

Minutes of the Cambridge Historical Commission

November 6, 2025 – Meeting conducted online via Zoom Webinar (899 1355 3813) - 6:00 P.M.

Present: Chandra Harrington, *Chair*; Yuting Zhang, *Members*;
Florrie Darwin, Scott Kyle, Michael Rogove, *Alternates*

Absent: Liz Lyster, *Vice Chair*; Gavin Kleespies, Joseph Ferrara, Paula Paris,
Kyle Sheffield, *Members*

Staff present: Charles Sullivan, *Executive Director*, Sarah Burks, *Preservation Planner*

Public present: See attached list.

This meeting was held online with remote participation pursuant to Ch. 2 of the Acts of 2023. The public was able to participate online via the Zoom webinar platform.

With a quorum present, Chair Harrington called the meeting to order at 6:08 P.M. She reviewed the online meeting instructions and public hearing procedures and noted that public questions and comments would be combined and limited to three minutes. She explained the Consent Agenda procedure and asked if anyone present had objections to placing Cases 5355, 5356 and 5367 on the Consent Agenda.

Case 5355: 29 Mt. Auburn St., by The Catholic Archdiocese of Boston. Install architectural lighting at St. Paul’s church.

Case 5356: 580 Mt. Auburn St., by Mount Auburn Cemetery. Alter paving at cemetery gates.

Case 5367: 14 Craigie St., by Carol Green. Rebuild front steps and add handrail for safety. Install path lighting at front walk.

There being no objections registered, the chair asked for a motion to approve the cases with details delegated to staff. Ms. Darwin so moved. Mr. Rogove seconded, and the motion passed 5-0 in a roll call vote. (Zhang, Harrington, Darwin, Kyle, Rogove)

Preservation Grants

Case IPG 26-3: 25 Lowell St., by New School of Music. Wood window restoration. \$10,150.

Case IPG 26-4: 1555 Massachusetts Ave., by Harvard Epworth Episcopal Church. Repair foundation leaks. \$27,500.

Mr. Sullivan described the requests for matching grants and showed slides of the buildings.

Mr. Kyle asked if the Cambridge Art Association windows would be restored. Mr. Sullivan replied in the affirmative.

Ms. Darwin asked about the total grant funds available. Mr. Sullivan replied that there was nearly \$1M available at this time. He explained the grants are funded through the Community Preservation Act.

Mr. Kyle moved to approve the two grants as described. Ms. Darwin seconded and the motion passed 5-0 in a roll call vote. (Zhang, Harrington, Darwin, Kyle, Rogove)

Public Hearing: Landmark Designation Proceedings

Case L-147: 43-45 Mt Auburn St. Foundation for Civic Leadership, owner. Consider landmark study report and make a recommendation to City Council.

Mr. Sullivan shared his screen and summarized the preliminary landmark study report. He stated the staff recommendation that the Commission support the proposed landmark designation of the property with the provision that the designation a) explicitly recognize the appropriateness of removing

the ell and clubroom addition, relocating the house to face DeWolfe Street and restoring the house to its appearance as renovated in 1928, subject to Commission approval of construction materials, details, and site improvements, and b) consider the appropriateness of construction of a new building that conforms to the zoning in effect on the date of designation, explicitly retaining the Commission's authority to impose conditions as to the height and setbacks, and subject to Commission approval of exterior features such as balconies, cantilevers, fenestration, materials, and construction details under the Harvard Square Conservation District guidelines.

[Mr. Kleespies joined the meeting].

Ms. Harrington asked about the Commission's jurisdiction if the City Council were not to designate the property as a landmark. Mr. Sullivan answered that it would still have jurisdiction to review exterior changes due to the property being located within the Harvard Square Conservation District. The Commission's decisions on applications for additions or new construction in the Conservation District could not be based on the appropriateness of the size or shape of the construction and could not be more restrictive than zoning allows.

Ian Simmons, President of the Foundation for Civic Leadership, thanked the staff for its communications during the study period. He said the Foundation had purchased the building in as-is condition, but it had needed extensive renovations from the beginning. Landmark designation was unnecessary and would be burdensome by potentially causing delay and added expense. The anticipated renovations would upgrade the building's accessibility and safety. The historical and cultural associations did not rise to landmark level. The report was tremendously valuable, and he appreciated the thoughtful guidelines. He reaffirmed his commitment to working collaboratively with the Commission. He asked the Commission not to recommend designation to the City Council.

