



CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

831 Massachusetts Avenue, 2nd Fl., Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

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E-mail: histcomm@cambridgema.gov URL: www.cambridgema.gov/Historic

APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE

1. The undersigned hereby applies to the Cambridge Historical Commission for a Certificate of (check one box): ☒ Appropriateness, ☐ Nonapplicability, or ☐ Hardship, in accordance with Chapter 40C of the Massachusetts General Laws and/or Chapter 2.78 of the Municipal Code.
2. Address of property: 177 Brattle Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts
3. Describe the proposed alteration(s), construction or demolition in the space provided below:
(An additional page can be attached, if necessary).

See attached

I certify that the information contained herein is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief. The undersigned also attests that he/she has read the statements printed on the reverse.

Name of Property Owner of Record: Red Bird Group LLC

Mailing Address: c/o 175 Brattle Street

Telephone/Fax: 617-694-1280

E-mail: emk@farfieldpartners.com

Signature of Property Owner of Record:

(Required field; application will not be considered complete without property owner's signature)

EDWIN M. KANIA JR. INVESTMENT MANAGER

Name of proponent, if not record owner:

Mailing Address: 315 Old Sharon Rd, Peterborough, NH 03458

Telephone/Fax:

E-mail:

(for office use only):

Date Application Received: _____

Case Number: 5346

Hearing Date: 10/9/25

Type of Certificate Issued: _____

Date Issued: _____

Application for Certificate of Appropriateness – 177 Brattle Street Front Façade

Attachment: #3 Proposed alteration:

Background:

The subject building was originally a squash court with an attached garage that was completed in 1915 as a new structure at 175 Brattle Street (the Ruggles-Fayerweather House). A picture of the original building is attached as Exhibit A.

The third garage bay in the picture (which appears to have been more of an attached shed than part of the garage) was removed sometime thereafter. This likely occurred at the same time as an outbuilding attached to the west side of the original Ruggles-Fayerweather House was removed. Exhibit B shows a picture of the Ruggles-Fayerweather House in 1920 that includes this attached building (which apparently was connected, on its west side, to the shed that appears in the 1915 picture as a third garage bay).

In 1947, the parcel of land comprising both the squash court / garage and the driveway to it from Brattle Street was legally separated from 175 Brattle. This parcel became 177 Brattle. Shortly thereafter, the entire squash court / garage structure was legally converted into a two-bedroom residence. The former squash court became a living room with two bedrooms on a new second floor. The former garage portion of the building became a kitchen and a 'sun room'. Exhibit C (from the 1960s) is the only picture we've been able to find giving a sense of what the property might have looked like. It shows only the former squash court portion of the structure.

In the 1947 conversion, the two former arched garage bays were covered with stucco (rather than the brick that covered the remaining facade). A window unit and an exterior door were also built into the left garage bay. Double French doors (operable) and two identical sidelights were also built into the right garage bay.

Over the years, the exterior of 177 Brattle was not well-maintained. Further, an HVAC unit was installed in front of the building, along with exterior electrical and HVAC lines applied to the façade in various places. Exhibit D shows a current picture of the front façade. Exhibit E shows a current picture of the two garage bays as rebuilt in the 1947 renovation. Exhibits F and G show current pictures of the left and right bays as rebuilt.

Summary Objectives of the New Owner:

Red Bird Group LLC has begun an updating/restoration project at 177 Brattle that is intended to return 177 Brattle to its prior history as an integrated and visible part of the Ruggles-

Fayerweather House. The work, generally minor in nature, is focused on several subprojects in addition to the façade project detailed below. These include: updating the interior; updating the electrical, plumbing, and HVAC systems (including relocating the HVAC unit in front of the building to the rear where it will be not visible); repairing/repainting exterior trim boards; restoring the beautiful front white fence along Brattle Street to its original design (matching the CHC-approved 175 Brattle front fence); and tending to trees and shrubs as well as general groundskeeping.

Regarding the latter effort, given that the original, wonderful landscape design has been largely preserved (although not well maintained), the goal is simply to restore what was. This includes overall cleanup; replanting a few yews around the flagstone patio in front of the living room window while restoring both the patio itself and the low wall that surrounds it (not visible from the street); planting ground cover on both sides of the driveway; and restoring the brick driveway edging that is visible in Exhibit C while also refreshing/replenishing the pea gravel surface. If Red Bird Group was to undertake any significant new work (for example, changing the grade of the driveway or adding stone pavers to the end of the driveway adjacent to the Brattle Street), we would, of course, discuss this with CHC.

Specific Garage Bay Façade Restoration Project for CHC Review:

Beyond the above projects, we would also like to reconstruct the two garage bays. They are beyond repair, reflecting time and neglect as well as the vigorous activity of carpenter ants. Further, as presently designed, the garage bays have the following architectural challenges we'd like to address:

- The grey stucco is an odd choice of material to fill in the bays, given that brick, wood, and glass are the dominant present (and only original) façade materials.
- It is awkward that the bays are different rather than identical.
- There is no need for operable doors in the bays given that there are two other entrances to the first floor (including the main door to the left of the left garage bay, and another door on the east side of the building).

