

Mid Cambridge NCD Commission Review Worksheet

Case MC- 7293 at 60 Ellery Street to be reviewed on June 9, 2025

This worksheet provides a summary of the Review Authority and General Criteria in the City Council orders establishing the Mid Cambridge NCD that the Commission should consider in making a determination whether or not to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness, Hardship, or Non-Applicability in this case. The determination must be made in a public meeting after a hearing open to questions and testimony by members of the public. (However, the staff may issue a Certificate of Non-Applicability on behalf of the Commission if it determines that the case involves only changes to architectural features not visible from a public way or that are exempt from Commission review under the orders.)

The Commission “shall not consider interior arrangements or architectural features not subject to public view” and “shall not make any recommendation or requirement except for the purpose of preventing developments incongruous to the historic aspects, architectural significance or the distinctive character of the . . . neighborhood conservation district.” (Ch. 2.78.220, A. and B.)

Section IV., Review Criteria to be Considered by the Commission, A. General Criteria

All applications *shall* be considered in terms of the impact of the [proposed action]. . . on the District as a whole, and in addition with regard to the potential adverse effects . . . on the immediate streetscape and the economic assessment of the alternatives to the proposed action.

General objectives shall be to:

- Avoid excessive infill;
- Encourage new construction which complements existing buildings;
- Encourage preservation of neighborhood buildings;
- Protect National Register structures; and
- Enhance the economic vitality of the neighborhood.

Application may contain issues relevant to these aspects of Section III., Review Authority

“The authority of the Commission shall extend to the following two required categories of review . . .

A. The Commission may make **non-binding** recommendations for any of the following that are visible from a public way:

- New construction, including additions . . . of more than 150 and less than 750 square feet of floor area;
- Alteration of the exterior appearance of a structure that requires a variance or special permit . . .
- Alteration involving any of the following:
 - Removal or enclosure of any historic or original decorative element . . .
 - Increase or diminishment of the size and/or change in the location of windows or doors
 - Increase or diminishment of the slope, pitch, or configuration of a roof or removal of historic or original roofing material.

B. The Commission may **make binding** recommendations for that portion of any of the following that are visible from a public way:

- **New construction**, including additions . . . involving any of the following:
 - More than 750 square feet of floor area
 - More than 33% of the lot area not already occupied by structures
 - Enlargement of the floor area of an existing structure by more than 33%
- **Demolition** of 33% or more of the floor area of an existing structure not originally used to garage automobiles, including relocation of an existing structure onto or off of a site
- Any alteration or construction of the following
 - Structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places, except those subject to Historical Commission review
 - Publicly owned structures
 - Structures containing or proposed to contain non-conforming uses.

Section V., Determinations by the Commission

“The determinations of the Commission shall be binding regarding activities detailed in paragraph 3B . . . and may contain conditions as the Commission determines to be necessary to fulfill the objectives . . . Such conditions may impose limitations stricter than the applicable zoning regulations only to the extent of a one-third reduction in (1) the additional floor area of (2) additional dwelling units permitted on the site, or a one-third reduction or one-half increase in the number of parking spaces required by zoning, except that in the case of a building damaged by fire that structure may be rehabilitated to its full extent prior to the fire.

In imposing binding conditions . . . or in denying a certificate, a concurring vote of at least four (4) of the members . . . shall be required.”

Date of Construction 1923 Archt/Bldr (if known) John .J. Powers

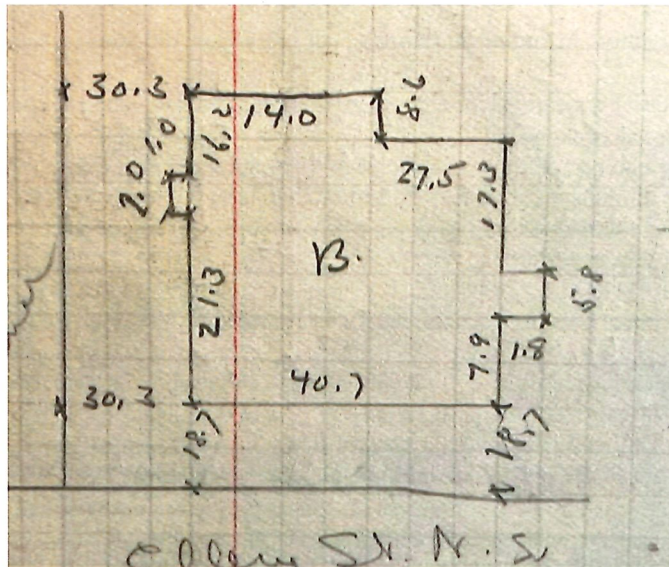
Other preliminary staff comments: _____

Staff Initials AAC Date 05/22/2025

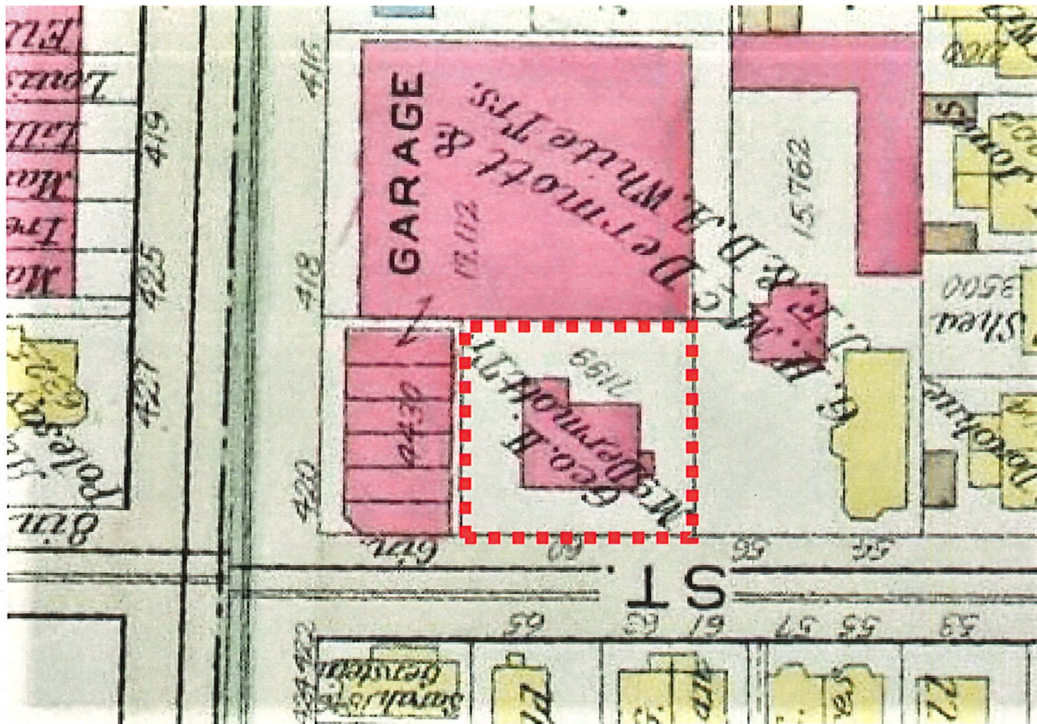
The applicant is proposing to demolish the building and construct a 6-story structure.

Background

The 4,564 square-foot building, constructed in 1923, is located on Ellery Street. The building was originally designed as a single-family home for a local contractor named Joseph F. White and later became a lodging house in the 1950s. In 1961, the building was renovated into 9 dwelling units and then later converted to 4 units. Clad in red brick, the 2 and a half story house features three gable dormers on the front, front entry porch with double ionic columns, front door with sidelights, and 6/1 windows. The front entrance was altered (new door and sidelights) in 2008. The roof was originally slate and was replaced with asphalt in 2021.



Building Footprint, 1923 City Engineer House Book



1930 Bromley Atlas



1965



Current View



Current View



Aerial view, April 2025

Immediate Neighborhood Context

Adjacent to 60 Ellery Street are buildings of various architectural styles including a brick-clad former retail building, now the Swiss Consulate, at 420 Broadway, constructed in 1922, with a pavilion and roof garden constructed in 2006. At 54 Ellery Street is a triple decker constructed in 1915. Across the street from 60 Ellery Street are two Italianate structures, both built in 1873. At the corner of Ellery Street and Broadway is a Colonial Revival triple decker constructed in 1892. Other structures on the street were built in 1884, 1915, and 1885. Behind 60 Ellery Street is an 18-unit townhouse complex constructed in 1978.

On Ellery Street at the corners of Harvard Street are two brick multi-unit dwellings, 4 to 4 ½ stories, across the street from each other, both constructed in 1930. And further down toward Mass Avenue is a 6-story brick building constructed in 1973.



Corner of Ellery and Harvard Streets – 2 brick apartment buildings constructed in 1930



Ellery Street toward Mass Ave (to the right) -12-16 Ellery Street constructed in 1973

Review

The purpose of reviewing demolition within the Neighborhood Conservation District is to preserve significant buildings and the diversity of building ages, styles, and forms that help to define the historical character of the District. The review also provides the opportunity to review the significance of individual buildings in the context of specific development proposals, to consider creative reuse possibilities, and to encourage the care and maintenance of the building stock.

Applications to demolish existing and construct new buildings in the Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District are reviewed under the provisions of Ch. 2.78, Article III and the Order establishing the district.

Ch. 2.78.220 of the City Code describes the factors to be considered by the Commission:

A. In passing upon matters before it, the Historical Commission or neighborhood conservation district commission shall consider, among other things, the historic and architectural value and significance of the site or structure, the general design, arrangement, texture and material of the features involved, and the relation of such features to similar features of structures in the surrounding area. In the case of new construction or additions to existing structures a Neighborhood Conservation District Commission shall not consider the appropriateness of the size and shape of the structure, and a Neighborhood Conservation District Commission shall not impose dimensional and setback requirements in addition to those required by applicable provision of the zoning ordinance. A Commission shall not consider interior arrangements or architectural features not subject to public view.

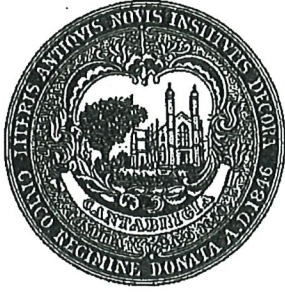
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C. In passing upon matters before it, the Historical Commission or neighborhood conservation district commission shall also consider community goals as may from time to time be expressed by the City Council, including the need to provide additional housing, affordable and otherwise, and to promote the sustainable use of energy and capacity for climate resilience.

The Order Establishing the Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District provides the following commission review criteria:

C. Demolition or Relocation of an Existing Building. The Commission shall apply the provisions of Section 2.147 (now Ch. 2.78.220) with regard to the proposed demolition of an existing building, and in addition shall consider the following factors:

1. the physical condition of the building;
2. a claim of substantial hardship, financial or otherwise, for the owner or occupants; and
3. the design of the proposed replacement structures, if any.



Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission

831 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139
Telephone: 617 349 4683 TTY: 617 349 6112
E-mail: histncds@cambridgema.gov
www.cambridgema.gov/Historic/DistrictsHistoricProperties/MidCambridgeNCD

Tony Hsiao, *Chair*, Lestra Litchfield, *Vice Chair*
Monika Pauli, Charles Redmon, Katinka Hakuta, *Members*
Nan Laird, Catherine Tice, *Alternates*

CONSENT TO CONTINUE HEARING

I, Mike Tokatlyan, the applicant or applicant's
appointed representative, do hereby waive the right to a decision by the Commission with
regard to the proposed application MC-7293 for 60 Ellery Street
(ADDRESS).

I hereby agree to extend the statutory time period provided for by Section 2.78 of the
Code of the City of Cambridge and/or Section 11 of the Chapter 40C of the
Massachusetts General Laws [for properties in historic districts] for review and decision
until 11:59 PM on August 4, 2025.

Mike Tokatlyan
dotloop verified
06/13/25 10:05 AM EDT
OSV5-HVJ3-2S14-12MG

APPLICANT OR APPLICANT'S AUTHORIZED
REPRESENTATIVE

Tony Hsiao/aac

CHAIR OF COMMISSION

06/13/2025

DATE

6/10/2025

DATE RECEIVED & AGREED TO BY CHAIR

Mid Cambridge NCD Commission Review Worksheet

Case MC- 7293 CONTINUED at 60 Ellery Street to be reviewed on August 4, 2025

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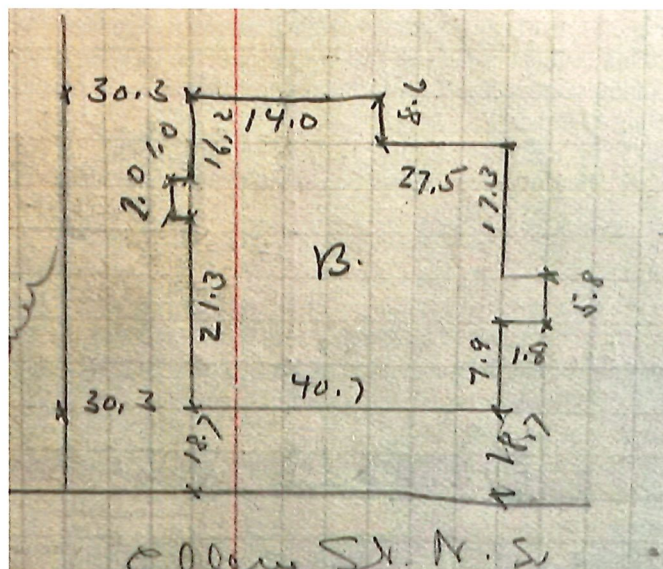
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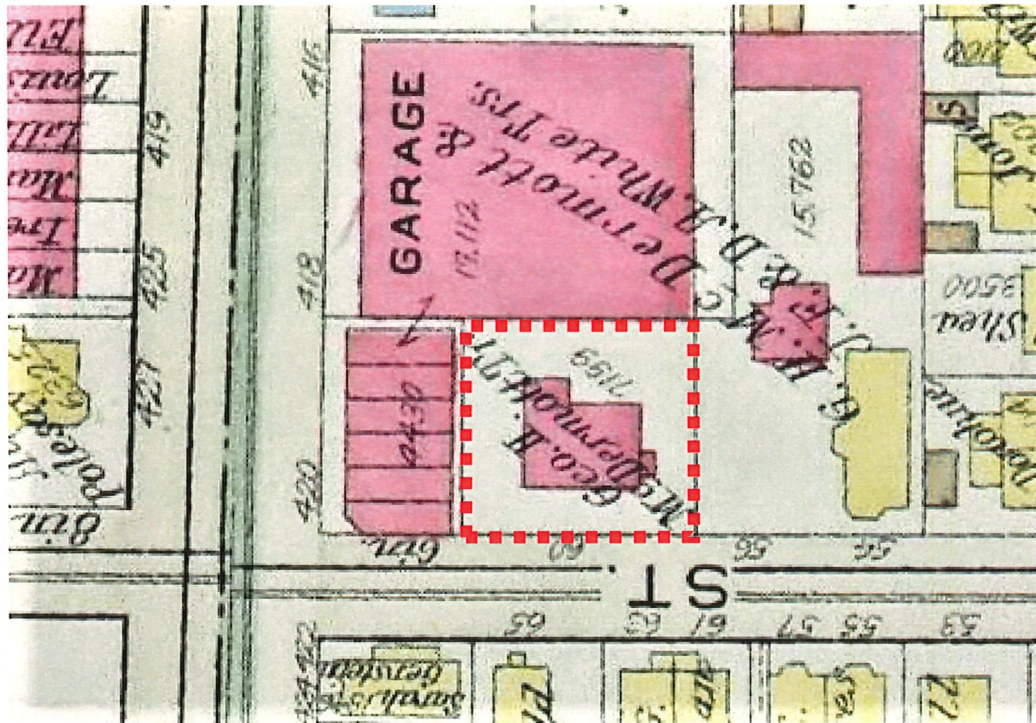
UPDATE: The applicant agreed to continue the hearing in order to respond to comments regarding the materials, façade treatment, the main entrance, the easement with garbage storage and transformer, and the overall streetscape experience.

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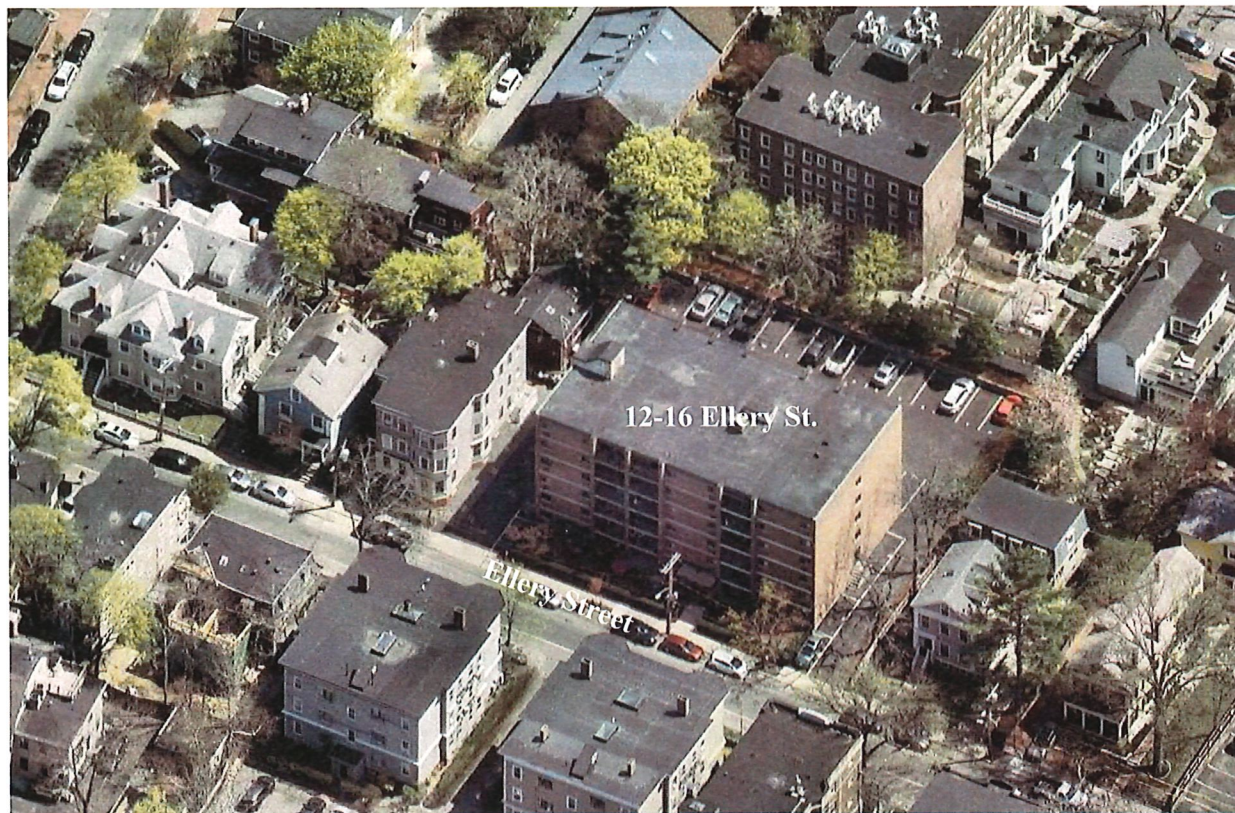
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MINUTES OF THE MID CAMBRIDGE NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION

Monday, June 9, 2025, 6:00 PM, online Zoom meeting

Commission Members present: Tony Hsiao, *Chair*, Lestra Litchfield, Vice Chair, Catherine Tice, Katinka Hakuta, Monika Pauli

Absent: Charles Redmon, Nan Laird

Staff present: Allison Crosbie, Preservation Administrator

Members of the Public: See attached list

This meeting was held via online zoom webinar <https://tinyurl.com/MC062025> 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 836 8303 1180.

Commission Chair Tony Hsiao made introductions and called the meeting to order at 6:04.

MC-7292: 43-45-47 Dana Street, by 45 Dana LLC. Exterior alterations including roof, dormers, windows, railings, porches, entries; remove 3 chimneys.

Ms. Allison Crosbie, preservation administrator, gave a brief history of the building.

Lauren Harder, the applicant, explained that the project will maintain existing 10 units and preserve details on the front of the structure. She noted the renovation project will include all new utilities and all the chimneys will be removed. She also pointed out that many of the existing windows are not original to the building and they are proposing to replace all the windows but preserve the fan window in the front gable. She also went over the proposed alterations to the rear roof to gain more usable space.

Architect Sisia Daglian presented the drawings and went over the alterations including the porches that need to meet current codes as well as changes to the entrances. She also went over the mechanicals including a condenser for each unit. She also stated that they might be required to install a transformer on the site. She explained that one of the dormers will be extended and a skylight will be added. She then presented the rear elevation and said that the current vinyl siding will be replaced with fiber cement siding. She also said they are removing the chimneys including the ones in the front that are causing rot and have been a continual maintenance issue.

Commission Questions

Mr. Hsiao shared his screen to show a google street view to clarify the locations of proposed alterations.

