

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

November 1, 2018 - 806 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge Senior Center - 6:00 P.M.

Members present: Bruce Irving, *Chair*; Susannah Tobin, *Vice Chair*; Joseph Ferrara, Chandra Harrington, Jo M. Solet, *Members*; Gavin Kleespies, Paula Paris, *Alternate*

Members absent: William Barry, Robert Crocker, *Members*; Kyle Sheffield, *Alternate*

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

Public present: See attached list.

Mr. Irving called the meeting to order at 6:07 P.M. He made introductions and dispensed with the consent agenda.

Public Hearing: Alterations to Designated Properties

Case 4000 (continued): 110-120 Brookline St. and 108-112 Pacific St., by Ledgemoor, LLC. construction details of exterior renovations including entry, cladding, curtain wall, and mechanical screen.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and described the building and its various phases of construction.

LeeAnn Suen of Bruner/Cott Architects described the elements brought back for the Commission's review. She described the cladding and windows on the rear elevation and facing Tudor Street. The cladding was a zinc-coated panel in graphite gray color with standing seams approximately 1" deep. The vertical panels would vary between 5, 7, and 12 inches. The aluminum windows would be 4' x 8' in size. The mechanical screen was a corrugated, perforated, galvanized aluminum panel, light gray in color, and measuring 6' tall. The main entry would replace the existing overhead door. The double-height window above it would have divided lights. The door system would be black anodized aluminum and glass. She passed around samples of the panels and screen.

Dr. Solet inquired about noise mitigation. Ms. Suen answered that there would be separate sound screens on the units and that the installation would comply with the noise ordinance. Jason Jewhurst of Bruner/Cott Architects noted that the perforation of the panels would prevent reverberation and the steel frame on which the units sit would prevent vibration. Dr. Solet asked about the projecting sign. Ms. Suen replied that the sign frame was existing and would remain.

Mr. Kleespies questioned the color choice of graphite gray wall panels against the red brick. Ms. Suen agreed it was a contemporary look and said the contrasting color was intentional.

Mr. Sullivan asked about the entrance on the far right (south) of the front elevation, at the 1947 addition. Ms. Suen answered that the corner would be recessed and a secondary entrance located there. Mr. Jewhurst said the corner would be restored to the 1947 design.

Margery Cobb of 100 Pacific Street asked about the number of rooftop HVAC units. Ms. Suen said the drawings showed the maximum extent of the mechanical area.

Peter Parise of 119 Brookline Street asked about the color of the screen. Ms. Suen said it would be gray, but lighter than the wall panels.

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Mr. Irving asked for public comment.

Peter Valentine of 37 Brookline Street read a statement. There was nothing wrong with offering space to artists in the EMF building. The artists would pay rent as they had before. The gray color was drab and uninteresting. A blend of business and art tenants would create energy and bring interest to Cambridge.

Mr. Parise asked if the mechanical units would be visible through the perforated screening. He said he would prefer a more solid screen.

James Williamson of Jackson Place said noise was always an issue with mechanicals. How would it be mitigated? Materials more consistent with the brick buildings might be better.

Mr. Irving closed the public comment period.

Dr. Solet explained that the noise limits applied in a vertical plane at the property line and did not apply only at the ground level.

Mr. Kleespies asked if the screen color could be less contrasting with the brick.

Ms. Suen noted that the screen would block the view of the equipment even though it was perforated. She noted that the screen would be set back from Brookline Street at least 70 feet.

Ms. Paris asked about the roof deck. Ms. Suen answered that it had been deleted from the scope.

Ms. Harrington asked about the signs. John DiGiovanni, an owner, answered that the painted signs would not be changed. The content on the projecting sign would likely change for a new tenant.

Mr. Ferrara said the design had evolved in a positive way. He liked the contrast of new panels and the original brick. He approved of the lighter color of the screen and supported the design as presented. Mr. Irving agreed. He was strongly in favor of the cladding decisions. He noted that the Secretary's Standards recommended differentiating new from old.

Mr. Sullivan asked how the elevation of the top level would be detailed in the absence of the roof deck. Ms. Suen said the concrete block would be clad with fiber cement and the glazing would remain as previously shown. The glazing system would match the color of the factory sash (black or dark gray).

Dr. Solet asked if there was a door to the rooftop on that elevation. Ms. Suen said there were four windows and a door. Mr. Rafferty said he understood that the approval from last month's vote included those openings. Mr. Sullivan said the elevation would not be visible from the public way in any event.

Mr. Parise indicated they might be visible from further down the street. He said there were four sconces shown on the wall. Mr. DiGiovanni said the sconces were part of the roof deck proposal and had been deleted from the application.

Mr. Ferrara moved to approve the details as presented, excluding the sconces and roof deck, and to delegate remaining construction details to the staff. Ms. Tobin seconded the motion, which passed 7-0.

Case 4009: 24 Mt. Auburn St., by Rosalie Post & Thomas O’Leary. Replace windows.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and described the 1858 house. A one-story addition had been added in 1897 for the owner’s tailoring shop.

