

**DRAFT Minutes of the Cambridge Historical Commission—THIS DRAFT HAS NOT YET BEEN REVIEWED OR APPROVED BY THE COMMISSION**

**Minutes of the Cambridge Historical Commission**

April 4, 2019 - 806 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge Senior Center - 6:00 P.M.

Members present: Bruce Irving, *Chair*; William G. Barry, Joseph Ferrara, *Members*; Gavin Kleespies, Kyle Sheffield, *Alternates*  
Members absent: Susannah Tobin, *Vice Chair*; Robert Crocker, Chandra Harrington, Jo Solet, *Members*; Paula Paris, *Alternate*  
Staff present: Charles Sullivan, *Executive Director*, Sarah Burks, *Preservation Planner*;  
Public present: See attached list.

With a quorum present, Mr. Irving called the meeting to order at 6:06 P.M. He introduced the commission members and staff. He noted that both alternates could vote on all matters. He described the consent agenda policy and reviewed the agenda. He asked if anyone present wished to discuss Case 3817 regarding construction trailers and landscaping. No one indicated as such.

**Case 3817 (amendment): 27 Holyoke Pl., by President & Fellows of Harvard College.** Request to extend approval for construction trailer and to re-sod and restore post and rail fence to remainder of lot.

Mr. Kleespies moved to approve the amendment to Case 3817 per the consent agenda policy. Mr. Barry seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Public Hearings: Alterations to Designated Properties

**Case 4076: 1 Berkeley St., by Fiyaz Kanji.** Alter side porch; construct fence, walkway and synthetic turf in play area.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides of the property.

Colin Hand, the landscape architect, described the application to repair the side porch, add new railings, and enclose the side yard with a 6' fence as a play yard for the owners' small children. He described the proposed synthetic turf for the yard.

Mr. Kleespies asked the size of the space. Mr. Hand answered that it would be about 20' by 40'.

Mr. Irving asked if the synthetic turf would be visible. Mr. Hand indicated that the privacy was desired from the break area of the hotel, directly across the street.

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

Marilee Meyer of 10 Dana Street asked about the design of the fence. Mr. Hand answered that the bottom 4.5' would be solid and the lattice top would be another 1.5'. He indicated the height on the slide.

Mr. Irving called for public comment and indicated a three-minute limit.

Ms. Meyer wondered about the wisdom of synthetic turf, noting that it's possibly toxic.

Mr. Sullivan read a letter from Nancy Aiello of 2½ Berkeley Street, expressing concern about the proximity of the fence to the sidewalk. She suggested that it be set back 1' and planted with climbing hydrangea so that the sidewalk would be easier to use for those with mobility issues.

Mr. Irving closed the public comment period.

Mr. Sheffield asked if the applicants had considered making a play space in the back of the house. Mr. Hand noted that the rear space was only 12' wide, was paved for a patio, and was very shady.

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Mr. Ferrara suggested the fence be pulled back one full window bay where it intersected the house and at least 1' from the sidewalk.

Mr. Sullivan noted the Commission's history of disallowing tall fences along sidewalks. He recommended a temporary certificate tied to the ages of the applicant's children.

Mr. Sheffield suggested lowering the height of the fence to 4'.

Mr. Irving suggested a 7-year limit on the certificate, or until the house was sold, whichever was shorter. Mr. Sullivan suggested 10 years.

Fiyaz Kanji, the applicant, asked for a few minutes to consult with his landscape architect. Mr. Irving agreed to resume the hearing after the next case.

**Case 4077: 1326 Massachusetts Ave., by President & Fellows of Harvard College, owner, o/b/o Clover, tenant.** Install an internally-illuminated blade sign.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides of the property.

Tom Hannon, of Sign Design, described the proposed 32" square blade sign with a Lexan face and internal illumination. It would be hung at 9'-4" to the bottom of the sign and located at the left corner of the storefront, near the fire beacon.

Mr. Sullivan asked if the white of the sign face was translucent. Mr. Hannon passed around a sample of the Lexan material. The light would be a low-voltage LED.

Ms. Burks said Commission approval was required for internally illuminated blade signs.

Mr. Irving asked for public questions of comments, but there were none.