Commissioner Katinka Hakuta asked about the choice of materials for the railings, noting that wood would be more historically appropriate. Ms. Daglian replied that the metal railings will be thin and blend into the background, and that the top of the railings would be wood to provide a better grip. Mr. Hsiao pointed out that there are examples of this type of railing in the neighborhood.

Commissioner Monika Pauli asked if they considered using round columns on the porches since the newspaper image that Ms. Crosbie had shown illustrates round columns, not the current chamfered ones.

Vice Chair Lestra Litchfield asked what brand of windows were being proposed. Ms. Daglian answered that they are using Marvin Elevate windows.

Public Questions

Liz, neighbor to Deborah Salter-Klimburg of 39 Dana Street, said she is a direct abutter and asked about the potential impact on trees and lack of privacy and noise because of the proposed rear decks. Ms. Harder responded that the trees are not being impacted, and the decks are small and not conducive to having a lot of people.

Cary Saunders of Ellery Square said she is also a direct abutter and asked about the materials of the porches and the lighting, and she thanked the applicant for the thoughtful design. Ms. Harder answered that the porches will be painted wood and there will be hooded lighting that shine down, 1 sconce per unit. Ms. Saunders asked about the mechanicals. Ms. Harder said that they are using mini splits that will be for both air conditioning and heating, and there will be no gas. Ms. Saunders asked about the potential noise. Ms. Harder said that it shouldn't be an issue and mentioned that she likes to keep the equipment off decks because they tend to vibrate.

James Stathis of Ellery Square also asked about privacy and complimented the applicants for preserving the building.

Marilee Meyer of 10 Dana Street, asked about the entrances on the sides. Ms. Daglian went over the design of the entrances and the railings. Ms. Meyer asked about the dormers, and Ms. Daglian went over the different types of dormers. Ms. Meyer then asked about one of the porch entries. Ms. Daglian replied that the landing location is awkward, which necessitated a wall as a graceful solution. Ms. Meyer asked about the window profiles. Ms. Daglian went over the existing and proposed windows.

Ms. Saunders asked about the possible transformer location. Ms. Daglian showed the location on a plan on the right-hand side of the building.

Mr. Stathis asked about the rear porch supports and their materials and is there a way to make the decks more cantilevered. Ms. Daglian said she can revise them and look at using brackets for support.

Andrew Angel of 39 Ellery Street asked for more information about the transformer size and location. Ms. Daglian showed the location on a plan and said she is not sure of the exact size. Ms. Harder stated that the size is not finalized yet but will most likely be 5 feet tall, and the pad is 6 feet by 8 feet.

Deborah Slater-Klimber of 39 Dana Street asked about the number of units. Ms. Daglian confirmed that there will be the same number of units (10).

Ms. Meyer asked if ten units triggers inclusionary units and wondered if the transformer will be buried or on top. Ms. Daglian said the transformer will be on the surface and the project does not trigger inclusionary housing because it is not a new building.

Comments

. Meyer commented that the altered roofline does not work and wishes it would remain the same. She also stated that it would be a shame to cut the cornice to add the window under the fan light in the gable.

Commission Comments

Ms. Litchfield commented that the applicant has done a sensitive job with a building that needed a lot of TLC. She stated that it would be a shame to cut the dentil/frieze but understood the need, and recommended working with CHC staff to refine the details. She also encouraged the applicant to keep the chimneys in front because they add a lot of character to the building.

Mr. Hsiao thanked the applicant for the thoughtful proposal and concurred with Ms. Litchfield regarding working with staff to refine the window details and retaining the front chimneys.

Mr. Hsiao motioned to approve the proposal. Ms. Litchfield seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.

MC-7293: 60 Ellery Street, by Contempo Builders c/o Mike Tokatlyan. Demolish building and construct 6-story structure.

Ms. Crosbie gave an overview of the property and went over the review criteria as amended by the City Council in 2023 and 2025.

Mr. Evan Stellman, the architect, introduced Mike Tokatlyan, the applicant, and proceeded to present the proposed project encompassing the demolition of the existing building and the construction of a 6-story condo building with 29 units and noted that the project complies with current zoning. He pointed out an existing pathway that is an easement for Ellery Square and went over ADA accessibility. Mr. Stellman also went over the setbacks, the landscaping, roof deck, and showed elevations of the proposed building that include brick siding on the lower portion with row block courses and soldier course and 6/1 windows. The rest of the building is to be clad with metal and composite panels. Mr. Stellman then showed perspective drawings and aerial views and shadow studies. He pointed out that the building will be energy efficient, including a green roof as well as electricity for everything which will require a transformer on site.

Commission Questions

Mr. Hsiao asked about the height of the proposed building. Mr. Stellman replied that it is 63 feet high, but the elevator over run and stairs extend beyond this height.

Ms. Hakuta asked if they received feedback at their meeting with the neighbors regarding issues that the Commission has jurisdiction over and if they were able to incorporate any changes as a result. Mr. Stellman answered that the neighbors were generally opposed to the new building, especially the composite panels. Neighbors were also unhappy with the shadow impacts and the treatment of the pathway easement. Changes were made to the windows after the meeting.

Ms. Pauli said she had a general question which is can the people who will live there promise not to buy cars? Mr. Stellman replied that he didn't know if that could be added to a purchase and sale agreement.

Commissioner Catherine Tice asked about the composite material. Mr. Stellman answered that they were considering fiber cement panels, but the neighbors were not in favor of the panels.

Public Questions

Ms. Saunders asked if there are affordable units on the first floor. Mr. Stellman answered that they had not determined yet which units will be affordable. Ms. Saunders then referred to sheet #9 in the drawing set and asked if the square footage was correct. Mr. Stellman answered that it was not correct. Ms. Saunders pointed out that this incorrect number was carried over into the calculations for affordable housing. Mr. Stellman acknowledged that this changes the calculation to 5.5 inclusionary units.

Stine Grodul of 29 Dana Street pointed out that the pathway has been turned into a garbage tunnel that is dark and unfriendly and asked if they can change that.

Zion Sherin of 401 Washington Street asked if the applicant has consent to develop over the easement. Mr. Tokatlyan replied that working out the easement happens later. Mr. Sherin asked if there's a way to build over the easement. Mr. Stellman said there are ways to build over it.

Kevin Coady of 300 Broadway asked how many additional cars are projected. Mr. Stellman responded that there is no parking as part of this project and indicated that there are nearby bike stations and public transportation.

Mr. Stathis asked how they calculated the number of garbage bins. Mr. Stellman stated that the garbage will be collected by a private company, not the City, and that they have allocated for one dumpster and a series of recyclable bins. The pickup schedule could be once or twice a week, but that has not been worked out yet.

Mary Beth Lawton of 54 Ellery Street noted that the residents of Ellery Square will have to walk through the building. Mr. Stellman explained that the walkway is fully exterior. Ms. Lawton asked if they considered that bicyclists still own cars and in the wintertime they will be using them more. Mr. Stellman acknowledged that this could be the case.

Downing Lu of 63 Ellery Street asked how will the dumpster be accessed and if there would be rodent mitigation. Mr. Stellman showed the plan for the cedar trash enclosure and noted that there is currently no composting planned and stated that they haven't worked out how the trash will be accessed yet. Ms. Lu asked about the frequency of pickup. Mr. Stellman stated that the private company could potentially come the same day as the City pickup but that still needs to be worked out. Ms. Lu asked how loud will it be. Mr. Stellman said he did not know. Ms. Lu asked about the landscaping and the existing trees on the site. Mr. Stellman showed a landscape plan and said that the existing trees will need to be removed and stated that the landscape plan does pass the City's cool factor. Mr. Stellman then showed the proposed locations of new trees on the site. Ms. Lu asked about the City's requirements regarding

removal of mature trees. Mr. Stellman explained the calculations for replacing trees based on the number and size of the trees.

Ms. Salter-Klimburg asked if there was any recourse to the fact that parking isn't being added as part of the project. Mr. Stellman explained they are not required to provide parking. Ms. Crosbie advised notifying the Transportation Department and the City Council her concerns and reiterated that the City eliminated parking requirements for new construction.

Yasemin Isler of 432 Broadway commented that the drawings are not to scale and asked about the square footage. Mr. Stellman answered that they can produce additional drawings. Mr. Hsiao mentioned that they could transpose the proposed building onto photographs to better capture the scale. Ms. Isler noted that the equipment on the roof makes the building look more like an 8-floor building and asked about the HVAC and the potential sound impacts from the equipment and parties on the deck. Mr. Stellman answered that they can look at mitigating noise impacts.

Susanna Arteta of 432 Broadway asked about traffic impacts and if there could be a pull-off for Uber cars and deliveries, and she asked for clarification regarding the trash area. Mr. Stellman said he would have to look through the permitting requirements regarding traffic studies and that they do not have space on the site for a pull-off. Regarding the trash, he said they have planned for 8 recycling bins and one dumpster. Ms. Arteta then asked if Fedex would have access to the lobby. Mr. Stellman replied that they would have access.

Marilee Meyer of 10 Dana Street asked about the building height and if there are rooftop amenities. Mr. Stellman explained that the height was measured from the grade at the front of the building to the roof.

Ned Melanson of 163 Allston Street asked how many units would be for families. Mr. Stellman replied that there 7 2-bedroom units and 17 1-bedroom units. Ms. Litchfield interjected and asked how a family unit is defined because she believed three bedrooms constitutes a family size unit. Mr. Stellman said he did not know and that he doesn't think it's defined in the Code.

Lisa Randall of 11-13 Cleveland Street commented that a lot of issues have been raised and asked if it's possible to step back and consider some of these issues, noting that the bike lanes will most likely be used by Uber drivers trying to pull over and pick up customers. She also mentioned that she is installing solar panels, and she is next door to the project so the building will have an impact on the amount of solar power.

Justin Saif of Hurley Street asked how many homes have been added to Mid Cambridge in the past decade. He also asked how much does it cost to build an affordable home. He also asked about the process for selecting tenants for the inclusionary units and remarked on the number of people on the waiting list.

Ronald Mortara of Ellery Square asked about bicycle storage. Mr. Stellman answered that each unit would have one bicycle storage space in the basement.

Nasser Khajehnoori of Ellery Square asked if one bicycle space per unit was enough, and what is the exact number of inclusionary units because the number seems to change and asked

about the shadow impacts. Mr. Stellman replied that for today's presentation he ran the numbers and came up with 5.4 inclusionary dwelling units. He went over the shadow study and said that the plants in the Ellery Square courtyard would benefit from morning and afternoon sun. Mr. Hsiao interjected and explained that applicants typically do shadow studies with two colors to differentiate the existing shadow and the extended shadow from the proposed building. Mr. Stellman said they can put that together. Mr. Khajehnoori asked about the roof deck. Mr. Stellman explained that the zoning code has three types of open space including private space which has minimum square footage and dimensional constraints, and permeable open space. He also mentioned that private roof decks now count as part of the required open space.

