

Minutes of the Cambridge Historical Commission

July 7, 2016 - 806 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge Senior Center - 6:00 P.M.

Members present: William King, *Chair*; William Barry, Shary Page Berg, *Members*;
Joseph Ferrara, Susannah Tobin, *Alternates*

Members absent: Bruce Irving, *Vice Chair*; Robert Crocker, Chandra Harrington, Jo M. Solet, *Members*

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

Public present: See attached list.

With a quorum present, Chair King called the meeting to order at 6:04 P.M. He made introductions and described the hearing procedures and designated alternate Joseph Ferrara to vote on all matters. He noted the written request to continue the hearing of Cases D-1384 and D-1385 for 207 and 227 Cambridge Street, which had been received from the proponents.

Cases D-1384 and D-1385 (amendment): 207 and 227 Cambridge St. Withdrawal of application to demolish significant buildings and revised project plans for limited scope of demolition at rear of existing buildings.

Ms. Berg moved to continue the cases to a future advertised public hearing date. Mr. Barry seconded the motion, which passed 4-0.

Ms. Tobin, alternate, arrived. Mr. King designated her to vote on all matters. Mr. King described the consent agenda procedure and reviewed the agenda items. He recommended Cases 3634 and 3636 for approval per this procedure, with details delegated to staff.

Case 3634: Byerly Hall, 6-8 Garden St., by President & Fellows of Harvard College. Install grates and guard rails at existing light wells and egress areas.

Case 3640 3636: 138 Brattle St., by Mike & Julie Kaneb. Replace single window with new double window on west elevation. Modify front door.

Mr. King asked if anyone present from the commission, staff or members of the public wished to have a hearing on the cases but no one responded.

Ms. Tobin moved to approve Case 3634 per the consent agenda procedures. Ms. Berg seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Barry moved to approve Case 3636 per the consent agenda procedures. Ms. Berg seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Public Hearings: Alterations to Designated Properties

Case 3635: 29 Highland St., by Amos Highland LLC. Renovate house and carriage house. Construct addition at rear of house. Alterations per landscape plan.

Ms. Burks showed slides and reviewed the history of demolition delay, landmark study, and approval of a proposal by the previous owner, and reported that the property had changed hands and a new application had been filed per the Reservoir Hill NCD study protections. [Mr. Sullivan arrived].

Liz Whitbeck, proponent, described the proposed repairs, renovations, and additions to the house and carriage house. She reviewed the elevations and site plan, pointing out the driveway, a dining terrace off the kitchen and an addition with the kitchen and master suite. The carriage house would function as a

garage with new doors and some window modifications. The sleeping porch would be restored. The existing windows would be repaired and new storm windows added. New windows would match existing. She proposed to change the slate on the cheek walls of the dormers to wood siding. The slate roof would be replaced with new slate and copper would be used on the flat areas over bays. She noted a new basement entry and mudroom, new dormer, and new skylight. The board-and-batten siding of the carriage house would be repaired. The foundation would be repaired. Some of the 1970s windows on the carriage house would be replaced with more traditional double-hung sash. She reviewed the features of the landscape plans and elevations. The white fence would be retained or replaced to match. A gate would be added on the Appleton Street side, which, when open, would improve views of the carriage house.

Mr. Barry asked why the material on the dormer cheek walls was to change. Ms. Whitbeck answered that it was for aesthetic reasons. Joe DiLazzaro, of Opus Master Builders, noted that both slate and wood were typical materials for dormers of this period. He noted that the gable over the sleeping porch was clad in wood. Mr. Barry asked for confirmation that the house was not being moved. Ms. Whitbeck said it would stay in its current location.

Mr. Ferrara asked if the grade on the Appleton Street side was to be raised. Ms. Whitbeck indicated that there would be raised planting beds for vegetables on that side. They would be about 10-12 inches high, indicated Matthew Cunningham, landscape architect. Mr. Ferrara asked about the addition of a pergola. Ms. Whitbeck noted its location. Mr. Cunningham said it would consist of painted wood square columns and rafters and noted that vines would be trained to grow there.

Mr. Barry asked about glazing in the garage doors. Ms. Whitbeck said the upper row of panels would have glass.