Mr. Kyle offered reassurance that the Commission would continue to be a constructive participant in future discussions.

Dan Totten of 54 Bishop Allen Drive, the lead petitioner for the study, was invited to speak. He asked how rare the building was in Harvard Square. Mr. Sullivan named several other historic frame buildings in the district. He noted that the district guidelines called out surviving wooden buildings as a type worthy of preservation in the district. Mr. Totten said the petition got a lot of people involved that weren't normally involved in preservation discussions. He described the historic value of the building as immense. He reiterated that without landmark designation, the Commission would not have jurisdiction over the size or shape of new construction or additions due to the amendments to the ordinance in 2023.

James Rafferty, attorney for the property owner, offered clarification to the preceding statement. The Commission would still have jurisdiction to review a project and would need to approve a certificate for an addition, it just could not consider the appropriateness of the size and shape of the construction as its basis for its decision.

Ms. Harrington asked for public comments or questions, with a two-minute limit per speaker.

James Williamson of 30 Churchill Avenue said the Commission's new rules should be clear about when the allotted time was reduced from three to two minutes. He spoke in support of landmark designation and said it might not be a good idea to reposition the building toward DeWolfe Street. The church tower should not be obscured by an addition.

Marilee Meyer of 10 Dana Street spoke in favor of landmark designation as a means to protect the existing building from inappropriate and unnecessary additions.

Marie Saccoccio of 55 Otis Street asked if there was precedent for a study report pre-approving a design concept. Mr. Sullivan said it had been done many times, giving 1627 Massachusetts Ave. as one example. Ms. Saccoccio said ownership could change and landmark designation was essential.

Mr. Kleespies said he had arrived late and would not vote on the case. He indicated that the Commission had always been in favor of a living city that changes and evolves but landmark designation would be helpful to ensure that an addition would not overwhelm the building.

Ms. Darwin noted that a majority of the City Council could designate or rescind landmark designation. She said she supported the extra protection in this case. She moved to approve the report and forward it to the City Council endorsing the recommendation as drafted. Mr. Kyle seconded the motion which passed in a roll call vote 5-0 with one abstention. (Zhang, Harrington, Darwin, Rogove, Kyle voting in favor and Kleespies abstaining).

Case 4906: Brattle St. from Mason St. to Fresh Pond Pkwy, by City of Cambridge. Review existing two-way bike lanes and related structures.

Mr. Sullivan showed photographs of the existing conditions of the bike lanes, separated from the automotive traffic with concrete curbing and a minimal number of flex posts.

Stephen Meuse, Supervising Engineer of the city's Department of Transportation, shared his screen and presented information about the project, which had been carried out in two phases in 2022-2023. He noted that the Commission had approved two temporary certificates of appropriateness for the traffic control structures including lane separators, curb changes, and potential future traffic signal infrastructure. The project was considered a quick build, not full reconstruction. He showed photos of the work as constructed and requested renewal of the certificate without a time limitation.

Mr. Kleespies spoke about the national historical significance of Brattle Street and the highly significant architecture of the street as well. He said the Commission had asked the city to be creative in the ways in which the bike lanes could be carried out while reflecting the special character of the historic setting. Had there been discussion of using planters, art, or landscape design for the bike lanes? Mr. Meuse said planters had been considered but ruled out because there was only 2.5' of width and the planted material was difficult to maintain. The creativity was limited by the small variety of qualified traffic control devices. The lane delineators could not be a proprietary product or a maintenance issue. Public art could be a potential add-on to a full reconstruction project in the future.

Ms. Harrington said the project had been rushed in 2022-2023 due to the time requirements set in

place by the cycle safety ordinance.

Ms. Zhang asked if other studies or options could be presented. Mr. Meuse said the concrete curbs were available in slightly different shapes, but the differences were subtle. Boston was about to try cast-in-place curbing. He said there were other manufactured lane separators, but they were not as durable as the concrete.

Mr. Kyle noted that Huron Avenue had granite and plantings that were of higher quality than what was used on Brattle Street. Mr. Meuse explained that the new facilities on Huron had been constructed as part of a full reconstruction road project. Someday Brattle Street would be due for full reconstruction, but it wasn't in the five-year plan now.

Ms. Harrington asked for public comment.

