacement proposals for individually-owned units in larger buildings.

Ms. McMahon said the replacement model would not likely last longer than the warranty, because the seal in the insulating glass would eventually fail. She said the color of the cladding would likely fade over time as well.

Ms. Myers said she supported the proposal, and urged the trustees to propose the same window in the future.

Mr. Redmon MOVED to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposal as submitted. Mr. Hsiao SECONDED the motion, which PASSED 5-0.

Ms. McMahon MOVED to approve the minutes for the 5/4/09 meeting as submitted.  
Mr. Hsiao SECONDED the motion, which PASSED 5-0.

There being no further business, Mr. Hsiao MOVED to adjourn. Mr. Redmon  
SECONDED the motion, and the meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote at 7:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Trudeau  
Preservation Administrator

**Members of the public that signed the 6/1/09 attendance sheet:**

Henning Gaissert	15 Old Colony Dr., Dover
Wallace Sherwood	10 Trowbridge St., #1
Angie Foss	371 Harvard St., #3B
C. S. Johnson	371 Harvard St., #1A