Ms. Berg commented that the drawings were very preliminary and pretty vague. Mr. Sullivan noted that much of the work proposed was restoration of existing or replacement in kind. He recommended that construction details be delegated to staff. He said that he was concerned about removal of slate on the dormer cheek walls.

Mr. King asked about removal of trees. Ms. Whitbeck answered that several diseased trees had already been taken down. Some additional scrubby maples might be removed as well. Mr. King asked about the carriage house entrance doors. Ms. Whitbeck said the right panel would open and the left would be fixed because of the location of an interior stair added in the 1970s.

Marilee Meyer of 10 Dana Street asked if the addition could be lower. Ms. Whitbeck explained that an elevator was being added, which was the driver for the height. Ms. Meyer asked if the front steps and path would become grander in design due to the change in grade. Ms. Whitbeck answered that there would be no walls added to the walkway, just a series of ramps and steps. Ms. Meyer commented that the

new approach to the property was so much better than previous proposals. She was concerned about the level of activity and structures on the Appleton Street side and said she preferred slate on the dormers.

William Edgerly of 26 Highland Street said the applicants had done a very good job restoring 71 Appleton Street. He felt lucky that they would now work on 29 Highland. He expressed support for the application.

Mr. Ferrara said the addition was compact and the massing was appropriate. He offered a few design suggestions: keep ridge of addition below the main roof; keep slate on dormer cheeks; consider the detailing of the eaves and sleeping porch doors carefully so that it would flow seamlessly as intended.

Mr. Barry agreed about the slate on the dormers. He recommended delegating construction details to staff. He remarked that the use of a different material on the addition was appropriate. Perhaps the eave detail of the addition would not have to duplicate that on the main house.

Ms. Tobin remarked that the proposal had been carefully designed.

Mr. King said he was delighted to see the house would be restored. The design of the addition was sympathetic. The eaves of the addition should be subordinate.

Mr. Barry complimented the proponents on the clarity of their application materials and recommended it be used as an example to others. He moved to approve the application on the condition that slate be retained on the dormer cheeks and that construction details be approved by the staff with the consideration given to the design suggestions on record. Ms. Berg seconded the motion, which passed 5-0.

Public Hearings: Landmark Designation Proceedings

Case L-118: 66-68 Otis St. Staff report on status of construction. Public hearing on action to initiate landmark study.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and explained that a petition for landmark study had been accepted at the last meeting and a hearing scheduled for this meeting to discuss the action. He described the building, which had for many years been covered with asbestos shingle siding. Despite the ongoing renovation the original recessed front entryways remained with original paneling and etched glass in some panes of the sidelights. He showed a photo of the house in the 1930s, before the siding was applied. Much of the original ornamentation had been removed when the siding was installed in the '40s. Inspectional Services had issued a stop work order last month. He said there was concern expressed by the neighbors and himself that remaining original features be preserved including the entrances and the center gable. The existing doors were not original nor appropriate and could be replaced. The second floor windows on the front had already been shortened before the Historical Commission initiated the landmark study. He had convinced the owner to delete windows on the front elevation at the basement level and to retain the existing entranceways by moving the entry foyers for the four units inside; thus no hearing for a Certificate of Ap-

propriateness would be necessary. He had approved of a bluestone cap on top of an existing granite veneer at the front of the building. The purpose of the hearing was to consider whether to confirm last month's action to initiate the landmark study. If confirmed, the house would be subject to interim protections for another 11 months while the study report was produced. The owner could proceed with the building plans on file but changes from that would need to be approved.

Mr. Barry noted he had not been present at the prior meeting. He asked if the trim could be required to be more period appropriate such as using large corner boards if not recreating the original pilasters. Mr. Sullivan said the existing detailing was present on the permit plans so he did not ask the owner to modify those details. If there had been something original left to preserve, he would have argued for it.

Branka Whisnant of 61 Otis Street said the contractors were working on the house as recently as the present day. The cap stone was like what the same owner had used next door at 70 Otis. She asked the Commission to confirm the landmark study. She said the owner had repeatedly changed scope of work from what was on the permits.

Mr. King asked if the owner or a representative was present, but no one responded.