John Hawkinson asked why the Huron design could not be done on Brattle Street with the planters on top of the concrete curbs. Brooke McKenna, Director of the Department of Transportation, explained that the difference in cost is very significant between a quick build and full reconstruction. Functional traffic safety devices were not well suited to being creative or artistic. Mr. Meuse added that the plant material on Huron extended below grade and were not in above-grade planters.

Urs Gauchat of 154 Brattle Street expressed dissatisfaction with the existing structures. It was unsightly, like curbs in a parking lot. There were better examples in Europe.

Mr. Totten said he felt safer as a cyclist because of the concrete curbs.

Mr. Williamson spoke in defense of other modes of transportation such as walking. He said the design needed more work. Brattle Street should be treated as an area of special planning concern.

Itamar Turner-Trauring of 139 Oxford Street said Brattle Street was safer than other quick builds. The usage had increased by about 20 percent. Huron was prettier and safer, something that was wanted for Brattle Street when funding becomes available. The quick builds were temporary compromises.

Meg Koerner of 121 Brattle Street said the design felt unsafe. Motorcycles and e-bikes also used the bike lanes. It was a double standard to allow the flex posts, but the property owners had strict controls over what they could do on their private properties.

Karl Iagnemma of 25 Craigie Street said there should have been suggestions for improvement as requested by the Commission three years ago.

Richard Freierman of 39 RC Kelly Street said appropriateness shouldn't be the standard for a traffic control device. Other options such as no trucks or making the street one way could be considered. It was a valuable bike facility and an important part of the network.

Anne Hawley of 154 Brattle Street said she liked bike lanes but someone from Brattle Street should be on the bicycle committee. The concrete curbs damage tires and cars get stuck on them. The curbs were not safe and not attractive.

Karen Falb of 245 Brattle Street requested that Brattle Street be studied as a historic landscape, not just a city roadway. HALS documentation would be a valuable project.

Elizabeth Houghteling of 132 Brattle St. said wrought iron instead of flex posts would be worth consideration. The e-bikes travel very fast making it dangerous where there were active driveways.

Ms. Harrington closed the public comment period.

Mr. Sullivan noted that there were additional public comments sent by e-mail, some of which included pictures of other design options. He suggested a continuance. Mr. Meuse said he had a matrix of different traffic devices options that he could present. Ms. McKenna agreed.

Mr. Kleespies moved to continue the hearing to next month. Ms. Darwin seconded and the motion passed 6-0 in a roll call vote. (Kleespies, Zhang, Harrington, Darwin, Rogove, Kyle)

Ms. Harrington called for a brief recess at 8:45 and reconvened the meeting at 8:50 P.M.

Case 5354: Craigie St. at Brattle and Sparks streets, by City of Cambridge. Install bike share station.

Mr. Sullivan introduced the case and turned it over to Nick Schmidt of the Dep't. of Transp.

Mr. Schmidt shared his screen and presented the proposed installation of a 15-bicycle docking station in the portion of Craigie Street at Sparks and Brattle that had been closed to automotive traffic. He provided statistics about bike sharing and noted that there was a service gap in West Cambridge. He described the dimensions and design of the station. The station was made of removable parts, nothing would be permanently anchored into the pavement. He described the frame at one end for public service announcements and a map. He said that cyclists would be able to enter the bike path at Sparks Street.

Mr. Kleespies asked if the service van would be able to park at the location. Mr. Schmidt said Lyft had confirmed it could service the location. Mr. Kleespies suggested blocking access from two-way Craigie Street and allowing only access from Sparks Street.

Ms. Harrington asked if there was a need for bikes at this location. Mr. Schmidt replied in the affirmative. Ms. Harrington opened public questions/comments.

Ms. Houghteling said it was a most confusing intersection and a safety risk. If more bikes were needed at Mount Auburn Hospital, then put them there. It would be visual clutter at a busy intersection.

Mr. Iagnemma said it would be located just outside his driveway. The renderings were misleading. It would result in the continued erosion of the historic character of the district.

Ms. Koerner spoke in support of her neighbors' safety concerns about this location.

Mr. Freierman said the Bluebikes would be useful for tourists coming to Brattle Street. The intersection had improved.

Gary Matt of 134 Brattle Street said it was the wrong place for it. It should be nearer to the school, Lesley University, or the hospital.

Ms. Burks read an emailed statement from Annette Lamond of 9 Riedesel Avenue expressing her concern that cyclists cross the automotive travel lanes to reach the stations at Huron Avenue and Vassall Lane. It would be an added safety risk at a complicated intersection.