Drew Volpe of Ellery Square asked if the miscalculated square footage impacts the Commission's review. He also pointed out that the pathway easement allows for landscaping right on the path so what effect would that have on the trash area. Mr. Stellman answered that there is space on the right side where the trash could be stored.

Mr. Stathis asked what is the justification for demolishing the existing building. Mr. Stellman answered that the existing building is 4,500 square feet with 4 units and given the need for more housing they are trying to maximize the number of units and that keeping the building was not feasible.

Katherine Koh of Ellery Square asked for additional information/drawings of the rear of the project since that is what the residents of Ellery Square will be viewing. And she asked if the applicant would pay to replace all the plantings that will die as a result of being cut off from the sun. Mr. Tokatlyan answered that he is happy to meet with abutters. Ms. Koh also asked if the Commissioners could come to the site to better understand the conditions and impact of what is really an 8-story building. Mr. Hsiao said the Commission could discuss that and typically the Commission has done site visits when a project is underway.

Mr. Sherin asked if there were other buildings in the neighborhood that had composite panels, and noted there are other brick buildings on the street. Mr. Stellman answered that they hadn't modeled a 6-story brick building. Mr. Sherin asked about the height of the building with the elevator. Mr. Stellman said the height is 77 feet with the elevator.

Ms. Salter-Klimburg asked about calculations to determine the appropriate number of trash receptacles. Mr. Stellman replied that he does not have calculations but that he has lived in a 4-story building that was served by one dumpster and some bins for recycling, and they were sufficient. Mr. Hsiao suggested finding examples of other projects with similar trash storage would be very helpful.

Ms. Lawton noted that she lives next door, and they own the area next to the trash and transformer and asked for clarification on the alternate location of the trash receptacles. Mr. Stellman showed a plan to clarify what he was saying. She also explained that the parking on her property gets blocked by delivery trucks and they frequently have to ask them to move. She then asked about the proposed brick. Mr. Stellman replied that the proposed brick is a thin brick system which adheres to passive house requirements.

Brendan Hickey of 54 Concord Avenue asked the applicant if they considered a loading zone. Mr. Stellman answered that they hadn't considered it but could discuss this with Public Works. Mr. Hickey asked if they considered replicating Ellery Square. Mr. Stellman said they did not.

Public Comments

Attorney Adam Kurth representing Ellery Square Home Owners Association (ESOA) commented that the proposal is counter to the general criteria that the Commission can consider for both the construction of new buildings and the demolition of existing buildings. He also stated that the Commission can consider the potential adverse effects of the proposed construction or demolition of surrounding properties. He pointed out the additional square footage represents 450% increase and is not congruous with the immediate neighborhood. He also mentioned the concerns regarding the shadow impacts especially on the plantings on their property, the loss of open space, increased noise from the roof deck, the lack of parking, increased traffic due to delivery trucks, Ubers, etc. He also pointed out the easement that goes through the property and that the design currently shows the proposed building right over it, and noted that the trash storage and transformer look to be located on that easement, and there will be a disruption in the use of the easement during construction and emphasized that it is a major point of ingress and egress for the ESOA and these easement rights cannot be infringed upon. He reiterated Ms. Koh's suggestion that the Commission visit the site to appreciate the existing conditions and impact of the construction. He also questioned the need to demolish a building that is in excellent condition.

Bill McAvinney of 12 Douglas Street stated that he strongly supports the project and that history for him is the stories of people, their struggles and successes, and mentioned how people are displaced from the city because of the high property values and people can't afford to stay here.

Diana Yousseff of Broadway expressed concern over the lack of parking which will be exacerbated by the new construction. She also pointed out that the new bike lanes on Broadway will be eliminating much of the existing parking.

James Zall of 203 Pemberton Street pointed out that new construction became more and more restrictive over the years leading to today's housing shortage, the supply didn't keep up. But now the elected City Council is trying to address this and make it easier to build more housing.

Ned Melanson expressed support for the project and understands there are valid concerns regarding the proposal, but they can be addressed such as the trash storage. He also pointed out that this project is about putting roofs over people and alleviating the housing crisis.

Lise Zieg and David Owens of 7 Cleveland Street commented that they are both supportive of higher density but feel this project has been done poorly and that it's important that they get this right because it will set the precedent for subsequent construction. Mr. Owens noted problems with the metal panels, the proportions of the walls, and the use of historicism. He pointed out that the proposed arcade has a unit behind it so that people entering the building are going by someone's private living room. He suggested that the entry be moved to the right-hand side of the building. He also pointed out that the trash storage could be inside and the

transformer vault could be located underground. He recommended rethinking the design of the ramp, which is very long and pointed out that the site slopes upward toward the right and that the ramp length could be reduced. He further suggested removing the metal panels because they are not appropriate for this project, and using brick for the whole building, and creating a clear entry point. He emphasized that he strongly supports increased housing, but it shouldn't be done poorly. He also hopes that the applicant remains open to input from the neighbors.

Carolyn Fuller of 12 Douglas Street expressed support for the project because of the current housing crisis and commented that the existing building is historically and architecturally insignificant.

Nancy Seidman of 9 Cleveland Street with Claude Barden referred to their comments submitted to the Commission as well as the City Council. Ms. Seidman requested that this hearing be continued to allow the applicant to address the concerns raised by neighbors. She added that she is in favor of density and affordable housing, but feels that the setbacks, while as of right, are not appropriate for this area. She also questioned whether the project should be subject to a special permit as it is very close to 25,000 square feet. She also commented that she doesn't see how adding 5 or 6 affordable units will address the city's housing crisis. She noted that the proposal is completely out of character for the neighborhood and that there must be a better way to address the housing crisis. She also concurred with previous concerns regarding the lack of parking, as well as issues with air pollution, traffic, solar panels, and shading.

Eoin Power of 67 Ellery Street expressed support for the project and looks forward to its construction. He pointed out that he and his wife live without a car and are very happy and think that adding 29 car-free units seems doable with the available public transportation nearby.

Ben Compaine of Ellery Square commented that the new condos will not be affordable, and they are not family-oriented, so it's not going to make a dent for affordable housing. He also commented that there will be additional cars with this number of units. Regarding density, he pointed out that 7% of residences in Cambridge are single-family, compared to 17% in New York City. He also said he doesn't think this project will add anything to street life.

Ms. Saunders read a letter written by another resident of Ellery Square, Easley Hamner, which noted that Ellery Square and 60 Ellery share a 68-foot-long property line and an easement. Mr. Hamner applauded the City Council in its effort to increase the density of the city, but the new ordinance should be more nuanced, namely by requiring a setback at 4 stories, which would be more sympathetic to the character of the neighborhood. The current proposal is third-rate at best, but the architect is certainly capable of better work and referred to their project for Lumina in Somerville. He advocated for the use of real brick on all four sides and appropriate window sizes according to the rooms they serve, such as larger ones for living rooms, smaller ones for bedrooms. Mr. Hamner also stated that the colored panels cheapen the appearance of the building and suggested looking at the reflective glass used next door at the Swiss Consulate for inspiration – by reflecting the sky, the visual mass of the upper floors would be significantly reduced. He then referred to the existing mature trees on the site that are a vital visual screen for the abutting complex, and that by increasing the rear yard depth to ten feet, the trees could

be saved. He also said the new building will also destroy the two star magnolias in the front, and there is a magnolia on the Ellery Square property line that extends into the easement and will probably die. And Mr. Hamner said that Ellery Square will protect their rights to the easement.

Mr. Khajenhnoori appreciated the need to address the housing crisis but felt that the recent zoning changes are only creating new problems for the current residents, most notably the parking which will impact not only residents but visitors to the city, and believes there needs to be a more balanced approach.

Mr. Saif expressed support for the project and stated that the design of the building looks nice and will fit into the neighborhood well and stated that turning the ugly parking lot into housing will greatly improve the neighborhood. He also stated that studies show that fewer parking spaces reduce traffic and pointed out that the new building will be a green building, consistent with the City's climate goals, and the location provides close access to the green space and playground in front of the library as well as the War Memorial facilities, and will allow more people to live near the many amenities in Mid Cambridge as well as Harvard Square and Central Square. Mr. Saif commented that the project will provide accessible homes and allow seniors to continue to live in the neighborhood and provide 5 or 6 subsidized affordable homes. He also noted that a shorter building will most likely not provide any affordable homes. Mr. Saif then read a letter written by a mother who was able to get an affordable home in Cambridge.

Ms. Koh stated that she does not support the proposal and noted that the existing building is listed as being in excellent condition and doesn't understand why it needs to be destroyed. She remarked that Ellery Street is already one of the most densified streets in Mid Cambridge and one of the most heavily trafficked streets because it's the only thruway from Cambridge Street to Mass Ave. She also noted that the nearest T stations are half a mile away, at Central Square and Harvard Square, and doesn't think that retirees and disabled people are going to walk all the way to those stops, and the bus on Broadway does not run very regularly, especially on weekends. She further commented that there will be more cars and that in the wintertime people are going to need cars. She also stated that the proposal is grossly out of scale and out of character for the neighborhood.

Zion Sherin commented that while out of scale, the building should at least be all brick, and the applicant should consider not building over the easement.

Ms. Meyer stated there are a lot of practicalities to consider and there are a lot of emotional stories out there. She acknowledged the need for more housing but said the drawings do not show an accurate representation of the street, that the design is not unified and is very poor. She asked the applicant to consider reducing the number of units to provide more breathing space and address the concerns that have been raised and emphasized that context matters. She went on to say that no one is opposed to more housing but there must be some nuance, addressing context, materials, and identity, and that this shouldn't be shoehorned onto the site. She also implored the applicant to consider his reputation for the kind of work he does.

David Hattis of 393 Broadway expressed support for the project and stated that he believed that Mid Cambridge has lost homes and there is a real need for development like this, especially with the acute need for more affordable housing.

Mr. Hickey agreed with Mr. Saif and stated that developers need to max out lots because of this obstructionism, that it is so expensive to build because people throw up roadblocks everywhere and that if it was easy to build in Cambridge, people would not max out lots, but you're driving up their costs and making them build big buildings. He then again referred to term limits for the Commissioners.

Sarah Block of 24 Shepherd Street expressed support for the project and pointed out that her neighborhood has several 6-story buildings and they do not have noise or garbage issues, and parking is not an issue.

Ms. Saunders responded to the comments made by Ms. Block and urged people who are looking at 6-story buildings to also note the setbacks from these buildings because the required setbacks have changed and the existing 6-story buildings are set back 15 to 20 feet from the property line. She pointed out two large brick buildings on Ellery Street and their setbacks which are not being proposed here so it's a different orientation and relationship to pedestrians and neighbors.