William Dines of 69 Otis Street said the owner kept changing his plans. The building had been gutted. The chimneys had been removed and the basement excavated. The asbestos and lead abatement was not handled correctly. He distributed photos of the building under construction and described the timeline of work. He asked that the window proportions be brought back. A demolition permit should have been required.

Carole Perrault of 9 Dana Street said what was happening to the house was outrageous. She encouraged the Commission to confirm the landmark study. Violations such as these were happening more and more across the city due to the rise in property values.

Marie Saccoccio of 55 Otis Street spoke in favor of landmark study. She recommended remediation of the inappropriate changes made on the front of the house. She said the asbestos removal was unlawful and that land had been taken from 62-64 Otis Street to justify a driveway.

Betty Saccoccio of 55 Otis Street asked the Commission to confirm the study. The developers had performed work on the weekends when city offices were closed. The house needed its integrity put back. The developer should be asked to restore some of the niceties.

The Commission and staff discussed the scope of work that triggers a demolition permit requirement. The current rule of thumb used by Inspectional Services was 25% of the volume, which was not the case in this instance.

Beaver Spooner of 329 Walden Street questioned the ramifications on the health of the neighbors if the asbestos had been improperly handled.

Mr. King closed the public comment period.

Ms. Tobin moved to confirm the Commission's June 2, 2016 vote to initiate a landmark study for the property. Mr. Barry seconded the motion, which passed 5-0 with no further discussion.

Case L-117: 145 Elm St. Shawn & Laetitia Henry, owners. Consider draft study report for designation.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and summarized the designation study report about the history, architecture, and significance of the property. The house, built by Ivory Sands in 1839 was the first of three brick houses constructed by the Sands family of brickmakers. It was significant under landmark criterion 1 for its association with the original property owner, an early practitioner in Cambridge's signature brick industry. It was also significant under criterion 2 as a rare example of brick construction in Cambridge in the late Federal Period. He noted that it served as an advertisement for the Sands family's brick business. The house exhibited fine craftsmanship and materials including brownstone lintels, sawtooth cornice, flush-boarded gable ends with fan lights. The uncharacteristically high brick foundation may have resulted from re-grading the level of Hampshire Street. He related the history of several of the property owners, including a Boston baker, a Swiss family that bottled beer and water there, and most recently, Dr. Edward Seldin, a dental surgeon who had restored the house and made several significant alterations of his own. Mr. Sullivan recommended forwarding the study report with a favorable recommendation.

Shawn Henry, a current owner, commented that Dr. Seldin had done a fantastic job of preserving the historic nature of the house and made some very interesting modifications that looked great also. He said that he and his wife intended to preserve the house and did not object to designation.

Ms. Perrault of 9 Dana Street noted that Dr. Seldin had spoken eloquently at last year's Preservation Awards about the house and his experience restoring it. She encouraged the Commission to vote in favor of landmark designation.

Mr. Barry moved to find that the house met the criteria for landmark designation and to send the report to the City Council with a positive recommendation for designation. Ms. Tobin seconded the motion which passed 5-0 without further discussion.

Public Hearings: Demolition Review

Case D-1390 (amendment): 40 Cottage St., by Roy Russell & Robin Chase. Amended replacement design proposal for reconsideration of decision.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and reported that a demolition application for the entire building had been heard in March and a demolition delay imposed upon finding the house significant and preferably preserved. The owner had returned with a revised design proposal for the Commission's consideration.

Levi Tofias of Boyes Watson Architects presented the new proposal. The front block of the house would be preserved in place and the ell would be demolished and reconstructed as a separate dwelling unit. The garage would also be demolished except for the back wall, which would be retained as a buffer to the neighbor behind. A small connector would link the two masses of the house and the new ell. The

ridge height of the new ell would match the front house, but the connecting element would provide separation and clarity. Changes on the front building would include rebuilding the non-original concrete porch in wood, construction of a dormer, and removal of the chimney, a new side entry, and skylights. The footprint of the ell would be enlarged to the east/garden side. The existing setback was non-conforming and would require zoning relief to reconstruct.