Ms. Harrington closed the public comment period.

Mr. Rogove said it was a very complicated intersection, and a high friction point along the two-

way bike lane. Ms. Harrington noted that the Commission should consider the appropriateness and leave the safety requirements to the Transportation Department. Mr. Rogove moved to approve a certificate of appropriateness for the installation, as submitted. Mr. Kleespies seconded the motion which passed 4-2 in a roll call vote. (Kleespies, Zhang, Rogove, Kyle voting in favor and Harrington and Darwin opposed).

Case 5230 (Amendment): 1124 Massachusetts Ave., by Sigma Chi Foundation Inc. Construct 4th floor addition and front roof deck.

Mr. Sullivan asked the applicant for the last agenda item if they would agree to a one-week continuance due to the late hour. Stephen Hiserodt, the architect representing the case, agreed to the continuance to November 13.

Ms. Darwin moved to continue the hearing to November 13. Mr. Kyle seconded the motion, which passed 6-0 in a roll call vote. (Kleespies, Zhang, Harrington, Darwin, Rogove, Kyle)

Case 5357: 29 Follen St., by Follen Development LLC. Restore existing house. Construct new 3-family residence at rear. Related landscape changes.

Mr. Sullivan shared his screen and described the 1839 Greek Revival house designed by housewright Oliver Hastings. Its unique features included curved bays under the front porch. He noted its associations with Harvard astronomers and individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places. He showed views of the property from Follen Street and Massachusetts Avenue. It was surrounded by taller buildings on two sides. He noted that vegetation was treated as ephemeral in terms of public visibility.

Kelly Boucher, architect for the project, presented her design. She noted that the existing house was a two-family and would remain so while a new three-family residence was proposed to be constructed in the rear yard. She showed a landscape plan and noted new and retained trees as well as trees to be removed. The front house would be restored including the historic wood windows. Where the windows were already replacements, new windows would be installed. She described the proposed modifications to the side and rear of the front house. She described the removal of two sheds and the design of the proposed new building. The roof parapet would serve as the railing for the roof deck of the new building. She noted parking and mechanical locations.

Ms. Darwin asked about an elevator headhouse and HVAC placement on the new building. Ms. Boucher said the parapet would hide most of the headhouse and would block the mechanicals from view.

Ms. Harrington opened the public question/comment period.

Barbara Anthony of 1580 Massachusetts Avenue said she was a trustee for her building. She expressed her concerns about tree removals and the retaining wall between properties. She asked about garage doors, construction mitigation, mechanicals and solar on the roof at the rear building. Would two additional stories be added for a total of six? Ms. Boucher answered that the rear building would be only four stories. Solar would be installed and three condensers. It would be an all-electric powered building. She spoke about the trees and retaining walls and construction methods. The new building would not have a basement. Big equipment would not be used. There were three garage doors and five parking spaces in

the new building.

Dan Adelson, the applicant, said small excavators would be used. Hand digging around the roots would be done. The condensers were very quiet Mitsubishi units.

Sally Haddn of 1580 Massachusetts Avenue noted that 40-60' tall trees were located on the 1580 property but very near the lot line. She was concerned that the soil would be compacted. Ms. Boucher said they had a good track record in protecting trees.

Douglas Horton of 1580 Massachusetts Avenue asked how the floor levels would compare on the back building and 1580. Ms. Boucher said the new building would be half as tall as 1580.

Audra Dainora of 1 Follen Lane said the new building was missing the level of architectural detail that other homes on the street had. She said she was concerned that the rear building would visually dominate the front building. Ms. Boucher described her detailing including corner pilasters, three types of siding, 5/4" window casings and bay trim. She showed renderings of the views of the new building.

Ms. Harrington closed the public comment period.

Mr. Sullivan asked if a transformer would be required. Ms. Boucher said Mr. Adelson would put it in a vault under the driveway if the utility required one.

Ms. Burks asked why the rear building was white. She noted that color was subject to commission approval in this district. She wasn't sure if there had been testing done to determine the original color of the front house. Ms. Boucher said that the colors had not been selected yet, but it was rendered in white as a default not a choice.

Mr. Kyle asked if pavers were proposed in the driveway. Ms. Boucher said light pavers were selected to meet Cool Factor requirements. Mr. Kyle asked about water management and dry wells. Ms. Boucher said civil engineering was the next step. A Cul Tec system would likely be needed and could be located under the driveway.