Ms. Block commented that apartments in her area have no setbacks, they're right on the sidewalk, there are a lot of Harlow buildings.

Ms. Saunders responded that she used to live at 3 Chauncey Street and acknowledged that there are limited setbacks for some of the buildings near Shepherd Street, but they're in a different arrangement with other buildings around them, they're on a different type of street. The area does have a lot of Harlow buildings, but they tend to be complementary to each other and to the area around them, and she was not seeing it with this building.

Ms. Koh reiterated that she does not support the proposal because the existing building is in excellent condition. She wondered about lots like Vale Court, which is currently overgrown and not developed, when there is such an urgent need for housing. She also commented that the City should make sure that people in affordable units actually need them and that there seems to be no plan, just crazy decisions and actions driven by loud voices, and the residents who pay their taxes, follow the law, and live their lives quietly are getting hosed.

Ms. Meyer pointed out that there are two buildings on Mass Ave and on Harvard Street that are mid-rise but have been offline for almost two years while they're being renovated. She also noted that there is a large building on Dana Street, but it has a courtyard and huge setbacks, and lawns and gardens.

Mr. Saif commented that Vail Court isn't being developed because the City took it by eminent domain and the owner is suing the City, and regarding inclusionary rentals, they're 45% people who have federal Section 8 housing vouchers which means they have very low incomes.

Ms. Crosbie acknowledged receipt of public comments via email and confirmed that they were all distributed to the Commissioners.

Commission Comments

Mr. Hsiao thanked everyone for their comments and recapped that the Commission operates under a specific purview, therefore certain concerns that were raised can't be addressed.

Regarding comments about the Commission's validity, Mr. Hsiao stated that all the Commissioners serve as public servants on a voluntary basis and their only motivation is to do the best they can to service the City of Cambridge.

Mr. Hsiao then opened the discussion to the Commissioners and asked Mr. Stellman to pull up the drawings on the screen.

Ms. Litchfield commented that the existing brick structure does contribute to the streetscape and the brick siding relates to the adjacent Swiss Consulate which is also brick. She also stated that she would hate to see a perfectly good building torn down.

Ms. Pauli agreed with Ms. Litchfield. She recognized the need for more housing but believes there should be a more balanced, nuanced approach, and tearing down buildings is not the answer, and pointed out that there are other places where this building would be appropriate. She also echoed a previous comment that just because you can do it, do you have to do it?

Commissioner Catherine Tice referred to Ms. Saunders' observation that the actual square footage is slightly inflated, which affects the required inclusionary units, and stated that a studio is not suitable for Section 8. She pointed out that the existing house could be converted and then go from there. She further commented that this project is not creating opportunities for more affordable housing, and the whole project must be rethought and conform in some way visually with the surrounding context. She then stated that affordable housing is the mandate, not unaffordable housing, and wondered how many people will actually benefit from this building.

Mr. Hsiao commented that no one disagrees with the need for more affordable housing and reiterated what the Commission is charged with regarding as-of-right projects, and it's challenging to weigh in on a project that complies with the new zoning but disagrees with the result. He explained that he is trying to come at this from the perspective of trying to balance competing interests. He referred to an aerial image of the site to show the city fabric and neighborhood context and noted how the project impacts the abutting properties and referred to the public comments on impacts on light and views. He suggested looking at ways to be more respectful of the neighbors. He also suggested focusing density on the front and stepping down in the back. He also commented that metal panels are problematic because they are not residential in feeling and advised the applicant to reconsider materials. He also noted that there are a lot of good examples of brick buildings that are full height in Cambridge. He said that there have been a lot of good comments and that perhaps there should be an ongoing discussion between the neighbors and the applicant and believes that urbanistically there is a way to create density and housing but also be respectful of the neighbors.

Ms. Hakuta proposed looking at the experience of the pedestrian or bicyclist. Regarding Ellery Square, she mentioned that the Commission isn't really supposed to consider what is not viewed from a public way, but it's worth considering how this is going to feel as a pedestrian

walking by the building and the overall street experience. She pointed out the review criteria in the Ordinance and how that can relate to how this project feels in this neighborhood so the Commission can talk about this street experience.

Mr. Hsiao agreed with Ms. Hakuta and asked the applicant to pull up the street view and elevations on the screen and remarked that there were some very good comments earlier from the public. He said it was very telling that the largest opening in the façade is dedicated to trash receiving/pickup. He stated that reducing the size of the entrance and the amount of ramping would be very helpful and suggested looking at how to make this feel more like a streetscape and not like a very large open trash area with a transformer. He also recommended looking at the street view of this project, particularly at the corner and the public way to the right of it. He also commented that the change in materials was not working and to look at brick for the whole structure since brick is a residential material, and metal panels are incongruous with this neighborhood, and recommended having a setback to break up the façade. Regarding the brick, Mr. Hsiao felt that brick veneer is not the way to go because it's too thin and recommended full masonry, which is more compatible with the neighborhood.

Ms. Litchfield remarked that the Commission still has purview over the proposed demolition of the existing building, but the Commission is also still trying to figure out whether it really has a role here at all, and that the new zoning has created a conflict of interest.

Ms. Crosbie responded to Ms. Litchfield and stated that this is new territory for the Commission, and that there have been good comments from the Commission as well as the public and suggested asking the applicant if he is willing to continue the hearing to revise the design to incorporate the feedback.

Mr. Hsiao also responded to Ms. Litchfield's comments saying that it's at the heart of the purpose of the Commission and this is the first real test case applying the new zoning regulations, and the Commission is seeing the direct consequence of the fulfillment of the letter of the law. He pointed out that this project complies with zoning and the Commission cannot change that but urged the Commission to make the best possible situation out of what they are grappling with. He also concurred with Ms. Tice in hoping that this dialog can continue and asked the applicant if he is willing to have further discussion with the immediate abutters in response to feedback. Mr. Hsiao asked the applicant if he would agree to continue the meeting in order to consider the comments and revise the design.

Mr. Tokatlyan said that he appreciated the feedback and agreed to continue the meeting and respond to comments. Mr. Hsiao motioned to continue the hearing to allow the applicant to have further dialog with the neighbors and address concerns. Ms. Tice seconded, and the motion passed, 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Allison A. Crosbie, Preservation Administrator

Members of the Public Present June 9, 2025

Panelists:

Lauren Harder	43-47 Dana Street
Sisia Daglian, architect	43-47 Dana Street
Mike Tokatlyan	60 Ellery Street
Evan Stellman	60 Ellery Street

Attendees:

Andrew Angel	39 Dana Street
James Stathis	4 Ellery Square
Kay K	Ellery Square
Nancy Seidman	9 Cleveland Street
Zach Durant-Emmons	
Mikki Ansin	2 Ellery Square
Drew Volpe	
Mary Beth Lawton	4 Ellery Street unit 3
Jeanne Petropoulos	
Cary Saunders	Ellery Square
Iliana Partan	9 Ellery Square
Howard Schultz	
Elizabeth Gombosi	
Suzanne Watzman	
Eoin Power	67 Ellery Street
Ben Compaine	5 Ellery Square
Brendan Hickey	54 Concord Avenue
Susana Arteta	432 Broadway
Deborah E. Salter-Klimburg	39 Dana Street
Fernando Yu	
Robert Luchetti	5 Cleveland Street
Adrian King	
Adam Wolfberg	
Danyel Logevall	
Nancy Carpenter	
Marina Atlas	
Tobias Holck Colding	
Tom Mrowka	
Lisa Randall	11-13 Cleveland Street
Gigliola Staffilani	
Justin Saif	Hurley Street
James Zall	
Downing Lu	
C Greenwood	
Naomi Dunson	
Ned Melanson	163 Allston Street
Stine Grodal	

Diana Yousef	
Dawn Baxter	
William McAvinney	12 Douglas Street
Emma Xue	
Genghis Lapointe	
Gene Doyle	
Yasemin Isler	
Suzanne Watzman	
Carolyn Fuller	
Dalisa Morales	
John Pitkin	
Beverly Mire	
W, Easley Hamner, FAIA	3 Ellery Square
Warren Mathison	
mj pullins	
Sara Nelson	
Suzanne Hamner	3 Ellery Square
Marisa Fratini	
Michael Klugerman	55-57 Ellery Street
Goldie Eder	
Fireflies.ai Notetaker Martha	
R A Humphreville	
Daniel Salomon	
Kathy Masucci	
Shellburne Thurber	
Adam Kurth - Attorney for ESOA	
Marc Mazzarelli	
Olive Patrick	
Ronald Mortara	13 Ellery Square
Marianne Mortara	13 Ellery Square
Shirin Shams	
Nasser Khadjenoori	1 Ellery Square
Adam Manacher	
Martin Chan	
Sean Hart	
George Lanzillo	
Charlotte Hambley	
Brenda Stanfield	
Lise Zeig	
Dana Tighe	
David Hattis	393 Broadway
Emma Guardia	
Zion Sherin	
Marilee Meyer	10 Dana Street
David Ring	
Christina Quinn	
Elizabeth Riker	55-57 Dana Street
Steve Jones	

Orly Ullman
David Halperin
kevin C
Maggie Dee
susanna siegel
Michael H
Edward Jones
Angela Petropoulos
Robert James
Michelle Song

MINUTES OF THE MID CAMBRIDGE NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION

Monday, August 4, 2025, 6:00 PM, online Zoom meeting

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

Absent: Charles Redmon

Staff present: Allison Crosbie, Preservation Administrator, Eric Hill, Survey Director, Charlie Sullivan, Director

Members of the Public: See attached list

This meeting was held via online zoom webinar <https://tinyurl.com/MC082025> 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 869 2556 3666.

Commission Chair Tony Hsiao made introductions and called the meeting to order at 6:04.

MC-7320: 78 Dana Street, by Jenna Larson and Jacob Smigiel. Raise/alter roof and reconfigure windows.

Ms. Allison Crosbie, preservation administrator, gave a brief history of the building.

Architect Kelly Boucher explained that the applicants have been making improvements to their home over the years and had received a COA in 2022. They have a child and their needs have changed and are looking to add more space to the second floor by raising the roof and altering it to a side gable and add windows. There's additional work in the back but not visible.

Commission Questions

None

Public Questions

Marilee Meyer of 10 Dana Street asked if the historic materials are being maintained. Ms. Boucher replied that they are. Ms. Meyer asked if the chimney will remain. Ms. Boucher confirmed that the chimney is staying and will increase in height per building code.

Public Comments

Ms. Meyer lamented the loss of the rhythm and visual interest that the current roofline has but understands the needs of the family.

Commission Comments

Mr. Hsiao stated that the modest increase in the height is not inappropriate to the house, especially since it's tucked away from the street.