Mr. Ferrara moved to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application as presented. Mr. Kleespies seconded the motion, which passed 5-0.

**Case 4076: 1 Berkeley St., by Fiyaz Kanji.** Alter side porch; construct fence, walkway and synthetic turf in play area.

Mr. Irving returned the conversation to Case 4076.

Mr. Hand proposed removing the fence from the application and installing a new hedge with gates. He explained that if the certificate would only be approved for a limited time like 7 years, the owner would prefer not to install an expensive fence. He proposed a yew or arborvitae hedge.

Mr. Sullivan recommended approving the amended application without a time limit but with the condition that the hedge be maintained at 6' or less.

Mr. Hand noted that the artificial turf requires zero maintenance and no chemicals.

Mr. Ferrara moved to approve a certificate for the application as amended, with a time limit of ten years for the artificial turf, a height limit of 6' for the hedge, and details delegated to staff. Mr. Sheffield seconded the motion, which passed 5-0.

**Case 4078: 53 Bow St., by President & Fellows of Harvard College.** Exterior renovation of Randolph

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Hall, as part of the Adams House Renewal project.

**Case 4079: 10 Linden St., by President & Fellows of Harvard College.** Exterior renovation of Apthorp House, as part of the Adams House Renewal project.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides of Randolph Hall and Apthorp House and described both buildings. Mr. Irving asked the applicants to present both cases together since they were part of the same project.

Erika Johnson of the Harvard Planning Office introduced the project architects from Beyer Blinder Belle. She indicated that phase one, Claverly Hall, would begin construction this summer and phase two would begin next summer.

Nate Rogers of Beyer Blinder Belle said he would focus on the areas most prominently visible from public ways. Work on Apthorp House would begin in August 2019 and limited work at Randolph would be done this summer. He provided historical information about Randolph Hall, built as a private dorm in 1897. The proposed alterations included accessibility, envelope repairs, ventilation, window replacement, masonry restoration, security grills, and landscape changes. The proposed work at Apthorp House would include new entries on the north elevation, shutters, chimneys, sash restoration, accessibility, and a fence.

Mr. Irving asked for questions of fact.

Mr. Barry asked about the missing cartouche on the dormer of Randolph Hall. Mr. Rogers said there was no detailed documentation to replicate a design, so a new cartouche would be designed for Adams House.

Mr. Kleespies asked about exhaust vents. Mr. Rogers replied that they would be copper and at the attic level. Mr. Kleespies asked why three doors were needed on the north elevation of Apthorp House. Mr. Rogers explained that one was a new accessible entrance to an interior lift. Another was a relocation to the library door from the primary residence and the third was the entrance for resident affiliates.

Ms. Meyer asked about the rear deck at Apthorp and louvers at Plympton. Mr. Rogers provided additional detail on those aspects of the design.

Mr. Irving asked for public comment. There was none.

Mr. Barry moved to approve certificates of appropriateness for both applications as submitted. Mr. Kleespies seconded the motion, which passed 5-0.

Public Hearings: Demolition Review / Landmark Designation Proceedings

**Case D-1497: 2 Chetwynd Rd., by 2 Chetwynd Road LLC c/o Mahmood Firouzbakht.** Consider amended plans for the proposed replacement buildings.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and reported on the actions taken at previous hearings of the case. He explained that the present hearing would address the applicant's request to waive the demolition delay in the context of his revised design proposal. If the Commission denied this request it would then consider

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whether to initiate a landmark designation.

Jai Singh Khalsa, the architect, described past design proposals and the changes that had been made in response to Commission and neighborhood comment. He showed the current site plan, noting that the parking would be located between the two houses. He referred to a letter of agreement between the applicant and the neighbors accepting the current design then reviewed the renderings and floorplans.

Mr. Irving asked for questions of fact.

Mr. Sheffield asked the distance between the two buildings. Mr. Khalsa answered that the dimension of 18'-8¼" had not changed.

Ms. Meyer asked if the rear house was a single family. Mr. Firouzbakht replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Irving opened the public comment period.