Mitch Toro of Renewal by Anderson presented a sample of the proposed replacement window, which was a composite material, black, mortise and tenon construction designed to replicate a wood window. He noted that sliding windows would be used in the barrel-shaped dormers. He passed around a sample of the high-transparency screen proposed for the windows.

Mr. Irving asked how the color was applied. Mr. Toro answered that the material was dyed. It was not a finish that would flake off. The finish was covered by a warranty.

Mr. Ferrara asked about the comparison of existing muntin widths to the proposed. Mr. Toro said they were very close to the same width. Mr. Ferrara asked what window style was originally in the barrel-shaped dormers. Mr. Sullivan responded that they were probably a rounded window frame for the top sash and a square bottom sash.

Dr. Solet asked if they could make true divided lights. Mr. Toro said that was not an option. Dr. Solet suggested an interior storm.

Thomas O’Leary, an owner, told Mr. Williamson that the addition had once been a candy store.

Mr. Irving asked for public comment.

Mr. Williamson said he knew the occupant, Mr. O’Leary, a writer, and supported the application. He noted that a previous occupant of the building had been Georges de Menil.

Mr. Sullivan recommended a half screen; full screens were not traditional and would obscure the windows. The proposed replacement would not be inappropriate if half screens were specified.

Mr. Ferrara suggested that the 2+2 double-hungs with arched tops be returned to the dormers.

Rosalie Post, an owner, noted that the third-floor spaces were rentals, so the openings needed to accommodate air conditioners. Mr. Toro said Anderson did not manufacture an arched top double-hung window. They could, however, put a double hung below the arched portion of the window frame.

Mr. Irving closed the public comment period.

Mr. Ferrara moved to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application as proposed, with the conditions that the owners work with staff to achieve the closest possible replica of the original dormer windows and that the windows have half screens. Mr. Kleespies seconded the motion, which passed 7-0.

Public Hearing: Demolition Review

Case D-1497: 2 Chetwynd Rd., by 2 Chetwynd Road LLC c/o Mahmood Firouzbakht. Demolish house (1928).

Eric Hill, the new CHC Survey Director, showed slides of the 1928 house at the corner of

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Chetwynd Road and Newell Street. He summarized the staff report about the house and its neighbors, all built by the Porter Realty Trust on land previously owned by the Hews Pottery Co. Number 2 was purchased in 1929 by David Murphy and had stayed in the family until 2017. He recommended finding the house significant for its associations with the Albert H. Hews company and in the context of the predominantly pre-WWII residential neighborhood of Chetwynd Road, which features eight nearly identical homes by the same developer, Porter Realty Trust.

Mr. Irving asked if there were questions of fact relative to the question of the building's significance. There being none, Dr. Solet moved to find the building significant as defined in the ordinance and for the reasons described in the staff report. Ms. Harrington seconded the motion, which passed 7-0.

Sean Hope, attorney representing the owner, explained that the proposed new construction was a zoning-compliant proposal for two detached single-family residences. The size of the lot would allow for three units per zoning. The design included relocation of the curb cut to Newell Street.

Jai Singh Khalsa, the architect, described the neighborhood context of similar houses on Chetwynd Road and some three-story buildings on Newell and nearby streets. The two new houses would share a driveway. The front house would be more traditional in design with a center entrance and a gable roof, while the rear building would be more contemporary with a flat roof.

Mr. Irving called for questions of fact. He asked about the existing and proposed siting of the front house. Mahmood Firouzbakht, the owner, showed a site plan with the existing house. The house was dilapidated. The clay soils had caused settlement and drainage issues. He submitted a letter from a structural engineer describing the condition of the house.

Ms. Paris noted that other houses on Chetwynd had additions on the back or side. She asked why they would build one house in traditional style and one contemporary on the same lot. Mr. Khalsa said it was a corner lot and the client wanted contrasting styles. Dr. Solet asked why a modern building was preferred for the back building. Mr. Firouzbakht said he settled on a traditional house to complement the existing houses on Chetwynd but a modern house facing Newell because of the existing mix of old and new styles there. The traditional design will transition from old to new.

Mr. Khalsa reviewed the shadow study for Ms. Paris.

Mr. Hill asked how the setbacks would work if the existing house were preserved and the new house built behind it. Mr. Khalsa said the back half of the house would need to be demolished. Dormers would have to be added to make up for the loss of space. It would result in a very different looking house.

Ms. Harrington asked about the landscape plan. Mr. Khalsa described the paved and planted areas. It would comply with the zoning code for required open space. Dr. Solet asked if the terraces counted toward open space and Mr. Khalsa replied in the affirmative.

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Mr. Irving noted a letter received from a group of neighbors, including six abutters.

James Williamson asked if the abutting house on Chetwynd had been renovated. How was the broader context considered? Was there a view of the Newell house with a gambrel roof? Carol Goodman of 4 Chetwynd Road answered that she and her husband kept the basic footprint when they renovated their house. They added a dormer to the back and finished the basement. Mr. Firouzbakht indicated he had studied the options for renovating or adding to the house, but it would have to be dramatically altered to make the development possible.