Commissioner Katinka Hakuta moved to approve the proposal as submitted. Ms. Pauli seconded, and the motion passed 4-0.

MC-7293 (CONTINUED): 60 Ellery Street, by Contempo Builders c/o Mike Tokatlyan. Demolish building and construct 6-story structure.

Ms. Crosbie explained that the case was continued from the June 6 meeting in order for the applicant to revise the design in response to feedback from the Commission.

Mr. Evan Stellman, the architect, introduced Mike Tokatlyan, the applicant, and proceeded to present the proposed project encompassing the demolition of the existing building and the construction of a 6-story condo building with 29 units, and noted that the project complies with current zoning. He pointed out an existing pathway that is an easement for Ellery Square and went over ADA accessibility. Mr. Stellman also went over the setbacks, the landscaping, the roof deck, and showed elevations of the proposed building that includes brick siding on the lower portion with row block courses and soldier course, and 6/1 windows. The rest of the building is to be clad with composite panels. Mr. Stellman then showed perspective drawings and aerial views, and shadow studies. He pointed out that the building will be energy efficient, including a green roof as well as electricity for everything, which will require a transformer on site.

Commission Questions

Commissioner Nan Laird asked about the size of the balconies. Mr. Stellman replied that they are 3 feet wide and can accommodate two people. Ms. Laird asked about other balcony locations. Mr. Stellman said there are no balconies on the sides. Ms. Laird asked about the roof deck. Mr. Stellman stated that it is a private space for residents, there will likely be tables and chairs, and it will be surrounded by a green roof.

Mr. Hsiao asked about the new location of the building. Mr. Stellman confirmed that the building was moved back from the street and the rear, and some square footage was reduced, but they did gain a little square footage in the front. Mr. Hsiao asked if anything else had changed, such as the height. Mr. Stellman said the height is the same, but the parapet was originally 3 feet and is now 3'-6" at the rear of the structure to give more privacy to the townhomes. Mr. Hsiao asked about the cladding. Mr. Stellman said that the first four stories are brick, the top two stories are fiber cement siding, and the gray areas in the drawings are fiber cement panels.

Commissioner Monika Pauli asked the Commission if the demolition had already been approved. Mr. Crosbie said it's part of this review.

Ms. Hakuta asked for clarification on the driveways in the plans. Mr. Stellman explained the driveways and pointed out the egress conditions. Ms. Hakuta asked about the windows on the first level. Mr. Stellman answered that there is a bedroom on the left side of the unit, that the first floor is elevated about 3 feet from the sidewalk and then another 2 feet, so the windows are five feet up, and there will be plantings in front of the windows.

Ms. Laird asked if there would be composting. Mr. Stellman replied that they have not discussed that yet, but could consider something inside, safe from animals. Ms. Laird asked if they had calculated the density of the project compared to city-wide. Mr. Stellman answered that they had not, but he pointed out that the new zoning will generate more density than in the past.

Public Questions

Zion Sherin of 401 Washington Street asked if there has been a study of how much CO2 emissions will be caused by the demolition. He also asked if there is a plan to recycle some of the bricks if they're in good condition. Mr. Stellman responded, saying that there has been no CO2 emissions study, and he is not sure if the existing materials can be used again, but thinks it would be nice if some of the existing bricks could be reused in the new structure. Mr. Stellman also mentioned that they have a consultant for the passive house process. Mr. Tokatlyan said that he's not sure that any of the existing bricks would be viable because they're cemented together. Mr. Sherin asked about the easement. Mr. Tokatlyan said he has spoken with the attorney for the Ellery Square Association and is happy to discuss further once the building design is approved, and he will talk with folks about the construction process once it gets closer to that stage. Mr. Sherin asked about the walkway/easement, and Mr. Tokatlyan said they will still have the walkway, but with new materials and landscaping if they choose. Mr. Sherin asked if they knew how many brick buildings there are in the neighborhood and what the percent reduction would result from the loss of the existing brick building. Mr. Tokatlyan said they have not done any study.

Ms. Hakuta asked for clarification on the proposed brick cladding. Mr. Tokatlyan clarified that they originally proposed brick veneer, but the Commission said it preferred full brick, and that is what they are doing now.

John Cain of 96 Ellery Street asked why they are demolishing the existing brick building when it is in excellent condition. Mr. Tokatlyan referred to the new zoning that allows this kind of development and stated that most properties are not dilapidated. Mr. Stellman explained that buildings with this density require more structural support than the existing structure can support.

Ben Compaine of 5 Ellery Square asked if the building will be condos. Mr. Stellman said yes. Mr. Compaine speculated that decisions about trash pick-up will be made later by a condo association and expressed concern over how it will be taken care of. Mr. Tokatlyan confirmed and said there will probably be management on site. Mr. Stellman went over the layout.

Suzanne Blier of 5 Fuller Place asked if they considered using the existing structure and adding to it or building behind it. Mr. Stellman answered that it isn't realistic because the foundation cannot support a taller structure. Ms. Blier pointed out a project at 5 Frost Terrace where they were able to move the building, construct a building behind it, save a tree, and still add more housing. Ms. Blier asked if they could consider greater articulation of the side façade for more visual interest and create less of a box. Mr. Stellman answered that they could look at that; they have 5'-4" setback, and the zoning code does not allow projections into the side yard. Mr. Stellman pulls up the elevation in the presentation. Ms. Blier asked about the distribution of units. Mr. Stellman showed the floor plans. Ms. Blier then asked about the roof deck and how it will be used. Mr. Stellman said that it's a green roof with plantings and will have an irrigation system. Ms. Blier referred to the townhouses in the rear and asked to see the views from that perspective.

Mr. Hsiao reminded everyone to limit questions to the Commission's purview, and the Commission's review is what is visible from a public way.

Marilee Meyer of 10 Dana Street asked about the roof mechanicals and stairwell and asked if they were going to save the two magnolia trees in the front. Mr. Stellman responded that they will have to remove the trees, and regarding the roof, they did try to reduce the extent of the headhouses. He showed a drawing of the stair towers and explained that different functions required various head heights, like the elevator overrun is going to have to come up a little higher than the stair towers, and they need a full-height machine room and elevator lobby.

Elena Saporta of 102 Ellery Street asked about the existing setbacks on the site. Mr. Stellman answered that the front setback is a little over 18 feet. Ms. Saporta asked if they could relocate the magnolias and pointed out that they are specimen trees. Mr. Stellman said they can discuss this with their landscape architect. Ms. Saporta indicated that the trees could be transplanted to another location. She then asked about the underground transformer. Mr. Stellman described what will be visible on the surface: two manholes covered with mulch. Ms. Saporta suggested green walls or some kind of green trellis material. Mr. Stellman said they could consider that.

Nancy Seidman of 9 Cleveland Street asked for clarification about the dimensions of the trash storage areas as presented earlier. Mr. Stellman said it's 8 by 12 feet, and the recycling area is 9 by 6 feet.

Susan Arteta of 432 Broadway asked about parking. Mr. Stellman answered that there is no parking in the project, but there will be bicycle parking.

Cary Saunders of Ellery Square asked how they could add one more unit if the square footage has been reduced. Mr. Stellman explained that moving the transformer underground, which required a lot of clearance above it, resulted in expanding the second floor. Ms. Saunders asked about the new setbacks and easement. Mr. Stellman confirmed the changes made since the last design. Ms. Saunders asked about the walkway on the left side and if it counts as open space. Mr. Stellman said no. Ms. Sanders asked about the easement/walkway and if it's supposed to be accessible, and if so, how does it comply? Mr. Stellman explained that they're building a sloped walkway, not a ramp, so it's accessible but does not require handrails, and mentioned that there is a ramp outside of the easement for ADA accessibility. Ms. Saunders asked if they were rebuilding the whole walkway. Mr. Stellman said yes. Ms. Saunders asked if the trash and bike area count toward the open space requirement. Mr. Stellman said they do not count.

Brendan Hickey of 54 Concord Avenue asked if the existing building has any efficiency certification. Mr. Stellman said he did not know. Mr. Hickey asked how the existing structure is heated. Mr. Tokatlyan said he did not know. Mr. Hickey asked how the new building would be heated. Mr. Tokatlyan answered with electric heat pumps.

Katherine Koh of Ellery Square asked if the applicant remembered the June meeting when the Commission asked him to speak with the neighbors. Mr. Tokatlyan replied that Ellery Square hired an attorney, and he spoke with him. Ms. Koh asked if they considered building 4 stories. Mr. Tokatlyan answered no, that this development is what the City allows now.

Mr. Hsiao interjected and reminded everyone of the purpose of the hearing.

Ms. Koh asked the Commission who verifies that the application is correct in terms of square footage and compliance with zoning. Mr. Hsiao responded that it's the responsibility of the applicant, and they still must file with zoning to ascertain whether everything complies. Mr. Tokatlyan also mentioned that a full survey was done on the property, and it's a 5,400 square foot lot. Ms. Koh asked if the survey is available. Mr. Hsiao said everything was available online.

Drew Volpe of 12 Ellery Square asked who decides that this complies with zoning requirements.

Nasser Khadjenoori of Ellery Square asked to see the rooftop plan. Mr. Stellman showed the plans and pointed out the mechanicals are closer to the front of the building than at the back. Mr. Khadjenoori asked to confirm the 2-year timeline and how the construction process works. Mr. Tokatlyan outlined procedures and staging.

Jenna Larson of 78 Ellery Street asked if they could do anything to maintain some historic character because right now, it looks very modern. Mr. Stellman responded that they could consider additional brick detailing.

Brendan Karch, Chief of Staff at the Swiss Consulate, asked about the landscaping and the fencing plan. Mr. Stellman replied that they're proposing a 6-foot fence and is happy to work with Mr. Karch on what would work best.

Public Comments

Cary Saunders corrected the existing parking spaces and pointed out that it looks like the easement is planted over and is not correctly defined.

Mary Beth Lawton stated that after the June meeting, the developer did not speak with the neighbors. She expressed concern over fire access and asked the Commission to delay approving the project.

Tyler Estrel of 99 Huron Avenue expressed support for the project.

Mark Keibler of 52 Porter Street also supported the project and said it's an improvement over the previous proposal, appreciated the affordable units, and said it's a great location.

Adam Kurth, representing the Ellery Square Owners Association, referred to the letter he sent the Commission and reiterated the historic significance of the existing building, the potential adverse impacts on the surrounding neighborhood, and encroachment on the easement.

Carter Weinberg of 10 Clary Street expressed support for the proposal.

Nicole R of 137 Cherry Street stated that the developers only care about what is allowed, regardless of the impact on the neighborhood, and demolition will create a huge disruption.