Ms. Meyer remarked that the rear building looked too big for the site. The neighborhood context was small, and the three-story building was obtrusive. She asked why a more traditional design was not proposed. Mr. Khalsa said the developer's preference for the rear building was to have a more contemporary design. The house on the corner was small to address the Chetwynd Road context, but that resulted in the rear house getting bigger. He did not think the house was out of scale for the neighborhood. Mr. Firouzbakht added that the rear house was transitional in style. The materials and colors would fit in nicely in the neighborhood.

Mr. Irving closed the public comment period.

Mr. Sheffield commented that the fascia between the second and third floors of the rear building was too wide. The ten-foot floor to floor height on the upper floors could be reduced.

Mr. Kleespies said he was still disappointed that the existing house wasn't to be preserved but indicated the design of the replacement buildings had improved.

Mr. Ferrara noted that there were no windows on the third floor (rear building) facing the courtyard. He suggested windows be added there to break up the wall area.

Mr. Khalsa replied that the fascia width and windows could be changed, but he disagreed that reducing the height of the house by 1'-6" would be noticeable.

Mr. Sullivan read a letter dated March 27, 2019 from a number of neighbors indicating that they did not object to waiving the remainder of the demolition delay for the current replacement proposal.

Paula Cortez asked if the Commission could require changes to the design. Mr. Irving replied affirmatively. Ms. Cortez asked for the height to be reduced. She noted that the top floor of the rear building was no longer set back as far. Mr. Sheffield suggested floor-to-floor heights of 9', 8'-8" and 8'-2".

Mr. Firouzbakht explained the evolution of the proposal. He had started with a proposal for two 35' high buildings, his personal preference. The current proposal with a low height for the front building

was a big compromise. He wanted to keep the proposed height of the rear building. He had eliminated the bump-out over the driveway. He agreed to reduce the width of the fascia and to add two new windows on the third floor of the rear building.

Mr. Ferrara moved to waive the remainder of the delay based on the revised replacement design and the above-described modifications to the fascia and fenestration and review of details by the staff. Mr. Kleespies seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.

On the matter of landmark designation study, Mr. Barry moved to decline to initiate the study in light of the waiver of the demolition delay. Mr. Kleespies seconded the motion, which passed 5-0.

**Case D-1508: 58-60 Stearns St., by Betsy Harper.** Consider amended plans for the proposed replacement building.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and reported that the Commission had found the house preferably preserved and initiated a demolition delay at the first hearing in February. The applicant had submitted a revised design with a request to waive the remainder of the delay.

Betsy Harper, an owner, reported that she had hosted an open house in March for the Commission and neighbors. She had submitted a structural report and had met five times with the neighbors. They had reached an agreement about the siting of the new house and some additional aspects of the design. She would need to seek zoning relief for the amended design and asked the Commission to lift the delay.

Tagore Hernandez, the architect, displayed the revised site plan and noted the changes. Two parking spaces would be provided off Esten Street. The green corridor in the back yard would be preserved. The architectural ornamentation had been simplified as requested by the Commission and neighbors. The changes included elimination of the arched windows, simpler columns, and no brackets. Materials would include shiplap and clapboards on the bays and walls and standing seam metal on the roofs. A low fence would be located at the front. The structural engineer had looked at the soil conditions and noted the difficulty of leaving the existing house in the current location. The existing foundation would remain as a retaining wall between the new house and the neighbor.

Mr. Sheffield asked about the windows on the side elevations. Mr. Hernandez explained that they were different sizes to accommodate kitchen cabinets.

Mr. Irving asked if the porch roof was copper. Mr. Hernandez said it would be some other metal.

Mr. Sullivan reported on the site visit attended by himself and Ms. Burks as well as a few neighbors. The interior plan was cramped and not conducive to modern living, and the house had not been well maintained. The ledgestone and brick foundation was common to every house in Cambridge built before World War I. It was porous, but functional and stable.

Mr. Irving asked for questions of fact.

Ms. Meyer asked about the fences. Mr. Hernandez said they were schematic representations.

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There probably would not need to be a fence between the houses. An existing fence was located at the rear of the lot.

Mr. Irving asked for public comment.

Stephen Bardige of 55 Stearns Street reported that a number of neighbors had met with Ms. Harper and her architect. They acknowledged that the existing house would not be preserved so they had discussed the design of the new house. The neighbors would sign a memorandum of understanding before the BZA hearing. They did not object to waiving the remainder of the demo delay for the current design.