Working with architects Judge Skelton Smith (Boston), we have prepared, for your review and consideration, a design to rebuild these bays. From the outside, these bays would appear as identical double, fixed French door units and two similarly sized sidelights (operable) that are set into an arched opening in the brick. This is intended to be a more architecturally appropriate and traditional version of the current right bay, as well as one that is implemented in a way that is truer to the original spirit of the 1915 design and supports a visual reconnection of 177 and 175 Brattle Street.

There will be wood panels covering the lower 1/3 of all French doors and sidelights. The top glazed area of the French doors and sidelights will be divided into two panes using a traditional muntin. The French door units will be inset by +/-3 inches from the brick façade (as a garage door would have been), and the top arched area will be covered with flush wood boarding rather than grey stucco. All of the wood will be painted Deep Forest Green to match the shutters and doors at 175 Brattle. Visually, the garage bays should more or less disappear. Deep Forest Green is almost certainly the paint color that was used in 1915 for the original garage doors.

The plans representing the revised design are attached as Exhibit H. A drawing/plan for the current façade is also included.

Exhibit A: 177 Brattle St. Squash Court and Garage (1915)



SQUASH COURT AND GARAGE OF ROGER B. MERRIMAN, CAMBRIDGE, MASS.
COOLIDGE & CARLSON, ARCHITECTS

Exhibit B: 175 Brattle St. (1920)



Exhibit C: 177 Brattle Street (1960s)



Exhibit D: 177 Brattle Street front façade (2025)



Exhibit E: 177 Brattle Street – Close-up of Converted Garage Bays (2025)

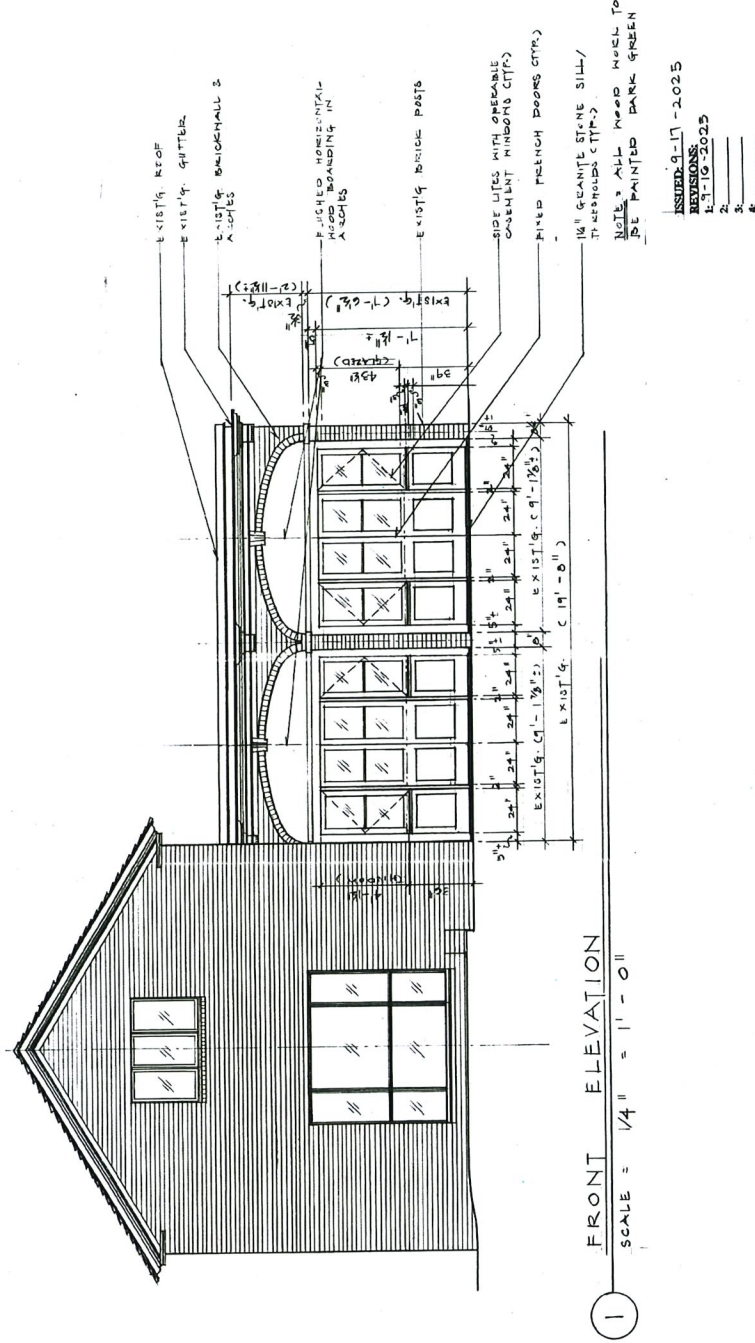


Exhibits F / G: 177 Brattle Street – Left Garage Bay and Right Garage Bay (2025)