Mr. Sullivan asked what would happen to the existing exterior fabric of the house. Mr. Tofias answered that it would be restored as much as possible. The foundation would be repaired. The columns and trim would be retained. It would be insulated from the inside.

Mr. Ferrara asked about the exterior materials proposed for the ell. Mr. Tofias answered that it had not yet been decided. Mr. King asked for public questions then comments.

Ms. Perrault asked why the chimney would be removed and why a dormer would be added. Mr. Tofias replied that the dormer was needed for head height in a bathroom and the second floor was already very tight. There was already a dormer on the east side. The chimney was not in use and removing it allowed for a better interior plan. Ms. Perrault asked why there were so many windows on the east side of the new ell. Mr. Tofias answered that they would provide passive solar gain and would look out over the garden. The rear unit would be very energy efficient in its design with super-insulated walls.

Charlie Allen of 44 Cottage Street said that keeping the front and sacrificing the ell might seem like a reasonable compromise but demolition wasn't necessary; it was not good science or good practice. It was a waste of embodied energy. All literature he had seen promotes the preservation of existing buildings. He did not object to renovation of the house and admired his neighbors' commitment to the environment. The ell was original and an important part of the house with the kitchen as the heart of the home. The house could be remodeled without demolition and could be a great example of green remodeling.

Ms. Meyer said she did not consider the proposed new ell to be sympathetic to the historic house, though it was improved over the previous design. Something could be done with the existing ell.

Ms. Perrault said the proposed changes on the west elevation such as the removal of the chimney and addition of solar panels would negatively impact the house's integrity.

Louise Elving of 36 Cottage Street said she was willing to see the ell demolished and new ell construction if the front part of the house was saved and the streetscape preserved. Mr. King asked if all the cottages had chimneys. Ms. Elving said they once had four on their house but had taken two down.

Andy Farrar of 4 Lawrence Street said he was partial to the traditional pattern of main house and graduated smaller pieces going back. He said he liked the proposal and hoped it would get built.

Mr. King closed the public comment period.

Ms. Berg said the three cottages belonged together and made a striking statement as a group. Perhaps there should be a small historic district here.

Mr. King said the Commission should consider the surrounding context and determine what would serve the greater public interest in determining if the house was preferably preserved.

Mr. Barry commented that the loss of the chimney had a negative impact on the house and streetscape. The new ell was incongruous. It could be rendered in a more sympathetic way. It was not subservient in its massing.

Mr. Ferrara agreed that the chimney was important. The size of the addition was modest but he was concerned that it would look like two disparate attached houses rather than a house and an ell. The ell could be modern but with gestures to maintain some continuity in materials, color or detailing. It could be a new take on an ell form.

Mr. Sullivan said he sensed that the Commission was not entirely opposed to demolition of the ell but wanted to see more preservation of the front house and a better relationship between the two parts.

Roy Russell, an owner, said the staff had originally mentioned the idea of replacing the ell. The chimney was not in use and was not in good condition. The dormer would be similar to what was at 44 Cottage. He said he would prefer a vote rather than continue.

Mr. King asked if zoning relief was needed. Mr. Tofias replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Sullivan recommended keeping the preferably preserved status in place until zoning relief was granted. A hearing on the question of landmark study would be scheduled for the August meeting and if there were refinements to the design, they could be presented at that time.

Mr. Barry said the design was headed in the right directions. Some adjustments could make it better. He moved to continue the hearing to the August meeting. Ms. Berg seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0. Mr. King called for a five minute recess at 8:40 and reconvened at 8:45.

Case D-1395 (amendment): 216 Norfolk St., by William Herbert. Amended replacement design proposal for reconsideration of decision.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and reported that the Commission had found the house to be significant and preferably preserved at its May meeting.

Bill Boehm, the architect, read a letter from owner William Herbert who was unable to attend due to longstanding travel plans. They had met with neighbors and shared a revised design proposal that would preserve the front of the house, demolish the ell, and build a new addition that would be compact. The driveway would be extended back. The front porch would be extended around to the left side. He showed renderings and digital models. He pointed out the limited visibility of the new addition from the street. The front unit would be two bedrooms and the rear three bedrooms.

