

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

Monday, June 26, 2023 - 5:30 PM

Commissioners Present: Constantin von Wentzel, *Chair*; Mark Golberg, *Vice Chair*, Heli Meltsner, McKelden Smith, Freweyni Grebehiwet, *Members*, Theresa Hamacher, Lee Campbell, *Alternates*

Staff Present: Allison A. Crosbie, Preservation Administrator  
Sarah Burks, Preservation Planner

Members of the Public: see attached sheet

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Meeting held via online zoom webinar, <https://tinyurl.com/AHjune2023>. This meeting was held online 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 **875 0407 6145**.

Two new members of the Commission, Freweyni Grebehiwet and McKelden Smith, were introduced. Commission Vice Chair Mark Golberg made general introductions, explained the procedures, and called the meeting to order at 5:37.

### Public Hearing: Alterations to Designated Properties

**AH-792: 7 Walnut Avenue, by Matthew Fisher.** Exterior alterations to garage including siding, new dormer, windows, and door.

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

Mr. Paul Hajian, the project architect, described the proposed conversion of the garage into a home office and explained that the roof needs to be stabilized and the existing doors are in disrepair. He presented elevations and plans and described the design intent to maintain the character of the structure including the slate roof, replace the existing doors with inoperable doors in the same style, and remove the existing aluminum siding. He explained that they will examine the wood clapboard siding underneath, but it will most likely need to be replaced. Insulation will also be added. Mr. Hajian pointed out the existing window which will be replicated on the façade. A transom over the door and a shed dormer will provide additional light into the space.

On the façade facing the street, the design includes an oculus window added in the gable, but this façade, which is the most visible from a public way, will remain pretty much the same. He further explained that they will try to save the rafter tails and are keeping the slate roof. Tiles from the slate roof on the house were saved, they are slightly different but can be used on the shed dormer portion. Mr. Hajian also remarked that the view from the street is partially obscured by a bump out on the side of the house and a large mature tree.

Mr. Hajian then described the new windows which will be Jeld-Wen double hung sash with the same pattern and configuration as the existing. He then presented images showing the deteriorated condition of the existing windows. He then explained the interior layout and stated that the office is just for the owner's private use.

Commission Chair Constantin von Wentzel joined the meeting at 6:00.

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### Commission Questions

Commissioner Lee Campbell asked about the slab. Mr. Hajian responded that they would insulate the slab and explained that the lathe and plaster will have to be removed.

Mr. Golberg asked for clarification on the slab. Mr. Hajian replied that the slab floats, there is a separation around the perimeter, so there will not be an impact on the frame.

Commissioner Freweyni Grebehiwet asked about the interior layout. Mr. Hajian clarified the proposed space layout.

Commissioner Theresa Hamacher asked if there will be an external compressor installed. Mr. Hajian answered that they will be installing a mini split which is smaller than traditional condensing units. Ms. Hamacher remarked that the placement of the unit would need to be reviewed by the Commission.

### No Public Questions or Comments

### Commission Comments

Commissioner Heli Meltsner stated that the proposed renovation is delightful, it respects the building, the new shed dormer is fine, and noted that the structure is set quite far back so you only have a distant view. She also commented that everything has been done sensitively, it is very thoughtful and makes the building spiffier.

Mr. Golberg agreed with Ms. Meltsner.

Mr. Campbell observed that the garage is not as visible as one might imagine, and that the visibility of the condenser will most likely be minimal. Mr. Campbell also remarked that a view from the street would have been helpful.

Ms. Hamacher commented that the location of the compressor should still be reviewed.

Ms. Hamacher motioned to approve the application as historically appropriate with the condition that the location of the air conditioner compressor be reviewed by CHC staff. Ms. Meltsner seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 6:25.

Respectfully submitted,

Allison A. Crosbie  
Preservation Administrator

**Members of the Public Present  
June 26, 2023**

Paul Hajian, architect  
Matthew Fisher, applicant

Watertown, MA  
85 Washington Avenue

Addresses are in Cambridge unless otherwise specified.