Exhibit H: Proposed Redesign of 177 Brattle Street Garage Bays

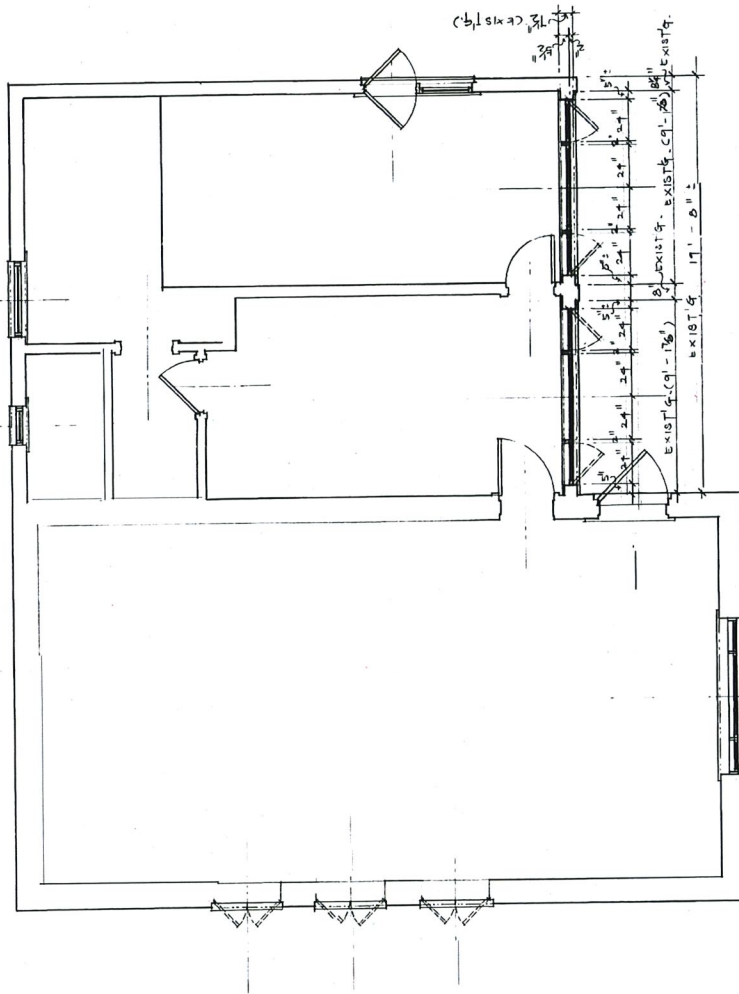
As noted in the above text, with the below design, architects Judge Skelton Smith are trying to stay true to the 1947 renovation of this building, while more closely keeping to the spirit of the original 1915 design. The garage bay 'inserts' will be painted dark green so that they largely disappear. Each one will have fixed double French doors with a large wood panel covering the bottom 40% of the door and two glass panes on the upper portion. There will be matching operable sidelights. The top area under the arch above the French door units will consist of flush wood boarding that, when painted, will look like a panel.



177 Brattle Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts

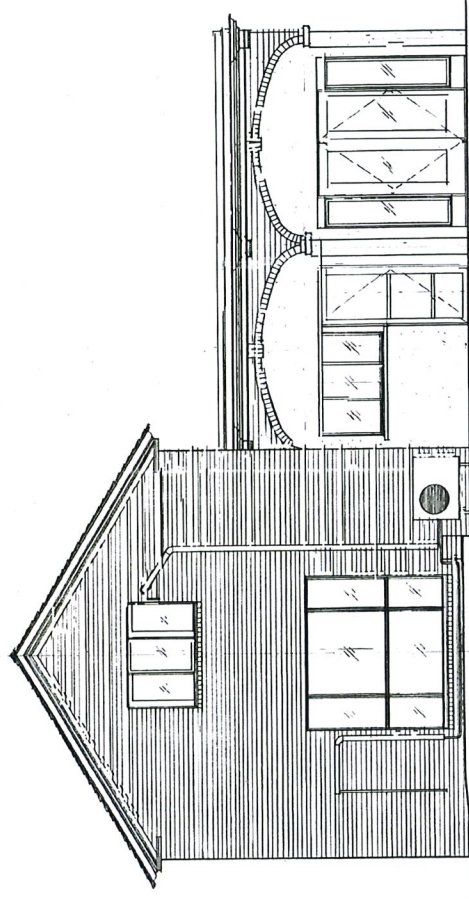
Judge Skelton Smith Inc. Architects 16 Joy Street Boston, Massachusetts 02114 Telephone: 617 · 227 · 9062 www.jssarch.com

ISSUED: 9-17-2025
 REVISIONS:
 1: 9-16-2025
 2: _____
 3: _____
 4: _____



⊕ FIRST FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

177 Brattle Street - current front facade



EXISTING FRONT ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

1

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EX-2

JSS/PB/06-14-2025