

MINUTES OF THE HALF CROWN-MARSH NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION
Approved at the January 14, 2019 Meeting

December 10, 2018 - 6:00 PM at Lombardi Building, Basement Conference Room, 831 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge

Members present: James Van Sickle, *Chair*; Marie-Pierre Dillenseger, Peter Schur, Jo Solet *Members*; Adrian Catalano, *Alternate*

Commissioners absent: Maximillian Frank, Rory O'Connor.

Staff present: Eric Hill

Members of the Public: N/A

James Van Sickle, Chair, called the hearing to order at 6:03pm. He noted that only one item was on the agenda and since the applicant had presented just two months ago, he would not repeat the procedures for the hearing. Van Sickle introduced the Commissioners and staff present. Commissioner Adrian Catalano mentioned that he would recuse himself as he is an abutter.

HCM-436: 7 Gibson Street, by Nicholas Paolucci. Demolish garage and construct new accessory structure.

Staff showed slides and gave an overview of the property and its setting. He showed aerials and noted that the applicant presented at the October hearing. Staff noted that the proposal had been adapted to a single-story accessory structure, compared to the previously proposed two-story structure.

Mr. Paolucci, the architect, introduced himself to the Commission and explained that he and the owner had listened to the comments at the October hearing and wanted to submit a design more in line with what they understood would be acceptable. Mr. Paolucci also stated that the building is to be used solely for personal office space for the owner, who is a Harvard Professor.

Mr. Van Sickle opened the meeting for fact-finding and questions to staff or the applicant.

Commissioner Dillenseger asked if the skylight was on the north or south slope of the roof as the plans appeared to be incorrect and mislabeled.

Mr. Paolucci mentioned that there were likely drawing errors in the updated plans as they were adapted from the previous two-story iteration. He noted that the skylight is proposed for the south (side) sloping section of the hipped roof.

Commissioner Solet noted that the proposal mentioned "office above the garage" and asked if this was another error in updating the application. Mr. Paolucci replied that it was an error and it would be fixed. Commissioner Solet also asked if a condenser or similar mechanical equipment would be installed or if heating would be run through from the main house. Mr. Paolucci stated that there was an existing condenser unit behind the garage now and a new, more efficient model would replace the existing. The equipment would also be screened from the street. Ms. Solet and Mr. Van Sickle mentioned to the applicant that approval by BZA would likely be required as far as setbacks and noise pollution are concerned.

Mr. Van Sickle asked the applicant what the wall height for the existing garage structure measures, because it was not clear in the existing condition drawings. Staff noted that based on scale, it looks to be less than 9'-0" but agreed that the measurement was not listed. Van Sickle also asked if the structure is in the same footprint; and if not, would the two parking spaces in front of the garage structure remain?

Mr. Paolucci stated that the wall height of the existing structure and the proposed would be very similar and did not know the number off the top of his head. He noted it would be roughly a foot higher. The applicant stated that the proposed structure would remain in a square footprint; however, it would be a slightly larger building which would encroach into the front and interior side setback.

Mr. Schur asked the applicant if the fence would be replaced. Staff noted that the owner received approval in the past for a previous project to restore the main structure and replace the solid wood fence between the two structures.

The applicant, Mr. Paolucci, stated that they are not proposing any additional fence work at this time.

Ms. Dillenseger asked if the pedestrian door facing the street would be a solid wood, paneled door or if it would have a glass panel on the upper section like that seen on the main structure. She noted that there were also discrepancies in the drawings showing the door as being a solid wood door as well as a wood door with a glass panel.

The applicant noted that the owner is open to either door option. Staff stated that typically, accessory structures have less ornate and more functional detailing on windows, doors and trim and would recommend a solid wood, paneled door that matches the same profile as the main house. The applicant noted that he agrees.

Commissioner Solet asked the applicant if the windows proposed are a synthetic material.

Mr. Paolucci stated that the proposed windows are a fiberglass composite window and are double-hung and simulated/full-divided-lite.

Ms. Dillenseger noted another discrepancy in the plans, that being the pedestrian door on the side elevation was noted as being on the "south" side, but, it should be on the "north" side elevation. Mr. Paolucci mentioned that he would fix the labels in the drawings.

Mr. Van Sickle also mentioned that the side yard setback from the house may be an issue and especially in relation to the existing bulkhead on the main structure. Mr. Paolucci stated that he would have to see what the inspectors say and stated that there should be adequate room between the structures to allow for easy access.

Mr. Van Sickle then mentioned that no members of the public were present; however, two letters addressed to the Commission were submitted by abutters, Ms. Meservey and Ms. Canner. Mr. Van Sickle read both letters out loud to fellow commissioners. After reading Ms. Meservey's letter addressing concerns about trees being damaged or removed, the Commission pointed out that the trees submitted in the photos were on the applicant's lot.

Mr. Catalano noted that the arbor vitae screens the existing structure well from farther down the street.

Ms. Dillenseger thanked the owner and architect for listening to the comments and concerns at the prior hearing and updating the proposal accordingly.

The applicant noted that the intent of the design was to take cues from the main house in terms of roof pitch and design but be a minimal interpretation.

Mr. Schur asked if the grade of the driveway would change and if gutters or downspouts would be installed.

Mr. Paolucci stated that the grade of the driveway would not change, and that gutters and downspouts would be installed to divert the water. Mr. Van Sickle mentioned that the plans examiners with the City of Cambridge would not allow for water to be diverted off the site so a dry well or channel elsewhere would be a suggestion to look at.

A motion to vote was called for and Ms. Dillenseger made the **motion to approve the proposal with the proviso that the plans are updated to show the correct proposed conditions of the door and skylight and suggested the applicant protect and/or replant any screening plants on the south side of the structure. Mr. Schur seconded the motion. The vote was 4-0 to approve the application. Catalano recused.**

Minutes of November 19, 2018 hearing:

Ms. Dillenseger made a motion to approve the minutes pending the mentioned edits. Ms. Solet seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Eric Hill, Survey Director