Mr. Barry asked about materials for the porch and addition. Mr. Boehm answered that the porch would have wood lattice below and the deck would be about 30" above grade. The addition would be clad

in wood, maybe with a natural stain. Mr. Barry asked about the valley between new and old. Mr. Boehm agreed it was a challenge but there would be a large cricket to shed water from the area.

Ms. Meyer said the new addition was still problematic in its proportions and height.

Ms. Perrault appreciated the proponents' efforts to try and preserve the house. She asked about the ceiling heights in the back unit. The materials would be very important to the success of the design.

Natalia Bard of 267 Norfolk Street said she would welcome the new addition and the juxtaposition of old and new.

Mr. Barry said character of the addition would be very different from the front house, but in a good way. It could be a good example of how a modern addition could work with an old building. Mr. Ferrara agreed. It was a vastly improved approach. The rear addition would not be very visible.

Ms. Tobin said it was a nice combination of old and new. She asked why the driveway split into a vee. Mr. Boehm explained that two spaces were required by zoning but they might seek relief for them to be tandem spaces.

Mr. Sullivan said the revision was exciting because it showed how the demo delay can work. It was a very successful melding of old and new forms. He strongly recommended accepting the revised proposal and waiving the preferably preserved status of the building at such time that the requirements for a building permit could be met. Mr. Barry so moved. Mr. Ferrara seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion and it passed 5-0.

Case D-1402: 146-148 Pearl St., by Campbell Ellsworth, Manager, 146-148 Pearl St LLC. Application to demolish double house (1855).

Ms. Burks showed slides and summarized the staff memo about the history of the house and neighborhood. The 1855 house was an intact example of the double workers' cottage, a vernacular house type, and was significant for its architectural form and association with the broad architectural, social and economic history of Cambridgeport, and especially for its associations with soapmaker James Dalton and the soap industry started in Cambridgeport by Charles Valentine.

Margaret Farrar of 4 Lawrence Street said the houses in the area were all older and shared a historic character.

Mr. Ferrara said the staff report was thorough and outlined why the house should be found significant. He moved to find the building significant for the reasons given in the report and as defined in the ordinance. Ms. Tobin seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.

Campbell Ellsworth, the architect and an owner, introduced himself and his wife, Natalia Bard. He said they would like to relocate to Pearl Street from their current home on Norfolk Street to have a larger yard and be close to the Morse School where their daughter would attend. The proximity to Dana Park was also a nice thing. He said they had bought the property with the intention of renovating the

house. They had gotten a special permit to do that and to construct a detached dwelling in the back but since then they had decided that the house would be too small and would not maximize the yard space. He explained that his in-laws lived in Europe and they visit for an extended periods. He and his wife work from home, so they needed space for an office. He described several options that they had studied. The existing house had non-conforming front and side setbacks and a non-conforming driveway. The second floor sagged 5 inches.

He had communicated with 42 neighboring properties and held two open houses to share his design. He presented his design for a single building of two units with a two bedroom apartment at the front and a family house and office at the back. He would seek a special permit for a 10' tandem parking driveway without the 5' side buffer. He described the construction as very efficient with 13" thick double stud walls filled with cellulose insulation. They would try for a net zero house. The plan allowed for a large back yard. He described the elevations. The second and third floors of the front would be set back, creating a deck above the apartment. The neighboring buildings were tall, so in order to get light the new building needed to be tall also. He proposed a 35' height. He described the proposed materials including solar panels, green roof, natural wood, metal caps, metal stairs and railings, a 1' wide eave, and minimal metal corners. He described European details such as Rheinzink metal products and tilt-turn windows with triple pane glazing. Mr. Campbell described the proposed plans, elevations, and summarized the sun/shadow studies. He did not take the demolition proposal lightly and asked the Commission to find the house not preferably preserved.

Christine Bulman of 23 Valentine Street said her landlady had just passed away and she was the executrix of the estate and the future owner of the property. She said she was pleased that the proposal did not include a detached unit in the rear yard. She asked about the rear setback. Mr. Ellsworth answered that the rear wall of the proposed house was 42 feet from the rear property line.

Ms. Perrault commented that the historic house would be lost as would the pattern and rhythm of the street. Ms. Meyer agreed. The design was too industrial, too sterile, although the height and proportion were passable.