Mindy Koyanis of 5 Chetwynd Road remarked that the neighborhood was a historic pocket of Cambridge. She hoped that development would not cut out the remaining historic pockets of the city.

Mr. Irving thanked the proponents for simplifying the design.

Mr. Sheffield moved to waive the remainder of the delay based on the design presented. Mr. Kleespies seconded the motion, which passed 5-0.

Mr. Irving called for a short recess. The meeting resumed in approximately 5 minutes.

Preservation Grants

**Case PG 19-10: 336 Windsor St., by Just A Start.** \$40,000 for roof and windows.

**Case PG 19-11: 17 Boardman St, by Just A Start.** \$35,000 for roof.

**Case PG 19-12: 37 Union St., by Homeowner's Rehab.** \$50,000 for siding.

**Case IPG 19-5: 299 Western Ave., by Western Avenue Baptist Church (#3).** \$56,500 for accessibility and siding.

**Case IPG 19-6: 5 Longfellow Pk., by Friends Meeting.** \$50,000 for windows and doors.

**Case IPG 19-2: 1555 Massachusetts Ave., by Harvard Epworth M. E. Church.** \$25,000 for windows.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides of the applicant properties and described the proposed scope of work for each. He reported that the balance in the grant fund was \$305,744.

At 336 Windsor Street, he recommended increasing the grant from the requested \$40,000 to \$50,000 to cover the cost of replicating the ornate dormer cheek walls. Otherwise, he recommended grants as proposed on the agenda.

Peter Valentine of 37 Brookline Street asked how the Harvard Epworth Church was used. Mr. Sullivan described the floor plan. Ms. Burks added that the church hosted several social service programs.

Mr. Barry moved to approve grants in the amounts recommended by the Executive Director. Mr. Sheffield seconded the motion, which passed 5-0.

Preservation Award Nominations

Mr. Sullivan showed slides of the nominated projects. The program would take place on May 16.

The Commission finalized the list of preservation winners to include 47 Brattle Street, 25 Central Square, 27 Craigie Street, 28 Fayerweather Street, 13 Hilliard Street, 74 Holworthy Street, 56 Magazine Street, Longfellow Bridge, 139 Main Street, 211 Massachusetts Avenue, 1350 Massachusetts Avenue, 147 Prospect Street, 6 Myrtle Avenue (Platt/Goodwin award), and 281 Concord Avenue (CDD storefront

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improvement award).

Director's Report

Mr. Irving acknowledged receipt of correspondence from Daryl Janes.

Mr. Sullivan reported that staff had met with Steve Bardige and Alex von Hoffman of Stearns Street to discuss their proposal to amend the demolition ordinance in order to increase the length of demolition delays. The matter would be added to the May agenda for discussion.

Minutes

Mr. Ferrara moved to approve the March 7 and February 28 minutes as submitted. Mr. Kleespies seconded the motion, which passed 5-0.

Mr. Sheffield moved to adjourn. Mr. Kleespies seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks  
Preservation Planner

**Members of the Public  
Who Signed the Attendance List on April 4, 2019**

Mindy Koyanis	5 Chetwynd Rd
David Thompson	6 Chetwynd Rd
Erika Johnson	1350 Mass Ave, #573
Nate Rogers	610 11 <sup>th</sup> St, Brooklyn, NY 11215
Aaron Lampat	27 Hawthorn Ave, Scarsdale, NY 10583
Adam Mitchell	48 Stearns St
Tagore Hernandez	30 Quincy St
Fiyaz Kanji	1 Berkeley St
Marilee Meyer	10 Dana St
Steve Bardige	55 Stearns St
Tom Hannon	1326 Mass Ave
Mary Elston	56 Stearns St
Julie Todd	49 Fenno St
Steve Gallant	49 Fenno St
Helen Bowditch	8 Chetwynd Rd
Colin Hand	1 Berkeley St
John Hawkinson	<a href="mailto:jhawk@alum.mit.edu">jhawk@alum.mit.edu</a>
Alexander von Hoffman,	43 Stearns St

Note: Town is Cambridge, unless otherwise indicated.