Suzanne Blier stated that it takes 60 years to recoup the energy from demolition and pointed out ongoing heat island impacts. She stated that she prefers to see something bold and new or something that retains some of the elements of the neighborhood, but that's not going to happen here.

Zion Sherin pointed out the City Council goals of climate resiliency and yet there is no CO2 study. He asked that the environmental impacts be addressed, and he believes that they should only use brick on the new structure.

Katherine Koh urged the Commission not to allow what she considers to be a grossly inappropriate project that doesn't care about the neighborhood.

Nancy Seidman asked that the demolition not be allowed, that the new building is way out of proportion to the rest of the block, and stated that the new project conflicts with other City Council environmental goals. She further stated that it's not family-friendly in terms of the number of units allocated to families. She also expressed concern over the easement that will become a tunnel.

Drew Volpe encouraged the developer to talk with the abutters and said that he is not a fan of this project and is disappointed that the developer will not engage with the neighbors, especially since this is one of the very first projects under the new zoning regulations.

Roy Sistavares of 30 Gold Street expressed support for the project and commented that pre-war buildings are environmentally unfriendly.

Billie Mande of 7 Dana Place commented that it feels like the amount of green space is decreasing because of the larger footprint. She also wished that the balance of units was more equal between families and those who might be living there more temporarily, which is most of the units.

Nasser Khadjenoori stated that side streets like Ellery are not set up for this type of construction, as the street is too narrow. He also stated that it's a shame to demolish the building and pointed out the existing parking problems that will be exacerbated by the new bike lanes. He also felt the modern look of the building does not work in this location.

Brendan Hickey stated that this is a great project, that it will be a passive house, and environmentally friendly.

Debby Knight of 380 Broadway stated that composting is required and hopes the design will have enough room for 3 streams. She also suggested bike lockers.

Justin Saif of 259 Hurley Street expressed strong support for the project, which gets rid of an ugly parking lot, can accommodate seniors, is in a good location, and noted the desperate need for housing.

Lise Zeig of 7 Cleveland Street stated that the design still needs work; it's not elegant. Also, she stated that this project and another similar project proposed on Ellery Street should be considered together because of how they will affect this small, narrow street. She also thought the project had improved and that they should look to simplify the elevation and reconsider the proportions that right now appear top-heavy. And she concurred with another comment that more 3-bedroom units are needed for families.

Ben Compaine commented that supporters of the project are not looking at the review criteria, that this proposal is not right for Ellery Street, and asked to see the slide again, covering the

Commission's review criteria. He stated he thinks this building would be more suited to Broadway, and it just seems out of proportion and isn't right for this neighborhood.

Catherine Ford-Augustine of 28 Suffolk Street mentioned the parking problems, the traffic by the high school, and the lack of handicapped spaces. She pointed out that high school graduations are held at the school if the weather is bad. She stated that housing is needed, but parking is also needed.

Leah Strauss of 329 Harvard Street pointed out the two developments on a 1-way narrow street and stated that these projects make more sense on Broadway. She supports housing, but doesn't think this development is appropriate.

David Hattis of 393 Broadway expressed support for the project because the city needs more housing.

Susan Arteta commented that the main façade is an affront to the historical nature of the neighborhood and urged the applicant to create a façade more congruent to the character of the neighborhood and decrease the number of studio apartments, and create more 3-bedroom units. She also felt the size of the studios was too small.

Sarah Block of 24 Shepard Street commented that it's a nice design and did not think it was fair to say what size unit is a family size.

Commission Comments

Ms. Hakuta appreciated the comments and noted that the new design responds to previous feedback.

Ms. Laird agreed with Ms. Hakuta regarding the new design, responding to feedback and referring to the transformer being moved underground. She also agreed with public comments and that the building still looks commercial and is incongruous to the character of the neighborhood. She looked at the density and stated that this project is 480 people per acre, whereas the city of Cambridge overall is 288 people per acre, and said this proposal is not compatible with the neighborhood.

Mr. Hsiao explained that the project complies with zoning, and the Commission can only weigh in on the design, materials, and aesthetics. He stated that the revised proposal has made improvements, including the setback, which is significant, providing more opportunities for landscaping. He went on to say that the project still needs improvement and that brick and trim details would be very helpful. And while removing the metal panels and using fiber cement helps, there is much more that can be done. He reiterated the comment to transplant the existing trees to other locations, and he encouraged further communication with abutters.

Ms. Hakuta agreed and suggested that the applicant and architect refer to the City's guidelines for multi-family housing by the Community Development Department.

Ms. Pauli also appreciated the improvements in the revised design and noted that Ellery Street is very desirable because of its history, and she doesn't want the neighborhood to look like the Seaport District in Boston.

Mr. Hsiao advised looking at the Swissnex building and Ellery Square for clues on details that could be integrated into the design. He also urged the simplification of materials, to quiet it down more and be more consistent. But he also noted that it's going in the right direction.

Mr. Hsiao suggested looking at breaking down the façade composition; the amount of brick is good, but it needs more detail and breaking down of the connection of balconies and bay windows. He also said the cladding still looks commercial and suggested looking at a more horizontal emphasis, simplifying materials from 3 to 2, enhancing the landscape as much as possible, and re-examining the design to add more trees on the street side. He pointed out the fencing and that it's an important element that should be discussed with abutters.

Mr. Hsiao motioned to approve the proposal with the condition that the design be finalized in an Architects Committee meeting. Issues to address include:

1. Rework the façade composition. Reduce the cladding materials to two. Break apart the composition of the bay windows and balconies, which right now is contributing to making it feel more commercial. The trim and the brick portion need more detail. Look to the adjacent buildings, Swissnex and Ellery Square, for clues to detailing as well as other brick buildings along Broadway.
 - a. Materiality – simplify materials and look at emphasizing the horizontal for a more residential feel. The panels are still more commercial-looking looking even though no longer metal.
2. Enhance the landscape design to incorporate more tree plantings on the street side and add more vegetation in general.
 - a. Fence – this is a key element that will matter to abutters and should be very well designed.

Ms. Hakuta seconded, and the motion passed 3 (Hsiao, Hakuta, Pauli) to 1 (Laird).

****At 9:00 pm Ms. Laird left the meeting and Commissioner Catherine Tice joined the meeting.**

84-86 Ellery Street, by 84 Ellery Street LLC c/o Patrick Barrett III. Demolish building and construct 6-story structure.

Ms. Crosbie introduced the project, providing a history of the building, its architectural significance, as well as its association with architect Eleanor Raymond, who grew up there.

Mr. Patrick Barrett III, Esquire, gave an overview of the proposal. He mentioned the composting, there is no parking, but there will be bicycle spaces. He also said they had the abutters meeting as required by the new zoning. Dan Anderson, the architect, went over the project and began by going over what he considered to be characteristics of the area, and said there are several buildings that have more than one story. He also stated that the existing building cannot be maintained for a passive house. He then went over the landscape plan, the green factor, and shadow studies. He went over the 81 units composed of 58 studios, 11 1-bedroom units, 4 2-bedroom units, and 8 3-bedroom units. He went over the design, including a nod to the mansard style of the existing building, a standing seam metal roof, bays, balconies, and punched windows. He went over the shadow studies and perspective views.

Commission Questions

Ms. Hakuta asked about the proposed mansard-type roof. Mr. Anderson explained that the roof angles on one side.

Mr. Hsiao asked about the height of the building. Mr. Anderson answered that it's 68 feet. Mr. Hsiao asked what the height of the existing structure is. Mr. Anderson said he did not know. Mr. Hsiao asked about the lot coverage and setbacks. Mr. Anderson replied that the front is 10 feet, and they are maintaining the setback where the tree is.

Ms. Tice asked if the height given included the bulkhead. Mr. Anderson answered that the green roof exempts that height. Ms. Tice asked about the material. Mr. Anderson said it's a standing seam metal roof. Ms. Tice asked about the roof heating up. Mr. Anderson answered that darker colors do absorb heat, but there will be heavily insulated exterior walls, and the heat gain will not transfer to the interior.

Public Questions

Brendan Hickey asked if they could retrofit an existing building to a passive house. Mr. Anderson replied that it is difficult because there would need to be a new steel and concrete separation inserted into the building at the first level, with 5 stories of fire-protected construction on top, so it's less feasible from a construction technology standpoint.

Suzanne Blier asked if they considered maintaining the front and adding in the back and mentioned examples, including Frost Terrace and the Veritas Hotel. Mr. Anderson said that the CHC recommended that approach, but it's not feasible, it would be very complicated and difficult. Mr. Barrett pointed out that they need to make the project feasible, and keeping the main part of the building would mean they can't get the unit count that the owner is looking for, and he referred to the previous statement regarding the structural complications. He also mentioned that there's a 16M tax on the building, and they need to make the numbers work. He further mentioned the zoning changes approved by the City Council that indirectly ask developers to re-envision what Cambridge can be in terms of housing construction.

Nasser Khadjenoori asked about when the plans were dated and how the building can be considered multi-family. Mr. Barrett answered that the project is compliant with Cambridge regulations.

Ned Melanson asked about the accessibility of the existing building. Mr. Anderson answered that there is no elevator, and the new building will be fully compliant with ADA.

Zion Sherin asked if any part of the existing building would be utilized. Mr. Anderson answered no. Mr. Sherin asked what the CO2 emissions from the demo project are. Mr. Barrett answered that there will be 4 months of emissions, and they will be working with consultants. Mr. Sherin asked why the front is so different from the sides. Mr. Anderson answered that they wanted to differentiate the facades.

Lise Zieg and David Owens of 7 Cleveland Street asked if the building would be an extended stay hotel or Airbnb, given the proposed layout. Mr. Barrett responded that the C-1 zone does not allow lodging houses.

Isabel Alamazon of 36 Highland Avenue asked why the building isn't all brick. Mr. Anderson said it's not a fully masonry building, but they used brick on the most visible portions. He mentioned that EIFS is extra insulated and said they are trying to create curb appeal. Ms. Alamazon asked if there are other buildings in Cambridge like this. Mr. Barrett pointed out 907 Main Street, and Mr. Anderson mentioned Tremont Street in Boston.

Joshua Moscato of 9 Berkshire Street asked what the green conditions of the existing house are. Mr. Anderson said the building is historically significant but has no sustainability credentials.

Katherine Koh asked if they considered building only 4 stories and noted the proposed building towers over the adjacent structures.

Laura McMurry asked about bicycle storage. Mr. Anderson said they will be stored below grade. Ms. McMurry asked if the 1-bedroom units have 1 window. Mr. Anderson said yes and showed the plan.

Jenna Larson asked if they would preserve the tree in the rear, which she said is beautiful. Mr. Anderson said the trees will be removed except in the courtyard.