Ms. Darwin spoke favorably about the architectural design; it was sensitive to the front building, and she liked the variation of materials at the back. She noted that the rear yard was low and gets soggy.

Mr. Kleespies moved to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application with the condition that a transformer be put in a below-grade vault and that construction details, materials, paint colors, and landscaping be delegated to staff. Ms. Darwin seconded the motion, which passed 6-0 in a roll call vote. (Kleespies, Zhang, Harrington, Darwin, Rogove, Kyle).

Ms. Darwin moved to adjourn. Mr. Kyle seconded and the motion passed 6-0 in a roll call vote. (Kleespies, Zhang, Harrington, Darwin, Rogove, Kyle) The meeting adjourned at 10:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks

Sarah L. Burks, Preservation Planner

Members of the Public Present on November 6, 2025

Gus Fraser	Mount Auburn Cemetery
Sally Hadden	1580 Massachusetts Ave #8B
Brooke McKenna	Cambridge Dept. of Transportation
Stephen Meuse	Cambridge Dept. of Transportation
Nick Schmidt	Cambridge Dept. of Transportation
Dermot Kiernan	
Dan Adelson	
Kelly Boucher	Kelly Boucher Architect
Annette LaMond	7 Riedesel Ave
Stephen Hiserodt	dh Architects
Christopher Ripman	Ripman Lighting
James Rafferty	Adams & Rafferty
Ian Simmons	1 Mifflin Pl
Wendy Abt	19 Follen St
Gail Greenwald	21 Follen St
Aurilee Anne	154 Brattle St
Meg Koerner	121 Brattle St
Carmen Strajean	cstrajean@gmail.com
Nancy King	1572 Massachusetts Ave Apt. 43
Erika Matt	134 Brattle St
Karen Falb	245 Brattle St
Simon Thompson	325 Ludlow St, Portland, Maine
Richard Freierman	39 RC Kelley St
Douglas Horton	1580 Massachusetts Ave #6D
Myra von Turkovich	31 Shepard St
Melineh Momjian	202 Garden Place, Wayne, Penn. 19087
Lacey McCafferty	108 HMS Bickerton Way, Hingham, Mass.
Carol Miller	1580 Massachusetts Ave
Jerry Pucillo	94 Union St, Weymouth MA
Josephine Massey	8 Mason St
Barbara Anthony	1580 Massachusetts Ave #6G
Teresa Ragosta	1580 Massachusetts Ave, 4G
Ellen Williams	125 Brattle St
Nancy McCoy	1580 Massachusetts Ave #5A
Peggy Blumenreich	123 Brattle St
William Gibson	24R Winter St
Philip Laird	22 Mt Pleasant St
Ann-Kristin Lund	27 Craigie St
Karl Iagnemma	27 Craigie Str
Greer Gilman	1572 Massachusetts Ave., 44
Lindsay Leard Coolidge	148 Brattle St
Thomas Gordon	25 River Rd, Apt 1205
Urs Gauchat	154 Brattle St
Sharmil Modi	271 Cambridge St
Lawrence Miller	125 Brattle St
Marie Saccoccio	55 Otis St.
Michael Driscoll	11 Mt Auburn St
Ellen McDonald	1110 Mass Ave
Marilee Meyer	10 Dana St
Gary Matt	134 Brattle St
Douglas Lee	29 Mt. Auburn St.

John Hawkinson	—
Mary Akitomo	1572 Massachusetts Ave
Elizabeth Houghteling	132 Brattle St
Audra Dainora	1 Follen Ln
Daniel Totten	54 Bishop Allen Dr #2
Marc Levy	3 Potter Pk, #1
James Williamsom	30 Churchill Ave
Itamar Turner-Trauring	139 Oxford St
Jimena Canales	146 Brattle St
Luke Smith	8 Sharon Dr.
Bichop Nawrot	16 Seminole Way Bloomfield, Conn. 06002
Audrey Cayne	26 Craigie St
Marie Elena Saccoccio	55 Otis St
Cynthia Broner	246 Brattle St
Taylor Driscoll	54 Harvard St, Brookline, Mass.
A B	Sndndnd (sic)

Note: See <https://www.cambridgema.gov/historic/permitsApplications/projectplansandstaffreports> for a link to the Zoom meeting recording.