Ms. Farrar said she liked the design but it did not fit in well with its surroundings. She preferred the approach taken on Norfolk Street that preserved the front of the house.

Mr. Boehm, a resident of Laurel Street, said that Cambridgeport had a diversity of architecture. The scale was handled well. The existing house was depressing and mean. The Commission should allow for the replacement of some parts of the building stock to add examples from the current era.

Mikhail Sytchov of 173 Elm Street said the other houses nearby had been renovated. This was the last one and its condition was very poor. The house flooded a few years ago. He supported the proposal.

Natasha Bard said the front unit would be smaller and maintain the mass of the existing house. She wanted the family house to recede slightly. The apartment could accommodate her parents and European guests. It could also be rented out. She explained that the interior plan was arranged to keep kids' play space toward the back so it would not be noisy over the front apartment. She explained that the program of the house was divided into public and private living spaces. The public spaces were closer to the street and the private spaces at the back. She noted that several letters of support had been submitted to the Commission. Ms. Burks confirmed that those letters had been distributed to the commission members.

Andy Farrar of 4 Lawrence Street thanked the owners for their openness and expressed support for their design. It was respectful and the setback would maintain views along the street. He said he would like to see a stronger gesture toward the original house.

Mr. Ferrara thanked the applicants for their effort. A two-building approach was consistent with precedent in the neighborhood. Each unit was expressed separately in their massing. The proposal had a lot of good things going for it. It could, however, be improved so that it was less radical for the context.

Mr. Barry said it was an interesting design. He encouraged an approach that would accommodate the family but that would not demolish the whole house. He would support zoning relief if it would enable preservation.

Ms. Tobin said she would like to see more of the original house and less of the expressed massing.

Mr. King said he hoped the Norfolk Street win-win design would provide guidance for this property. But the Norfolk Street house had a high roof and this one did not. Adding height to the workers cottage would have a negative effect. The proposal fit in well with the street. It needed a front entrance and a broader entry. The owners should explore a partial preservation approach.

Mr. Campbell said he had studied keeping the front house and expanding it but those studies all looked odd and awkward. He liked the solution on Norfolk Street but the lower height of this house meant there was not the same opportunity here. Mr. Sullivan agreed that the studies staff saw of a modified front house were very inappropriate. Keeping just the bracketed entry hood would be a mistake. The proposed design was very stark and contrasted with the richer detail in the neighborhood context.

Mr. Barry moved to find the building preferably preserved. Ms. Berg seconded the motion, which passed 5-0.

Minutes

Ms. Berg moved to approve the June 2, 2016 minutes as presented. Mr. Barry seconded the motion, which passed 5-0.

Ms. Berg moved to adjourn, Mr. Barry seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks
Preservation Planner

**Members of the Public
Who Signed the Attendance List on July 7, 2016**

Lois Edgerly	32 Highland St
William Edgerly	32 Highland St
Lori Leland	14 Heather Drive, Reading 01867
Amelia Todd	16 Gray Gardens East
Liz Whitbeck	1 Fitchburg St unit B450, Somerville 02143
Joe DiLazzaro	371 Shawmut Ave, Boston 02118
Matthew Cunningham	106 Mt. Vernon Ave. Melrose 02176
Justin Corbett	100 Whitman Ave, Melrose 02176
Laetitia Henry	145 Elm St
Shawn Henry	145 Elm St
Maggie Booz	625 Mt Auburn St
Margaret Farrar	153 Pearl/4 Lawrence
Janet Strazzello	74 Otis St
Betty Saccoccio	55 Otis St
Bill Dines	69 Otis St
Dean Ventola	93 Third St
Marie Saccoccio	55 Otis St
Beaver Spooner	329 Walden St
Branka Whisnant	61 Otis St
John Whisnant	61 Otis St
John Hawkinson	
Heather Hoffman	213 Hurley St
Phillip Segó	221 Norfolk St
Marilee Meyer	10 Dana Street
Natalia Bard	267 Norfolk St
Andy Farrar	4 Lawrence St
Campbell Ellsworth	267 Norfolk St

Note: Town is Cambridge, unless otherwise indicated.