

## **Minutes of the Avon Hill Neighborhood Conservation District**

Monday, July 24, 2023 - 5:30 PM

Commissioners Present: Mark Golberg, *Vice Chair*, Heli Meltsner, McKelden Smith, Freweyni Grebehiwet, *Members*, Theresa Hamacher, *Alternate*

Commissioners Absent: Constantin von Wentzel, *Chair*; Lee Campbell

Staff Present: Allison A. Crosbie, Preservation Administrator

Sarah Burks, Preservation Planner

Members of the Public: see attached sheet

---

This meeting was held via online zoom webinar, <https://tinyurl.com/AHJuly2023>, 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 **818 3913 4321**.

Commission Vice Chair Mark Golberg made general introductions, explained the procedures, and called the meeting to order at 5:34. Commissioner Heli Meltsner recused herself as an abutter to the applicant.

### Public Hearing: Alterations to Designated Properties

**AH-794: 77 Avon Hill Street, by Nondita and Rahul Mehrotra.** Remove bay window and construct new entrance.

Ms. Allison Crosbie, preservation administrator, gave a brief history of the property. Regarding current work being done on the porch, she explained this work was due to structural issues that needed to be addressed, and that the porch will be restored.

Mr. Tom Saltsman, the project architect and builder, introduced the applicants, Nondita and Rahul Mehrotra, as well as his colleague Ben Cook. Mr. Saltsman explained that the house has Colonial Revival, Shingle Style, and Bungalow details and stated that the intent is to maintain the character of the house. Ms. Crosbie showed slides of the proposed new entrance and the existing porch, and Mr. Saltsman described the structural issues that needed to be addressed and reassured the Commission that the porch column and railings will be restored. Mr. Saltsman went on to say they will not be installing a screen door, and the sidelights around the new door will be true divided lights. He also said that in the near future they will be replacing the roof and possibly changing the railing on the front steps.

### Commission Questions

Mr. Golberg asked the staff if the porch was original. Ms. Crosbie answered that she does not have concrete evidence of when the porch was constructed. Preservation Planner Sarah Burks noted that the overhang appears to be original. Mr. Golberg asked the applicant if the new trim will match the style and scale of what is there. Mr. Saltsman replied affirmatively.

Commissioner Theresa Hamacher remarked that she is glad they were able to address the structural issues and asked the staff if they could review the roofing and railings instead of the applicant coming back to the Commission. Ms. Crosbie answered that would be possible.

### Public Questions

Ms. Heli Meltsner of 74 Avon Hill Street asked what is happening in the interior that is motivating the alterations. Mr. Saltsman responded that right now the entrance opens to a stair with

## **Minutes of the Avon Hill Neighborhood Conservation District**

a door to the right. The new location would open into a small room that is adjacent to the living room which he thinks makes more sense.

### Public Comments

Ms. Crosbie read two letters from abutters in support of the project - Stephen Fitzsimmons of 3 Wyman Street and Eleanor and Andrew Joseph of 82 Avon Hill Street.

Ms. Charlotte McGuiness of 71 Avon Hill Street stated that she thinks the proposal is very reasonable and has no objection.

Ms. Meltsner commented that as a preservationist she doesn't like to see the bay removed, but she understands why the applicants want to move the entrance, it seems reasonable. She also mentioned that the original design was intended to create a "great hall" as you entered the house.

### Commission Comments

Ms. Hamacher remarked that the proposal seems logical, although there will be a loss of architectural fabric, but she thinks it's fine. She also stated that the changes regarding the roof and railings are modest and could be reviewed by staff only.

Mr. Golberg concurred with Ms. Hamacher.

Ms. Hamacher motioned to approve the application as historically appropriate and delegated review of roofing materials and railings to CHC staff. Commissioner McKelden Smith seconded, and the motion passed 4-0.

Ms. Hamacher motioned to approve the minutes from June 26, 2023 and March 28, 2022. Commissioner McKelden Smith seconded, and the motion passed 4-0

The meeting adjourned at 6:30.

Respectfully submitted,

Allison A. Crosbie  
Preservation Administrator

**Members of the Public Present  
July 24, 2023**

Nondita and Rahul Mehrotra, applicants  
Tom Saltsman, architect/builder  
Ben Cook, architect/builder  
Jerold Kayden, colleague

77 Avon Hill Street  
Boston, MA  
Boston, MA

Charlotte McGuiness  
Eleanor Joseph

71 Avon Hill Street  
82 Avon Hill Street

Addresses are in Cambridge unless otherwise specified.