Public Comments

Irina Cain of 96 Ellery Street commented that the proposed materials look cheap.

Nasser Khadjenoori expressed strong opposition to the proposal.

Laura McMurry commented that the building looks peculiar and commercial.

Lise Zeig and David Owens commented that the layout looks like a dormitory, that it's a weak design, and that the existing building should be preserved. Ms. Zeig also stated that traffic in the area will only increase.

Ned Melanson expressed support for the project.

Jenna Larson commented that she would like more of the history preserved, as well as the tree, and expressed concern with the monolithic look of the proposed structure, and that it does not contribute to a sense of community.

Joshua Moscato liked the modern mansard style and supports the project because of the severe housing shortage.

Suzanne Blier asked if it's possible to ask the City for a lower tax rate. Ms. Blier commented that the front of the building should be maintained, and regarding carbon emissions, she stated that it takes 30 to 80 years to break even on carbon. She also pointed out that there are many brick buildings in Cambridge that are LEED certified. She commented that the proposed modern mansard is cartoonish and that it should be bold and contemporary.

Brendan Hickey says he loves the proposed building and the fact that it will be passive.

Zion Sherin stated that the structure shouldn't be knocked down as a whole, and that the sides should be redesigned to be as pleasing as the front façade.

Nancy Seidman opposed the proposal and stated that the existing building should be preserved, that they should maintain the historic character of the neighborhood, and that building a massive structure would dwarf all the buildings around it and is not in keeping with the character of the neighborhood.

Elena Saporta strongly opposed the proposal and stated that the existing building has another 150 years of life left, whereas the proposed building only has a 25-year life span.

Isabel Almazon supported the project and stated the need for more housing, that the height of the proposed building is comparable to similar buildings, and that it won't ruin the vibe of the neighborhood, and it's near public transportation. She noted that she takes the 68 bus, and it is never full.

Marilee Meyer strongly opposed the project and stated that it is appalling and will ruin the character of the neighborhood, and is upset at how this has all unfolded.

Justin Saif expressed support for the project, which will provide much needed housing. And as for the historic significance of the existing structure, they can just put up a sign with information.

Irine Cain stated that she supports more housing, but the proposal is an ugly building with cheap materials and does not match the surroundings.

Leah Strauss of 329 Harvard Street stated that in her building, the hallways have illustrations showing what was there before. She encouraged paying homage to the past in the design of the new building.

Commission Comments

Ms. Pauli commented that if the Commission can't stop the demolition of this building, then where does it stop?

Ms. Tice stated that if the current design is meant to incorporate historic details, she suggested looking at the nearby Cambridge Public Library and how it successfully marries two styles. She also pointed out there's no discussion of affordability and wondered if it is known that they will be affordable to students.

Ms. Hakuta agreed with Ms. Pauli and expressed concern about the area around the park. She appreciated the comments about preserving the front of the building.

Mr. Hsiao stated that the existing building is historically significant, and the two wings in the rear are not. He also clarified that reusing buildings is the most environmentally sustainable, and the architect is capable of incorporating contemporary language in the rear of the building. He also pointed out that cost is not in the Commission's purview.

Mr. Hsiao asked the applicants if they agreed to continue the meeting. Mr. Barrett agreed. Mr. Hsiao motioned to continue the meeting for the applicant to return with a revised design. Ms. Hakuta seconded, and the motion passed 4-0 (Hakuta, Hsiao, Pauli, Tice).

The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Allison A. Crosbie, Preservation Administrator

Members of the Public Present August 4, 2025

Panelists:

Lauren Harder	43-47 Dana Street
Sisia Daglian, architect	43-47 Dana Street
Mike Tokatlyan	60 Ellery Street
Evan Stellman	60 Ellery Street
Patrick Barrett, attorney	84-86 Ellery Street
Ender Saricay, applicant	84-86 Ellery Street
Dan Anderson, architect	84-86 Ellery Street

Attendees:

Andrew Angel	39 Dana Street
James Stathis	4 Ellery Square
Kay K	Ellery Square
Nancy Seidman	9 Cleveland Street
Zach Durant-Emmons	
Mikki Ansin	2 Ellery Square
Drew Volpe	
Mary Beth Lawton	4 Ellery Street unit 3
Jeanne Petropoulos	
Cary Saunders	Ellery Square
Iliana Partan	9 Ellery Square
Howard Schultz	
Elizabeth Gombosi	
Suzanne Watzman	
Eoin Power	67 Ellery Street
Ben Compaine	5 Ellery Square
Brendan Hickey	54 Concord Avenue
Susana Arteta	432 Broadway
Deborah E. Salter-Klimburg	39 Dana Street
Fernando Yu	
Robert Luchetti	5 Cleveland Street
Adrian King	
Adam Wolfberg	
Danyel Logevall	
Nancy Carpenter	
Marina Atlas	
Tobias Holck Colding	
Tom Mrowka	
Lisa Randall	11-13 Cleveland Street
Gigliola Staffilani	
Justin Saif	Hurley Street
James Zall	
Downing Lu	
C Greenwood	
Naomi Dunson	

Ned Melanson	163 Allston Street
Stine Grodal	
Diana Yousef	
Dawn Baxter	
William McAvinney	12 Douglas Street
Emma Xue	
Genghis Lapointe	
Gene Doyle	
Yasemin Isler	
Suzanne Watzman	
Carolyn Fuller	
Dalisa Morales	
John Pitkin	
Beverly Mire	
W, Easley Hamner, FAIA	3 Ellery Square
Warren Mathison	
mj pullins	
Sara Nelson	
Suzanne Hamner	3 Ellery Square
Marisa Fratini	
Michael Klugerman	55-57 Ellery Street
Goldie Eder	
Fireflies.ai Notetaker Martha	
R A Humphreville	
Daniel Salomon	
Kathy Masucci	
Shellburne Thurber	
Adam Kurth - Attorney for ESOA	
Marc Mazzarelli	
Olive Patrick	
Ronald Mortara	13 Ellery Square
Marianne Mortara	13 Ellery Square
Shirin Shams	
Nasser Khadjenoori	1 Ellery Square
Adam Manacher	
Martin Chan	
Sean Hart	
George Lanzillo	
Charlotte Hambley	
Brenda Stanfield	
Lise Zeig	
Dana Tighe	
David Hattis	393 Broadway
Emma Guardia	
Zion Sherin	
Marilee Meyer	10 Dana Street
David Ring	
Christina Quinn	

Elizabeth Riker
Steve Jones
Orly Ullman
David Halperin
kevin C
Maggie Dee
susanna siegel
Michael H
Edward Jones
Angela Petropoulos
Robert James
Michelle Song

55-57 Dana Street

Mid Cambridge NCD Commission Review Worksheet

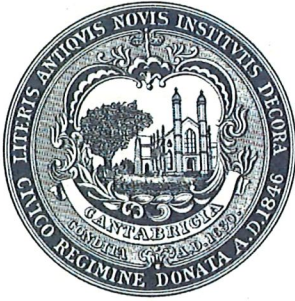
Case MC- 7293 at 60 Ellery Street to be reviewed on September 29, 2025

On August 4, 2025, the Mid Cambridge NCD Commission approved the proposal to demolish the building and construct a by-right 6-story multi-unit building. The approval included a condition that the applicant return to an Architects Committee meeting for final review of the design.

The Commission asked the applicant to address several issues, including:

1. Rework the façade composition. Reduce the cladding materials to two. Break apart the composition of the bay windows and balconies, which right now is contributing to making it feel more commercial. The trim and the brick portion need more detail. Look to the adjacent buildings, Swissnex and Ellery Square, for clues to detailing as well as other brick buildings along Broadway.
 - a. Materiality – simplify materials and look at emphasizing the horizontal for a more residential feel. The panels are still more commercial-looking looking even though they are no longer metal.
2. Enhance the landscape design to incorporate more tree plantings on the street side and add more vegetation in general.
 - a. Fence – this is a key element that will matter to abutters and should be very well designed.





Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission

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URL: <http://www.cambridgema.gov/Historic/midcambridgehome.html>

Tony Hsiao, *Chair*,
Katinka Hakuta, Aaron Canto, Pauke Corstens, Ksenia Kaladiouk, Catherine Tice,
Alex Van Praagh, *Members*
Min Ho Kim, Felix Rosen, Jacquelyn Fahey Sandell, *Alternates*

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

PROPERTY: **60 Ellery Street**

OWNER: **Contempo Builders
c/o Mike Tokatlyan
358 Athens Street
Boston, MA 02127**

The Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD) Commission, pursuant to Title 2, Chapter 2.78, Article III, Section 2.78.140-270 of the Code of the City of Cambridge and the City Council order establishing the Commission, reviewed the proposal described below:

Demolish structure and construct 6-story building.

Findings of Fact and Determination:

- 1. The Commission acknowledges the size and shape as well as the dimensions and setbacks of the proposed structure, provided that these measures conform to current zoning requirements.**
- 2. The proposed project responded to comments regarding materials, façade design, landscaping, and the design of the main entrance.**
- 3. The Commission acknowledges the goals of the current City Council and confirms that the project supports the addition of multifamily housing.**

After consideration of the historic and architectural value and significance of the existing building and its setting, the general design, arrangement, texture, and material of the features involved with the proposed new building, and the relation of such features to similar features of structures in the surrounding area, the Mid Cambridge NCD Commission makes the following determination:

As reviewed under the Commission's current jurisdiction, the proposed demolition and new construction at 60 Ellery Street is found to be not incongruous to the historic aspects, architectural significance, or the distinctive character of the neighborhood conservation district, and the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness is hereby granted and is binding on the applicant.

Approval was granted with the condition that the final design details, including cladding materials, brick and trim details, façade treatment, and landscaping, be reviewed and approved by the Architects Committee at a public meeting.

Work shall be carried out as indicated on the project plans titled, “Project: 60 Ellery Street Residences,” by Khalsa Design, Inc., Somerville MA, and dated July 18, 2025, except as may be updated in the process of the Architects Committee’s review and approval. Final plans will be noted on an addendum to this certificate.

This certificate is granted upon the condition that the work authorized is commenced within six months after the date of issuance. If the work authorized by this certificate is not commenced within six months after the date of issuance, or if such work is suspended in significant part for a period of one year after the time the work is commenced, this certificate shall expire and be of no further effect; provided that, for cause, one or more extensions not exceeding ninety days each may be allowed in writing by the Chairman.

Case Number: **MC 7293**

Date of Certificate: **February 20, 2026**

Attest: A true and correct copy of the decision was filed with the City Clerk’s office and the Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission on February 20, 2026.

By Tony Hsiao/aac, Chair

Twenty days have elapsed since the filing of this decision.

No appeal has been filed _____ . Appeal has been filed _____ .

Date _____, City Clerk