Mr. Irving asked for public comment and limited speakers to three minutes each.

David Thompson of 6 Chetwynd Road read a letter signed by 20 people. It stated that the new house was out of proportion to the neighboring houses on Chetwynd Road, had a different style, and would set a bad precedent for the neighborhood. He asked the Commission to delay demolition.

Helen Bowditch of 8 Chetwynd Road said she supported the requested demolition. She said the existing house was in terrible condition. Change was okay and the lot could support two structures. She asked that the design of the new buildings show more continuity with the neighborhood context. The driveway layout was terrible, resulting in too much paving on the lot.

Mr. Williamson said the house next door was a successful renovation. He hoped the owner would choose to remain consistent with the other seven houses on the street. The proposed buildings were too big and would impinge on other buildings nearby. He asked for a demolition delay to be imposed.

Noah Maslan of 194 Walden Street stated that he supported demolition because there was a shortage of housing in Cambridge. It was a dilapidated old house. The proposal would double the units on the lot and be zoning compliant. It was okay to change the look of the houses. More housing needed to be added to the neighborhood in a respectful manner. He encouraged the Commission to not impose a delay.

Mindy Koyanis of 5 Chetwynd Road said there was no other street quite like theirs. Number 4 had been entirely rebuilt. The house could change but needed to fit in better with the others on the street.

Wendy Squires of 6 Chetwynd Road said she was not opposed to changes or renovation but was concerned about the proposed plan. She wanted it to retain the uniform style of the street. The plan was too disruptive. She asked for time for the neighbors to work with the developer.

Debra Biba of 20 Newell Street spoke about the working-class character of the area and how it was near the industrial fringe of Cambridge. The proposal ignored the neighborhood's scale. Cambridge needed more housing but luxury housing that did not blend in should not take precedence.

Paula Cortez of 25 Newell Street asked for a delay of demolition. She questioned the FAR calculations and if the project really would conform to zoning.

Mr. Irving closed public comment.

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Dr. Solet asked about the square footage, number of units and cars. Mr. Khalsa answered that each single-family house would have 2200-2300 square feet on a smaller footprint than the existing house, but taller. Zoning required parking for one car per unit. Dr. Solet said the modern style of the rear house did not seem to fit the context. Mr. Firouzbakht said his preferences had evolved and he had grown to appreciate contemporary styles. There were other modern houses in the neighborhood. The neighborhood was changing. He said he had not rushed the planning process. He had reached out to the neighbors over the summer and held a neighborhood meeting. He needed the project to work financially, but was open to discussing style, materials, and landscaping with the neighbors.

Mr. Kleespies said he did not think demolition and two new houses would improve the neighborhood. He asked why the existing building could not be expanded and re-used as a two-family. He expressed a preference to preserve the enclave of Chetwynd Road.

Ms. Harrington said the grouping of houses was precious and possibly unique in Cambridge. It was worth preserving. The existing house was not beyond repair.

Mr. Ferrara agreed that Chetwynd Road was unique. He indicated he could support a two-house design. He said the parking arrangement was awkward and a second curb cut could reduce paving. He suggested a single structure with two units be studied.

Mr. Irving said he had not heard a compelling reason that the house had to be demolished. It should be retained to the greatest extent possible.

Ms. Harrington moved to find the existing house preferably preserved in the context of the proposed replacement buildings. Mr. Kleespies seconded the motion, which passed 7-0.

Preservation Grants

IPG 19-2	Harvard Epworth M.E. Church #4: window repairs, \$6,500
IPG 19-3	Cambridge Masonic Hall Association #2: roof replacement, \$41,230
PG 19-2	12 Boardman Street, JAS: Masonry repairs, \$35,000
PG 19-3	7-9 Salem Street, JAS: Siding and windows, \$40,000
PG 19-4	2 Allston Court, JAS: Roof and windows, \$40,000

Mr. Sullivan showed slides of each property and described the work proposed for each application. Ms. Harrington moved to approve the grants per the Director's recommendations. Mr. Kleespies seconded the motion, which passed 7-0.

Dr. Solet moved to adjourn. Ms. Paris seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks
Preservation Planner

**Members of the Public
Who Signed the Attendance List on November 1, 2018**

- Noah Maslan 194 Walden St
- Peter & Sandy Parise 119 Brookline St
- P. Cunningham 50 Church St, 5th Fl
- Mitchell Toro 30 Forbs Rd, Northborough, MA 01532
- Melinda Koyanis 5 Chetwynd Rd
- Cristel M. Sloan 1 Chetwynd Rd
- David Thompson 6 Chetwynd Rd
- Margery Cobb 100 Pacific St #3
- Mel Downer Concord Ave
- Debra Biba 20 Newell St
- John Hawkinson Cambridge Day
- Wendy Squires 6 Chetwynd Rd
- Mahmood Firouzbakht 9 Crescent St

Note: Town is Cambridge, unless otherwise indicated.